



Nurul Hasan Memorial lecture

Delivered by

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“The Nuclear Deal in a changing world As Nurul Hasan might have seen it”

Mr. Vice Chancellor, Director of the Centre of Advanced Study of History, Members of the distinguished faculty of the Aligarh Muslim University, Scholars, Researchers, my beloved friends, Members of the student body, Ladies and Gentlemen,

It is, for me an honour and an occasion for joyous celebration of the life and work of a great man whom I was privileged to call my friend and Elder Brother. I was a ridiculously young lecturer in History in St. John College, Agra, attending for the very first time, a Session of the Indian History Congress in Hyderabad in, either 1952 or 53, when I met the extremely distinguished, aristocratic, elegant looking khadi-clad Professor Nurul Hasan. He already had a formidable reputation as a Teacher and as a Researcher, an Oxford D. Phil. I had presented a paper on the British Resident in Sindh Capt. Seton’s Tricks and Intrigues against the Mirs of that State. I was taken aback, and rather flattered, when during the Lunch hour, Nurubhai came up to me smilingly and said a few kind words complimenting me on my paper. He said teasing me: “Mian Saheb-Zade! Agar history Congress ke bahar dikhai dete to main tumse kuchh kehne mein jhijhakta. Kyunki shakal se lagta hai ki shayad abhi matric bhi pass na ki ho tumne.” Later we corresponded desultorily; he invited me to visit him in Aligarh, and insisted that I stay with him and the Late Begum Nurul Hasan, in their beautiful home on the campus. Two decades later we attended two or three sessions of the United Nations and certain other UN bodies and Conferences during the seventies, when I was a member of the diplomatic service. He indicated more by his deeds and body language that he was one of those seniors who believed in encouraging younger people. He visited me when I was Ambassador in Lebanon, and later came specially to visit me when he was our Ambassador to Moscow, and I was posted to Vienna as India’s Governor on the IAEA Board of Governors. He had come that time to condole with me after my Father’s passing away. He too was an alumnus of AMU. Later still, I enjoyed his hospitality in the Kolkata Raj Bhawan on at least four or five occasions, as his guest. These memories and a lot of nostalgia is enough, as I recall it all to this audience, to bring a lump in my throat.

He and I had long discussions in Vienna about the iniquitous treatment India used to receive then, as a virtual nuclear pariah, especially excommunicated by the Anglo-Saxon powers: Americans and the British. The theme of my lecture today is on the ever evolving, ever-changing world situation, politically and economically and in terms of technology. And such evolution adding up to the flux which show-cases the bends and twists of history. This is how we mark changes in historic trends and other shifts. For what we have been able to get the world yield to us in the last month or two adds up to the commencement of a new states for India. Let us remember that the Anglo-Saxons in both those societies, the American and the British, continue to be horribly divided on the issue of power of both types, for India. Of this more later. Here let me only state that national perceptions regarding national interests keep evolving for every nation and state, those that are powerful, and those that are helpless. Nurubhai would have appreciated how in this Lecture dedicated to his memory, I must, without being boastful as an Indian, indicate in a holistic manner, where we were; where we are today, and which direction we are likely to pursue the destiny that beckons us.

The road to the Bush-Manmohan Singh deal was complex, bumpy with potholes, a story riddled with myriad complexities. Managing nuclear facilities is always complex as the same reactors, fuels and technology are used to produce either electricity or weapons or both. The Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty was designed to permit a few countries to produce bombs, also electricity, while others were to be prevented from making bombs but permitted to use isotope technology for assisting medical and health work, as also electricity or power for peaceful purposes. Hence the intrusive Inspection System, Safeguards regimes for non-weapon multitude, commitments under Protocols of all sorts: additional, special and simple ones and above all the dual-use denial systems etc. And a privileged situation for the five who wield nuclear-weapons legitimately. As India insisted on not signing the NPT, while exercising, all these years, her sovereign right to maintain her programme of research for an entirely comprehensive nuclear fuel cycle, it became, for the nuclear haves and their industrialized friends, a very special target and was gradually turned into an

international pariah, in certain aspects, while in other aspects, it could not be touched specially as it persisted in doing everything transparently and without infringing any of the NPT related IAEA procedural and juridical proprieties. The psychology of US-India bilateral political, economic and technological relations over the decades, became peculiar, and often warped, due to the nuclear and NPT related facets of their behavioural patterns, and mutual incompatibility.

In recent years India's role and cooperation in global anti-Terrorism struggle became valuable for the USA, due to our long experience in containing terrorism; our special code of conduct as a bonafide and globally confirmed democracy and our commitment to universal Human Rights System.

