

**RESEARCH PAPER****Analysis of New Era of Relationship between Modern India and Great Britain Begins after Brexit****Rakesh Kumar**

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Email: aryaraaz.defence1981@gmail.comReceived: 3rd January 2017, Revised: 25th February 2017, Accepted: 28th February 2017**ABSTRACT**

The process of strengthening relations began with President R. Venkataraman's visit to England in April 1990. R.V. conveyed to the British Prime Minister, Margaret Thatcher India's serious concern at Pakistan's involvement in terrorist activities in Punjab and Kashmir of which incontrovertible proof had been given to the Pakistanis. He also suggested to the British Prime Minister that the absence of an extradition treaty need not come in the way of extradition of terrorists. Mrs. Thatcher also expressed her concern over the upsurge of fundamentalism in the world and was firmly of the view that no country could ever think of negotiating with terrorists who were acquiring more sophisticated techniques and that their challenge must be met by the governments with greater determination and superior techniques.

Key words: Era of Relationship, Modern India, Great Britain

INTRODUCTION

Indo-British relations have had their ups and downs, but certainly there has been very considerable interaction between them. In addition the large Indian and Pakistani communities (including Mirpuri) in the United Kingdom made their own contribution to hiccups or growth in the relationship. But what was remarkable was the development of a new, almost special relationship between Indian and the Tory government in London, belying the traditional belief that India was more comfortable with Labour. The relationship spawned both economic and political ties. What was witnessed during 1991-95 can only be described as a flowering of relationship in all its aspects.

Mrs. Thatcher was soon afterwards succeeded by John Major who gave a new dimension to Indo-British ties and raised the relationship to a level never achieved before. He gave a big boost to both the political and economic relationship. Britain was among the first countries to put in a special effort to take advantage of the economic reforms of India. As it was, in 1991 Britain, it was claimed, was the largest foreign investor in India. Of the 100 foreign companies in India, 49 per cent were British and were earning 59 per cent of the foreign exchange earned by all foreign-controlled companies. British companies were evincing a new interest in investing in India.

That the John Major government had brought about a turnaround in the British approach was apparent from its first statement that came in the British Parliament on the Indian situation. Replying to a question, the British Minister of State in the Foreign Office, Tristan Garel-Jones justified the exceptional measures taken by New Delhi to deal with terrorism in the Punjab and called upon Pakistan not to support the terrorists. He said that a handful of Sikhs had organized a violent campaign against India which had its dens in Britain, Canada and the United States. He was affirmative that the British government would not permit a handful of Sikhs to plan or finance terrorism in India. The ground was thus ready for a much closer Indo-British political and economic relationship. India was already negotiating with Britain agreements for the confiscation of money and property of the drug traffickers and terrorists operating from the United Kingdom. This was further discussed by the British Secretary for Home Affairs, Kenneth Baker during his brief visit in January 1992. His meeting with the Minister for External Affairs Madhav Singh Solanki must have been the most satisfactory from the Indian point of view, for Baker was reported to have described India as a 'genuine victim state'. He agreed with Solanki that the rising tide of religious

fundamentalism coupled with terrorism posed a particular threat to democratic societies like India. He undertook to convey to the Pakistani leaders India's serious concern in this regard during his forthcoming visit there.

Close on the heels of the Baker visit came the British Foreign Secretary, Douglas Hurd in mid-January. Hurd hailed India's economic reforms and carried forward the discussions on an extradition treaty and other political issues. He believed that even though both countries were confronted with the problem of terrorism efforts should be made to ensure that there were no human rights violations as alleged by some groups in Kashmir. The two countries agreed on an official level Indian delegation to visit London to pursue negotiations on an extradition treaty. The firm stand taken by the British government on the issue of terrorism was emphatically stated by the British Prime Minister in his correspondence with Lord Avebury, a militant supporter of the 'Jammu and Kashmir Liberation Front'. He told Avebury, who had asked him to spell out his government's policy on Kashmir, that Britain was not satisfied with Pakistani assurance that Pakistan was offering only moral and political support to the Kashmiris in their opposition to India. 'We doubt whether it would be helpful to try to do so', he said. The British Prime Minister also told Avebury, 'We believe that ultimately the dispute can only be solved by a peaceful agreement between India and Pakistan ...as both have committed themselves to do in the 1972 Simla Agreement. We have offered to help but only if both sides wish us to do so'.

