Y good friend M P Goodpoll, the famous political analyst and pollster dropped in the other day.

MP, I said, long time no see, how's business?

Oh! Life has been very hectic lately. Its the polling season you know, and everybody wants to gauge public opinion and their political support.

'So tell me, I said, who's hot?, who's not?, who's in, who's out?'

'It's not so simple O R. Everybody's in and everybody's out, it just depends on your point of view.

What do you mean, I said with a puzzled expression on my face? Who does the public want, or does it want anybody at all - we want to know the truth?

'Don't be silly OR! Opinion Polls are not about finding out the truth, they're about affirmation. We pollsters would be out of business very quickly, if we looked for the truth. Nobody wants it. What

our clients want is a "representative poll", one that represents their point of view. We "poll to please, and are pleased to poll."

'How does this 'polling thing work"? And tell me how is it possible for the same poll to claim victory for two different political parties running against each other?"

You see that's the beauty of it OR. A poll, properly designed can be "all things to all people". Why just the other day you truly designed and fielded a poll for the "Center for the Analysis of Everything" in which every shade of political opinion was reflected, left, right, center, north, south, east west, pro, anti etc.

'I'm still puzzled about that poll, MP. Who were those people who were asked, and how were they picked?

'Ah! That's a professional secret OR. It's the "common man" we were after, not just anyone. It's the "man on the

Lies, Damn Lies and Statistics THE (MIS)USE OF OPINION POLLS

we care about, the "sons of

the soil". 'And another thing, how come so few women were represented. What about the common woman", the "little woman", the "daughters of the soil"?"

'Hmm! I see you picked up on that little problem we had in our last poll. Well women are just difficult, they never tell you what you want to hear, so what if they are 50% of the electorate, from our pollster's point of view and particularly our clients, we just throw them out of our sample.

'I'm still puzzled as to what to make of the results from your last poll.'

'You're puzzled! when those results came in. I was tearing my hair out. 80% of the sample were completely indifferent to the political situation, the affairs of state street", the "little man" who seemed not to matter to

them a jot. They could barely identify our two clients Mr Son of the Soil and Mr Man of the People. When asked who they would prefer, they said, neither. I tell you, I was not a happy pollster last week.

'So what did you do?'

the CAE analysts came up with a superb strategy.

What was that MP? 'Of our original sample, which was half men and half women, we threw out most of the women. These were the uncooperative "pesky women" who didn't care



by Dr Omar Rahman

Center for the Analysis of Everything (CAE) guys are just great, geniuses at making gold out of straw, silk purses out of sow's ears (or should that be the other way around) - I can never get these metaphors right. No matter!,

what I meant to say was that

about either candidate and the great issues confronting our country. Then we were left with a sample of 80% men, a much more representative group for our purpose.' Well, did getting rid of

the women solve all your problems, MP.

lamic politics."

which involved a substantial

amount of money, because the problem was over a particular issue, it was not a permanent feature of Ameri-

can foreign policy. And in that crisis, if we had to do it

strategy from tactics, and in

We have to separate

again, I would do it again.

'Not entirely. Unfortu-

nately, half of the men were undecided as to who to vote for - they were waiting to see who would pay them the most, what a mockery of our democratic institutions, I tell you! These we decided to ignore. Thus we were left with a quarter of our original sample who actually had an opin-

'I see, after throwing out the inconvenient people, you were left with a more amenable sample'.

'I suppose you could put it that way. I prefer to think that we were left with a more 'effective sample". This effective sample was still not enough however to give us the results we wanted, because those ungrateful uncooperative wretches were divided evenly amongst our two main candidates.

'So what did you do next,

"India and the US have a common inter-

est in preventing Islamic fundamentalism

from becoming a dominant force in Is-

Well, that's when the CAE's chief analyst, Mr "Bend with the Wind", in a brilliantly obscure piece of analysis came up with the colored lungi strategy - MP paused dramatically.

'I said, the colored lungi strategy - what's that?"

'That my friend was the coup de grace - (MP is fond of metaphors, even when he mixes them up). Mr "Bend with the Wind" or BW as I call him came up with this idea that we should divide up the remaining quarter of our sample into those with blue lungis and those with green. Then we could represent our results as 80% of blue lungis are for Man of the People and 80% of green lungis are for Son of the Soil.

'I still don't see how that helps you, MP.