China and India, have, over the last decades emerged visibly, as major economic entities with a vast potential to grow more, subject to the availability of fuel for producing electricity. US's hesitations and doubts about 'China-Rising (solely?) Peacefully'; the felt need for USA to seek, in this context, a new Asian balance, or a new Asian equipoise by bringing Japan and India closer to the ASEAN, each one a major trading bloc; as well as to ensure cooperation amongst the navies of Japan, India and USA to maintain in security Indian Ocean's sea-lanes of communication, and its choke-points like Malacca Straits.

For several decades until recently, when the Soviet Union started disintegrating, US-India relations had remained tepid and mildly estranged; never particularly adversarial, never really warm. Spasmodically each would try to get friendly with the other, without success, as they remained unable to shake off mutual distrust, their ideological incompatibility, and certain unpleasant memories. US viewed India in the Cold War terms, as "client and protégé" of their principal adversary, the USSR. Likewise India viewed the USA as "a uniquely durable and multi-layered supporter and backer" of India's neighbourhood bete-noir Pakistan, which had remained, since our, and their, Independence, perennially adversarial to us.

India has grown and evolved in economic, technological and societal terms as a democracy. China has stuck to Sun Tsu's philosophy while we in India have been ignoring Chanakya's dicta and pursuing the modern liberal line of contemporary

democracies. They created a militarily capable friend of theirs, a neighbour of ours, to become a missile-and-nuclear armed and militarily capable power to become a long-term dagger that may keep us in line.

Prime Minister Indira Gandhi won her post Emergency Election in 1980, nine years after our signing the Indo-Soviet Friendship Treaty, and eight years after the Shimla Agreement with Bhutto, meant to normalize our relations after Bangladesh's Caesarian birth. These two agreements never ceased to anger US media and decision-makers. Indiraji too, on her part, remained vocal about CIA's suspected interference in India. By 1980, however, she had realized that the time for socialist economic policies, and the Mantras of self-reliance and self-sufficiency was gone. India needed to reduce its dependence on USSR as its sole arms supplier, and seek weapons and trade from diverse sources. Indiraji recognized that for this a new economy had to be devised and structured by us for ourselves. After her assassination, Prime Minister Rajiv Gandhi who followed, re-shaped vigorously some of India's traditional policies, specially on education, productivity, economic management, foreign trade and acquisition of new technologies. His success in respect of Information Technology and Communications was phenomenal. By 1985, he could also foresee dismemberment of the Soviet Union, mainly caused by weaknesses in their economic and managerial methods. By 1991 the Soviet Union was crumbling and fracturing. At that time our present Prime Minister had started guiding changes in the nation's economic and financial policies. A little later as Finance Minister, he was able to lay the foundations of economic reforms in India.

Manmohan Singh could foresee the coming globalization and its impact on our national economic functioning. By 1995 India also recognized with much sadness, how feeble, frayed and vulnerable the so called non-aligned unity and solidarity had in reality become. India was truly angry and disappointed when during the 1995 NPT Review process the non-aligned countries without much persuading, gave unanimous support to U.S. demand that they support the U.S. proposal for extending in perpetuity the NPT. All of them fell in line cheerfully, and without demur provided legitimacy to the five nuclear weapon States, who now became the sole monopolists having the right

to possess nuclear weapons for themselves for ever and ever into eternity. The remainder, i.e. 186 non-nuclear weapon States, members of the UN, were rendered helpless without the right even to complain about their importance. The non-aligned had agreed to remain non-nuclear weapon States in perpetuity. They had emasculated themselves, without a squeak of objection. None of them tried to promote Nehru's theme of general and complete Disarmament, or the idea that nuclear weapons be eliminated, from this Good Earth. China too became enthusiastic in its support to the US and also encouraged the Sri Lankan Ambassador Dhanapala, who became the lead non-aligned lobbyist for this grace and favour treatment for the Nuclear Five. He is this year Sri Lanka's nominated candidate to contest election for the post of UN Secretary General. Any hopes for any possible amendments to the NPT were dashed; and India found itself totally isolated. Its well-known objections got ignored and overlooked. After this debacle, it seems an irony that many Indian VIPs and policy-makers, past and present, have continued to show their everlasting commitment to the so-called "non-aligned solidarity"! Our 'loyalty' to non-alignment is being viewed by discerning, observers as mindless, hollow and ridiculous. Our recently sacked EA Minister surprised many of his colleagues by his routinely promoting non-aligned 'solidarity', loudly and often.

