

Can Dr Rice's trip close rift with Europe?



THE new US Secretary of State Dr. Condoleezza Rice (50) has recently embarked on an 8-day trip to ten countries, including eight European nations and the Middle East. She wants to demonstrate that it is a beginning for a new chapter of trans-Atlantic relations that has been so much damaged by the first term of the Bush administration.

The purpose of the trip was to lay out the conciliatory approach of the second Bush administration to major European nations that was insultingly referred to at one stage by the US Defence Secretary Donald Rumsfeld as "Old Europe." The expression may be interpreted as suggesting that "Old Europe" has no importance to the Bush administration just as an old person is of no interest to an employer.

The implication of the term "Old Europe" continues to remain in the minds of the people of France and Germany and does not seem to go away. It is simply because the expression was nothing but reflection of America's arrogance of power and dominance in the world. As West Virginia Democrat Senator Byrd said: "We flaunt our super power status with arrogance." France and Germany have been deeply hurt of America's arrogance of power.

The second Bush administration found that they need Europe for Iraq and for combating terrorism globally. So does the trip signify a new era in US foreign relations with Europe?

It seems that differences are deep between the Bush administration and the major powers of Europe on many fronts. Some of them deserve mention.

First, in 2003, Rice was quoted as telling President Bush to "punish France, ignore Germany, and forgive Russia." (Dr. Rice did her PhD on Soviet Russia and obviously she has a soft spot for Russia). Many political analysts say that her hard line stance seems to be in her nature, partly because she wants to prove that she is as efficient as any other American because of her background. To her, efficiency means that she needs to be both tough and conservative in her outlook. She is known to be tenacious and opinionated, with a ready smile. At one stage in the late 80s, she told a belligerent Boris

International Criminal Court, and withdrew from the Anti-Ballistic Missile Treaty. The US has been non-cooperative in banning land mines and in the inspection regime of national laboratories under the Chemical Weapons Convention. The Europeans responded to these moves with a mixture of anguish and pique. Public opinion in Europe shows consistently widespread opposition to Bush's foreign policy. They believe that President Bush made decisions based entirely on US interests, without taking Europe into consideration.

Fourth, differences on Iran have

BOTTOM LINE

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Yeltsin (while Gorbachev was in power) to go home while she worked with President Bush, Sr.

Second, the Bush administration believes in hard power. Hard power means military strength solves problems, while Europe believes in soft power. Soft power is basically to "win hearts and minds" of people, not by military power but by aid, cooperation, and engagement. Europe has moved beyond power into transnational negotiation and cooperation.

Robert Kagan in his book *Paradise and Power* (2002) concluded that Americans were from Mars and Europeans from Venus. He argued that, "On all important questions of power -- the efficacy of power, the morality of power, the desirability of power --Americans and European perspectives are diverging."

Third, the Bush administration ditched the Kyoto Protocol on environment, unsigned the Statute of

emerged between the Bush administration and Europe. The US believes that negotiation with Iran is a non-starter, while European nations want to deeply engage Iran in not using nuclear facilities for weapons. The US wants the case of Iran referred to the UN Security Council. An intrinsic problem is that under the Non-Proliferation Treaty, Iran is entitled to develop the full nuclear fuel cycle, including enriching uranium that could be diverted into weapons. The President of Iran made it clear in a statement on February 10 that Iran would not give up this right, nor would it be intimidated by pressures from the US.

If sanctions are imposed on Iran by the Security Council (Russia and China may veto the resolution), then the only alternative left for Iran appears to be to withdraw from the Non-Proliferation Treaty. That will provide Iran the right to refuse to permit UN inspectors from IAEA to

visit its nuclear facilities. (North Korea did exactly that when the Bush administration suspended the supply of oil to North Korea). The tougher action gets tougher response, like Newton's law of motion, "To every action, there is always an opposing reaction." Furthermore, Iran is not weak Iraq of 2003, it is a regional military power endowed with large human and natural resources.

There is also a sharp divide on China too. The Bush administration is alarmed at European Union plans to lift an arms embargo on China. Administration officials in Washington fear that some EU countries will soon begin selling weapons to China and that raises questions about the security of Taiwan and sending wrong signals to China, with its dubious record on human rights. China wants to diversify its source of acquisition of weapons as it currently heavily depends on Russia.

Finally, unless the Bush administration treats Europe on equal terms, European leaders will be polite but will be hesitant to cooperate with the Bush administration. French President Chirac passionately believes in a multi-polar world for stability and peace. He reportedly said that Europe wants this world to be multi-polar and to make sure that each pole makes well-balanced decisions.

