

THE REAGAN ADMINISTRATION AND THE INDO-US RELATIONS: NEW DIRECTIONS AND OPTIONS

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The dialectics of relationship between India and the U.S. are rooted in the nature and character of social structure and self-images of key political leaders and policy makers of both the countries. Due to differentiation in historical and cultural experiences and styles of national life of the two countries, their perceptions and attitudes towards the global as well as regional diplomacy are bound to diverge in certain respects. Perhaps, little attempt has been made to understand Indo-U.S. relations within the paradigm of national images and the power status of each country in the international system. It is also necessary to understand underlying fundamental conditions and factors that have contributed to oscillating relations between the two countries.

Needless to say, the post-war U.S. foreign policy towards India is the outgrowth of its global strategy of containing the rise of independent centers of power. India's ambition and assertion to be an independent factor in world politics was a source of irritation and annoyance to the U.S. Americans felt that though India lacked necessary components of a major power in military, industrial and technological terms, she was trying to build and exert its influence in the system of global politics through political machination—using non-aligned ideology as a political weapon. The U.S. being a global power tried to contract India's role in global as well as regional affairs and refused to treat her from equi-distance. This policy continued for a long time and still continues but in a different diplomatic style and approach.

However, the outcome of the Indo-Pakistan War of 1971 that resulted in the rise of Bangladesh as an independent nation, altered the strategic structure and security scenario of South Asia. India emerged as a predominant power in the subcontinent. It was for the first time that the American Administration recognized India as a "pre-eminent power" of the region and also accepted her non-aligned policy.¹ It is true that India's relations with the U.S. were at the lowest ebb due to the Kissingerian heavy tilt in favour of Pakistan. But the

¹ See Dr. Henry A. Kissinger's address as US Secretary of State that he delivered at the Indian Council of World Affairs on 28 October, 1974, New Delhi, Official Text, USIS, New Delhi, pp. 3-5.

changed geopolitical setting of the region obligated the U.S. policy elites to review and reorient their policy behaviour towards India. When the Democratic Party came to occupy the White House under the leadership of President Carter, tone, style and form of the U.S. foreign policy towards India appeared to be more accommodative and was also suggestive of a balanced approach towards India and Pakistan. Unfortunately, symptoms of deteriorating trends in the bilateral relations of India and the U.S. soon became evident when the Carter Administration took a momentous decision of providing U.S. military aid and equipment to Pakistan in the wake of the Soviet occupation of Afghanistan.

It is in this background that we would attempt to understand and examine Indo-U.S. relations during the Reagan Administration. Before we proceed, we should bear in mind that the containment of India and the balance of power considerations that form an integral component of the U.S. policy postures towards the subcontinent are not the creation of the Reagan Administration. They are the legacies of the past.

New Phase

India and the U.S. have entered a new phase of relationship with the coming of the Republican Party to power under the leadership of Ronald Reagan. Eyebrows were raised in India that relations between the two countries might suffer a serious set back due to change in the U.S. Administration that was being identified and interpreted as "reactionary", "rightist", "centrist". Such an image leads India to perceive that "the Reagan Administration is particularly hostile to India. As seen from New Delhi, the Reagan Administration views the world in East-West terms with India being in the Soviet Camp. To be seen in this way is something the Indians find deeply offensive."² These perceptions and presumptions were based on anti-India biases of the past Republican Administrations and in the present context, were attributed to the divergent belief systems and policy styles of President Reagan and Prime Minister Mrs. Indira Gandhi.³ In India's case it should be mentioned that as a political leader, Mrs. Gandhi enjoys a virtual command over the party. Unlike her father, she is doggedly a pragmatist and within the government "Mrs. Gandhi's authority is virtually unchallenged, and much of the conduct of foreign affairs reflects her personal style and prejudices."⁴

² A Report to The Committee On Foreign Relations United States Senate, March 1982 (Washington: US Government Printing Office, 1982) p. 5.

