

# Hillary Clinton as Secretary of State

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President-elect Barack Obama is already taking steps to warm many hearts. If there is any truth in the cliché that morning shows the day, then it is just not only the people in USA but also the rest of the world who can feel that sunshine is about to return to their lives after eight long and miserable winters suffered under President George W Bush by the decisions that the transition team of the President-elect is taking.

Senator Obama is clearly a man of vision; one who can rise about partisanship and lead by bridging gaps rather than dividing in sharp contrast to the man he would soon be replacing. He has already reached out to the Republicans, initiating and then meeting Senator McCain, his opponent in a very bitter Presidential election to ensure that he has his support in the Congress in implementing his agenda of change. His country vitally needs this change to return from the worst economic predicament that USA has faced since the Great Depression of the 1930s. He is already contemplating giving cabinet positions to the Republican Party following President Lincoln who after winning the 1860 election took into his Cabinet some of his bitterest critics for the sake of the country. Obama, who writes or drafts most of his speeches like Abraham Lincoln but also uses speechwriters, instructed one of them to underpin a quote from Lincoln for his victory speech. The writer came out with a quote not used much that says: "We are not enemies, but friends ... Though passion may have strained, it must not break our bonds of affection." When these words were spoken by Obama before a vast crowd at Chicago's Grant Park on election night, it found an immediate connect with a nation sick with bipartisan bickering and underscored unequivocally Obama's determination to unite his country.

President-elect Obama's desire to follow the footsteps of President Lincoln by uniting his one-time opponents for the sake of the country can also be seen in his move to make Senator Hillary Clinton Secretary of State. He had fought against her one of the bitterest fights ever seen in the Democratic Party for the nomination for the President. At one stage, Senator Clinton even mentioned publicly and incorrectly that Senator Obama attended an Islamic school in Indonesia where he spent some years as a child with his mother and Indonesian step-father, a reference intended to underline Senator Obama's Islamic link.

The choice of the Senator from New York as the Secretary of State is one in which there are many other positives. Senator Clinton has already proved that she has what it takes to go to the White House and had she not met someone as brilliant and outstanding as Senator Obama, her party's nomination would have been hers for the asking and she could have been very well the President-elect. She has had a comparatively short career as a Senator but during this period, she has gained experience in five committees, notable the heavyweight Armed Services Committee. Although she voted for the Iraq war, she and Obama now shares the common concern of bringing the US troops from Iraq earlier

than later. As the First Lady, she played a very crucial role in the Clinton administration with such initiatives as Clinton health care plan (that was aborted in the Congress); State Children's Health Insurance Program and Adoption and Safe Families Act that added credibility and weight to the Clinton White House. At the time of her husband's infidelity, she stood by him by rising above her emotions for the sake of the country.

She is loaded with experience and ability whose inclusion in the Cabinet will be welcomed just not in her country but outside the United States. She will have one additional advantage for the Obama administration if she joins it. She will have an insider in her husband President Clinton to advise her on issues with which he is perhaps one of the most competent to speak to, having been a very successful President in foreign affairs - an interest he is still pursuing with his foundation that provides millions of dollars for development in Africa. As President, Bill Clinton had focused great attention and energy for resolving the Palestinian problem and just before he handed the administration to George Bush, had come very close to a permanent resolution to the crisis. It can be expected that he would influence the Obama administration indirectly for a just and sustainable peace in the ME and moderate the overtly pro-Israel stance that the President-elect had taken during the presidential campaign.

The Obama administration would be assuming office at a time when the US is in the midst of an economic meltdown. By tradition, the Democrats are pro-labour and in trade, protectionist. The economic crisis will only make Democrats in Congress less "free textile trade" and more "fair textile trade" with textile quotas ending at the end of the year. This is not good news for Bangladesh whose crucial export earnings from RMG come mostly from the US market. Bangladesh's economic diplomacy will be tested to the fullest to receive favourable attention from the new administration so that her RMG market in the US does not face a major blow. Bangladesh has no lobbyist working in the US; it has a Bangladesh caucus in the Congress but there is no reason to be optimistic that this group would be able to do much to help Bangladesh with her trade interests. The outlook is bleak with one window of opportunity, which one can see in a connection that a leading Bangladeshi has with Senator and President Clinton. In this context, I remember an event during the early days of the Clinton administration where Dr. Yunus was being honoured at the US State Department with one of the many international prizes that he has won. In his address at the event, Secretary of State Warren Christopher said that during the presidential campaign in California, when as candidate Bill Clinton was relaxing after a hard day's work, he told a group of close associates that there was an individual working wonders in Bangladesh with the poor and poverty alleviation and that he should be given the Nobel Prize. Very few knew who Bill Clinton was talking about till he named that individual as Dr. Mohammed Yunus. Before that in the 1980s, Dr. Yunus had been invited by the Clintons to Arkansas where Bill Clinton was



Governor and ever since, Dr. Yunus has been a very close friend of the Clintons, a fact now widely known in relevant circles in Washington.

