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By Kazi Anwarul Masud

Odd Arne Westadt of Harvard Kennedy School of Government (The Cold War and America's Delusion of Victory RED CENTURY AUG. 28, 2017) is of the opinion that America's post-Cold War triumphalism came in two versions-one of Bill Clinton's emphasis on prosperity while the other was George W Bush's emphasis on predominance.

It is debatable if the terrorist attacks of 9/11 on New York and Washington D.C. had not happened then "neo-Sovereignists" and supporters of "American Exceptionalism" who got berths in Bush jr's kitchen cabinet would have been able to take America to continue to predominate the world politics and global hegemony . Bush's Afghanistan attack widely supported by the Americans and the world at large was necessitated by the vacuum created by Soviet withdrawal from Afghanistan in late 1980s that plunged the country into chaos and finally in it's the occupation by Taliban. Bush also faced the challenge of the rise of China and India reducing US unipolarity to a fleeting episode in world history.

Westadt lamented "Both the West and Russia would have been considerably more secure today if the chance for Russia to join the European Union, and possibly even NATO, had at least been kept open in the 1990s. Instead, their exclusion has given Russians the sense of being outcasts and victims — which, in turn, has given credence to embittered jingoists like President Vladimir Putin, who see all the disasters that have befallen the country over the past generation as an American plot to reduce and isolate it." Barak Obama's Presidency saw a period of multilateralism where American cooperation was extended and division and discrimination was not sheltered. In Obama's Cairo speech he told the Muslims that the fight against the terrorists was not a fight against Islam totally contradicting Samuel Huntington's observation that Islam was the problem.

Recently when Donald Trump mused on CNN: 'I think Islam hates us,' he was expressing a common sentiment among many Americans. It's not about Islamic extremism anymore – it's a general prejudice against anything associated with Islam. New York Times early this year thought that this worldview borrows from the “clash of civilizations” thesis of Huntington, and combines straightforward warnings about extremist violence with broad-brush critiques of Islam. It sometimes conflates terrorist groups like Al Qaeda and the Islamic State with largely nonviolent groups such as the Muslim Brotherhood and its offshoots and, at times, with the 1.7 billion Muslims around the world. In its more extreme forms, this view promotes conspiracies about government infiltration and the danger that Shariah, the legal code of Islam, may take over in the United States. Those espousing such views present Islam as an inherently hostile ideology whose adherents are enemies of Christianity and Judaism and seek to conquer nonbelievers either by violence or through a sort of stealthy brainwashing. In contrast despite Barak Obama's partiality like most American politicians in favor of Israel persisted he sent his Secretary of State John Kerry for Middle East mission. Things dramatically changed not only with the ban on Muslims entering the US with the election of Donald Trump as President he scrapped the Transatlantic Alliance and consequent abandonment of US security coverage to China who aspires to become the wealthiest nation in the world.

It is difficult to predict the course of global event. Many would differ with the idea that the US has abandoned Asia. Profesor Joseph Nye jr writes that China's size and high rate of economic growth will almost certainly increase its strength in relation to the United States. But even when China becomes the world's largest economy, it will lag decades behind the United States in per-capita income, which is a better measure of an economy's sophistication. Moreover, given our energy resources, the U.S. economy will be less vulnerable than the Chinese economy to external shocks. Growth will bring China closer to the United States in power resources, but as Singapore's former Prime Minister Lee Kwan Yew has noted, that does not necessarily mean that China will surpass the United States as the world's most powerful country. Even if China suffers no major domestic political setbacks, projections based on growth in gross domestic product alone ignore U.S. military and “soft power” advantages as well as China's geopolitical disadvantages in the Asian balance of power. The U.S. culture of openness and innovation will keep this country central in an information age in which networks supplement, if not fully replace, hierarchical power.(AMERICA IN THE 21ST CENTURY WILL BE DEFINED BY THE RISE OF THE REST-JOSEPH NYE JR-2013).

Who then could contest American supremacy? Surely not North Korea despite Kim Jong-Un's nonsensical nuclear threats. Can it be Russo-China détente? But as Odd Arne Westadt says “Russia and China, unlike the Soviet Union, are not likely to seek isolation or global confrontation. They will attempt to nibble away at American interests and dominate their regions. But neither China nor Russia is willing or able to mount a global ideological challenge backed by military power. Rivalries may lead to conflicts, or even local wars, but not of the systemic Cold War kind.....What did not change with the end of the Cold War were the conflicts between the haves and the have-nots in international affairs”.

