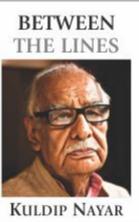


Modi's Trump card



BETWEEN THE LINES
KULDIP NAYAR

EVERY statement or a visit by a foreign dignitary has to be related to our attitude on Pakistan. Even if there is no mention of Islamabad, we stretch the observation to the point where it is meant to be so. American Presidents have so far been hedging an open criticism of Pakistan because the US has been supplying arms to Islamabad. But for the first time, America has dropped ifs and buts to pull up Pakistan for abetting terrorism and giving shelter to the militants. President Donald Trump in a joint statement with Prime Minister Narendra Modi, following their first meeting at the White House, made terrorism the cornerstone of mutual cooperation between the two countries. The statement went beyond the usual American position and while criticising Pakistan it also echoed Indian concerns regarding the Chinese-led Belt and Road Initiative. President Trump, recalling his election campaign, said that he had pledged true friendship with India. "I pledged that if elected, India would have a true friend in the White House. And that is now exactly what you have, a true friend... I am thrilled to salute you, Prime Minister Modi, and the Indian people for all that you are accomplishing together. Your accomplishments have been vast," said Trump. The President also described Prime Minister Modi and himself as "world leaders in social media" and that it has enabled them to directly hear from their citizens. In the past, India had friendly presidents in John F Kennedy, Bill Clinton and Barack Obama. But they did very little to help New Delhi in its strategic and development requirements. They were obsessed with

the thought that they should not in any way rub Pakistan on the wrong side. New Delhi never wanted them to do anything which would mean a tilt towards it. But President Trump has departed from the past American policy. The resolve of the two countries to strengthen anti-terror cooperation has come as a big diplomatic win for New Delhi and a big blow for Islamabad radical Islamic terrorism." The two leaders seem to have forged a lasting friendship that President Trump himself took Modi on a guided tour of the White House besides accepting the Indian Prime Minister's invitation to send his daughter, Ivanka, to India for a meeting. All these augur well. On his part Modi, with President Trump standing beside him, declared that America was India's primary partner for "its social and economic transformation." China is the first one to react. It has chided India for going to the American camp. And, as usual, America has boosted Pakistan to stay with Beijing. Islamabad has understandably stayed quiet. Although President Trump has hinted that the supply of arms to Pakistan might stop, the latter has not

uttered a word. Probably, it is waiting for the outcome of the meeting between President Trump and Prime Minister Nawaz Sharif. That should take place sooner than later. The Congress party has made no comment which would be construed as criticism of the Modi-Trump meeting. The American President's criticism of Pakistan is to the liking of the party but it cautiously awaits overall reaction in India, Modi seems to have the upper hand. Therefore, all American policies are being shaped presuming that the BJP would once again win the general election in 2019. The support that Modi has in the country at present indicates that the opposition is no match for him. Were all non-BJP parties to come together and fight the next election, they might emerge as a formidable group. The effort which Bihar chief minister Nitish Kumar is making gives some hope. Otherwise, the performance of the opposition would be dismal. The demonisation that the Modi government introduced had some adverse effect on the people initially but it is slowly fading away. However, the GST, which is coming into force from the first of July, could sting the government badly. With a lot of opposition in parliament and a prolonged debate and discussion, the bill was finally passed. It looks as if someone must have briefed President Trump on these points. Otherwise, he would not have tilted towards the BJP as he did openly after his first meeting with Modi. The Prime Minister continued to woo the Indian Diaspora and the CEOs from Apple, Amazon and Walmart to invest largely in the country. They are more inclined than ever before to do business with India. Probably, the State Department, too, encouraged them taking the cue from President Trump. On his first meeting with the US President, Modi has played the Trump card cleverly. With his party BJP already well entrenched in India and spreading its wings in the rest of states, what Modi required was some foreign support. None could have been better than America's, particularly at a time when China has openly sided with Pakistan and trumped up some incidents in the northeast to allege that India had occupied some of the disputed territory.

