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India's nuclear challenge

Indian aspirations and Pakistan's illusions

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BY conducting five atomic test explosions in three days, India has fully exposed its motive to be a regional hegemony. The letter of the Indian Prime Minister Mr. Atal Bihari Vajpayee to the US President Bill Clinton confirms this fear. In this letter, Mr. Vajpayee has said that the motive behind the test firing is to establish Indian hegemony in the region. It is clear that India would now show its readiness for signing NPT and CTBT and try to be a regional superpower, as it has always dreamt of. In such a scenario, Pakistan has no option but to come up with a matching response and acquire atomic status. Only this step can safeguard Pakistan's integrity and security concerns.

Pakistani nation and the leadership should stand up to the occasion and take bold decisions in the interest of the country. The nation should be united on the issue and compel the government to take all steps to ensure Pakistan's security, integrity and honorable place in the comity of nations. The government should not look for foreign support on the issue. It should not get involved in traps of negotiations, nor should it yield to Western pressure for not going nuclear and for signing NPT. The government should rather attempt to take the nation into confidence and undertake all out efforts in keeping with national aspirations to ensure country's security.

To fully grasp the gravity of the situation, it will be appropriate if we recount the creed that is Hinduism, the international political maneuverings and designs within which it fits, the Indian leadership's profile and its future plan about the region, and then finally to assess the pros and cons of posture Pakistan is taking towards India.

The extremist Hindu tendency in India that surfaced in the shape of a dominating force in the country as a result of the recent elections is not so much a new reality. Its roots are deep in its history of five thousand years. This trend has been manifest in all the important ideological, religious, cultural and political activities of Hindus, particularly during the last two centuries. This was the trend that forced the Muslim leaders of India from Sir Syed Ahmad Khan to Quaid-e- Azam, to give up the deceptive target of "Hindu Muslim Unity". Instead, faith, civilization and culture became the focus of their endeavors. On that basis after independence, a new order was established in the shape of two dominions. The last 50 years bear testimony that the Muslim Ummah accepted this new arrangement with open heart but the Hindu majority of India and its political leadership did never accept it in reality. Their inner resolve remained dormant under the cover of diplomacy and duplicity, but for how long could it remain so? After all this cover of duplicity was gradually removed. 'Shahadat' of Babri mosque in 1992 and the country wide elections of 1996 and 1998 so manifestly cleared every thing that all the friends and foes now admit the domination of Hindu Hindutva. Among these, the only exceptions are the ones who are overcome by complacency and who refuse to see what is so apparent. Every Muslim and every sane person desires

and longs for peace and security not only in this sub-continent but also throughout the world. However, peace and security cannot be achieved by simply longing for it. An understanding of the facts, an effective strategy and full force of action are needed for achieving the desired goals and for making them indispensable. Cowardice, weakness, diplomacy and sycophancy do not achieve peace and security. These are fruits of tenacity of purpose, zeal for the target, attaining effective stamina for structuring and creations and full-fledged preparations and mobilization for protecting freedom and honor. That is why Quran has guided the Muslim Ummah toward a right strategy in very clear terms:

Against them make ready your strength to the utmost of your power, including steeds of war, to strike terror into (the hearts of) the enemies of Allah and your enemies and others besides, whom ye may not know, but whom Allah doeth know. Whatever ye shall spend in the cause of Allah, shall be repaid unto you, and ye shall not be treated unjustly. (Al-Anfa'l: 60).

The internal and external politics of a faithful Shari'ah-bearing and respectable nation cannot be based on any foundations other than the ones stated above. But our political leadership, claiming to be the heirs of Pakistan's founder party, donning also the plume of heavy popular mandate, has always appeared to be restless and zealous to woo the Hindu extremist leadership of India and seem so complacent about it. It has since long been dreaming to build up castles of peace and security on the sands of American support and the "moderation and befriending" of Atal Bihari Vajpayee. All this is astonishing rather embarrassing.