Certain friendly nations: Libya, Iraq, North Korea, Egypt and South Africa, Argentina and Brazil, all signatories to the NPT, who had earlier striven to acquire weapons capability, but later succumbed to US pressure to abandon this quest have lately started displaying serious envy and angst against India, and show even a certain mild hostility towards us. Several of them, in various ways, sought and received help and advice from Pakistan's Dr. A.Q. Khan. For some years we have known that non-State actors like Al Qaeda too have been making **furtive** and feverish efforts to lay their hands on weapons-related technology, know-how, designs and materials. Around 1998 Dr. A.Q. Khan had permitted certain senior Pakistani nuclear technology personnel to visit parts of Afghanistan and met Al Qaeda members and even Osama himself. Our peaceful nuclear experiment of 1974 had demonstrated to the world that India had the capability and the will to handle nuclear explosive devices. Post 1995 action and attitude of the non-aligned and China, insisted that India must conduct itself

as per its status as a non-signatory to the NPT. We have refused to enter into arguments and have continued to act by ignoring rather than refuting those arguments. We have also continued on our own course without infringing the strict codes of non-proliferation. We are determined to maintain our deterrence capacity vis-à-vis China and Pakistan. We created it, and mean to maintain it, in a manner visible to all as such.

This is the summary of how we see ourselves in nuclear world, and what lies behind our calculations. We need to be secure today and maintain this security also for future generations of Indians, who, we hope shall be able to live with self-assurance and dignity that can be availed by only those capable of creating wealth and productivity. In short a happy, secure and prosperous future for all our peoples.

Clause by clause drafts of the NPT were negotiated between USA and USSR in 1967-69. The finally agreed text of the Treaty was opened for signatures in 1970. I was then Director Disarmament in the MEA, which in reality meant being the dog's body responsible for analyzing each article as it evolved into its finally agreed version. Once the Draft Treaty was finalized over several months, we had to determine how useful it would be for India to either sign it or not. Several diplomatic seniors including the then Foreign Secretary favored our signing the Treaty. I was opposed to this line, in view of its negative complexity as seen from my worm's eye view from the floor level! Each one of our political leaders involved with this issue i.e. Prime Minister Indira Gandhi; Foreign Minister M C Chagla; MOS Dinesh Singh etc. was opposed to the idea of signing it. I saw the NPT as a blatantly discriminatory and, therefore, unacceptable document. Deputy P.M. Morarji Bhai, who rarely agreed with Indiraji, joined her in asserting that India could not sign this text. Israel made no statement but avoided signing it. Pakistan was hugely suspicious of India's motivations and somewhat confused, but paid us the ultimate compliment of emulating our decision. The rest of the membership of the UN, including all the so-called 'non-aligned', divided as they were, between the two blocs, signed docilely on the dotted line.

Between 1972 and the present time the two original negotiators and their friends and followers have succeeded in structuring an elaborate system of inspections, full

scope Safeguards, and have built a brick-wall of technology denials against most non-weapon States whether fully loyal to the NPT system or not. Gradually the US-led Western industrialized countries have evolved concepts of dual use technology, and of denials of anything made in the USA or by any of its friends who may have used US technology in producing such even marginally nuclear-related item can deny it to a third country like India.

However, now that India and USA have a defence cooperation agreement plus civilian Space Cooperation and civilian Nuclear Cooperation agreements, one expects this denial regime to end.

The IAEA Secretariat developed over time, a system of issuing Information Circulars (also called Inficircs), for providing politico-juridical and technological definitions which soon became authoritatively prescriptive. They also established within the IAEA framework a body called the Committee for Assurances of Supply. It has effectively functioned as a Committee for Denial of Reactors, fuel, blueprints, ancillary equipment *et al.* This system of denials, Inspections and Safeguards has by now got structured as a 'Chakravyuh' which can be breached only by those members of the NPT world considered Kosher (e.g. China's proliferation to Pakistan in recent years) while others treated as pariahs remain ineligible to import any nuclear related blueprints, technology, or equipment, even those meant for utilization for peaceful nuclear energy. Also all dual-use technology items can be denied to them, and not merely in the nuclear field. Only a handful of developed, technologically capable countries of Europe, North America and Russia are both eligible and capable of producing the equipment and Reactors required for generating atomic electricity. The system itself has become so esoteric that few pretend to understand it adequately.

India was amongst the first countries, outside the magic circle of the five permanent members of the UN Security Council, and their developed, industrialized friends, to commence its own nuclear research and production. As early as in 1946, Nehru had invited Dr. Homi Bhabha, the Father of our nuclear programme, to brief selected members of our Constituent Assembly-cum-Parliament, even before our

Independence was inaugurated on August 15, 1947. To begin with both Pandit Nehru and Prof. Bhabha were fully committed to GCD (General and Complete Disarmament) but as time went by, both of them realized that nuclear weapons had in real politik terms already become a unique currency of power. Only those capable of wielding and handling it would be seen as 'the big boys', worthy of the appellation Major Powers in the emerging system of power balance.

