

The Transatlantic Allies: Parting of the Way

It Amounts to Intimidation

Politicians in Bangladesh have become known for their lack of tact, but recent comments by Leader of the Opposition in the Jatiya Sangsad Khaleda Zia have certainly stretched the limits of credibility.

Since its defeat in the by-election to the Pabna-2 constituency on Nov 12 last, the BNP has been demanding the CEC's resignation.

What Khaleda needs to understand is that her comments are anything but becoming of a former Prime Minister and a political leader of such high social responsibility.

First in Indo-Pak Mood

The Indo-Pak lawmakers' conference representing an entirely novel feature in the bilateral communication paradigm of the two countries ended on Saturday.

The credit for organising the lawmakers' conference goes to a newspaper — The News. We congratulate both The News and the honourable members of parliaments of the two countries on recording a positive contribution to peace-making in the sub-continent.

Quite a few things are happening simultaneously in Indo-Pak relations — the bus diplomacy, resumption of cricket, official level talks geared to take up Kashmir and nuclear issues bilaterally and then the legislators' conference that just ended in Islamabad.

While greeting the new confidence-building measures between the two countries, we urge them not to even entertain the idea of a nuclear arms race for their own sake and also for the sake of a proper security environment in South Asia that breeds out of the poverty strangle hold.

Minar's Sanctity

Once again, after an 11-month slumber, the "seasonal" clean-up drive at the Central Shaheed Minar is under way. No doubt, people will commemorate and honour the martyrs of the Language Movement in an admirable "pure" atmosphere which is, of course, something that they want at heart.

This memorial is located in the middle of Dhaka University, Dhaka Medical College and Bangladesh University of Engineering and Technology campuses. To our surprise and disquiet, the periphery of the cenotaph suffers from a malaise of various "uncleanliness" all the year round with the exception of February.

If the Shaheed Minar is the symbol of Bangladesh's "cultural freedom" next to that of "national freedom", at Savar, then the site deserves best possible care all the year round. The responsibility not only rests on the government, but also on the members of the student community and their leaders who go round this place almost everyday.

During the post-Second World War era the common threat of Soviet Union brought them together within the fold of an enduring politico-strategic arrangements — the North Atlantic Treaty Organisation (NATO).

Later, some European Governments were understandably reluctant to turn the alliance into a plat form for US' global military influence and concerned over giving the organisation an explicit 'out-of-area' role.

But nowhere has the divergence of US-Europe perception and policies been so pronounced as they were in Middle East since the mid-nineties.

It is true that the basic interests of the US and Europe are broadly similar in the Middle

Nowhere has the divergence of US-Europe perception and policies been so pronounced as they were in Middle East since the mid-nineties. Instead of being an intra-alliance scion the difference have now come out in the open.

East — peace, regime stability, the free flow of oil, security of Israel, a secure homeland for the Palestinians and the limitation on the spread of weapons of mass destruction (WMD).

At least in the Middle East peace process the difference now run along US-European lines presenting US or American policies and perspectives.

The Europeans have been unequivocal in their condemnation of Israeli occupation of the land acquired in the 1967 war, wanted the building of Jewish settlements in the West Bank to be stopped and insist on Israeli abidance of UNSC resolution 425 of 1978 calling her to withdraw from Lebanon.

On the contrary, the US al-

ways maintained a vague position on these issues. The US insisted that it was for the parties concerned to decide what would make stable peace and stayed away from imposing an agreement.



PERSPECTIVES

by Brig (Rtd) M Abdul Hafiz

posed Dayton Accords on Bosnia-Herzegovina. Despite having little practical leverage Europeans often argue that more diplomatic and economic pressure should be exerted on Israel to make her accommodative in the peace process.

other resolution that wanted Israel to stop her housing projects in East Jerusalem. Security has been the primary focus of the US policy in the Middle East and the key tool that it used for the purpose was invariably its military power in which she enjoyed comparative advantage over Europe.

These differences in perception and policy between the US and Europe are however not without reasons. The US sympathy and inclination for Israel stem from range of factors including a shared self-image as new immigrant-absorbing society.

reason for stabilising the situation was China's refusal to devalue their currency. East Asian countries have been able to fully exploit their low labour costs for the speedy development of manufacturing and producing sectors which further opens up their markets to the world.