Dr. Rice during her confirmation hearing in front of the US Senate Foreign Relations Committee reportedly said, "The time for diplomacy is now." Consistent with her remark, Rice's trip is an attempt to show to the outside world that US and Europe are united again in purpose and in action. The starting point for European leaders of major powers and the Bush administration appears to be different and their strategy is not the same.

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LEST WE FORGET

Enayet Karim--a distinguished diplomat

SYED MUAZZEM ALI

THIRTY-one years ago today, Enayet Karim, a valiant freedom fighter, a language movement activist, and a distinguished diplomat of our times, had passed away. He was only forty-seven years old, and was serving as the country's Foreign Secretary at that time. Many people have forgotten the name of this patriot. A noted historian had once observed that Muslim Bengalis tend to forget their past history, their heritage and their heroes. Archeologists say that our long monsoon washes away our past heritage and relics. Does the monsoon also wash away our memories? Are we simply forgetful, or are we cynical?

Enayet Karim was one of our distinguished diplomats. An outstanding student, he stood first in Matriculation examination and the people of Dhaka celebrated the success of their native son through great fanfare. He went on to become a brilliant student of economics, and taught in the same department at Dhaka University before joining the Pakistan Foreign Service in 1952. He was a very loving husband to his wife Husna Karim [a Science graduate from Dhaka University, and Tagore and Nazrul-geeti singer], and an extremely caring father to his daughters Leena and Shahla. At the same time, he was an understanding senior colleague, a great friend and an extremely polite person. I never heard him use "tumi" when talking to any person in the office; whatever their age, everyone was "apni" to him.

I first met this great diplomat at the Civil Service Academy in Lahore in 1969 when he came to deliver a lecture on the complicated issue of Ganges water sharing with India. My batch-mates and I were simply impressed by his understanding of all aspects of the issue, and his overall knowledge about India.

Enayet Karim, who at that time held the key post of Director (India) in the Pakistan Foreign Ministry, had earlier served in Pakistani Missions in both Calcutta and New Delhi. One question, however, bugged me. Why did Islamabad keep such a fiercely nationalist Bangali officer in that key post? I found the answer when I went to Islamabad the next year for on-the-job training: there was simply no one to match him in his area of specialisation.

Enayet Karim left Islamabad in early 1970 to take up the post of Counsellor at the Pakistan Embassy in Washington DC. After his departure, his immediate boss Director General (Asia) Aftab Ahmed Khan had reportedly asked for the services of [late] Shah AMS Kibria to replace him. The latter could not be released from the Personnel desk. This was a crucial time in the Pakistani Ministry in the wake of the 1965 Indo-Pak war, and many Directors in the Ministry wanted the coveted job. However, Aftab Khan decided not to take any of the existing Directors, and instead wait for the return of a suitable Director to the Headquarters.

At that time, as probationers in the Foreign Ministry, my batch-mates and I did not have much substantive work. One fine morning the Section Officer in charge of our training, Bashir, informed us that Aftab Ahmed Khan had asked for the services of one of us to cope with the work of the India desk. To my utter amazement, I was drafted for the job. My primary job, he told me, would be to summarise the reports that he was receiving on India from various missions and government organisations. Reluctantly, and a little overwhelmed about occupying that great diplomat's office, I entered the room. What I saw there really amazed me. He had collected all important books and publications on India, and had left them for his successor. In no time, the most sensitive reports and cables surrounded me. The task, which lasted for three months, was simply mind-boggling, but it was also most rewarding, particularly since I had the opportunity of reading Enayet Karim's assessments of several key bilateral issues.

Again by a stroke of good luck, I was assigned to Pakistan Embassy in Washington DC, and reached there in November 1970. The stay in the US capital turned out to be most eventful, and I had the privilege of working closely with three outstanding civil servants. Enayet Karim, Shah AMS Kibria and AMA Muhiith, during the critical days of our war of

independence. At that time, Enayet Karim was the senior Political Counsellor but was soon promoted to the rank of Minister and Deputy Chief of Mission. He became my immediate boss. I got the most effective training on various aspects of political work from him and also accompanied him to meetings with high US officials. Many an evening he would take me to his home for a good Bangla Meal. [My wife was in Dhaka for her Masters, and arrived in Washington DC in end of April 1971].