which was trying to portray the Hizbul militants as "freedom fighters." In his individual remark, President Trump said: "The security partnership between the US and India is incredibly important. Both our nations have been struck by the evils of terrorism and we are both determined to destroy terrorist organisations and the radical ideology that drives them. We will destroy the country. The Congress, like other parties, is busy with the Presidential election in India. However, the personal equation between Trump and Modi would not be to the liking of Congress president Sonia Gandhi. In the US State Department, the Congress does not have that kind of a priority which it had earlier. In the forthcoming Presidential election in

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Prime Minister Narendra Modi with President Donald Trump during their joint statement in the Rose Garden of the White House, June 26, 2017. PHOTO: AFP

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Fight against drugs — a losing battle so far



M EMDADUL HAQ

DESPITE the observance of the United Nation's International Day against Drug Abuse and Illicit Trafficking every year, drug abuse remains a serious problem in most parts of the world. It is a tragedy that due to the greed and profit mongering of traffickers, millions of youth fall victim to the habit of taking drugs. These addicted people are on a steady path towards untimely destruction and death. It is a socio-economic and cultural evil that affects the victims, as well as the nation and society. Ironically, without even being a mentionable producer of narcotic drugs or psychotropic substances, Bangladesh has emerged as a victim of the proliferation of drug abuse sponsored by underworld criminals and syndicates for the last three and a half decades. Being a transit country, Bangladesh has been facing massive domestic drug abuse problems, as spill-over is a common phenomenon. Local drug trafficking groups assist in the transit operations, which are often paid in kind. As they rarely have access to foreign markets, they sell the drug locally in order to generate income. With the increase of drug trafficking, addiction to yaba, phensedyl, heroin, cannabis, pethidine, and other psychotropic substances has increased tremendously. In 2015, a total of 9,987 male addicts were treated in private treatment centres in Bangladesh as compared to 10,364 patients in the

previous year. Drugs like buprenorphine, being cheap and accessible, have replaced heroin for many abusers. International Narcotics Control Strategy Report (INCSR) in 2012 indicated that diversion and abuse of pharmaceuticals originating from India have been one of the biggest non-conventional threats for Bangladesh. Most of the smuggled drugs are produced locally in India and many of them are produced under license. The country itself has the highest number of heroin addicts in the world. According to a UN report, one million heroin addicts are registered in India, and unofficially there are as many as five million. Drug addiction in the Indian Punjab has reached an 'epidemic' level. The smuggling of yaba tablets from Myanmar in recent years has become another serious threat to the younger

generation of Bangladesh. It is a highly addictive mixture of methamphetamine and caffeine known as 'Nazi speed' in the West. It was first developed by Hitler's scientists to keep soldiers capable of fighting for days at a stretch. It entered the Bangladeshi market in 2006 as a 'fashionable drug' for the well-to-do people. Because of its covert symptoms, this 'madness drug' is now the number one choice of the addicted population in Bangladesh. It can be swallowed, injected or sniffed, depending on the desired lasting effect of the drug. The presence of yaba manufacturing labs along the porous border of the southeastern part of the country has accelerated the use of the drug at an alarming rate. Law enforcement agencies seized 129,644 yaba pills in 2009. This increased to 19.5 million in 2015. The seizure of yaba tablets tripled