The East Asian Model

Viewed in the context of development achieved in the last 30 years there is no doubt that the East Asian Model is efficient and dynamic with the East Asian economy accounting for over one-third of the world economic aggregates, as a whole East Asia has registered the highest-ever growth rate since the Industrial Revolution.

The World Economic Forum (WEF) Annual Meeting every year presents a unique platform for world leaders, entrepreneurs, thinkers, scientists etc., for presenting their opinion on national and global issues.

Diverse people ranging from President Mandela of South Africa, US Vice President Al Gore, Chancellor Schroeder of Germany etc., to Ted Turner of CNN, former US Secretary of State Henry Kissinger, etc., participated fully.

Tracing back the process of economic globalisation, he said that cross border economic development and internationalisation date back to a century or more while the process of economic globalisation really began after the Second World War and has continued to gather momentum over the past 50 years.

Trade and investment liberalisation and internationalisation of macro-economic regulation and control are essential requirements if a sound relationship between states and markets is desired. Multiple national economic organisations urge developing countries

In spite of this, because of historical reasons, the transition from planned economy to market economy has just started. The economic aggregates of the developing countries only represent a small amount in world economy, one of the responsible factors being the non-development of the information Technology sector.

According to Mr Wang Daohan, economic globalisation is highly conducive to world economic development as it brings along a high rate of growth in international trade, enabling balanced supply and demand in international trade on a larger scale.

Trade and investment liberalisation and internationalisation of macro-economic regulation and control are essential requirements if a sound relationship between states and markets is desired. Multiple national economic organisations urge developing countries

to speed up their liberalisation, most international economic organisations and developed countries have shown a relaxation of their supervision and regulations over international mobile funds, thus ignoring their not only moral responsibility towards the poor but their conscience in "begging" entire

technology, etc. Nevertheless, viewed in the context of development achieved in the last 30 years there is no doubt that the East Asian Model is efficient and dynamic with the East Asian economy accounting for over one-third of the world economic aggregates, as a whole East Asia

has registered the highest-ever growth rate since the Industrial Revolution. Many East Asian governments have rushed in to help their neighbouring countries creating an environment, both internal and external which were necessary for development. Through Mr. Wang Daohan did not state so, one

All contradictions which developing countries were facing were brought into sharp focus by the East Asian financial crisis. In some of the crisis afflicted countries, their GDP dropped by 5-10 per cent, their currency devalued by as much as 30-50 per cent, their debts inflated several times over with social crises and even political turmoil emerging in some countries.

Mr Wang was of the view that "various structural problems of the East Asian Model have slowly surfaced: undue intervention by governments into the market mechanism, conflicts between incompetence in international competition and over rapid opening of domestic markets, between rapid growth and relatively slow structural readjustment and between increase of labour cost and inadequate input in science and

reason for stabilising the situation was China's refusal to devalue their currency. East Asian countries have been able to fully exploit their low labour costs for the speedy development of manufacturing and producing sectors which further opens up their markets to the world.

The East Asian Model is a very special way towards modernisation and can be effectively used by the less advanced developing countries for maximum benefit. To make the East Asian Model more vital and successful certain measures must be taken at government and private levels viz. indirect governmental regulation and control can be maintained and an increased input in science and technology by government and other enterprises.

However, the Iraq-Jordan relations turned sour in 1995 when Jordan gave shelter to two prominent defectors from Iraq, including Saddam's son-in-law. The two, upon return to Iraq, were killed when, according to Baghdad, they opened fire on a security contingent. However, it is widely believed they paid the price for 'betrayal'.

Iraqi vice-president Taha Mohiuddin Marruf, little known in the outside world, has succeeded Hussein's funeral whereas top Arab leaders like President Mubarak and others attended it.

Despite persistent criticism from the west and many of its Arab neighbours, Iraq remains unquestionably one of the principal players in the Middle Eastern political scenario, not because of its relentless fight against the west but for the size of its armed forces and stable leadership.

Jordan is certainly a major exponent in the Middle East political scenario simply because of its strategic geographical location and the importance of its late monarch on a global scale. The country has three notable neighbours — Iraq, Syria and Israel. Jordan lost sizeable area of its territory to Israel in the 1967 war and obviously is keen to get back the lost land.