Presently the foremost need for Pakistanis as a nation is to have correct and accurate understanding of the facts and to discard the conjectures of complacency and dependence on foreigners. No doubt, we should stand firm on the ground and should not stretch beyond our resources. It does not, however, mean that we should not take notice of the affairs of the world and the maneuverings of our adversaries, nor should we be oblivious of our aims and intentions or our steadfastness. To be victorious, it is imperative that there should be accurate comprehension of the situation, judicious use of the resources, awareness of the nation and for its full-scale participation in this process of struggle and development. This is the way to our stability and progress. The Western plan to sabotage regional power equation can be summed up as follows:

1. Perception of the reality at the international level that all the American efforts aim at its political, economic, military and cultural supremacy and domination over the whole world is necessary. It is not just a matter of friendship and cooperation as these are everybody's innate desires, but the fact cannot be ignored that today's only super power (U.S.) harbors plans for supremacy and domination instead of mere friendship. It is expressed overtly and covertly in the statements of former President George Bush and his team as those of the President Clinton and his advisers. The latest declaration is that of Clinton administration about CTBT. It has been commented upon editorially by the daily Guardian, London in its issue of April 7, 1998: "But there is also widespread skepticism that the treaty merely legitimizes the dominance of the nuclear five. The Clinton administration has said the treaty will 'prevent other nations from acquiring weapons and Will Demonstrate US Global Leadership'. As Robert Bell, Arms Control Director of the US National Security Council has put it, 'the point of the treaty is to ban the bang, not to ban the bomb.'" (The Guardian "Ban the Bang: Who believes it's a new start?" April 7, 1998, p.15).

2. Leaving apart the soother provided to others by US, on regional basis, America's vivid target is to encircle China to strangulate it and not to allow any Asian country to emerge as world power. To build up India as an Asian power against China, Japan and the Islamic policy, is an important part of the overall

America plan but it would not be possible unless Pakistan accepts India's supremacy in one way or the other, may it be in the shape of regional cooperation or even friend- ship.

3. Another target on the regional level is to make Israel so strong in the Middle East that it controls not only the Arab world but the entire Islamic world also militarily it should be superior to all and by dint of power it may raise the bogey of peace and thus have a grip economically over the Arab as well as the Islamic world. Then India and Israel who already have abundant mutual cooperation at all levels, military, political economic, as well as in research and in espionage-may become custodians of the whole area and thus fulfil their own and American designs.

4. Also on the regional basis it is deemed necessary that no real alliance should emerge between Muslim countries and the Arab countries. They should fight each other so that their resources are utilized by others to the maximum and should not be let to be used for the prosperity of the people of this region, nor for a strong Muslim Bloc to emerge.

5. In order to keep India in its fold, such situation must be encouraged so that national level political powers may weaken and regional forces in India are strengthened for utilizing them as leverage from different angles. The multinationals should play an increasingly prominent role so that they could influence future policies of India. 6. In Pakistan, the American policy is to encourage forces that may open Pakistan's markets for American and European investment and products, be prepared to curtail defense expenditures and may agree to restrict its nuclear power according to the dictates of the Western countries. Further, these forces should be enamored of the Western culture and civilization and should line up not only for economic, cultural and political friendship with India but even for alliances and annexation. For liquidating the Kashmir question, some Oslo-type or Ireland model game be played. Pakistan should be cut off from Arab world, Middle East and the Islamic World, which is its natural place, and tied with India and Southern Asia wherefrom it had earlier carved out itself. It should be distanced from Afghanistan and Iran. Southern Asian and SAARC chain should be strengthened and Pakistan-China friendship split apart.

For this purpose, it is necessary that in the name of open minded- ness in Pakistan, secularism and culture, civilization and liberation and a common economy with India may be propagated. Feminist movement should be upped by popularizing the Western culture ways so that family bonds are torn to pieces, the new generation be driven to the path of linguistic and class distinctions, violation, narcotics and licentious life and there should be down- sizing in defense forces in the name of developing education and human resources. (Interestingly, the external debt and the interest paid there- on consume 50% of our revenue receipts but there is no mention about it. Our financial wizards and former finance ministers, who have been responsible for burdening this poor nation with huge loans, do not at all speak of this enormous burden and are making the defense expenditure the major target, which now constitutes half the amount of the debt service). An important aim of this strategy appears to deprive Pakistan of its nuclear capability. After failing to make Pakistan yield in the past, a new approach is now being worked out. We apprehend that on the occasion of the ensuing visit of President Clinton, participation of Pakistan in CTBT in one form or the other might be arranged.

This is a six-point plan that is being acted upon by the Western countries. Now we have to see what is the place of the recent changes in India in the plan and in what direction the Government of Pakistan wishes to lead this country.