in 2015 as compared to the previous year. In January 2016, Bangladesh police seized 2.8 million yaba tablets, with an estimated value of USD 10.5 million. But, despite the increasing amounts of seizures by the law enforcement agencies, the supply of a wide variety of yaba tablets to the underground market continues unabated. As a result of the organised transit trafficking, coupled with the supply of Indian, Burmese and Pakistani drugs into Bangladesh, drug addiction has reached an alarming rate in the country. The Bangladesh Department of Narcotics Control (DNC) in its Annual Drug Report of Bangladesh 2013 revealed that the country had about five million addicts, 50 percent of them located in Dhaka city alone. Two years later, a report in *The Daily Star* suggested that the figure has reached seven million. Bangladesh stands eighth among the world's top 10 drug abusing countries. Cross-border drug trafficking and the spread of harmful medicinal drugs have contributed to a growing addiction problem in Bangladesh, especially among the most downtrodden people in the society. In the recent past, the poor, uneducated, and unemployed youth were the most vulnerable group of addicts in Bangladesh. Reports of the law enforcement agencies indicated that more than 20 percent of drug arrestees involved in peddling or selling drugs were street children under the age of 16. They primarily came from slum areas and had close relatives and friends who abused drugs. Credible reports also suggest that about 65 percent of street addicts share needles while injecting drugs, and are engaged in risky sexual

behaviour or are abused sexually. These addicts are exposed to particularly high risks of HIV/AIDS transmission. It was perceived previously that drug abuse was a problem among the ultra-poor, but now it has spread among the wealthy and well-educated youth. Many young students, coming from middle or upper middle class backgrounds, have become the prime targets of drug peddlers. Once hooked on the habit, the victims either eventually drop out from their academic institutions or perform poorly. Recently, a leading news weekly reported that 50 doctors of a reputable medical university were addicted to various drugs. They were addicted to cannabis, heroin, phensedyl, cocaine, ecstasy, yaba, and crystal meth. Many of them stole painkillers, including morphine and sleeping pills, reserved for patients. In an attempt to stop this, the university authority introduced drug tests for doctors after allegations of this rampant narcotics abuse came to light. Addiction, with all its pervasive impacts, including making young people psychologically and physically crippled, often leads to violent behaviour. They often resort to crime to sustain their addiction. Thus, when many anti-narcotics bodies observe June 26 as the UN Day for combating harmful drugs, the battle against addiction continues to be a major challenge.

The writer is Professor of Political Science at North South University. He is also the author of *Drugs in South Asia: from the opium trade to the present day* (Palgrave Macmillan, UK & St. Martin's Press, USA).



PHOTO: ANISUR RAHMAN

QUOTABLE Quote

SARAH MARGARET FULLER

Only the dreamer shall understand realities, though in truth his dreaming must be not out of proportion to his waking.

CROSSWORD BY THOMAS JOSEPH

ACROSS

- 1 Not as much
- 5 Fresh-water fish
- 9 -- Lama
- 10 Once more
- 12 Coral island
- 13 Cowboy contest
- 14 Kansas capital
- 16 Tax agcy.
- 17 Peepers
- 18 Prof protector
- 21 Despondent
- 22 Sentence piece
- 23 Resort spot
- 24 TV's Carson
- 26 Boater or bowlder
- 29 Strict grammarian
- 30 Skin opening
- 31 Conclude

DOWN

- 1 Sister of Janet and Michael
- 2 Wed in secret
- 3 Store events
- 4 Necktie material
- 5 Sedan or SUV
- 6 In the past
- 7 Circle spoke
- 8 South Dakota capital
- 9 Sees socially
- 11 Face feature
- 15 Georgia capital
- 19 Simple
- 20 Fruitcake bit
- 22 Swindles
- 23 Greek X
- 24 Alaska capital
- 25 Commands
- 26 Real looker
- 27 Out of bed
- 28 Choir member
- 29 Salon job
- 30 Sacred song
- 33 -- Major
- 35 Compete
- 36 Corn spike

BEETLE BAILEY

BY MORT WALKER

BABY BLUES

YESTERDAY'S ANSWER

VIVA RODES
OMENS IDEST
CARGO PENCE
AGO BUS IRE
LENSES STOP
SACRED COW
RULER
SCAPE GOAT
SPAM SADDEN
PIN PSU AXE
ORATE SAGAS
TIDAL STINT
START MOSS

BEETLE BAILEY

BY MORT WALKER

BABY BLUES