By the late sixties India's capability in nuclear research got known, well recognized and accepted. Soon after the establishment of the IAEA, India was accorded the status of a permanent member of its Board of Governors. Out of its total 35 members only 10 were thus recognized. In 1984-85 when China was being inducted into the IAEA, to replace Taiwan, which until then, occupied the Chinese seat there, certain Anglo-Saxon members started an elaborate intrigue to suggest that the permanent seat held hitherto by India be yielded to China. I was India's Governor in the IAEA then, and saw red at this move and over several months fought to preserve it, and was able to thwart the move. Let it be said that the assortment of African, Asian and Latin who were then members of the Board, for different and varying reasons, had after making their individual calculations, none were willing to stand and be counted as friends loyal to India. One had to bully and black mail certain of the major powers oneself, just as they had tried to do to India. One had the satisfaction of defeating this foul scheme hatched by our detractors.

Only those of us who have functioned and negotiated in IAEA for some years can appreciate the complexity of the technical problems and issues already tackled and negotiated between India and the USA in reaching our 2nd March Nuclear Deal. However, as Mazzini had stated immediately after Italy's reunification was achieved: we thought we had arrived at the summit of our achievement, and discovered that the flat ground which was there required our labour for much further construction. India will soon be required to negotiate a new and unique safeguards system with the USA, and this will also involve the IAEA. Further and sustained hard work lies ahead of those who are today recipients of the nation's gratitude and congratulations.

In recent years Americans too, as they led their western allies right in the beginning itself also received unexpected and forceful support from the Soviet Union for their mutually agreed principle meant to encourage all the States, with the exception of the five nuclear weapon capable States, not to aim to build such explosive devices, as that would carry a heavy price tag and involve severe sacrifice and punishment, not yet defined by the US-USSR duo then.

India and Canada were the two nations which failed to be admitted into, and did not enter the exclusive club of the five recognized nuclear weapon States, but could perhaps have staked a claim for that status. Canada's geographical proximity to the USA; the close friendship between the two neighbours, its emotional and political closeness to the UK, and what then was still the White Commonwealth, made the quest for separate nuclear security unnecessary for Canada. But India was hamstrung, rather busy sorting out the debris of Partition process and Pakistan's continuing incursions into Jammu and Kashmir. It, therefore, could not, and was unable to demonstrate its capability as a nation ready and willing to build and explode a nuclear device, as quickly as China did in 1964, before the date of finalization of the NPT became a major negative factor for India. However, India's brain power and research power were visibly there, already recognized, and her independent experiments and research went on, creating much sub-terranean chagrin amongst those who wanted us to be held back in this technology.

From time to time changes do take place, in the international system and these lead to the global order evolving, changing and getting visibly altered. These periods of flux can either be gradual or sudden and jerky. For the last several years as China's annual rate of economic growth, and India's, have reached 10% per annum and 7 to 8% respectively, the global order is getting altered. Coincidentally there has been an abnormal and sudden increase in the prices of hydro-carbon fuels. Japan's economy too has, after many years, commenced on a path of revival. The growing demand for energy in these three rapidly rising economies: China, India and Japan, indicates to the international community that it was perhaps a mistake for the world not to have structured and refined technology for Nuclear Reactors, so as to enlarge the role of the

atom as a clean, non-polluting source for augmenting global energy production. For thirty years, since 1974, India was being treated as a global nuclear pariah, facing denial of fuel and equipment to help our research and industry to augment power generation. 1974 onwards it was in the freezer of major international sanctions, with several additional ones that got imposed on India after 1998.

Separately and for a variety of their own reasons the USA too chose to neglect further refinement of its own civilian nuclear technology. Their production of Reactors and related equipment was allowed to stall and later atrophied. Scientific improvements and innovations for producing Reactors and other nuclear equipment for peaceful uses got scant attention. As the world market in nuclear Reactors and equipment shrank, nuclear power industry attracted less research and attenuated financial investment. Additional measures for denying nuclear technology were imposed and the world market for these items shrank. All this, perhaps unwittingly provided incentives for small clandestine and criminal entrepreneurs in nuclear trade, taking greater risks for making additional profits. A.Q. Khan of Pakistan became the prime exemplar of this. USA reduced its hi-tech trade in nuclear items.