Bharatiya Janata Party was formally established in 1980 and within 18 years, it overshadowed the political horizon. But in fact, Hindu extremist movement has been gaining ground since the beginning of the 19th century. Its first movement came into existence in 1820. Thus alongside the Congress, Hindu Sabha (1907) and then Hindu Mahasabha (1918) had been playing this role. Rashtriya Sevak Sangh was established in September 1925 and earlier in 1923 Hindu extremist leader V.D. Savarkar presented his extremist policy in his book Hindutva which is treated as the Bible of this movement and it: achievement is BJP's real target This booklet of Savarkar is based on Rig Veda, according to which Hindus are those who are kept together through sacred relations of birth and earth. Under this system Hindu and Hindustan sacred mother country Pitribhumi and Punyabhumi are connected like body and soul. This holy land has been encircled by three sacred rivers Sindh, Ganges and Brahmaputra. Savarkar himself played a central role in Mahasabha.

He and Mr K.B. Hedgekar who had full faith in Savarkar's Hindutva and had become its preacher - established Rashtriya Sevak Sangh In September 1925, on the occasion of the Hindu festival Dussehra which is the mark of Krishna's victory over Ravana, the first Sevak was set up at Nagpur and then this semi-military movement grew stronger

Twice it was banned but it could not deter it and gradually Rashtriya Sevak Sangh (RSS) became the spinal cord of Hindu extremism. RSS had claimed in 1989 that it has in its fold 18 lakh trained Sevak who are working in its 25,000 branches at 18800 places (See Robert Eric Fisk's article Hindu Fundamentalism and Structural Stability of India, Vol. III of the Fundamentalism project 'Fundamentalism and the State, University of Chicago Press, 1993, pp. 242-243).

After partition of the subcontinent, the RSS movement gave birth to Bharatiya Jan Sangh under the leadership of Dr Shriyama Parshad Mukerji. He was a federal minister in the Nehru cabinet. He had refused to recognize the partition of the country and had resigned from the cabinet in protest against Liaquat Nehru Pact of 1951. The whole leadership of RSS played the central role in its formation. This is the Jan Sangh, that became under the leadership of Atal Bihari Bajpai a part of Janata Dal established by Murarji Desai and Mr Vajpayee joined Desai's cabinet along with Sangh's another leader K.L. Advani. (Only three ministers were from Jan Sangh. In the Assembly the number of Sangh members was stated to be 91). Janata Dal government held the reins twice. Due to its failure, Bharatiya Jan Sangh was disbanded and in April 1980 it was formed a new one in the shape of Bharatiya Janata Party. It secured two seats in 1984 and 178 seats in 1998 in the Central Assembly. Its various provincial governments are already in position including the one in U.P. in whose leadership Babri Mosque was desecrated. Now this party is leading the Central government. Thus it is a series that has been continuing since 1925.

Now let us glance over the base of its ideological and political stand. Philosophically it is based on the Hindu concept of the universe and believes in organic unity. Politically it has four basic principles and targets that must be understood.

First thing that is the most fundamental is its concept of nationalism and collectivism that has been presented by M.S. Golwalker, a thinker of this movement, in his book. "We, Or Our Nationhood Defined" as a gist of Savarkar's thoughts. It is even today the spirit of BJP's manifesto and its strategy. Its main theme is one country, one nation and one culture. Golwalker writes: "The non-Hindu peoples in Hindustan must adopt the Hindu culture and language, must learn to respect and

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hold in reverence Hindu religion, must entertain no idea but glorification of the Hindu race and culture i.e. they must not only give up their attitude of intolerance and ingrate fullness towards this land and its age old traditions, but must also cultivate a positive attitude of love and devotion instead in a world; they must cease to be foreigners, or must stay in this country wholly subordinated to the Hindu nation, claiming nothing, deserving no privilege, far less any preferential treatment, not even citizen rights." (Mahadev Sudashiv Golwalkar, "We, or Our Nationhood Defined", Nagpur, India Pakistan, 1939, 1947, pp.55- 56).

Golwalkar and the whole leadership of this school of thought declares Muslims (and similarly the Christians) as foreigners and the only way for them to survive is to fall in line with Hindutva and get themselves absorbed therein.