Indo-British relations were on the bounce and perhaps the most important development in this regard was John Major's visit to India as the chief guest at the Republic Day parade on 26 January 1993. Apart from a British Aerospace (BAE) delegation, Major was accompanied by perhaps 'the most prestigious group of British businessmen ever to accompany a British Prime Minister abroad', as he himself put it subsequently. The British and the India Prime Minister were in complete agreement on the need to combat religious fundamentalism and expressed total abhorrence of terrorism which had tragically affected both the countries. The British Prime Minister said at a banquet speech that those who sought to bring about change through violence did so because they could not secure democratic assent. India and Britain were both resolutely committed to opposing such methods.

It the political relationship was being enormously strengthened, the economic dimension of the visit was no less significant. The two sides were agreed upon the establishment of Indo-British Partnership Initiative (IBPI) led by the private sector and supported by the two governments. The highlight of the economic side was a joint venture agreement signed by British BAE and Hindustan Aeronautics Limited (HAL) for setting up a software company-HAL, BAE Software, based in India. With 49 per cent equity participation of HAL and 40 per cent of BAE, the company would make speciality software, for mainly engineering application, for sale to third parties.

Flanked by his own industrialists and speaking to the captains of Indian industry, the British Prime Minister promised that 'Britain will move up the batting order since the wicket is more friendly in India'. He was responding to a comment by an Indian industrialist that 'Britain, which was the opening batsman, has gone down the batting order as far as foreign direct investment was concerned. He also assured India that Europe would not become a fortress and that trade barriers must be removed. He invited Indian to invest in Britain to have a direct access to the European market since 'Britain is back in business'. That the British Prime Minister was extremely pleased with his was clear from his subsequent comments in the House of Commons. Speaking during the question hour he claimed that the contracts signed by the British companies during his visit were worth billions of pounds and could help in creating 20,000 jobs. He referred to the £100 million supply contract for British Gas and a £140 million power transmission contract for GEC Alsthom. 'We established a new rapport with the India government and the Indian business community that will bear rich fruit in trade, investment and jobs'. His comments came in the backdrop of some criticism of his visit as a waste of time, particularly a virulent attack by the time, London. A few months later, speaking at an Indian High Commission Luncheon, John Major said that he saw in India something of a romance. The next day marked another milestone in the development of Indo-British ties. The House of Commons approved the Indo-British extradition treaty by an overwhelming majority. The treaty had been signed earlier in September 1992 sending a clear signal to anti-Indian militants operating from British soil that Britain would no longer be a safe

haven for them. The treaty brought Britain extradition arrangements with India at par with those already existing with USA and most other European countries. Curiously, however, not a single member of the Labour Party voted for the treaty, while 31 of its members voted against in along with 4 Liberal Democrats and 3 Tories. Before the end of the year India and Britain had finalized tie-ups and contracts running to almost £1 billion as part of the Indo-British Partnership Initiative (IBPI). The agreements related mostly to the power sector. Speaking on the occasion of the signing of the agreements abroad the royal yacht HMY Britannai off the Bombay shore, British Foreign Secretary Douglas Hurd remarked that the IBPI was 'much the biggest trade effort made by the British'.