As India's economic, technological and democratic clout increased during the last several years, and its success through its own efforts in several hi-tech areas became more visible, the world discovered also that this country had refused to be defeated by any sanctions, or to dilute its pursuit of excellence and ethical standards in these areas of research and technology, and that India was determined, despite pressures, to maintain rigid proliferation standards against spread of WMDs, and its technology. President George Bush on his own recognized the need to establish an Asian power balance and could perceive the need to seek the cooperation of India which was seen as the sixth global balancing power. The world had already accepted as the principal balancing powers of our era: USA, EU, China, India, Russia, and Japan. President Bush grasped the benefits of India being incorporated into the global nuclear system with its expanding productivity and rising per capita GDP. India could also assist the revival of civilian nuclear energy globally. The US corporates at this

point in time, were understandably getting involved in persuading their Government and the Congress to take a positive view of these possibilities.

Certain financial and energy consultants calculated that the USA could supply India at least 25 billion dollars worth of reactors and other nuclear ancillaries, in the next ten years. The accepted arithmetic for this is that \$ 1 billion additional in US productivity can add 11000 jobs to its work force. Additional sales of \$ 25 billion worth of American Reactors could provide the USA 275,000 jobs per annum, and that would give a huge boost to the American economy.

These calculations were behind President Bush's offer of 18th July, 2005 to Prime Minister Dr. Manmohan Singh. For 222 days details of nuclear related terms that were on offer, had to be negotiated by US and Indian experts before the final breakthrough of March 2, could be achieved and announced.

The joint Bush-Manmohan Singh Statement of March 2, 2006 also announced their agreement to cooperate in the following additional areas: mutual security against common threats; democracy and its values; effort to transform over-all Indo-US relations; trade policy and investment flows; defence cooperation; cooperation in fighting terrorism; Container Security Initiative; overall cooperation in agriculture, including bilateral trade in agriculture; joint efforts to revive the Doha Round negotiations; maritime cooperation; establishing a bi-national Science & Technology Commission; cooperation in civilian space exploration, satellite navigation, and launch of US satellites; assistance to the Indian lunar Mission, Chandrayan; disaster relief initiative etc.

Bush declared in his Press remarks on 2nd March: 'What is done is what is required to be done, and what shall surely be done. What this breakthrough indicates is that times change; situations evolve; fresh opportunities and contentions appear; nations assess their roles differently at different times and in different situations; the world changes.'

Very few amongst us choose to remember the time in the early seventies when India's story in the Western media, led by powerful Anglo-Saxon, US-UK press was

one of a thoughtless, callous society fighting wars against its much smaller neighbour rather than solving its major and almost insoluble problems of: malnutrition, starving babies, providing education & health services to its villages etc. It bears no longer any relationship with our story, just thirty odd years ago!! Today the global media underlines India's capacity for research; its ability to capture the global market in services; the excellence of our IITs and IIMs; the incredible cultural and archeological wealth of our nation; diligently expanding our infrastructure; India's requirement of vast amounts of energy, and hence its ability to bring down consumption of world's hydro-carbons if other sources of energy are built, e.g. nuclear means. The international community attempted to run for 30 years a not-so-successful non-proliferation related denial regime against India. We are today watching the world commencing to abandon the effort. Also to recognize India as a de facto nuclear weapon State, if not a de jure one! Pakistan in its turn is now seen country that can beg or borrow resources from both China and USA, both treating it as their particular protégé. It however, cannot be a jointly propped-up protégé, as one protector is disappointed by the protégé's inability to move on the road to democracy, social welfare, or human rights; and for the other it has become a constant and altogether high-cost grantee of resources for their conventional weapons, missiles as well as nuclear ones.

We have to be aware that, in the process, China has made our neighbour a long term dagger pointed at our throat.

Since 1998, France has shown far greater understanding than other major players, of India's strategic interests and requirements. President Chirac managed to visit India just a few days ahead of the Bush visit. This visit had every potential of becoming both cordial and fruitful. India had not forgotten that immediately after Pokharan-II in 1998 France became the first major foreign power to dialogue with India cordially and normally. On that occasion President Chirac himself had talks with the then NSA Brajesh Mishra. However, just a few days ahead of Chirac's visit to India a number of negative and anti-French articles concerning scandals and scams started surfacing in Indian newspapers and journals. Chirac was quoted stating that in

the area of providing assistance in civilian nuclear arena to India he would need to follow USA's lead in respect of what precisely the US do will need to be followed by him. There were certain international non-proliferation obligations to which Paris too was committed. We had no objection to this formulation. We were, however, mindful of the specific French attitude on India, which remains that it is keen to integrate India into the global nuclear network. He also remains sensitive that in such issues many so-called experts in the USA and UK consider Paris as a meddler and an interloper.

