

Pakistan-India relations need more positive

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Prior to the elections 2004 in India, the Mr. Atal Behari Vajpayee Government in its last days that had taken steps to improve relations with Pakistan, the same has to be followed by the new Prime Minister Dr. Man Mohan Singh.

Despite efforts try both sides some hidden hands are active in creating chaos between two countries. On this Mr. Natwar Singh India Foreign Minister has removed doubts that were generated in the minds of new government officials in India and leaders of Pakistan.

The statement by Mr. Natwar Singh has created hopes in the leadership in Pakistan that express the desire of peace by India, and is ready to continue the peace process and dialogue. Mr. Natwar Singh added that India, keeping in view, the Simla agreement of July 1972 will not only continue talks but this dialogue would be on Sino-India Model. Some times ago, some differences had arisen between two countries.

Analysts are of the view that Mr. Natwar Singh, who has a key role in Indian Ministry of External affairs and has to determine the future Foreign Policy, should avoid issuing doubtful statements, because by analysing these statements political circles get astonished.

We should keep in mind some circles have reservations about Mr. Natwar Singh who is a Career Diplomat. When Mr. Natwar Singh assumed Diplomatic assignments in Pakistan, some dispute came into surface, and on this reasons he should be very cautious and avoid issuing irrelevant statement, that create confusion.

To judge the gravity of situation it is enough to say that

the two Foreign Ministers had to converse three times in a row during a week to clear their positions.

But some how they have saved inter-state relations. The random statements by India that the talks would be done in the light of Simla Agreement, means that India is only considering Simla Accord, and one feels that the Indian leadership under Congress Party is neglecting all other accords except Simla Agreement, which includes Lahore Accord (February 1999), and Islamabad Accord (January 2004).

Ground reality is that with the onset of Islamabad Accord (2004), confidence-building measures increased but also Mr. Atal Behari Vajpayee and General Pervez Musharraf developed friendly relations among them selves. This is the reason that some statements by Mr. Natwar Singh creates doubts in the minds of analysts in Pakistan Foreign Ministry, and it was the reason that President Musharraf to get a clear picture of situation preferred to contact on telephone with Mr. Vajpayee instead of Dr. Man Mohan Singh. Dr. Abul Kalam President of India, while delivering speech in a joint session of parliament, had confirmed that all the policies and accords of previous government will be followed. Also Prime Minister of Pakistan and his Indian counterpart Dr. Man Mohan Singh remain in touch through telephonic conversations. Issuing of unreasonable remarks by Mr. Natwar Singh, has lost the credibility of Indian leadership among Pakistani Diplomatic Circles but this statement that

"Despite continuation of terrorists acts in Jammu & Kashmir, we will continue dialogue" has created prob-

lems for Indian Government itself.

As the recently relinquished National Democratic Alliance (NDA) Government had expressed its readiness to start dialogue with Pakistan on the grounds that it had got satisfied that both the countries had taken steps to control terrorism which is evident in Jammu Kashmir. The statement of Mr. Natwar Singh that despite continuing acts of terrorism we are ready for talks is not only contrary to the Policies of the previous Government but is an allegation on Pakistan that it supports terrorism.

In view of the possible dangers when Mr. Mr. Natwar Singh meet his counterpart Mr. Khurshed Mahmud Kasuri, a better situation will arise. While expressing astonishment to such statements by Mr. Mr. Natwar Singh a career diplomat a common man got the feeling that first they take a step forward and then they think about that, which is very dangerous, and this create confusion.

Indian External Minister to solve disputes has said following Sino-India Model and has given some details, but lots are remained to be explained yet. Indian External Minister has signaled about upgrading relations with Arab World, which is encouraging, whereas the NDA Government with some exceptions had neglected 90% of the Muslim countries.

In view of the changing world trend India must boost its economic, trade, social and political ties with these states. If India in these difficult periods thinks about co-operation with Arab States, it could be able to prepare an unaligned Foreign Policy like Pakistan. On 15 and 16 June talks at

secretaries level of narcotics control and smuggling were held and it is planned that in the third or fourth weeks of June Foreign Secretaries of both countries start their deliberations and in August talks at the level of Foreign Ministers are going to take place.

But it should not remain formal meetings with no objectives. On April 2003, Mr. Vajpayee in his speech in Srinagar (occupied Kashmir) forwarded hand of friendship and with the pull back of Army the relations got warm, and exchange of delegates from every walk of life took place. Both sides showed some relaxation of granting visas and the reason was told that the new High Commissioners and visa consular are doing their best. But to some extent even before the 2004 elections, the Indian High Commission, Islamabad has adopted a policy of gradually delayed issuance of visas. According to international law the diplomats play a key role in creating friendship and vice versa.

Will their vision and diplomacy the curse of war can be stopped, as it was evident from this fact that despite presence of military on both sides of border, the Ambassadors of both the countries were doing their best to avert war. Public opinion is that to get an Indian visa from Islamabad on receiving an application a token is given to report after many months. Those living in Karachi and interior Sindh specially women face many difficulties to travel to Islamabad to get visa. The Indian High Commission is trying its best to open its consulate in Karachi, and Indian High Commissioner has said it

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has expedited efforts in opening a Consulate in Karachi, and Pakistan will also open its Consulate in Mumbai.

It is interesting to note that for coverage of the election 2004 process in India, an Islamabad based prestigious Urdu newspaper had submitted an application of an Eminent Scholar and Columnist to the External publicity wing of Ministry of Information and Media Development and Indian desk in Pakistan's Ministry of Foreign affairs two weeks prior to holding of election. But after some days when the elections were over the passport without visa was returned back.

There is no second opinion that granting of visa depends on the sweet will of the embassy staff, but it was their moral responsibility to inform before hand about denial of visa. Indian High Commission Islamabad and consulate in Karachi were issuing around 300 visas daily, and if an application was given in the morning time, visa was given by afternoon. It is correct that then the number of staff was sufficient, but now if the number of staff is less by taking some grace period the targets could be achieved. It is to note that in the ending months of last year, Pakistani High Commission in New Delhi, to grant a visa to an Indian Scholar, invited him to visit High Commission on weekly closed holiday and this shows the upper hand of an Indian Scholar over a Pakistani counterpart. During the talks at Secretaries and Foreign Minister talks it should come under discussion that Senior Citizens get exemption for visa and keeping in view all rules they may be allowed to cross border on foot and Senior Citizens be also exempted from Police report-

ing.

The new generation of India and Pakistan are very much interested to visit each other country, but without presence of any facility the suspicions would increase. The new generation should keep away themselves from war and live in harmony. The teachers & students of universities should have working relations among themselves or at least they should get a chance to teach and do research for at least one semester in each country. As a result of bus diplomacy (February 1999), a person was granted visa to visit 12 cities, and Professors, Businessmen of high repute and other High Officials were granted multiple visas. Why cannot both sides restart this process? The Air, Bus and Railway links have restarted between two countries. Indeed common person cannot afford air cost. Bus / Train service is available for two days in a week. Which can be upgraded for three days. With this a ferry service can be started between Karachi / Mumbai / Karachi and efforts should be done to early start of rail links from Khokrapar / Munabao? The relations between two countries have not ended and with an end to old generation, new generation wants to establish new relationship with each other. Whatever situation arises, this links will remain intact with out considering that their remains some obstacles in this way.

If new Government under Congress Party does not follow the accords then Bharatia Jaanata Party (BJP) now in Opposition will play the card to get victory to defeat the ruling party.

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