As we have remarked earlier, economics and politics went hand-in-hand in the Indo-British relationship. Britain made it clear that there was no change in its Kashmir policy. While welcoming the proposed resumption of talks between India and Pakistan, the Minister in the Foreign Office, Mark Lennox-Boyd replying to an adjournment motion in the House of Commons on the human rights situation in Kashmir maintained that a bilateral dialogue under the Simla Agreement provided a framework for the solution of the Kashmir issue. The external support for violence in Kashmir should cease and the human rights situation there should improve. The Minister expressed the government's view that the UN resolutions on Kashmir had, to some extent, been overtaken by events and that in any case neither side had fully implemented these resolutions. The issue had been raised by a couple of members (like Max Madden) who were known to be harsh critics of India.

THE HISTORIC CHALLENGES AND RELATIONS

Yet another significant step in the development of economic relations was taken when the two countries signed a ten-year agreement to promote and protect investment in the two countries during Prime Minister P.V. Narasimha Rao's visit to Britain in mid-March 1994. The agreement, signed in the presence of both Narasimha Rao and John Major was hailed as an important achievement of the IBPI, which was extended by another year with the intention focusing on small and medium companies to boost trade links. The two co-chairmen of the IBPI, the British and the Indian, in their report made a number of recommendations to the two governments for strengthening economic links and identified business opportunities in different sectors, including power, agro foods, processing, manufacturing technologies, telecommunications and telematics, industrial components, infrastructure and environment, oil and gas, financial and legal services, and consumer goods. On the political side John Major was reported to have suggested to Narasimha Rao that some confidence-building measures might be taken to ease tension and facilitate talks with Pakistan. India was willing to resume talks with Pakistan but believed that the resumption of the dialogue was linked with the cessation of border terrorism. The British understood India's position on militancy and the problems it posed for the army, but still favoured greater transparency in the observance of human rights. The British government also demonstrated greater sensitivity to India's concerns on the nuclear non-proliferation issue and the matter was not raised during Narasimha Rao's visit. The Indian Prime Minister was extremely satisfied with his visit and believed that 'our relations are marked by mutual trust, confidence, understanding and awareness of many shared interests and values' and that an additional cementing factor were the strong inputs given by business and industry of both countries to their economic relations.

LABOUR PARTY AND INDIA

The conventional belief has been- and it was not wrong up to a certain period- that intellectually and even emotionally India felt itself nearer and more akin to the British Labour Party than the Conservatives. Historically many eminent persons of the Labour Party had been sympathetic to India's struggle for independence and India's political leadership had many personal contacts with a number of British Labour leaders. Even after the attainment of independence it was believed that the British establishment, particularly the British bureaucracy (that had been ruling India) and the media was tilted towards Pakistan, not having 'forgiven' India for its defiance of the British empire, whereas there were still a number of personages in the Labour Party sympathetic to India's aspirations and democratic, secular polity. In fact the situation was changing right after

independence and by the eighties any special relationship with the Labour Party had become defunct. The position was actually reversing itself by the nineties. Whereas a new relationship was developing between the conservative government and India, there was increasing disenchantment in India with the Labour Party. The differences centered on the Kashmir issue. Labour's approach towards the Kashmir issue was more and more influenced by constituency politics. The Pakistan's community, especially the Mirpuri community, in England constituted a significant segment of the voting population in some constituencies and the Labour MPs (or candidates dependent on these votes not only became hyperactive in championing the Pakistani cause on Kashmir but came to have an enormous clout over Labour's standpoint on Kashmir.

Even though the leader of the Party would take a more moderate position, a sufficient number of vocal members, including some in the leadership, gave a more virulent twist to the official policy. At the beginning of the nineties, Neil Kinnock was the leader of the Labour Party and his standpoint was more moderate than that of his shadow home secretary and foreign secretary. Kinnock's stand was reflected in the Party manifesto which said, 'The Labour government will make itself available to our friends in India and Pakistan to assist in achieving a negotiated solution to the problem of Kashmir that is acceptable to all the people of Kashmir-Muslims, Hindus and Buddhists. 'The manifesto also promised to set up a human rights division in the Foreign and Commonwealth Office requiring all Britain's diplomatic posts abroad to appoint an officer to monitor human rights. But both the shadow home secretary Roy Hattersley and shadow foreign secretary Gerald Kaufman (both of whom had large Kashmiri or Pakistan constituents) were harping on the theme of self-determination in Kashmir and a plebiscite to determine the wishes of the people. The shadow home secretary was promising that if Labour formed the government, it would move the United Nations on Kashmir as well as on Punjab. Both were promising to give priority to the Kashmir issue if Labour was voted to power.