Interestingly just prior to Chirac's visit the Arcelor issue (Lakshmi Mittal's bid to take over this French-EU Steel Unit), and certain cheeky comments that had appeared in the French Press on the topic got high-lighted. The controversy over breaking of the old French air-craft carrier 'Clemenceau' which reportedly had in its structure large amounts of asbestos that pollutes and is environmentally hazardous. This asbestos issue played neatly into the hands of those who wished to discredit and ruin the Chirac visit. Thereafter followed certain allegations against Indian middlemen/agents involved with the sale of Scorpene submarines by France to India. These too were played up negatively by our media. Any sensitive political observer could notice from this sequence and the pin-point timing of these that so many anti-French items could not have burst on our Front-pages, without somebody planning it with a view to maximizing their anti-French, anti-Chirac potential to engineer damaging France-India relations. This indeed illustrates the power of today's public relations and advertisement firms both to assist and damage specific interests of bilateral and other relationships.

President Bush is seen by both adversaries and friends as a leader, who, once he takes a decision permits himself no second-thoughts, that could lead him change or defer its implementation. Examples: having decided to invade Iraq and effect a regime change there, he refused to change course, despite world-wide outcry personally against him. His first-term Secretary of State Colin Powell, opposed the decision and, after a while, had to walk out into the Cold. Until Bush's South Asia visit this month, he had remained firmly supportive of General Musharraf despite the latter's reluctance to respect the norms of democratic behaviour; and his inability to demonstrate his

determination to pursue hostile Al Qaeda and Taliban terrorist leaderships, the bulk of whom are now reported to have found shelter on Pakistani mainland.

It is getting known that the final decisions on the latest nuclear deal with India, could be made only after President Bush had ignored a great deal of scientific and strategic advice tendered to him. He has gone ahead and agreed to a new and wholly realistic status for India, as (i) a responsible and principled nuclear power meticulous in maintaining the spirit of the principles and practices of non-proliferation; (ii) a country which refuses to concede an inch of its own sovereign rights as a non-signatory of the NPT, a State, however, that had attained its technological nuclear capabilities through wholly licit and transparent means; (iii) with a special but unique status as a de-facto, but not de jure nuclear weapon State.

The final deal was one on which the expert negotiators on the two sides failed to agree, despite their goodwill, seriousness, competence, and determination; and at the end had to be finalized and settled by two determined and focused leaders. George Bush has delivered what he had committed to our P.M. in July, 2005. P.M. Manmohan Singh too refused, in the meanwhile, to permit the fierce, confused and confusing domestic political opposition, which tried to exploit, in this controversy, certain irrelevancies like India's IAEA vote on Iran, or the deliberately fanned communal passions. In this, the shield provided to the P.M. by the Congress President was truly magical.

In recent months and years British Journals and commentaries had never opposed any major White House policy moves, and broadly speaking had remained supportive also of Indian decisions. An important British journal used unusually harsh terms, asserted that India does not have a "God-given right" to nuclear technology. The USA's accepting a compromise now, it asserted, will be seen as a "dangerous mistake". How can USA favour India, which has never joined N.P.T., it queried. Other nuclear States (UK?) and wannabes not-so-favoured (Pakistan ?) will now accuse the US of 'hypocrisy.' One Asia expert in Britain warned US against sending a "wrong signal" by cosying up to India too much, as there could be inferences drawn about "America's intentions towards China". They ridiculed USA and India if they think that

somehow India could be an adequate counterweight to China. It warned, they are bound to be disappointed. The Guardian attacked the Bush administration for “rewarding” India with a nuclear deal. On this occasion they responded with peevish bitterness and pique, hostility and unremitting criticism against the Bush White House, and India. One wonders why.

Until now both USA and India have scrupulously avoided making any mention of China, in this context. Two facts, however, remain. One the Chinese pronouncements on Taiwan have continued to be aggressive and harsh; also China’s loud anti-Japan rhetoric has remained rough and tough. Two, the Chinese have gone on prevaricating with India, even after 43 years of controversy and negotiation and have persisted in avoiding settling the bilateral boundary question. This has disappointed India, and its friends. All this while, however, India has persisted in ignoring though not condoning China’s moves to comprehensively arm Pakistan, using their (China’s) own resources as grants donated to Pakistan, providing them conventional arms-building capability, and industry, factories, plants and machine-tools for making their own rockets and missiles, and above all providing Pakistan nuclear weapons capacity, in clear contravention of their obligations under the NPT. Meanwhile India and China had agreed some years ago to sign a mutual Peace and Tranquility Treaty; to build and encourage mutually profitable trade and cooperation, **inter alia** also in Information Technology, and in other hi-tech fields; agreed to build transparent border CBMs; agreed to opening up their bilateral border trade, and at China’s initiative, on two occasions, discussed and settled at the highest levels certain basic principles to provide guidance to both countries, towards moving to finalize their bilateral boundary and border settlement. At the end of it, India has merely received from them a bold and arrogant demand (made publicly through the media, and also during closed door negotiations) for the territory of Arunachal Pradesh, and more particularly the Tawang region in West Arunachal.