Peter Popham, the correspondent of the daily independent of London, has explained the mentality of BJP and RSS displayed on the occasion of the recent success of Bharatia Janata Party: "The BJP is not a party like other parties. It is the political wing of a paramilitary organization founded 73 years ago called the Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh.... the RSS take itself very seriously. Its growth during the last decades of British rule was an attempt to do for the Hindus what Mussolini and Hitler were doing for Italy and Germany: evoke a vanished golden age of national strength and purity; create solidarity by identifying and stigmatizing national enemies; and lay the basis for a takeover of the state by creating a corps of dedicated, paramilitary zealots."

"There was a time when our country was free and prosperous and had attained commanding heights in every walk of life," the RSS's web-site declares. "And yet it found itself defeated and disgraced at the hands of a handful of foreign invaders....." The abiding obsession has been 'the Muslim Problem'. What to do about the 11 per cent of India's population who owed allegiance not to Lord Rama but to Mecca. Golwalkar, the RSS leader still known simply as "guru", took Hitler's attitude to his own 'Semitic' problem as his inspiration. "To keep up the purity of the nation and its culture, Germany shocked the world by the purging of its Semitic race, the Jews," he wrote in We, or our Nationhood Defined. "National pride at its highest has been manifested there. Germany has also shown how well-nigh impossible it is for races and cultures having differences going to the root to be assimilated.." "The core beliefs of the RSS, however, have been consistent down the years. Muslims and other minorities are still the obsession." (The Independent, London. March 22, 1998 "India's new rulers enter with a whiff of fascism").

The representative of American Magazine Time writes in his book The Indian Unrest: "The whole tendency of the Hindu revival during the last twenty years had been constantly anti-Mohammedan..."

The second point of the basic creed of RSS, Bharatia Jan Sangh and Bharatia Janata Party itself is to establish the unity of India and the programme to undo the (1947) Partition of the country. This programme is the first point of Jan Sangh's manifesto viz "United India is our life blood". Bharatia Janata Party has, however, stated it somewhat tactfully. Prof. D.D. Pattanaik in his book "Hindu Nationalism in India" (Vol 3) comes to the conclusion after studying the literature of both Jan Sangh and BJP, that both of them have a common target, viz. to undo the partition of the country and to establish India's oneness. This target is not limited to Pakistan and Bangladesh but all the neighboring countries that formed part of India in the past are now the target for a Greater India. In regard to BJP he adds the following:

"Political unification may not be viable but culturally it may be possible. Stating this, Dr Murli Manohar Joshi, the former BJP President, held that voluntary merger of neighboring countries which were part of India in the past, viz Pakistan, Bangladesh, Nepal, Bhutan, Burma and Sri Lanka, is possible." (the Statesman, 19 January, 1992).

Bharatia Janata Party had organized the 'Aikta March' in 1990 from Somnath to Kashmir with the sole purpose of defining its target. After the formation of Bharatia Janata Party government, its secretary general not only declared that they would recover their territories from Pakistan and China but he had proposed a confederation of Southern Asian countries. The Chief of Tehrik-e-Takmeel-e-Pakistan Mr Mahmood Ali and Sardar Abdul Qayyum, have expressed their fears that the installation of Akhand India in some way or the other is becoming the important goal of the politics of the continent. It is being supported by the United States also and a lobby is active for this purpose in this country (Pakistan) as well (See Nawa-e-Waqt, statement of Sardar Abdul Qayyum, the Editorial Disclosure of Akhand India Plan 1st March 1998 and Jang Rawalpindi, March 7, 1998).

Bhartia Janata Party's concept of India, its nationalist ideology, and to merge once again Pakistan and other countries of this entire region in the shape of Akhand India and to clamp India's supremacy over this part of the world, are the primary and basic objectives for which they have been working since the last 75 years. Their target has remained the same, no matter what the name and organization of the party. For achieving these goals, work is being done in literary, political and cultural fields, besides mustering a military force and equipping it with such traditional and non-traditional weapons by dint of which India could become the policeman of the whole region and thus it becomes not only a regional but global power of some degree. Further, two more principles are stated to have a fundamental bearing. One, the setting up of a capitalist economy based on free market that may be a model of Brahmana money-lending concept of economy; and second, putting into practice the indigenous concept of becoming self-sufficient and as a result of which the influence of multi-national corporations may abate and Indian trade companies and their own multinationalism should prosper.