As it happened, Labour was defeated in the April 1992 elections and Neil Kinnock made way for John Smith. Both Hattersley and Kaufman faded out at least for the time being from the political scene, although there were others to take their place in India-baiting, like Max Madden, who, however, was a backbencher and not the Labour spokesman. Smith brought balance and sanity back to the Labour policy towards India. He supported bilateral talks between India and Pakistan, beginning of a political process in Kashmir and cessation of support to terrorism in Kashmir from outside. He was enormously impressed by India's democratic ethos and indirectly supported India's entrance into the Security Council as a permanent member. But Smith's sudden death in May 1994 brought the position back to square one, so to say, and divided Labour opinion again, with a number of Labour dignitaries taking the usual anti-India positions. With approaching elections the rhetoric over Kashmir was again raised by many decibels for obvious domestic political reasons, even while the official Labour standpoint tended to be more sober. The manifesto of the Labour Party researched by Tony Blair in June 1996 asserted that a Labour government in Britain would more actively mediate to facilitate a solution to the conflict in Kashmir and claimed that a Labour Britain 'would be well-placed to help facilitate the Indian and Pakistani Governments to find a solution to the conflict in Kashmir, which would have to be acceptable to all the people of the region- Muslims, Hindus and Buddhists.

A Labour Party delegation led by the shadow foreign secretary Robin Cook and including the well-known NRI industrialist, Lord Swaraj Paul, came to India end October on what might be called a familiarization four-day visit, followed by a trip to Pakistan (but without Swaraj Paul). Robin Cook's response was more positive than that of the critics of India in the Labour Party, but the Party was still speaking with many voices, no doubt largely influenced by electoral considerations. Speaking at a meeting of the Kashmiri separatists in Halifax in Yorkshire, the Party spokesman on foreign affairs, Derek Fatchett declared that his party wanted self-determination for Kashmir and would 'press for a settlement before the 50th anniversary of those resolutions' (due in 1998). He also ridiculed India's quest for a permanent seat in the Security Council with the dismissive remarks, 'The world will tell her to clear the mess in her own backyard before we can take her seriously'. What politicians can do or say in order to win an election is well known. As was expected Labour was swept to power in May 1997 and the first indication given by its Foreign Secretary (foreign minister in other countries) was that of an activist foreign policy, with considerable attention to

human rights and environment, but outlining the priorities of his government's foreign policy, he made no references to India, Pakistan or Kashmir.

Remarkably also, the new Prime Minister Tony Blair put a virtual cap on statements on Kashmir, and the Labour government has been very discreet on the conflictual situation in the subcontinent. Yet many of the ambiguities of Labour's approach to the subcontinent remain and there is no knowing when they might again come to the fore. If some of the dears entertained in India over Labour policy turn out to be unfounded, then the growing economic and commercial ties between India and the United Kingdom could well continue to develop and forge ahead. But if driven by electoral politics, Labour leaders try to meddle in Indian affairs; it would not only negatively affect their political relations but also impede the development of other relations. Five years ago fifty two people were killed on the tube and on a bus in London and in November 2008, we watched in horror as terrorists went on the rampage in Mumbai, killing scores of Indians and three British Nationals. As we know we are more affected by these terrorist attacks, we promise together we worked with our government in the investigation into these events, we remain determined that those responsible must be brought to justice. Both India and Britain propose to establish close security relations. The terrorist we face are adept at crossing borders, communicating globally, and concocting the most abhorrent plans to destroy our way of life. It's only by increasing the ties between us that we can defeat them. So I want us to broaden our counter terrorism partnership, including looking at new areas such as cyber security and terrorist financing. Last year, Delhi hosts the commonwealth Games, which is safely and success fully completed, through the close cooperation between Indian police and intelligence of India. But in two years London hosts the Olympic Games, in which we (India) share its burden through increase cooperation in many sector related to security matters. In the area of Defence technology and cooperation, Britain and India signed a defence deal to the building of Jaguar and Hawk aircraft in this city in recent decades.