³ For the study of anti-India biases of the Republican Administrations refer to Franz Schurmann, *The Logic of World Power*, (New York: Pantheon Books, 1968); John W. Mellor (ed.), *India: A Rising Middle Power*, (US: Westernview Press, 1979).

⁴ A Report to the Committee on Foreign Relations....., p. 3.

We may also point out here that Mrs. Gandhi's dramatic return to power in early 1980 caused a strong suspicion among liberal American intellectuals and the right-wing Republican leaders that her strong pro-Soviet tilt, except during a brief spell of the Janata regime, might deepen differences between the two countries. Portentously enough, such misgivings and conjectures were set at naught by the governments of India and the U.S. Official pronouncements at both the levels sought to clarify that the pattern of friendly ties that evolved during the Carter Administration would not be reversed merely on account of the change of leadership in Washington and New Delhi. Prime Minister Mrs. Gandhi in her message to newly elected President Reagan stated:

Our countries share common traditions of struggle for independence, dedication to democratic ideals and spirit of tolerance and understanding.

We sincerely hope that our bilateral relations will continue to deepen and diversify for the mutual benefit of our two peoples and objectives of peace and security for the world.⁵

In a similar tone, U.S. spokesman, Robert F. Goheen, the then U.S. Ambassador to India, declared that:

With Mr. Reagan's election I see no change in the desire of the United States to continue a policy of friendly cooperation based on mutual respect.⁶

Though it is a well known fact that due to compulsions of U.S. regional interests, President Reagan cannot afford to ignore India, rhetorics of "peace", "security" and "friendly relations" in the interest of world order do not by themselves, in practical terms, contribute to cultivating positive images by each one of them towards each other. They are relevant so long as global and regional interests of both the countries do not clash with each other. But things are not so simple as they appear to be. For instance, the Reagan Administration by virtue of U.S. policy needs and priorities, is committed to extend military and economic succour to its allies and is simultaneously keen on diminishing the influence of its adversaries through the application of global strategies. This is evident from Reagan's inaugural address that reflected his "support" and "firm commitment" to allies who remained faithful to the U.S. "We will match loyalty with loyalty, he said, and "strive for mutually beneficial relations."⁷

⁵ *The Times of India* (New Delhi) November 6, 1980.

⁶ *Ibid.*

⁷ Official Text issued by the United States International Communication Agency, New Delhi, January 21, p. 1.

One might easily infer from his inaugural remarks that the matrix of "loyalty" has been adopted in dealing with "unequal" powers. In this context, where does India stand? Can she declare herself to be loyal to the U.S. in order to win its friendship? A pertinent question arises as to "loyalty" for what and for whom? Loyalty here implies an acquiescence in the satellite status of somebody in exchange for some gains which it is incapable of achieving by itself. At least on this count India would not compromise her independent course of the foreign policy nor barter away with her political autonomy.

Sources of Tension

Let us examine main sources of irritants that have been rocking the bilateral relations of India and the U.S. in the present policy scenario. We maintain that basically these sources are the function of (i) divergent national interests, priority and preferences of both the countries and (ii) the personalities of political actors who dominate the national scene of their respective countries. For example, the personality of India's Prime Minister, Mrs. Indira Gandhi, is "charismatic" and tough. She is described as an "iron lady". This has been evidenced by a great realist of this century, Dr. Kissinger in his recently published memoirs.⁸ What we intend to stress is that when America deals with India on bilateral and multilateral issues, it is in fact dealing with the personality of Mrs. Gandhi who is out and out a cold-blooded practitioner of power politics. Now we come to discuss in brief those areas and issues that remain to be main sources of tensions between the two countries.