The Pakistan army began the war of genocide in March 1971. The Bangali officials of the Embassy and Bangali expatriates living in the DC area regularly met to formulate course of action to propagate the cause of the independence of Bangladesh. As the senior-most Bangali officer he presided over all

After setting up of the Bangladesh Mission in Washington DC, the provisional government sent [late] MR Siddiky to head our Mission. Under his leadership, all of us worked tirelessly to propagate the cause of our independence. Enayet Karim, still recovering from the heart attack, was not in a position to attend office. He was, however, in constant touch with us and gave us his considered advice and guidance from home. After office, we would almost daily go to his house and inform him of the developments of the day. If we failed to go, he would immediately telephone us. During these evening sessions, he would give us his expert assessment. While we talked, Husna Bhabi would often hastily arrange a Bangali meal for us.

Soon after the independence of Bangladesh, Siddiky, Kibria, Muhiith,

Nixon reciprocating the sentiments.

Subsequently, Enayet Karim was nominated as the country's first Ambassador to USA, and we were sanctioned funds to buy a flag car for him. As we were completing all protocol formalities for his Ambassadorial appointment, a fresh order arrived asking him to go to Dhaka immediately to take over as Foreign Secretary.

Enayet Karim, despite his delicate health condition, did not hesitate and left for Dhaka in mid-1972. I have heard that after reaching Dhaka, he worked day and night to safeguard and promote the national interests of Bangladesh. With a small Foreign Ministry, he embarked on the mission to bring about recognition of Bangladesh by as many countries as possible within a record time, to maintain massive international efforts for reconstruction of war-ravaged Bangladesh under the UN Relief Operations. Dhaka [UNROD] and subsequent UN Relief Operations, Bangladesh [UNROB] operations [incidentally these were largest UN operations ever undertaken for the reconstruction of a country], and to secure bilateral assistance from US and other major donors. His other major tasks were: to reach accords with New Delhi and Islamabad for the release of Pakistani POWs and war crime trial, repatriation of the stranded Bengalis from Pakistan and the Pakistanis from Bangladesh, and the distribution of assets and liabilities of the former federal government of Pakistan.

Naturally, the hard work in Dhaka proved too much for his ill health. Enayet Karim was hospitalised twice. When he suffered the third heart attack, he collapsed in his office in February 1974. He was at that time preparing for the upcoming visit to Dhaka by a high-level Indian delegation, led by their Foreign Secretary. Enayet Karim was rushed to the hospital but this time the heart attack proved fatal. I later learnt from Husna Bhabi and other colleagues that in the Intensive Care Unit, while possibly still unconscious, he had been muttering about the position that Bangladesh should take on various issues.

I pay my tributes to this outstanding son of Bangladesh, who laid down his life for the country. He clearly epitomised the very best in public service. As a young diplomat, I immensely benefited from my association with him.

Some years later, Enayet Karim was posthumously awarded a Presidential medal for his outstanding public service. Our dear Husna Bhabi died in 1997. On Enayet Karim's 31st death anniversary, I pray for the salvation of their departed souls.

Syed Muazzem Ali is a former Foreign Secretary of Bangladesh.

WORLD ECONOMIC FORUM

Bush and Clinton at Davos

ZAFAR SOBHAN

THERE has been a lot of talk in the US recently about "the Davos crowd" being anti-American. This might seem like an odd accusation, after all, Davos is for the most part a gathering of world leaders and high-powered CEOs from the business elite, not some motley collection of leftist academics. One would have thought that such an agglomeration would be strong supporters of the existing world order and its American stewardship.

Recently, however, CNN Chief News Executive Eason Jordan was obliged to resign over the furor caused by his statement during one of the panel discussions at Davos that the US army had deliberately targeted journalists in Iraq. He attempted to backtrack from the statement but the wrath of the right-wing punditocracy -- the opinion and editorial pages and the chattering heads on TV talk shows -- was such that in the end he had little option but to tender his resignation.

The subtext to the whole fire-storm was that his sin was attempting to ingratiate himself with "the anti-US crowd" at Davos by peddling anti-American propaganda.

But the labeling of the 2000-strong gathering at Davos as anti-American is inaccurate. Certainly, there was a lot of scepticism towards the Bush administration and its policies on display. Which in and of itself is interesting when you consider the professional make-up of the participants and the fact that a significant percentage were actually from the US. It seems as though the business elite in America is no longer as reliably Republican as in the past.

I was present at a somewhat testy and bad-tempered debate that was televised live on BBC World Service (and broadcast here in Bangladesh) on the subject of America's image around the world. The debate featured US Senators John McCain and Joe Biden, Prince Turki al Faisal of Saudi Arabia, Australian PM John Howard, and among others, Prof. Joseph Nye from Harvard.