'OR its all in the headlines. The CAE holds a seminarcum-press conference with the usual suspects invited: journalists, political party loyalists of both sides, foreign dignitaries, hanger ons, etc.,

etc. BW launches into his dense analysis, the more obscure the better. Then you have a panel packed with political partisans on both sides, each of whom claim victory for their own candidate, buttressed by an appropriately selective reading of the poll. Then to stop it all, the next day, the newspapers carry banner headlines, of course varying with the ideological bent of the paper which say "80% vote for Man of the People" or "Most people want Mr Son of the Soil"."

'But shouldn't they be saying that this only pertains to those with the colored lungis?'

'Nobody cares about the lungis, its an inconvenient point and lungis don't fit into the headlines anyway.

'So you're saying that these polls are just smoke and mirrors, MP.

'Not all, Polls tell you what YOU want to know. Sorry, I've got to run. I am doing a poll on those with white shirts next week. See you later, OR'.

By arrangement with India Today

An Interview with Henry Kissinger

"US Must Acknowledge India's Emergence as a Major Power"

Perhaps there can be no greater proof that a nation has no permanent friends or permanent enemies than the visit to New Delhi of former US Secretary of State Henry Kissinger. Kissinger, 72, whose name is forever linked with the dramatic US tilt towards Pakistan during the 1971 Bangladesh crisis, now heads the highly influential firm, Kissinger Associates, and was in New Delhi recently at the invitation of Prime Minister P.V. Narasimha Rao to share his legendary understanding of international realpolitik with Indian defence and foreign-policy analysts. During his four-day visit, Kissinger met Rao, spoke to specialists from think-tanks such as the Institute of Defence Studies and Analyses (IDSA), and visited the Taj Mahal. In an exclusive interview with India Today, he spoke to its Senior Associate Editor M. Rahman on a range of issues relating to South Asia.

Brown amendment has created anxieties of another back? arms race in the subcontinent. Why do you feel it was so important for the US Administration to support the amendment?

A. My impression is that the US Administration felt this was an obligation that had been incurred by previous administrations, and that it was unjust to hold up items which had already been paid for. The Administration probably felt pressed to fulfil that part of the obligation that was least likely to lead to a real arms race, and therefore they did not deliver the F-16s.

Q. But do you believe it could trigger an arms race? A. Given the attitudes of

the United States Congress. and also given the attitudes of the Administration. I don't foresee that a new militaryaid programme is on the cards. I can't think of any realistic possibility of the United States sparking an arms race in this region. Even if the United States considers something threatening its national interests with regard to say Central Asia, I can't conceive this (the resumption of arms aid to Pakistan).

Q. Doesn't the US see Pakistan as an ally in a region where it is concerned about the energy reserves in Central Asia?

A. The United States has friendly relations with Pakistan, but I've not heard the proposition that the United States looks at Pakistan as the lynchpin of its policy in Central Asia. That's not accu-

Q. Does Washington now

feel that it has ignored Pak-

Q. The passing of the istan in the last few years. and that there's a need to tilt

> now in office in Washington is not the party to which I belong, so they don't check all their decisions with me. Actually, they don't look at problems in this way. They don't look at it from this strategic point of view. The Brown amendment was sparked by a very different feeling, that it was unjust for the United States to impound property that had already been paid for, and they were looking for some way to rectify the injustice.

> pointed out that Pakistan had actually paid a large part of the money after the Pressler amendment came into force.

> A. To tell you the truth, I did not follow this debate. It's not a big issue in the United States. It does not reflect a huge policy decision. I did not even follow the debate because I did not consider this thing was all that big. I just do not think that it reflects a fundamental change of American policy.

Q. Do you think the US should make a major gesture which reassures the Indian Government and the Indian

A. I think the United States and India should commit themselves to the improvement of their relations, and they should have dialogue on every level.

We should assess together what interests we have in common and where, if we disagree, we can handle the disagreement in such a way that it does not impair our common interests. I cannot really imagine any major

clash of interests between India and the United States in, say, the next five to 10 A. The party which is years.

> Q. Do you see any common strategic interests between the US and India? A. I don't know how you

define 'strategic'. We certainly have an interest, both of us, in preventing Islamic fundamentalism from becoming a dominant force in Islamic politics. We may have a certain common interest in the ability of the Central Asian countries to export their energy reserves. I've noticed in some Indian papers that this is supposed to Q. Senator John Glenn be of great benefit to the United States. I think it is of greater benefit to India and China and those countries whose energy requirements are going to be increasing dramatically. Because we can probably supply ourselves from the Middle East, from Latin America and from our own production. And of course, oil being fungible. whoever gets it from one area increases the supply in another area. So I can conceive that we have some common interest to discuss the future of these areas as regards China and Russia and, to

some extent, Iran. Q. Do you foresee increased defence cooperation between the two countries?