U.S. Arms to Pakistan

Pakistan has been a key factor in Indo-U.S. relations ever since the manifestation of the compatibility of geostrategic and political interests of the U.S. and Pakistan. Right from the presidency of Truman, Pakistan has occupied a central position in the U.S. thinking in its policies towards the subcontinent. The Reagan Administration's recent decision, to supply sophisticated arms and military hardware to Pakistan on massive scale, has created an impasse not only in the bilateral relations of India and the U.S. but also between India and Pakistan. It has adversely affected the process of normalization of relations between India and Pakistan—two major countries of the subcontinent. India's External Affairs Minister, P. V. Narsimha Rao, told the Lok Sabha (Lower House of Indian Parliament) that the U.S. supply of armaments to Pakistan would disturb the strategic harmony and security environment of the subcontinent. Rao added

⁸ Refer to Dr. Henry A. Kissinger, *The White House Years*, (Boston: Little Brown and Co., 1979).

that expectation of a "change" in the U.S. determination "to arm Pakistan to the teeth" would be "hope against hope."⁹

K. R. Narayan, Indian Ambassador to the U.S., explained to press correspondents in Washington that:

Our stand is that the kind of weapons that Pakistan is acquiring can only be used against India. Security of Pakistan is an asset to India. We have always stood for a stable, but not a Pakistan which is militarized in an unbalanced way. The magnitude of U.S. military balance in the region has to be considered. We do not believe that the type of weapons proposed to be given to Pakistan would enhance Pakistan's security.¹⁰ Ambassador Narayan scoffed at the U.S. attempts to establish any parallelism between India and Pakistan in view of India's size, population, military and industrial capability and her nuclear status. He further stressed that "it was wrong to compare the defense requirements of India with those of Pakistan in the same way as it would be wrong to compare the defense needs of the U.S. with those of Cuba."¹¹

U.S. Explanation and Interpretation

The Reagan Administration explained to India that induction of American arms into Pakistan in the context of military presence of the Soviet Union in Afghanistan and consequent upon its menace to the security of the entire Gulf region, is no longer intended to weaken or alienate India. A U.S. State Department official said:

We explained to the Indians that whatever we may do for Pakistan is not directed against India or India's legitimate interest. We do not approach our relations with India and Pakistan as a zero-sum game. We want good relationship with both and we think that it is possible.¹²

The U.S. officials tried to convince India's External Affairs Secretary, Eric Gonslaves and the Chairman of Atomic Energy Commission, Homi Sethana, that America was fully aware of India's sensitivity and her grave concern over the American arms to Pakistan. But they maintained that military aid to Pakistan was sequel to the Soviet threat.

Another State Department official spelt out:

A weak Pakistan serves the interests only of the Soviet Union. A strengthened Pakistan in closer relationship with the U.S. poses no threat to India and indeed should contribute to the overall security of the Subcontinent. Our assistance to Pakistan should not be a cause for heightened tension in the region. We have consistently supported improved Indo-Pakistan relations and will continue to do so. We certainly would not wish to see an arms race in the Subcontinent.¹³

⁹ Quoted in *The Times of India* (New Delhi), April 2, 1981.

¹⁰ *The Times of India* (New Delhi), May 20, 1981.

¹¹ *Ibid.*

¹² *The Indian Express* (New Delhi), April 19, 1981.

¹³ *Ibid.*

India was not convinced by the U.S. logic. To most of the Indians, the U.S. arms deal (especially F-16 aircraft) to Pakistan "is straight and simple case of the United States seeking to undermine Indian hegemony in the Subcontinent."¹⁴

Even the Western strategists have questioned the rationale behind the channelling of the U.S. sophisticated weapons into Pakistan under the veil of security threats from the USSR. Selig S. Harrison, a senior Associate of the Carnegie Endowment for International Peace, has argued that the U.S. F-16 and 155 mm. howitzers are not suitable for the Afghan frontier. He stressed that if it is really serious about Pakistan's defense vis-a-vis the USSR, it should give her F-5 Gs which are effective interceptors in the given geographical conditions of Afghanistan. Moreover, F-16s are irrelevant in controlling and combating "domestic insurgency." Harrison further warned that the U.S. arms policy would not only disturb the strategic autonomy of India but would also result in further deterioration of bilateral relations of India and the U.S. However, the fact is that the U.S. in its quest for acquiring bases for its Rapid Deployment Force (RDF) in the ports and air fields of Pakistan, is keen on building up the security of the latter. *The New York Times* commented that the U.S. should not be too much optimistic to take it for granted that Pakistani bases would be available to it since the Zia regime is "unstable" and "unpopular."¹⁵