The debate got quite heated and Senators McCain and Biden remained extremely defensive throughout. Both repeatedly complained about the tone of the debate and felt that the other participants (who were hardly a collection of commie peaceniks or closet al-Qaeda supporters) were doing nothing more than "Bush-bashing."

It was left to Prince Turki to point out gently that the Bush administration and commentators in the US rhetorically "bash" others all the time -- mentioning, for instance, some of the statements made in the US in recent times about Arabs and Europeans.

No one pointed out the absurdity of the fact that Senator Biden had spent much of the last year making exactly the same kind of criticisms of President Bush and his policies while campaigning for John Kerry and hoping that Kerry would name him Secretary of State. Now that Bush is

president for another four years, Biden is apparently keen to appear "statesmanlike" in public.

But this wasn't the only session in which the policies of the Bush administration were roundly criticized. Climate change was a big issue on the agenda and the Bush administration's continued peddling of pseudo-science in defense of its position that global warming does not exist and its many other steps to undermine the global consensus on the need for environmental protections was also a hot topic.

Similarly, the Bush doctrine of pre-emptive war and the administration's failure to lead effectively on the question of weapons of mass

Clinton mesmerized the audience and the buzz in the air after his interview was electric. It was all anyone wanted to talk about.

Clinton finished his brief appearance at Davos with a late night night-cap with Shimon Peres which was by far the hottest item on the programme. Due to having an eye for an opportunity and a fair amount of good fortune, I was able to sign up for this restricted access session, so I was once again present to see him wow a small group with the depth and acuity of his knowledge and insight on the subject of the Middle East.

There is no other way to put this. Bill Clinton was the undisputed King of Davos.

The political make-up of the participants also suggests what a monumental missed opportunity Bush's reelection represented both for American foreign policy and the world. I could not help but think that had John Kerry been elected president that the whole mood in Davos and perforce on the world stage would have been very different.

destruction proliferation were also high on the agenda.

So there was some truth to the accusation that "the Davos crowd" was by and large sceptical about the Bush administration's policies and priorities.

But does this make them anti-American? I don't think so and here's why.

There were any number of celebrities at Davos this year. There was Bono, the lead singer of Irish rock group U2, who has been intimately involved in the campaign for debt relief in the developing world. Sharon Stone and Angelina Jolie were present from Hollywood, to say nothing of the twenty heads of state and eminent personages from the business community such as Bill Gates.

But among all these luminaries one shone brighter than the rest by far. There was only one real superstar present and his name was Bill Clinton.

He was the one everyone wanted to listen to. He was the one everyone wanted to talk to and shake hands with. He was the one everyone was talking about.

Clinton announced his presence with a typically forceful display in the panel discussion about Africa and the G-8. He shared the stage with Tony Blair, Thabo Mbeki, Olusegun Obasanjo, Bill Gates, and Bono, but there was no question as to who the star of the show was. It was a high-powered group, but dominated by his presence and ideas.

Next up was an interview with Charlie Rose that was held in the main hall but was standing room only. Once again, the whole of the World Economic Forum came to a halt so that everyone could listen to his thoughts on his successor, Iraq, Iran, and the way forward. The respect and the awe in which the crowd held him had to be seen to be believed. The only other person on the planet I can think of who might have commanded

So I think that it is a bit far-fetched to suggest that "the Davos crowd" is anti-American unless one accepts the Republican position that being pro-Democrat and pro-Clinton doesn't really count as being pro-American as Democrats and Bill Clinton don't really count as real Americans.

It was interesting, however, to note the antipathy towards the Bush administration on display at Davos. It suggests that Bush's reputation among the upper-tiers of the international business community is as low as it is elsewhere. And recall that close to 50 percent of the businessmen and women at Davos

were actually American. It didn't seem as though too many of them were voting Republican.

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The Americans had an opportunity to bring the rest of the world on board and to help facilitate the establishment of their foreign policy vision, but they blew it.

I think that the rest of the world is concerned about the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction. It is concerned with the stability and security of Iraq. It would be happy to help establish a world order in which democracy and self-determination were top priority. The only thing that is holding the rest of the world from getting on board with the US agenda is that it distrusts the intentions of the Bush administration.

And the global power elite at Davos are evidently no exception.

Zafar Sobhan is Assistant Editor of The Daily Star. This piece is the second of a series.

Announcement
Starting tomorrow February 17 we will begin running a special two-part in-depth article on the recent explosion in the Chattak gas field written by a team of experts. Part I comes out tomorrow. We urge our readers to not miss this important and informative piece.

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