We should recognize that China will now feel discomfited with the Indo-US nuclear deal, and need vigilantly to watch out for further reactions and responses from Asian powers to these developments. We find already some evidence of China beginning to encourage Bangladesh to expect greater assistance in the nuclear field

from China. North Korea's negotiations with the USA too could develop greater complexities.

Henry Kissinger feels that US and India are moving towards an unprecedented level of cooperation and interdependence. He asserts too that the defining aspect of Indian culture has been that of maintaining Indian identity through centuries of foreign rule, without the benefit for a long time of a unified, specifically Indian State. Huns, Mongols, Greeks, Persians, Afghans, Portuguese, and Britons, came and conquered some land in India, established empires, and then vanished, leaving behind multitudes of their own people absorbed here, clinging to the impermeable Hindu culture. India does not strive to spread its culture or its institutions, and this does not make it a comfortable partner for global ideological missions. India, in other words, tends to digest its own conquerors, and still remains comfortable. What India analyses uniquely well, and with great precision is that which it sees its national security requirement. They have a deep understanding of equilibrium and of their national interest. Its recent policy in respect of its neighbours has been parallel to the old Monroe Doctrine, applied mostly by persuasion, only occasionally by use of force.

Across the intractable barrier of the Himalayas and the Tibetan massif India has been dealing with China's giant power, while also structuring a security belt against military pressure. Neither China nor India has so far engaged in a diplomatic or a security contest for attaining pre-eminence in the middle of Asia. Both countries will keep protecting their interests, but realize that they have too much to lose from a general confrontation, or a shooting war. India and USA have so far found it in their interest to maintain a constructive relationship with China. Indian participation in building a new world order, the US feels, will benefit them too. But India is not likely to serve as US's foil with China, and is bound to resent attempts to be cast in that role. In both South-east Asia and South-west Asia India's future efforts and attitudes will be determined by its economic and political strength, and a broader relationship in which the principal actors will be China, US, Japan and India.

Two regions will retain prime importance for India. One, the region between Kolkata and Singapore, and second that between Mumbai and Yemen. In both these

areas, for a variety of facets, perceptions and reasons, USA and India can be helpful and useful to one another. For India playing the balancer power role is nothing new. It had, on its own, already devised that role for itself during the Cold War, and again in the current era, when Russia can no longer be seen as a super power, and is no longer adversarial to the USA, while China has emerged as a major and growing geopolitical player with considerable ties to the USA, especially in the economic arena, India has quietly abandoned its attitude of aloofness, concluding that the old isolation is no longer viable or useful, India has worked out a new configuration of power and influence, through new economic and political equations. We see in this latest analysis of India's strategic re-positioning, the old Kissinger of the sixties and seventies reinventing himself, as somebody who unambiguously supports India's nuclear capabilities which deserve to be appreciated and accepted, not only by the USA but by the entire western world. India should now be seen as an influential balancer of power, a country seeking to lend its support for building a world of equipoise. The Professor seems now to be arguing: What can be so threatening for anyone in the world in the new project of building cooperation between two large, serious, major democracies, both seeking peace, balance and an all-round strengthening of productivity.

One of our senior, and most balanced, objective commentators, B.G. Verghese too has advised the country to shed its diffidence and nostalgia, and applaud the results that our Prime Minister has sought and won, at the end of recent hard negotiations with the hardest of bargainers from the USA. The fear that the nuclear deal will tie India to America's apron strings betrays a lack of confidence in the country's fibre. Let us not ignore that only recently, in the eighties and nineties, India withstood international sanctions, and opposed the discriminatory CTBT single-handed against the entire world.

As the US administration takes this bilateral nuclear agreement to the US Congress, to the Nuclear Suppliers Group, and the IAEA, we need to watch and observe, without wailing loudly, as some seem to be doing: "Hai, hai, yeh to gazab ho gaya; aur hum to Amerika kay chellay, chumche ban gaye", wallowing in self pity!! The entire world, however, sees in us a strong nation of a huge size, with a huge,

largely talented population of superior quality, with a humongous & large internal market, a functioning democracy, culturally, politically, and economically, socially united, unused to being jostled around by either capitalists or communists, neo-conservatives, or militarists, charting out our own uniquely chaotic but useable model! But we do have insatiable energy needs that are putting pressure on global hydrocarbon supplies and prices. It is not surprising that a society like the USA sees in us a reliable democratic partner capable of helping fight terror, with a mutually compatible knowledge society. B.G. Verghese has pointedly mentioned that India will pursue its own interests and values some of which, it obviously shares with the USA, but that does not mean that we can be required to consider all those States as rogue ones whom the US may characterize as such. Many of these States have been our friends over a long period and we cannot suddenly start demonizing them or threatening support for those who may wish to change a regime here, and a regime there.