During the recent visit of Prime Minister Mrs. Indira Gandhi to the U.S. in July-August 1982, President Reagan gave her an assurance that arms supplied to Pakistan would not be used against India. It was too simplistic a remark to be taken seriously. Mrs. Gandhi retorted that Pakistani rulers were acquiring weapons with the sole purpose of directing them against India as it did in the past. Mrs. Gandhi reiterated that India was not against the legitimate security build-up of Pakistan but disfavoured the induction of massive arms into it for that would, in her opinion, bolster up war psychosis of its military ruling elites. One might recall here that President Reagan's recent invitation to President Zia is sequel to Mrs. Gandhi's visit and is also indicative of America's serious concern about Pakistan's security affairs. Reagan's assurance of additional supply of military weapons to Pakistan is being interpreted in New Delhi as a calculated move to counter India's defenses and security preparedness.

Atomic Fuel for the Tarapur Plant

Indo-U.S. relations seemed to have turned sour ever since the controversy generated over the issue of the U.S. obligation to supply

¹⁴ A Report to the Committee on Foreign Relations... p. 4.

¹⁵ *The New York Times*, July 16, 1981

enriched uranium for India's Tarapur Atomic Plant at Trombay in Bombay. The story goes as far back as August 1963, when the U.S. had agreed to supply nuclear fuel for the plant for a period of thirty years ending in 1993. But the U.S. application of fresh safeguards and inspection requirements for India's nuclear reactors under its Nuclear Non-Proliferation Act, 1978, provoked the ire, indignation and anxiety of the Indian government and its people. India's top officials who held discussions with their counterparts in Washington in April 1981, argued that the U.S. domestic legislation on nuclear non-proliferation was both legally undefendable and morally untenable. The retroactive application of the legislation, India's External Affairs Minister P. V. Narsimha Rao reiterated, would not be acceptable to India. Nor would, the Minister said, India abandon her "right" over the nuclear spent fuel.

The Indian government thinks that the long term objective of the U.S. to pressure it into accepting the Nuclear Non-proliferation Act, 1978, is to prevent India from emerging as an autonomous nuclear power. Without pretense, opposition members like Samar Mukherjee (CPM), Mr. Parulekar (Janata) dubbed the U.S. tactics as a "black-mail". What has really distressed the Indian government is the manifest discrimination of the Reagan Administration against India. Its efforts to "lift Symington Amendment restrictions on aid to Pakistan evoked some comment in New Delhi about a U.S. double standard."¹⁶ The New Delhi leadership argues that if the Reagan enthusiasts are prepared to do a special favour to Pakistan by bringing in such amendment, they can do the similar thing in India's case by modifying the NNPA, 1978. Such a policy behaviour reflects that the U.S. is mainly guided by political and extraneous considerations rather than by dictates of legal and moral obligations.

It is significant to observe here that the General Accounting Office (GAO), known as the watchdog of the U.S. Congress, is critical of the U.S. nuclear policy vis-a-vis India. It commented: "India's national pride has become heavily involved in the issue of discrimination with respect to international nuclear non-proliferation."¹⁷ In spite of becoming critical of the U.S. nuclear policy, the GAO has justified the "export criteria" applied to the shipment of nuclear fuel to India. It has also supported Pakistan's nuclear programmes which will, in its opinion, "enhance its security position with India and improve the stability of South Asia."¹⁸ Reacting to such a "prejudiced report", U.S. policy analysts are of the view that it would supplement to boosting the morale of Pakistani rulers in the direction of "war preparedness."

¹⁶ A Report to the Committee on Foreign Relations... p. 7.

¹⁷ Quoted by *The Times of India* (New Delhi), May 23, 1981.