Jordan is certainly a major exponent in the Middle East political scenario simply because of its strategic geographical location and the importance of its late monarch on a global scale. The country has three notable neighbours — Iraq, Syria and Israel.

Jordan is certainly a major exponent in the Middle East political scenario simply because of its strategic geographical location and the importance of its late monarch on a global scale. The country has three notable neighbours — Iraq, Syria and Israel.

However, the Iraq-Jordan relations turned sour in 1995 when Jordan gave shelter to two prominent defectors from Iraq, including Saddam's son-in-law. The two, upon return to Iraq, were killed when, according to Baghdad, they opened fire on a security contingent.

Iraqi vice-president Taha Mohiuddin Marruf, little known in the outside world, has succeeded Hussein's funeral whereas top Arab leaders like President Mubarak and others attended it.

Despite persistent criticism from the west and many of its Arab neighbours, Iraq remains unquestionably one of the principal players in the Middle Eastern political scenario, not because of its relentless fight against the west but for the size of its armed forces and stable leadership.

Jordan is certainly a major exponent in the Middle East political scenario simply because of its strategic geographical location and the importance of its late monarch on a global scale. The country has three notable neighbours — Iraq, Syria and Israel.

Jordan is certainly a major exponent in the Middle East political scenario simply because of its strategic geographical location and the importance of its late monarch on a global scale. The country has three notable neighbours — Iraq, Syria and Israel.

Jordan is certainly a major exponent in the Middle East political scenario simply because of its strategic geographical location and the importance of its late monarch on a global scale. The country has three notable neighbours — Iraq, Syria and Israel.

City without newspapers

Sir, May I thank the Prime Minister for the comments she made to the Bangladesh Sangbadik Samity on 26.01.99 to realise a day without newspapers? We did not have newspapers for four (19th to 22nd) days.

Way back in mid-sixties, there used to be an advertisement on the huge glass window of the India Tea Centre Oxford Street London that 'Air India is as regular as our morning tea and newspapers'.

The retail price, if imported legally, would be much higher.

Smuggling of 'London'

Sir, The government is shouting hoarse about its transparency in all sectors, but the country is flooded with smuggled 'London' brand of foreign cigarettes, selling at a much cheaper price than cigarettes of similar quality produced locally (the local taxes are levied on costly and imported cigarettes are very high, as a punitive measure on smokers).

The people of Bangladesh

Dear Democracy

Sir, I can support any party I like. But that does not mean that whatever that party or the party chief will do I support it blindly. If that party or the party chief makes a mistake or does something undemocratic I will criticise it.

The authority is aware of this smuggled trade, as per press reports from time to time. Some vested groups are milkling money by the ton, breaking all political barriers.

Gas meters

Sir, The letter written by Nur Jahan about installing gas meters should get some attention from the government, for she very rightly pointed out how gas being one of our most important natural resource is being wasted.

Dr Nazeen Nizam Old DOHS, Dhaka

King Hussein's Death and a New ME Equation

Since Hussein was a strong leader with big say on the West Asia peace efforts with personal rapport with western leaders including the American presidents at different phases, it was possible for Jordan to chart an independent line at times that annoyed different countries at various stages.

Avim is wary that Hussein is no more but at the same time will seek to take advantage of the immature leadership in Amman while settling its scores with the Arabs.

Hussein enjoyed tremendous importance in the west for his role in the West Asian politics and this was amply demonstrated when he was drawn from his sick bed in an American clinic by President Bill Clinton last year as the peace efforts were in progress in Maryland between the Israeli and Palestine leadership and all concerned were burning the mid night oil.

MATTERS AROUND US

Zaglul Ahmed Chowdhury

We will give all possible support to sister Jordan. Sir, the death of King Hussein has changed his mind. The "west leadership" of Hassan during his long absence for medical treatment in the United States has been cited as the reason. Abdullah is a major general in the army which is strong and may seek to call shots in the kingdom in the event of instability.

Have considered Abdullah who is known to be popular in the army. The right choice and this may also help Abdullah in running the nation since nearly half of Jordan's population is of Palestine origin. But the decision has triggered undercurrent of tensions within the royal family. New King's uncles Hassan and Mohammad seem unhappy and stayed away from some of royal family functions after Hussein's death.