These four points form the axis, round which the policies and activities of RSS and Bharatia Janata Party have been revolving and shall do so. After the recent electoral success the leadership of RSS and BJP has openly declared that due to lack of overwhelming majority they would work on a common agenda but Party's real target shall be as per their manifesto and it shall follow a twenty five years plan when it gains full power and achieves its real targets.

For the sake of common programme, their claims in their manifesto viz absolute merger of Kashmir by eliminating Clause 370 of the (Indian) Constitution and having a common Civil Code by abrogating the personal and family laws of Muslims, have been apparently deferred and similarly the programme for constructing Ram Mandir in place of Babri Mosque is also not mentioned in the programme, but when the statements of Indian leaders are analyzed and their very common agenda is studied, one finds that these things have been inserted between the lines in some form or the other, e.g. setting up of a Constitutional Commission that shall prepare suggestions in the light of the experience of the last fifty years. Clause 370 and the personal law are covered by it. As for the question of Babri Mosque, the Prime Minister Bajpai and his compatriots have clearly said, "they will not resort to court and legal proceedings. Instead some solutions shall be found through negotiations and consensus". The same course of action has been announced in the case of other mosques, which are the targets of the extremist leadership. These include the mosques of Mathura and Kashi in addition to the 2000 more,

which are on their bloody agenda. Nuclear Option and 'liberating' Azad Kashmir from Pakistan were openly included in the programme of the new government. Similarly pressurizing China and itself becoming a world power are also the items of this agenda.

Having understood the historical role of Bharatiya Janata Party and Hindu extremism and their common objectives in their dealings in different postures, it appears necessary that accurate assessments are made about the 72-year old Prime Minister, Atal Bihari Vajpayee and should not indulge in vain fancies on mere hearsay. No doubt, he enjoys the reputation of being 'a good man in a bad party', or that he is a moderate fellow. Also that the then Pakistan's leadership was impressed by his pleasant disposition when he was the foreign minister of India. All these things might be true but we do not intend to analyze his personal life, yet Indian newspapers, the books published there and particularly the memoirs of his fellows in the cabinet and in the parliament are replete with this sort of information which should be useful for the negotiators to possess as also to understand the different facets of his personality.

First of all we should keep in mind that we are not doing our ambassadorship in an era of kingship where the rulers enjoyed absolute powers and much depends upon his personal likes and dislikes. Today's political system is working on absolutely different basis. There is a weak coalition government in India and its survival depends on not one or two but 18 political parties, their mercurial leadership and their ever-changing interests. If only seven members of parliament change sides, the government shall be flattened. Pinning hopes on such a government that it shall be able to take any major decision or it can take the courage of initiating any new action about basic problems like Kashmir, is a complacency that merits little appreciation.

Vajpayee being 'principled' and 'moderate minded' can be understood from the fact that he has been a member a resolute member of Jan Sangh from his childhood and even today he considers it has body and soul. His Interior Minister- K.L. Advani, is an extremist of the first order, and the Minister for Human Resources Shri Murli Manohar Joshi even surpasses Advani in his severity. Thus the ministries of Interior and Human Resources are in the hands of the two most prejudiced and authoritative persons who have been Party's presidents. Of the 13 ministers of BJP, 9 have been nominated by RSS and Vajpayee could do nothing. He wanted very much to give Finance Ministry of Jaswant Singh but he was helpless against the opposition of RSS. According to daily. The Asian Age (London and Delhi) Prime Minister Vajpayee was left alone in regard to the selection of Finance Minister and his nominee (Jaswant Singh) could not get the support of a single person (21.22 March, 1998). Of what use can be his "moderate demeanor" in the presence of such a strong hold of RSS?

This electroplating of moderation need not be given much weight because all significant observers are of the view that Vajpayee is merely a showpiece. He does not possess the real authority; that lies with RSS and it shall rule the roots.