One of the important dimensions of the controversy over the nuclear issue that has recently caught attention is the question of the reprocessing of nuclear spent fuel. The U.S. Assistant Secretary of State James Malone rejected outright India's claim over the "reuse" of the fuel. He persisted in his argument that it was obligatory on India's part to allow safeguards on Tarapur even if the U.S. stopped the shipment of nuclear fuel to India.¹⁹ He described India's adherence to the policy of recycling the spent fuel to extract uranium, as contra-vention of diplomatic norms. Dr. Homi Sethana described the U.S. thinking as "fanciful." The Department of Atomic Energy (DAE) in its annual report (1980-81) declared that it "would reprocess the spent fuel from its power reactors to recover plutonium."²⁰ It also contends that two trials have already been completed at the reprocessing plant at Tarapur. It also agrees that though the production capacity of the Tarapur Plant has considerably fallen due to the sudden U.S. announcement of the postponement of the nuclear shipment, it has managed to generate 1646 million units of power.

The position has slightly improved when Mrs. Gandhi recently undertook an official visit to the U.S. The Reagan Administration has discovered an alternative to rearrange the supply of enriched uranium to India in collaboration with the French government. Under the tripartite agreement among India, U.S. and France, the latter has agreed to supply nuclear fuel for the Tarapur Plant. Unfortunately, air has not been fully cleared. Controversy still exists on the question of safeguards and India's right to reprocess the spent fuel. Mrs. Gandhi made it clear before Americans that India was not opposed to the safeguards evolved by the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) but she asserted having accepted them once, India has "the right to reprocess."²¹ Mrs. Gandhi further explained that "once IAEA safeguards were met there was no need for India to take concurrence of any country for reprocessing."²²

The U.S. government, however, is not in agreement with Indian point of view. It is worth mentioning here that due to an articulate and strong lobby at the Capitol Hill, the Reagan Administration will not give India a free hand in the reprocessing of the spent fuel. And, moreover, India does not enjoy a strong leverage like Japan and Germany with the U.S. to get conditions waived off on the reprocessing issue. Under these circumstances, options before India are: (i) seeking uninterrupted supply of nuclear fuel from France; (ii) reprocessing

¹⁸ Ibid.

¹⁹ See also The Annual Report 1981-82, Ministry of External Affairs, Gov't. of India, New Delhi, 1982.

²⁰ Quoted in *The Indian Express* (New Delhi), April 19, 1982.

²¹ *The Times of India* (New Delhi), August 1, 1982.

²² Ibid.

the nuclear spent fuel without taking U.S. objections into consideration; (iii) deployment of indigenous sources to achieve self-reliance. India may also use MOX fuel as an alternative to enriched uranium; (iv) searching for new markets.

If we make an impartial and objective assessment of nuclear fuel as a deterrainant in the bilateral relations of India and the U.S., we find that it has left a bad taste. It would perhaps be a fatuous estimate if the U.S. makes tall claims to have succeeded in breaking deadlock over this controversial issue. It has, of course, succeeded in shifting its majority responsibility to France. The success of U.S. diplomacy is suggestive of the lack of diplomatic finesse on India's part. India has not only lost the diplomatic battle with the U.S. but also seems to have lost with France. The French insistence on the "perpetuity clause" on safeguards has made India's task still more difficult. The Indian government is trying to persuade the French government to dissuade itself from the "perpetuity clause" and make her available enriched uranium without a further loss of time. How the French government will look upon India's persuasion, is a matter of speculation. It, however, seems apparent that the tripartite agreement has given rise to complexities between India and France and heightened the degree of misunderstanding and bitterness between India and the U.S.

U.S. Presence in the Indian Ocean

One of the indirect sources of tension between India and the U.S. is the latter's growing military build-up in the Indian Ocean. This, in India's perception, constitutes a threat to her security and that of the littoral states. Contrary to India's perceptions, however, the U.S. looks upon its naval-cum-air presence in the Indian Ocean as an integral component of its global diplomacy to checkmate the Soviet Union's expansion and influence. India's consistent stand has been that the Indian Ocean should be declared a permanent zone of peace. During Mrs. Gandhi's recent official visit to Mauritius in August 1982, she strongly supported her right over Diego Garcia. The U.S. has taken a serious view of India's stand on Diego Garcia. The crystallization of U.S. interests would make it almost impossible for it to withdraw from the Indian Ocean. The U.S. has already intensified its naval presence and improved its strategic position vis-a-vis the USSR. Any Indian strategy of diminishing its influence or driving it out would not only be interpreted by the U.S. as an act of open hostility but would be met with stiff opposition through its military, economic and diplomatic instruments. The recent Indian advocacy of handing over Diego Garcia back to Mauritius is likely to create a negative image of India and might give a further set back to the

