

US tilt towards India and our response

By Prof. Khurshid Ahmad

US President Bill Clinton's visit to India and Pakistan made it abundantly clear that whatever was the state of affairs of Pak-US relations, Pakistan is no more a natural ally of America. Now India is its "natural ally" and "strategic partner".

It does not matter that a party that propagates Hindu chauvinism, preaches Hindutva instead of secularism and sheds blood of Muslims, Christians and other minority groups is in power in India. This is the situation on the ground. We should, therefore, try to understand new American priorities and ways open to us. To complain about betrayals or to dream

about the revival of friendship would be against the rightful approach of facing the reality.

Fault lies with us if we failed to realize that there has always been a severely criticized non-aligned movement and reckons the 40 years of this policy as lost years. Now foundation has been laid not only for friendship with America but also for formal and institutional relations. Its result can be seen in the 'document of vision' that establishes the same relationship between America and India as India had with Russia in 1970 prior to India's attack on East Pakistan.

On the eve of Clinton's visit, Foreign Secretary Madeleine Albright gave a very important statement that they apologize to India

for neglecting them during the last 50 years. Karl Inderfurth said in clear terms: Overall relations with India will not be hostage to our relations with any other country.

On behalf of a Task Force, headed by Dr Richard N. Haass, Vice President of the famous Brookings Institute and director of its Foreign Policy Studies, twentyone top intellectuals of America prepared a report 10 years 70,000 Kashmiri youth, old and children have been martyred. However, this state terrorism finds no mention in the statements of this second and current phase.

Indian democracy is being praised but no exception is taken to the hell let loose on the minorities in India. As

many as seventeen separatist movements are operating in India today but what Mr. Clinton could find was ethnic, linguistic and religious tolerance and harmony throughout the country. Quietly and deftly, he has paved the way for a change in the nuclear policy itself. India has receded from its earlier stand of cleansing the world of nuclear weapons, to 'non-proliferation' while America has indirectly recognized the security risks of India which has been blessed with leadership of not only this region but at the world level as well.;

If Pakistan's leadership ignores these major changes and does not prepare effective

in India; that there has always been a soft corner for India in different American governments. Keeping in view its geographical location, area, population, financial resources, strength of market and its political influence, this cannot be regarded unnatural. However, the way Indian leadership, right from the days of Nehru, presented itself as the champion of socialist system, enjoying strong ties with Russia and an active member of non-aligned movement, kept it at a distance from America during the days of the cold war.

The situation changed after end of cold war. India gave up the socialist system (in whatever shape it was then) and shifted to market economy and also adopted a liberal trade policy. Despite its backing

of Russia on certain issues, such as Afghanistan, it gradually started establishing relations with America. By 1995 these links had assumed a definite shape and included economic cooperation, ever-increasing trade, higher American investment, agreement in political matters, facilitating facility to American lanes during war against Iraq, and ultimately the commence-

America, prepared a report

It is high time that without indulging in anti-American emotionalism the nation conveyed to America with solemn determination and due respect that the doors are open for friendship and cooperation but there is no room for subjugation and allegiance. If America enjoys the right to adopt a policy that serves its interests better, so has Pakistan the right to decide about its stand keeping in view its national interests. Those who want us to behave like a weathercock are in fact pushing us to slavery and subjugation.

where Clinton was advised to give

and does not prepare effective strategy to face the new situation, then it would amount to national suicide instead of life and development. President Clinton has spared no effort in informing us on American priorities, concerns, interests and plans.

The most important question now is: what should be Pakistan's approach in such circumstances and how it could face the situation. A section talks of elasticity and in the name of realistic approach counsels for treading the path marked by America, albeit with certain reservations and some window-dressing. In its support it refers to unfavourable circumstances, battered economy and the world situation.

Their advice is Cor _ signing the

CTBT, mitigation in Jihad in

Kashmir, control over religious

academies and

-----, severing relations with

Afghanistan. Track II

diplomacy is also advocated. This noise and whisper is

restricted to a small section of the people whereas the majority anxiously awaits a completely new initiative.

central role to India after the end of
cold war and not to allow Pak-India
conflict and nuclear issues to stand in
the way of this new setting, that
Kashmir 110

planes during war against Iraq, and ultimately the commencement of joint US-India military exercises under a regular agreement concluded with American defence secretary in January 1995.

The role of the Indian businessmen, industrialists and particularly of information technology institutions in America has been another important factor during this period. Indian software earned a position in American market and shot up from \$ 45 million in 1991 to \$ 5 billion in 1999.

As many as 125,000 Indian software engineers are now working in the Silicon Valley of America. Indian exports to America were more than \$ 10 billion last year, that is 22 per cent of India's total export. Similarly, about 9 per cent of its imports are from America. Trade balance is in India's favour (about \$ 6 billion surplus), hence the importance of Indian markets for American products.

There are some lessons we can learn from India. It did not rely only on its foreign office and its embassies in Washington and New York but spread a network of pro-India organizations.

More than 125 American

Congressmen are part of the Indian lobby and voters of Indian origin are effectively using money and their political influence.

India has done its homework with prudence, skill and dexterity. The ten meetings of Jaswant Singh with Talbott have influenced the thinking of American policy makers. Jaswant Singh's book

Defending India,

published in New Delhi in 1999

in this way of this new setting, that Kashmir be put on back-bumer and the threats of terrorism and Islamic extremism should be accorded importance. This Task Force had also suggested that Pakistani people should be directly addressed through TV and radio.

President Clinton's entourage included a large number of American traders, industrialists, investors and Indian-origin professionals. The target of all this was to bind India and America in a new alliance and to evolve a system of dialogue and cooperation for future collaboration and decision making. For this to achieve it was but essential to ignore Pakistan as well as the issues that are important for it. Kashmir issue, about

which President Clinton had expressed his concern during his first address to the General Assembly, promised "personal interest" in the declaration of July 4, 1999, and reportedly resolved to find out a solution to it before the expiry of his term, was treated as a mere bilateral and bye-issue. The central issue now is terrorism and that too as the product of Pakistan's

Clinton and his team chose to forget the violations of human rights in Kashmir which had been repeatedly mentioned in their own speeches, letters and in the reports of State Department and the Human Rights Watch. At the time of ceasefire in Kashmir the number of Indian troops there was only 12,000 and that too was promised to be reduced. Today it is more than 700,000 amounting to half of the total Indian army strength. During the last year anxiously awaits a completely new initiative.

It is high time that without indulging in anti-American emotionalism the nation conveyed to America with solemn determination and due respect that the doors are open for friendship and cooperation but there is no room for subjugation and allegiance. If America enjoys the right to adopt a policy that serves its interests better, so has Pakistan the right to decide about its stand

keeping in view its national interests.

Those who suggest behaving like a weathercock are in fact pushing us to slavery and subjugation. We still hold good opinion about them that it is perhaps unconsciously that they see some signs of life in 'escape from reality'. But, to us, there is only one way to respect and progress: not to compromise and not to allow so-called flexibility in respect of our real destination, objective of existence, freedom and ideological identity.

Realizing the bitter facts of life, we should gear up for struggle, diligent work, prepared to offer sacrifice and to mobilize for achieving the desired end.

Though the performance of military leadership and its civilian team has so far been highly unsatisfactory, yet Clinton's recent visit and the new direction of the American politics have provided a historic opportunity that should be availed of without any further loss of time. This is the call of the time and answer to the challenge.

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