As for Mr Vajpayee there is no exaggeration in the claim that he is an adept in changing colours and adapting himself suiting the occasion. Kuldeep Nayyar's articles about him "Two Faces of Vajpayee" (Dawn, March 28, 1998) and "How Long Before the Mask of Off, Mr Vajpayee?" (The Asian Age, Delhi and London, 21 March 1998) are worth reading Kuldeep Nayyar makes particular mention of the article written by Mr Vajpayee under the caption "The Sangh (RSS) is my Soul". Mr Vajpayee writes: "Their religion will not be changed. They can follow their own religion. Mecca can continue to be holy for the Muslims but India should be holier than the holy for them. You can go to a mosque and offer Namaz, you can keep the Roza. We have no problem. But if you have to choose between Mecca or Islam and

India you must choose India. All the Muslims should have this feeling: we will live and die only for this country." (The Nation, January 24, 1998). About the programme of Rashtriya Sevak Sangh (RSS), Mr Vajpayee writes that it has two sides - First, to organize Hindus and second, to build up such a strong Hindu society that should be ideologically united and above petty differences so that it could execute its programme. Mr Kuldeep Nayyar writes about Vajpayee: "He is a product of RSS and there is no doubt that RSS is using his liberal image to gain power" (Dawn, March 28, 1998). Kuldeep Nayyar makes mentions of the three day consultative moot of RSS wherein it was said that they would achieve their real targets within 25 years. He has quoted the Joint Secretary RSS Mr Mohan Das, who had declared in very clear terms that neither the plan to construct Ram Mandir shall be shelved nor the claim of Mathura and Kanshi would be withdrawn. Therefore, it is simply the matter of postponing the programme for the time being and Mr Vajpayee himself is an adherent of this strategy. He, however, takes one stand while preparing Party's manifesto and skips over to another while implementing the common programme. He thus has two faces, not one.

The conduct of Mr Vajpayee as Foreign Minister is often discussed so much so that in his congratulatory letter Mr Nawaz Sharif made mention of it. But it has been ignored that he was at that time a member of the cabinet of Prime Minister Murarji Desai who was rightly awarded Pakistan's highest civil award. Mr Murarji Desai was among those Indian leaders who had heartily accepted the partition of the country and always honored it practically. Mr Vajpayee was a member of that cabinet where majority dis-agreed with his real thinking but now he is Prime Minister of the government established by BJP whose strings are held by the RSS. In this context, Kuldeep Nayyar's comment that sheds light over Mr Vajpayee's double personality is worth studying. He writes: "What left Islamabad speechless was when he reportedly remarked that they should forget what he said in the past because he was then Jan Sangh member and. was now part of Janata Party. The visit was highly successful. Did the real Vajpayee emerge, or did he act to suit the ambiance? Riding two horses at the same time can be an aerobic feat. But it cannot be a proper way of governance."

Similarly, the aspect of Mr Vajpayee's conduct that he displayed in bringing together Jan Sangh and Janata Dal may be kept in view. This alliance came into being on the pledge that the relations between the RSS and Jan Sangh will be severed completely. The well-known Indian leader Jay Parkash Narain also had played a key role in this deal. Primary negotiations were held and agreements drawn between Jayparkash and Atal Bihari Vajpayee but what was the conduct of Mr Vajpayee at the crucial time of test, are stated by Mr Kuldeep Nayyar: "It was the Gandhite Jayparkash Narayan who was having full faith in the Jan Sangh brought it into the Janata fold. He was disappointed when it did not break its ties with the RSS. He even said that he felt cheated. Ultimately, the Jan Sangh members walked out of Janata on that very question. Vajpayee was one of them."

Indian newspapers have published the self-compiled autobiography of Subramaniam Swami a leader of the Janata Party. Some excerpts have appeared in the monthly

"Afkar-e-Milli" published from Delhi (April 1998). They depict his (Vajpayee's) double rather triple sided personality. Further, they bring out as to when and what role he has been playing in regional conspiracies. In spite of his opposing Indira Gandhi's emergency, he played tracts right from rendering apologies for release up to the tug of war with Murarji Desai, Charan Sindh and Jagjeevan Ram. All these things help in understanding his politics and modus operandi. A matter of very basic importance that Pakistan must know is the, particular tilt or Mr Vajpayee towards Russia (and this is also said about

Indian Defense Minister George Fernandez). Both have serious reservations about China and this is the thing that makes them not only acceptable to America rather points towards a special role in the regional politics of the future, whereas China has been our most dependable friend.

After analyzing the political scenario in India, it is necessary to cast a glance over Pakistan's stand and the advances made by it in this regard.

The first thing that has caused anxiety to the thoughtful persons is the infinite desire: for friendship with India that our Prime Minister has been displaying every now and then since February 1997 when he assumed the office. Despite the repeated flogging from India, his eagerness and manifestation has been on the increase. Naturally one can ask as to what is in the back- ground.