bilateral relations of the U.S. and India. Recent trends also indicate that except denunciation of the U.S., India is not in a position to exert a positive influence on the U.S. to retreat from the Indian Ocean. It appears a far distant dream that the U.S. would withdraw under moral pressures.

Economic Field

On economic issues, India is fully aware of the U.S. policy of free enterprise and neo-protectionism that is contrary to India's mixed economy with a heavy tilt toward socialist planning. The divergent perceptions between the two countries on global economic diplomacy became manifest when Mrs. Indira Gandhi held discussions with President Reagan at the Cancun conference. The developed, rich, industrialized countries are not prepared to give substantial concessions on trade and aid to the less developed countries. The transfer of wealth by rich countries seems absolutely a chimera. They are not in a mood to transfer even their technology to less technically advanced countries of the Third World. Aid through multilateral agencies generated a lot of controversy. In the U.S. view, this would lessen the dependence of developing countries on its unilateral aid which could be used as an instrument to promote U.S. national interests.

So far as bilateral economic relations are concerned, the Reagan Administration does not seem to look upon India's economic problems with sympathy. Instead, it vetoed "low-interest" energy loans to India to be provided by the World Bank for her oil industries. More than that, India's adversary—Pakistan—was rewarded when the U.S. doubled its economic and military aid from the previous year to humiliate India. It has further committed to more than half a billion dollars for the forthcoming financial year. To India's dismay, she had to content herself with a meagre \$210 million aid for her various developmental programmes. Still, India and the U.S. have much scope to cooperate with each other in trade and technical fields. Perhaps for the first time, balance of trade was in India's favour during a brief tenure of the Janata Party regime. She can be hopeful of increasing her trade with the U.S. and boosting her export. The American Business Council has evinced much interest in its investment in India for a variety of items. In her recent visit to the U.S., Mrs. Gandhi emphasized the need for mutual cooperation in "improvement of food production research, reduce energy consumption, biomedical research and biomass production."²³

In the fields of science and technology also, India and the U.S., said Prime Minister Mrs. Gandhi, "can build true links of understand-

²³ Ibid.

ing.”²⁴ America has expressed its willingness that the U.S. scientists are prepared to cooperate with India in “biomedical research to control leprosy, tuberculosis and waterborne diseases, and for fertility control through immunology.”²⁵ Mrs. Gandhi emphasized that the U.S. and India could collaborate with each other in the reduction of energy consumption that would benefit not only India and the U.S. but other nations, too. To encourage creative skills, leaders of both countries agreed to mutual scientific and technological collaboration. Mrs. Gandhi, however, “regreted that in spite of all the exertions of developing countries and projects of multilateral and bilateral cooperation, 95 percent of the world’s research and development was still confined to the industrialized nations.”²⁶ She, therefore, appealed to the U.S. for giving active reconsideration to the question of the transfer of technology to the Third World that was struggling very hard to make itself self-reliant and self-sufficient.

New Directions

New directions, trends and patterns in Indo-U.S. relations can be better understood and appreciated in the context of the recent visit of Prime Minister Mrs. Indira Gandhi to the U.S. in July-August 1982. During her nine days stay in the United States, Mrs. Gandhi sought an opportunity to have had wide ranging discussions with prominent American leaders, top officials and intellectuals. If viewed within the totalistic perspective, the aim of Mrs. Gandhi’s visit was to search areas of mutual cooperation and interests rather than confrontation. Mrs. Gandhi spelt out:

“Our hand of friendship is stretched out to all. One friendship does not come in the way of another. . . . No two countries can have the same angle of vision, but each can try to appreciate the points of view of the other. Our effort should be to find a common area however small, on which to build and to enhance cooperation. . . .”²⁷

She especially emphasized India’s serious concern with the “people-to-people relationship.” But simultaneously she did not give the impression that India might deflect from her basic postulates of the foreign policy. She spoke with a sense of poise and confidence and expressed her frank views on global and regional issues. Of course, the Reagan team was trying that India reappraise and revise her rigid policy postures on the issues of Afghanistan, Kampuchea, Israel, West Asia, etc.