In recent weeks, we have seen in our own internal electoral politics an intensely partisan effort, from a point of view exclusively of political expediency of those who oppose the current coalition in power as a threat, whipping up minority grievances on the US positions specially on the nuclear pursuits of Iran, and its current style of waging war inside Iraq. They do not seem to be able to see that the recent Bush visit to India for finalizing the nuclear deal, was not meant to be seen in the context of the over-all happiness and well-being of our minority community. In a democracy these things will happen for electoral reasons, and one has to understand these with both tolerance and caution.

India is a country of a large size with various innovations to its credit in certain technologies, a certain performance record in terms of Information Technology, capable of attaining excellence in certain areas of higher education, trying hard to reform its economic and financial performance, yearning for public support while moving towards good governance, but still with a residue of items on our national agenda which remain to be fulfilled. We need, therefore, to have greater unanimity in our total society, on major issues and must learn to separate what is relevant to a

particular area of our national functioning, to be kept separate from what could be considered as irrelevancies in that area.

Amongst professional diplomats which this country has sent abroad I must be one with the largest amount of experience in dealing with Civil Wars and internal strife, having seen all this through in Cyprus, Lebanon, Afghanistan, Iran, and in parts of General Zia-Ul Haque's Islamist government in Pakistan and his efforts to apply the shariah law parallely with the common law jurisprudence of normal South Asian genre. Of course all these things sparked off in Pakistan in those days new tensions and problems that continue even today, under a new, self-proclaimed secular General. The final sacrifice of that particular era was President Zia himself.

One of the worst crises of my diplomatic career was when I had to watch helplessly in Beirut, the ouster of Yasser Arafat, a personal friend of mine, who had asked me to call him Akh Abu Ammar, to Tunisia and he had to suffer the indignity of accepting a number of naval vessels offered by the USA for the safe evacuation of his Central Committee and the core Palestinian fighter regiments. In each case whenever such tragedies have overtaken leaders or entire societies, my experience shows that these events occurred flowing from angrily articulated differences of views, thoughts and dreams one did not need to do, but people often do due to violent anger of their idealistic feelings expressed in groups and societies that are basically irrational and hugely ambitious.

If we in a democracy like India, we do not learn to keep our eye on the essentials and start getting angry and emotional about irrelevancies, as some people did in the context of the India-US Nuclear deal, when one needs to remind oneself of Shakeel Budauni's dire warning contained in the following shaer. After all, Shakeel too was an Aligarh Muslim University alumnus:

“mere' housle' itne boland hein ke' paraye shouloun ka dar nahin
mujhe' khauf a'atesh e gul se' hey' yeh chaman kahien jala na dey”

Each such venomous strife, Prof. Nurul Hasan used to analyse, was caused by irrational, unheeding thought processes which ignored rational analysis of one's immediate national or societal interests. He himself had remained essentially a Marxist in his thinking, but never did he ignore the larger nationalist interests for reasons of personal or ideological pique. He preferred not to allow his view of Indian history to be submerged in the Marxist-Leninist theories. A good example of this was his study of the primary, secondary and autonomous Zamindars and Talukdars who became such an essential part of the revenue and taxation system, and thus of governance in general from Emperor Akbar's era until the period in Lucknow of the Nawab Viziers of Oudh. He kept his logic and analysis objective, clear and uncluttered. I was never formally a student of his, but I must here confess that he taught me rationality, and a great deal about how national historical stories evolve and through change and flux in different eras, without the geography, or the will and psyche of the people altering in a major way. Through his example of cool and sober analysis he did teach me a lot about life, and how to handle oneself through periods of change and flux. In a sense, during the nearly three decades that I knew him as a friend and teacher, in my perception he had evolved into the kind of Rishis and Gyanis of the imperial era of Akbar Kabir, a period of which he was the historian par excellence. And he analyzed well individuals who were indistinguishable in their religious beliefs and faith, whether they were called Upanishadik Acharyas, or Sufi Saints; and per chance could be seen himself as one such.

I dedicate this piece of my writing as my personal tribute to Nurubhai, as a token of my affection, love and loyalty.