The Prime Minister, the Defense Minister and other leaders of India have all along been saying that there shall be no negotiations of Kashmir. If it is held, it shall be on retrieval of Azad Kashmir from Pakistan, but here in Pakistan negotiations are talked about every now and then. India may have any type of government but our eagerness to beseech them goes unabated. The more they show their aversion and avoidance the more is our eagerness, longing and interest to woo them. It is also worth mentioning that in his letter which our Prime Minister wrote to Mr Gujral on is assuming premier- ship, the Kashmir problem was mentioned as a core issue, but in the letter written to Mr Vajpayee, a reference about Kashmir has been made but not as a key issue. Further, in his interview with Kuldeep Nayyar, our Prime Minister appears to be giving a message that there be only an expression of intention for negotiations on Kashmir, even if there are any negotiations, or no matter how long negotiations may go on, with or without any outcome, all this will be acceptable. Kuldeep Nayyar writes: "Nawaz Government shall be satisfied if only negotiations do start. He has no time frame in his mind. Three months earlier he had told in an interview that once negotiations start on Kashmir, he would not mind. how much time it takes. His position is still the same but he wants to keep the ball rolling even after the installation of a new government in New Delhi. When questioned if the army shall be satisfied with this approach, he said that there was no question of army intervening. There was no pressure on him from that quarter." (daily Khabrain, March 1, 1998). This very view was expressed by the Foreign Minister Mr Gohar Ayub Khan, in an interview to a rep representative of an Indian newspapers in Colombo, saying: "The Kashmir question would 'eventually' become the subject of discussion, to be held 'repeatedly' among the two countries. (The accent on 'eventual' talk could be construed as a willingness to wait indefinitely). If India simply refuses to discuss Kashmir, then it will be difficult for Pakistan to continue the talks." (the Hindu, February 3, 1998).

In this interview, some 'new thoughts' of Gujral have been mentioned and in that context Gohar Ayub Khan told something to the representative of The Hindu, making a reference to Mr Nawaz Sharif, which was a fatal blow to Pakistan's principled stand: "Mr Ayub Khan quoted Mr Sharif as having told Mr Gujral further as follows: 'If we (India and Pakistan) have to get lawyers to interpret the very basis of certain agreements to sort the negotiation, where are we going to go? We (Pakistanis) are not going to go there. It has to be a will to start the dialogue'." (The Hindu, February 7, 1998).

On the one hand, the compromise on the central and the foremost stand on the question of Kashmir, yet our anxiousness for enhancing trade relations with India (despite the existing deficit of Rs 10 billion), then the Prime Minister's agreement on the occasion of SAARC Conference, for setting up of a free trade zone within two to three years, the more than frequent visit of cultural and business delegations, tour to India by Prime Minister's son, bringing in vogue the Hindu festival like 'Basant' in Pakistan and reception

of India's cultural troupe and then claiming repeatedly that Prime Minister enjoys a mandate for all these things- openly clash with the aims and interests of Pakistan and the Muslim Ummah. That is why Nawa-e-Waqt itself, which had supported this government more than any one else, is now crying horse and admonishes that this dangerous game should be stopped. See eight editorials during one month, ie, 1st, 3rd, 5th, 6th, 20th, 27th, 30th, and 31st of March, 1998.

It is now sufficiently clear that the attitude of the Government of Pakistan has been indicative of a departure from the principled stand and represents confused thinking and compromises. The nation has neither ever given any mandate to any ruler for such deviations. rather disloyalty, nor would tolerate it at any cost. This not must stop immediately, otherwise it shall be difficult to save the country from severe internal and external strife.

As a result of the dominance of Hindu extremism, the challenge created for India and its Muslim population, and the issues and dangers it has posed to Pakistan and other neighboring countries, merit serious thinking, meaningful planning to counter it, warrant to create awareness regionally and internationally and necessitates to initiate serious counter-actions. It is also absolutely necessary to take the nation into confidence and to prepare it for every confrontation. Dreaming for India's friendship or expecting support from the so-called friendly Western countries in these circumstances is just an illusion. It amounts to acting like an ostrich hiding its head under the sand instead of facing the danger. Bravery demands preparation for accepting the challenge with the consciousness as to whom we have to deal with. A tiger does not alter its originality and a wolf does not turn into a sheep by putting up its skin. To distinguish between friend and foe, to muster up strength, to face the challenge and to stand up to the occasion the living nations have always opted for.