²⁴ Quoted, *Ibid.*

²⁵ *Ibid.*

²⁶ *Ibid.*

²⁷ Quoted in *Span* (New Delhi), September 1982.

Mrs. Gandhi's firmness to criticize U.S. role of global "policemanship" constituted a mild rebuff to the U.S. She told the National Press Club that India's "stability" would be a major factor in the stability of the entire region. She, of course, expressed her serious concern over the presence of Soviet troops lying on the gateway to the Subcontinent. Mrs. Gandhi clearly pointed to this fact that unless both the super powers adopted in practice the policy of "non-interference" in the domestic affairs of the country, the possibility of troop withdrawal by the Soviet Union does not seem possible. Mrs. Gandhi further explained: "I don't think the Soviets will tolerate any regime which is anti-Soviet", she added, "but they would accept a non-aligned regime in Kabul."²⁸ Mrs. Gandhi, however, conceded that there was still scope for general withdrawal of the Soviet troops from Afghanistan provided both the super powers concede to bartering away something with one another.

But she was more obsessed by China and Pakistan than the Soviet Union. The Prime Minister said: "I think we stand upright. One does not spend one's life fighting for independence just to be able to give it away."²⁹ On international issues, both the governments reaffirmed their faith in "equitable peace" in conflict ridden areas of the world. Reagan and Mrs. Gandhi felt that peace and stability of the region depended on constructive approach of the two countries. Besides political issues, both the countries expressed a sense of optimism on economic issues. Mrs. Gandhi pointed out "liberalized conditions" existed in India that would encourage U.S. foreign businesses. During her talks with A. W. Clausen, President of the World Bank, Donald Reagan, U.S. Treasury Secretary and the Commerce Secretary Malcolm Balridge, she emphasized the need of international economic cooperation in the economic development of India and the Third World nations.

Her visit as an "adventure" in search of 'understanding' and friendship was literally speaking, more adventurous and less reassuring to India's national interests. For instance, on the question of U.S. aid and transfer of technology and capital, the outcome of her efforts to seek more aid, according to an Indian critic Namboodiri Pad, "to rescue the crisis-ridden Indian economy and industry" have been "utterly disappointing."³⁰ It is true that India is seeking massive economic aid from multilateral institutions like World Bank, IMF. But it was to her great dismay when the Reagan Administration refused to oblige India by giving aid on concessional terms. Her case was rejected on the ground that India could not be treated on par with less developing countries (LDCs) in terms of her per capita income.

²⁸ Quoted in *The Times of India* (New Delhi), August 21, 1982.

²⁹ *Span* (New Delhi), September 1982, p. 3.

³⁰ *The Times of India* (New Delhi), August 10, 1982.

On the question of supplying F-16s, the U.S. government assured India that it would sympathetically consider her case if she asked for these aircrafts. India refused to seek aid and aircrafts from the U.S. by making a direct request. Mrs. Gandhi in her sarcastic tone said: "We are not seeking military aid from any country. Whatever we sought, we have bought."³¹ Question, however, arises as to what was the intention behind the U.S. move to throw hints to considering India's case for acquiring F-16s. Did it like to mollify her? Or did it want to create a positive image for itself in the Indian eyes? A plausible explanation being offered is that U.S. believed that it would be far less vulnerable to India's condemnation of the American policy of rearmament to Pakistan.