A. I'm open intellectually to increased defence cooperation, and I understand the Chairman of our Joint Chiefs of Staff may come over here in January. I would certainly welcome that

Q. You've spoken about India emerging as a major power, and you see possible conflict with China and

A. Major powers inevitably intersect with other major powers, that is in the nature of major powers. To what extent it creates problems with China really depends on how far India pushes its area of influence. It'll be natural for India to try to have its voice heard in South-east Asia and in the region between India and South-east Asia. It may or may not intersect with China. but that only the future will

Q. Would the US want Pakistan as leverage against India to maintain the balance

of power in the region? A. No. Because the disproportion in the power is very great. And secondly, in a political conflict between China and India, the United States does not have to take a position. And if it took a position, it can do so on its own. It does not need any additional help. What position the United States will take in such a situation depends on the circumstances. It certainly does not line up allies ahead of time for contingencies which cannot begin to be described vet.

Q. You were one of the authors of the US tilt towards Pakistan in the '70s. What do you think is different in the region today?

A. In 1971 we had a very specific problem. We had just opened to China through the help of Pakistan. A crisis developed (in Bangladesh) and India allied itself with the Soviet Union. And even before President Nixon had reached China, we simply could not abandon countries that had helped us. As soon as the crisis was over, we forgave the PL480 loans.

terms of the long-term relationship we did not tilt towards anybody. The relationship then was anyway different from what it is today.

Those days India was nonaligned. If you read the nonaligned declarations, you will find they never had anything good to say about the United States and never anything critical to say about the Soviet Union. Even though it is statistically impossible that we were always wrong. Every once in a while we were bound to do something right. So that was the atmosphere of that period.

Now we are in a different period. The cold war is over. The Soviet Union no longer exists. India may technically be non-aligned but there is nothing to be non-aligned about. So the relationship between India and the United States can now be very constructive. That is how I look at it, and it is my impression that that is how Indian officials to whom I've spoken look at it. The mere fact that I have been here twice in one year is an indication of the importance I attach to India.

Q. Your asssessment in 1971 was that Mrs Gandhi was bent upon dismembering West Pakistan. Did you see it then as a part of India's longterm policy?

A. No. We had two separate problems. One was the use of military force--we would have preferred to have the whole issue (Bangladesh) settled peacefully. Secondly, India refused to give us an assurance with respect to West Pakistan. This is what gave us the idea.

I do not believe that it is India's policy today to dismember Pakistan. Anyway, it was 34 years ago, in totally different regional and international circumstances. And of course. Pakistan is a fact of life. But India is a much more powerful country. Anybody will have to take these realities into account. Q. But what hasn't

changed is the Kashmir problem and the antagonistic relationship between India and Pakistan.

A. My view is not necessarily the current view. My view is that the United States cannot involve itself in every crisis that exists in the world. Kashmir is just about as far away from the United States as it is possible to be. It should be settled between India and Pakistan, and there is no law of nature that helps the United States to involve itself. Incidentally, I had said this in 1962 when I was

Q. So do you believe the US Administration made a mistake when it pursued an active public role on issues like human rights in Kashmir and on nuclear non-prolifera-

A. I think foreign policy

tion?

should be non-partisan. I've supported the President and the present Administration on a number of items--Most Favoured Nation status to China, on the recent improvement of relations with China. And I'm in contact with the Administration, so there is no hostility on my part. I have disagreed with the tendency, whoever does it--and some Republicans have done it as well-to pronounce on every domestic issue around the world. Because we're not journalists. we're policy makers. And so I believe some of these statements (by administration officials) have been excessive. and have been out of relationship with what we can implement.

But non-proliferation is another issue. We have an interest in preventing the spread of nuclear weapons. have said about the President of the United States: I would ing. And if I were prime minister of India, I would do what the prime minister is doing. So this is something where there is a difference of perspective.

Q. But the Brown amendment is being seen as tacit US acceptance of Pakistan's clandestine nuclear progra-A. I disagree. This is

certainly not true. This Administration is totally committed to the non-proliferation policy. Its commitment sometimes outruns its ability to achieve it, which is a different issue. And we have to face the fact that in relation to a number of countries, we have to make distinctions It's tough. But I have sympathies for the Administration. So I do not think that it was an approval of Fakistan's project. It was a recognition of reality. Just as we are not applying Pressler to India.