Successful diplomacy depends on tact, contact and national power. Of power, the less said the better in case of Bangladesh. Tact or the ability of diplomats to negotiate successfully is on the decline. On contact, Bangladesh has precious little to successfully achieve her foreign policy goals. If Senator Clinton becomes the next US Secretary of State, a window of opportunity would open in achieving Bangladesh's bilateral interests with USA with the element of contact. This window of opportunity could work if a number of other things fall into line. Bangladesh must have a credible election and an elected government in place without resorting to violence. The government that would come to office must make its inten-

tions clear on its resolve to deal with Islamic militancy. As President, Obama would have little or no interest in Bangladesh; there is no reason for him to be. But if Bangladesh can come strongly with a democratic government serious on the issue of militancy, it could attract the attention of policy makers in the new administration, including Hillary Clinton as the Secretary of State. In that scenario, Bangladesh could work with Senator Clinton through Dr. Yunus with a very limited bilateral agenda such as sustainable access to the RMG market in the US. An announcement that Senator Clinton would be the next Secretary of State is expected after Thanksgiving and at the moment, it seems certain that she will be.

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## Significance of Gaddafi's visit to Moscow

BARRISTER HARUN UR RASHID

Colonel Muammar el-Gaddafi, the leader of Libya, visited Moscow on 1-2 November. The visit of the Libyan leader was his first visit to Russia since 1985, a trip that could revive close cooperation between Tripoli and Cold War ally Moscow.

It is noted that the visit was just two months after Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice was his guest in Libya. Gaddafi, whom President Ronald Reagan once famously called "the mad dog of the Middle East," is well on his way to mending ties with the United States and other Western governments after renouncing terrorism and efforts to build weapons of mass destruction.

Recently, Libya has paid \$1.5bn into a US compensation fund for relatives of victims of terror attacks blamed on Tripoli. The fund was agreed upon in August to settle remaining lawsuits in the US. The attacks include the 1988 Lockerbie bombing that killed 270 people and the 1986 bombing of a Berlin

During the visit, the Libyan leader had dinner with President Dmitry Medvedev at the Russian leader's residence.

"Unfortunately, in the past our relations have been mainly focused on military and diplomatic contacts and there was virtually no cooperation in civilian sectors," the Libyan leader said at a Kremlin meeting with President Dmitri Medvedev. "I believe that such cooperation is especially important in the current conditions."

Gaddafi pitched a Bedouin tent in a Kremlin garden and invited Prime Minister Vladimir Putin for tea.

In the part of Gaddafi's meeting with Putin shown on Russian television, the two sat in leather armchairs beside a bonfire, heedless of the cold autumn wind. "We're becoming closer and closer," Putin said. "We've discussed a series of strategic questions," Putin said. Gaddafi said, according to the Interfax news agency, "We think alike about gas and oil policies."

"Libya wants to say, 'Look, we have

sweeten the deal with something the United States would be unlikely to offer, Russian authorities are negotiating to provide Libya with a civilian nuclear research reactor, though it was reportedly unclear whether the sides reached a deal on this issue."

His visit followed a long courtship by Gazprom, the world's largest natural gas company, and the supplier of about 40 percent of the European Union's gas imports.

For now, the North African nations of Libya and Algeria compete with Russia to supply gas to southern Europe. But Russia is toying with forming an OPEC-style group, the Gas Exporting Countries Forum, to eliminate this competition.

At the same time, Gazprom has been buying licenses to Libyan gas fields in joint ventures with the Italian company Eni and Wintershall of Germany. Both companies traded Libyan licenses for access to coveted reserves in Russia, in a sign of how highly Russia prizes the prospect of an energy alliance with Libya. Gaddafi seemed to embrace the idea of closer commercial ties.

### Military and nuclear cooperation

Tripoli bought many of its arms from Moscow during the Cold War, which was still raging when Gaddafi last visited 23 years ago.