Without surprise, President Reagan did not commit anything to the Indian Prime Minister in terms of reduction in arms supplies to Pakistan in the overall interests of strategic harmony in the Sub-continent. India's fears have been reinforced by the U.S. latest plan to offer new credits to Pakistan for her purchase of arms in 1983. It has been decided to "expand its military aid and arms sale through 1984 and beyond it in an effort to gain political influence and access to foreign bases."³² As evident from the report of the General Accounting Office, the Reagan Administration has pointed to "the \$6.0 billion for this year and \$8.7 billion requested for 1983."³³ Thus, expansion of the U.S. military programmers for Pakistan would be disquieting and less assuring to India in the context of fast deteriorating security scenario of the region. If the U.S. perceives every Indian move—diplomatic, military or otherwise—on the issue of the Indian Ocean as hostile, disturbing, India too, perceives U.S. effort to prop up war psychosis of Pakistan by way of committing more arms to Pakistan, as an act of inciting hostility against her.

It is appropriate here to point out that Indo-U.S. relations should be assessed in the context of the current scenario of new realignments and readjustments that are taking place between some of the powers. For instance, U.S.-Pakistan relations are likely to be adversely affected in view of China's positive assurance of providing nuclear assistance to Pakistan. Americans believe that China is assisting Pakistan in acquiring the capability of manufacturing nuclear weapons by way of developing her facility to enrich uranium. The fact is that Pakistan is an ally of the U.S. and only a friend of China but America would not encourage a weak ally—Pakistan—to acquire nuclear capability. History bears the testimony. The U.S. did not disclose its nuclear secrets even to Britain—a one-time close ally—

³¹ *Span* (New Delhi), September 1982, p. 3.

³² *The Times of India* (New Delhi), August 9, 1982.

³³ *Ibid.*

when it was reduced to the status of a secondary power at the end of World War II. Obviously, it would not serve U.S. interests if Pakistan emerged as an autonomous nuclear state with the Chinese assistance by the calculus of a simple logic that nuclear Pakistan would not subserve to the U.S. designs in South West Asia. A non-nuclear Pakistan would be more subservient to the U.S. strategic and military interests in the region. At this juncture, India has a diplomatic opportunity of intensifying U.S. displeasure with Pakistan. But to conceive of a total reversal of U.S. policy towards Pakistan, would be a mis-calculation.

Another significant development is the suspension of the U.S. government's nuclear cooperation with China. Though both the governments have succeeded in a great measure to resolve their outstanding differences over the question of American assistance to Taiwan, the Reagan Administration has realized that China's clandestine diplomatic moves to assist Pakistan in her nuclear programmes are intended to diminish the U.S. influence on Pakistan. America seems to have realized that in the context of the ripening of dialogue between the Soviet Union and China, the latter's anti-Soviet stance is also becoming less prominent and hostile. It, therefore, thinks that the objective of the Sino-American axis to defeat its common adversary would fail.

One might take up cues from these developments that both the U.S. and India have a bigger scope for drawing close to each other. It is essential to qualify this assessment because the nature and quality of relationship between India and the U.S. largely depends upon the nature of relationship between India and China. The U.S. would not like to take any political risk that might maximize growing cooperation between India and China. On the other hand, it would like to take such measures that might stabilize and enhance its strategic interests in the region without completely cooling off its relations with China. Similarly, India too, would not like to cultivate close relations with the U.S. at the cost of straining her relations with China. Still, both the countries can broaden areas of mutual cooperation in mutual interests without tilting in favour of a third country.

In brief, both India and the U.S. need to appreciate each other's view point, perceptions and approaches to bilateral as well as global issues in a correct perspective. Instead of cultivating each other's negative images, they should explore those areas of mutual interests where confrontation is minimal. In this context, the U.S. should realize that it would not be a fruitful exercise to dilute India's special strategic relationship with the USSR. It would also be a self-deluding assess-

ment that U.S. would be successful in weaning New Delhi away from Moscow as that India would be successful in driving U.S. out of the Subcontinent. What both need are the management of crises and problems and removal of irritants in their bilateral relations not only through negotiations and appreciation of each other's problems and compulsions but also with a sense of granting some concessions to each other in the mutuality of their interests.