In New Delhi Monday, 22 March 2004 India signed a preliminary agreement with Britain for buying 66 Hawk advanced Jet Trainers (AJTs) worth 795 million pounds after almost two decades of protracted negotiations. Indian Defence Secretary Ajay Prasad who signed the agreement here (New Delhi) with British High Commissioner Michael Arther said 'We have been negotiating the purchase of the Hawk trainer for many years'. The actual deal for the Hawk Jets- 24 of which will be bought in a flyaway condition from BAE systems while the rest will be made under license by state owned Hindustan Aeronautics Limited. The contract will contribute towards creating and sustaining highly skilled jobs here in India and in Britain and will further extend the successful industrial collaboration between our two countries in the defence, aerospace and engineering sectors. The delivery of the jets will be completed in six years and 75 Indian Air Force the Hawk in Britain alongside their Royal Air Force counterparts.

The agreement guarantees product support for the jets for 25 years in an effort about the supply of spares. The pact will be automatically extended by 10 years unless either side notifies the other of its termination.

The British government will ensure that prices and condition negotiated by BAE systems are fair and reasonable and comparable to prices negotiated by Britain for its own contracts.

The Hawk Jets, used as trainers air forces of 18 countries including Britain, Australia and Saudi Arabia can also be used as ground attack aircraft. When both country think about to protecting their people, both cannot overlook what is happening in Afghanistan and Pakistan. Both we-like-you want a Pakistan that is stable, democratic and free from terror. Both, we-like-you want an Afghanistan that is secure free from interference from its neighbours and not a threat to our security. Both country, India and Britain are determined that groups like the Taliban, the HaqqaniNetwork or Lakshar-e-Taiba should not be allowed to launch attacks on Indian and British citizens in India or in Britain. Nor against our people, whether soldiers or civilian, from both our countries who are working for peace in Afghanistan.

Climate change is an important issue between them which need to tackle together. 'Fail to act now and we are looking down the barrel of catastrophic floods, intense heat waves and droughts. Physical geography would dictate human geography, climate change exacerbating waves of migration, poverty, and hunger'.

In fact, nowhere are the risks from climate change more apparent than here in India with over half a billion people on the Ganges Plain and much more of your agriculture dependant on water from the Himalayas and a reliable monsoon. Climate change does not respect borders- what is sown in one part of the world is reaped the world over. That's why we need global action, with all major economics playing their part. It must be started on government level getting an international agreement on climate change, because it is very urgent.

In way the UK has already reduced carbon emission by more than 20 per cent from 1990 levels, and our new government has been taking radical steps to de-carbonise and build a greener economy, we need unilateral action to tackle it. When we see Cancun, Kyoto protocol and De'orio summit on climate change, we find that there is lot of misperceptions about each other due to which it is not implemented honestly. At this issue the UK and India working at business and research level too. If we want to save our Earth and its uniqueness, it is time to see new cars that are really fuel efficient, new source of energy that are affordable, new products that will change the way we live. These will not only help to protect our planet, but also bring with them jobs and money. The British and Indian companies are building solar panels right in Bangalore. And Indian manufactures are working on the next generation of electric cars in Britain. We need to move forward in our relationship in the sector of clean energy, electricity brought to poorest people, New Jobs, provider of place keeping troops to the UN, collaboration in IT sector and Wealth.

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