Q. How far does Benazir Bhutto's ability to attract public attention in the US help Pakistan?

A. She is a dramatic personality and she is a woman and she is somewhat better known than other leaders from the region. But even so, I would be amazed if even 10 per cent of the American public knew who she is Though that would be true also of the Indian prime

Q. But do you feel Pakistan has handled its case better than India in Washing

A. Indian-American relations are improving dramatically. But it doesn't mean each of us will always do things that the other side inevitably approves. I think our relationship is fundamen tally improving. It would be a big mistake to build this (the Brown amendment) into some kind of a symptom that there is really no basis for the relationship. That would be very unfortunate.

Q. Consider this scenario: India now feels compelled to. deploy the Prithut missile. which makes Pakistan bring out the M-11 ballistic missiles clandestinely supplied by China. Under the Missile

Technology Control Regime. the US will then have to impose trade sanctions against China. A. It'll be a mess. |Shifts

focus to India-Pakistan nuclear non-proliferation issue. Neither country has signed the nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT).] I think this whole issue has to be relooked at. Maybe states which in effect have nuclear capability could agree to the provisions of the npt against spreading their own nuclear capability, even if they don' sign the section with respect to not acquiring nuclear capability. This is something that we ought to look at in the United States, it requires an extensive debate.

Q. There's both optimism and pessimism about economic ties between India and the US. What is your own assessment?

A. India among developing countries has probably one of the highest percentages of educated people; it has an efficient, sometimes excessively heavy civil service: people speak English; and it has an entrepreneurial class which has a lot of experience. I keep meeting some of them, and they are certainly world class.

The conditions for economic development in India are great. But Americans coming here have to get used to Indian politics and the local conditions. And the Indian bureaucracy could be simplified to make it easier for foreigners to operate here. I would think that over the next 10 years, the economic relationship between the United States and India

Q. So you aren't apprehensive about the opposition to multinationals in India?

A. The fact is that if you

will develop explosively.

want foreign capital you have to get it from foreign capitalists. Governments don't have enough money anymore to make a substantial contribution to economic development. This is a question for Indian domestic politics (to resolve). Because the reality is that the demand for capital worldwide exceeds its supply. And so if it cannot come to India, it will go someplace else. On the other hand, India is in an excellent position to make very attractive conditions

Q. Ambassador Ray's statement after the Brown amendment was passed, that Indo-US economic ties are likely to be affected, once again suggested how fragile these ties could be.

A. I think it will be a big mistake to take this into a big confrontation between the United States and India

There'll always be disagree- . ments. But this is not a major one. It shouldn't be a major

Q. Is your firm Kissinger Associates taking up any offer to represent the Indian Government in the US?

A. No, no, no. Let me make one thing absolutely clear. We do not take money from governments. We do not represent governments ever. We require any client of Kissinger Associates to sign a contract that makes clear that we do not intervene with the United States Government. So there is no possibility whatever that we will do anything of a financial nature

with the Indian Government. On the other hand, the Indian Government has treated me with extreme courtesy. I have a high regard for many of its officials and its prime minister. So from the point of view of the national interest, I will be perfectly happy to tell people (in the US) what I think. But not because I have a contract with the Indian Government. We represent only private companies. We never do

Q. What has brought you this time to New Delhi? A. What has brought me

anything for governments.

to New Delhi is that the prime minister, the last time that I was here, asked me to meet the various think-tanks to discuss foreign policy-issues. And that is practically the only thing that I have done here.

Q. What has brought about this change of relationship from your side with In-

A. My position was always that India was a major country which should be treated respectfully. I paid several visits to India as Secretary of State, and there has been a relationship on both sides. Conditions have changed. India is now prepared to enter international politics in a way that it was not 15 to 20 years ago.

Over the years I've always said the task of foreign policy is to reflect the national interest, not personal feelings. And I believe that India is now emerging as a major regional power and as a world power. That is a fact that American policy must acknowledge and take into ac-

Q. Do you think the lowkey manner in which Prime Minister Ran is going about it is proving successful?

A. Yes, it's proving suc-

cessful. What is yet needed in the future is ... it is amazing actually that India is a country which speaks English, and which can communicate most easily with Americans.