Military deals were not forgotten, however. Interfax, citing unidentified Kremlin sources, said the Libyans were in talks to buy \$2 billion worth of anti-aircraft missiles (S-300 and Tor-M1 surface-to-air missile systems), fighter jets (SSu-30 and Mig-29 fighter jets), helicopters, tanks (T-90 battle tanks) and a diesel submarine.

Libya might also offer to host a Russian naval base on its Mediterranean coastline, a move likely to alarm the West, a Russian newspaper reported. For Russia, a Mediterranean base would cement its military resurgence after it dispatched a flotilla of warships in a show of might last month. The ships stopped in Tripoli this month and are due to continue to Venezuela.

The Russian military presence will be a guarantee of non-aggression against Libya from the United States.

Talks also touched on "the peaceful atom," the Kremlin official said on condition of anonymity, following previous reports that Russia was in talks about building a nuclear power plant in Libya.

Libyan leader Muammar Gaddafi is keen to expand cooperation with Russia beyond the military and political sphere into trade and commerce and invited Russian investment and business to his country.

Observers say that the visit suggested that Gaddafi, an astute politician, is manoeuvring to play Russia and the United States against each other for commercial and political favours.

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## Need for an Indian response in Somali waters

After months of negotiations, the hijacked ship, MV Stolt Valor, carrying 18 Indian nationals on board was released. The Japanese firm which owned the ship reportedly paid a US\$2.5 million ransom to the Somalia based pirates. It was another piracy off the Horn of Africa resolved through ransom payment.

The International Maritime Bureau (IMB) has noted that piracy in the region has risen by a significant 10 per cent, compared to its significant waning in other parts of the world this year, reflecting the increasing brazenness of the Somali pirates. India has also suffered due to the acts of pirates. Earlier this year an Indian vessel, MV Victoria, was hijacked by pirates. It was subsequently released in an ambiguous manner but it is speculated that ransom money was paid.

The Indian government's belated response in dealing with the crises reflects a callous attitude towards a very important issue. Despite an interest in maintaining a stronger presence, the government had stalled a decision for hot pursuit of pirates, arguing for discussions among the Ministries of Defence, External Affairs, Law and Shipping (The Times of India, 20 September 2008). Contrast the Stolt story with that of the French luxury yacht Le Ponant hijacked by the Somalia based pirates. The French government ordered a military operation with special commandos to launch a daring rescue of the hostages. While the French example is not feasible in all scenarios, it makes the case to deter the criminals on the high seas.

It was only after intense pressure by the wife of the captive Captain of the Stolt, Prabhat Goyal, that the government relented and has allowed an Indian warship to enter the region and protect "Indian interests." However, the Indian Navy has a deeper strategic objective to achieve through its cooperation with other navies in the region by curbing piracy in the region. More recently, the Indian Navy helped to combat piracy, and successfully contributed to patrolling the piracy-infested Malacca straits in Southeast Asia. Yemen, too, has been open to cooperating with regional powers in combating the menace of piracy. Since its deployment in the region, the Indian Navy has foiled three piracy attempts and destroyed a pirate ship. Patrolling the region also boosts India's image in the neighboring Arab countries, while allowing for joint cooperation with NATO navies in the region.

The opportunity to patrol the Gulf of Aden would also bolster the 'blue water' capabilities of the Indian Navy. Technically, a blue water navy is taken to be one able to operate over 200 miles (320 kilometers) from shore. This is a measure which can also be used to counter growing Chinese influence in the region. Naval deployments are a readily available public demonstration of diplomacy, showing the flag, showing support, and, more dramatically, showing India's presence in an immediate, flexible, and readily redeployable manner. Sleek stealth destroyers like INS Talwar lend themselves to long-range deployment, highlighting India's naval capability and showcasing India as being an advanced technological power in the world.

Projecting a strong naval capability and a firmer policy against pirates is accentuated by the fact that as much as 90 per cent by volume and 77 per cent by value of India's foreign trade is by sea. A senior Defense Ministry official articulates, "The Gulf of Aden provides access to the Suez Canal through which sizable portion of India's trade flows. Indian Navy's presence in the area will help to protect our sea-borne trade". Even though Indian ships may not necessarily be the targets of Somali pirates, the number of Indian hostages taken or killed is very high. Sunil Nair, spokesman for the National Seafarers Union of India (NSUI), explains that the English-speaking ability of Indian workers result in high intakes of workers from the subcontinent. In 2008, for example, out of 52 inci-

dents of piracy, 24 cases involved Indian seafarers. The contribution of these sailors to the national economy is significant and warrants immediate attention to their safety (The Times of India, 12 October 2008).

Additionally, piracy action also has terrorist overtones, and needs to be dealt with firmly. There are fears that 'opportunistic pirates, many of whom operate in Muslim-dominated nations, could make common cause with Islamic extremists' (Terrorism Monitor, 6/16). This fear was reiterated by Yemen's Deputy Foreign Minister, Dr Ali Hassan, when he spoke about the element of hostage taking for ransom, which could be exploited by terrorist elements in the region (Al-Motamar, 7 October 2008).

India's legal concerns can be addressed by working under the sanction of UNSC resolution 1816 (2008), which authorizes "all necessary means" to repress acts of piracy in Somali waters with cooperating states. India has belatedly realized the extent of this threat and is now actively monitoring the troubled waters off the East African coast.

Source: IPCS, New Delhi.

## Putin urges Obama to halt missile shield plan

Russian Prime Minister Vladimir Putin on Nov. 24 urged U.S. president-elect Barack Obama to drop the planned U.S. missile shield in Eastern Europe, warning of an "adequate response" from Moscow.

"This project is aimed against the strategic potential of Russia. And we can only give it an adequate response," Putin said at a conference on human rights law in Saint Petersburg. But he added: "If there are not missile defense sites in Poland and the Czech Republic - there will be no retaliatory measures either."

Obama, who takes office on January 20, has yet to give firm details over whether he intends to continue the plan which was created by the outgoing administration of Republican President George W. Bush.

Putin said that if the new Obama administration was prepared to drop the plan, then "by itself, the question of our retaliatory measures would be dropped."

"Then we can break the dangerous, negative trend on the European continent," he said.

He warned that if the missile shield was built, "it is clear that the one who loses, above all, is Europe."

Earlier this month Moscow raised alarm in Western capitals by warning it could place missiles in the Russian exclave of Kaliningrad, close to Poland, in response to the plan.

Russian President Dmitry Medvedev said at the weekend that while the Bush administration's position looked "extremely inflexible" then "the position of the president-elect looks more careful."

Russia has repeatedly expressed fury over U.S. plans to place a missile defence radar system in the Czech Republic and linked interceptor missiles in Poland.

In a candid interview with the Nezavisimaya Gazeta daily, Russian Deputy Foreign Minister Sergey Ryabkov did not directly comment on the missile shield but said he expected no major changes under Obama.

"The inertia of American foreign policy is a reality on which the whole world has to count," he said.

"I do not expect a miracle and still less hasty decisions on the questions that are important for us."

He was also downbeat on the chances of a change if speculation is confirmed that former presidential candidate Hillary Clinton becomes Barack Obama's secretary of state.

The holders of such posts "are members of an elite who by definition and in their relations with Russia can only be linked to policies which to a large extent do not suit Russia," he said.

Source: www.defensenews.com



disco, which killed three and wounded more than 200. According to the deal, Libya did not accept responsibility for the attacks, but agreed to compensate victims.

The Libyan leader believes that despite numerous Libyan attempts to amend bilateral relations, the Bush administration has not been in a hurry to fully embrace Colonel Gaddafi and adopted a policy of "wait and see" how Libya conducts its policy in international affairs.

### Strategic importance of the visit

The trip to Moscow has gained Libya, the former ally, strategic importance in terms of energy cooperation, and military and civil nuclear cooperation. Libya was an ally of the Soviet Union, but relations withered after the 1991 Soviet collapse. Gaddafi's visit highlights Russia's efforts to bolster relations again.

options," said Alex Turkeltaub, a managing director at Frontier Strategy Group, a risk consultancy firm. "This is a shot across the bow to the new administration in Washington."

### Energy cooperation

Russia has been eager to persuade Libya to back its plans for a gas cartel that would also involve Algeria, Iran, Qatar and the countries of Central Asia and could strengthen Moscow's energy leverage over Europe.

Russian energy companies have been offering Libya sweeping cooperation and investment programs. In a bold offer in July, for example, Gazprom, the Russian natural gas monopoly, offered to buy all of Libya's natural gas production in a deal that could help Gazprom corner the European natural gas market. Libya has been noncommittal.

Now, apparently in an effort to