This brings us to Donald Trump's Afghanistan policy statement of 21st August 2017. This is of direct importance for South Asia. In his speech he speaks of three fundamental conclusions about America's core interest. First, is an honorable exit from Afghanistan. After all 17

years have passed since the Americans went in and spent billions of dollars in a chaotic and corrupt country half of which is under the control of the Taliban. .Second, Trump is aware of predictable and unacceptable consequences of a rapid exit from Afghanistan. The vacuum created would be quickly filled by ISIS and Taliban terrorists. Third, and finally, he concluded that the security threats faced in Afghanistan and the broader region are immense.

Today, 20 U.S.-designated foreign terrorist organizations are active in Afghanistan and Pakistan, the highest concentration in any region anywhere in the world. For its part, Pakistan often gives safe haven to agents of chaos, violence and terror. The threat is worse because Pakistan and India are two nuclear-armed states whose tense relations threaten to spiral into conflict. Repeatedly Donald Trump refers to shelter given to terrorists who are fighting the US and Afghan soldiers. "We can no longer be silent about Pakistan's safe havens for terrorist organizations, the Taliban and other groups that pose a threat to the region and beyond". Pakistan has much to gain from partnering with our effort in Afghanistan. It has much to lose by continuing to harbor criminals and terrorists....But Pakistan has also sheltered the same organizations that try every single day to kill our people. We have been paying Pakistan billions and billions of dollars at the same time they are housing the very terrorists that we are fighting. But that will have to change. And that will change immediately. No partnership can survive a country's harboring of militants and terrorists who target U.S. service members and officials. It is time for Pakistan to demonstrate its commitment to civilization, order and to peace".

Pakistan naturally denied the accusation of providing shelter to the terrorists and called upon the US to work with Pakistan to eradicate terrorism.

India on the other hand welcomed President Trump's call on Pakistan to immediately dismantle the shelters used by the terrorists. In Afghanistan there was universal positive reception from the Afghan leadership to Trump's comments. Afghan President Ashraf Ghani welcomed the "enduring commitment" through the new strategy which he indicated "increases capacity in the Resolute Support Mission. There is, however, skepticism that despite punishment that may be given by Trump administration Pakistan will mend its ways. After all giving shelter to terrorists (Osama bin Laden comes to mind) is structurally embedded in Pakistan's security establishment. ."

It's nothing new for US leaders to vow to get Pakistan to change its ways," said Michael Kugelman, a senior associate for South Asia at the Washington-based Woodrow Wilson Centre. "What remains to be seen is how Trump intends to compel Pakistan to alter its behavior."He added: "In all likelihood, Pakistan is unlikely to change its ways regardless of what threat or punishment Trump comes out with." (Strait Times Singapore With Chinese support, Pakistan can ignore Donald Trump on Afghanistan AUG 24, 2017) quotes Harsh Pant of King's College London that With more than US\$50 billion in planned infrastructure projects and strong diplomatic support for its positions, American threats to withdraw billions in military aid are becoming less worrying for the powerful army, which dominates foreign policy.. "China is the shield now behind which Pakistan can be expected to continue to play its double game.... The more aid America will cut, Pakistan will be expecting China to fill the vacuum."Pakistan has long denied it harbours terrorists. But despite rising frustration from US lawmakers over designated terrorist groups such as the Haqqani Network - who strike Afghanistan allegedly from inside Pakistan - China's support for its ally means Pakistan does not need to alter course". No less a greater shock came again with Donald Trump's decision to withdraw from Climate

Change Agreement signed in Paris after years of negotiations.

Professor Jeffrey Sachs described President Trump's decision on global warming as 'sociopathic, paranoid and malevolent'; He added Trump's utterances as "utterly delusional, deeply cynical, or profoundly ignorant. Probably all three. And they should be recognized as such." In reality scientists from all over the world are unanimous on the catastrophic consequences of climate change. An international team of experts who issue annual report on carbon emission in its report for 2013 announced that global carbon emission was 2.3% triggering a fresh warning that "that even a 'moderate' warming of 2°C stands a strong chance of provoking drought and storm responses that could challenge civilized society." The gravity of the situation can be understood by the fact of the general consensus among scientists that aggregate emissions since industrialization began in the mid-eighteenth century must be held to a trillion metric tons. Almost 600 billion of those tons have already been emitted. If current trends continue, it will burn through the rest in the next twenty-five years. Thus, what is essential to preserving the possibility of 2 degrees is reversing these trends, and doing so immediately. The way to achieve the goal of 2% carbon emission is for the major emitters to decide on drastically limiting their emission while the victims of emission to be compensated for the acts of the emitters. Despite all these incontrovertible facts President Trump has withdrawn his country from the Paris accord.

According to The New York Times the effects of climate change are already having an impact on the U.S., after average temperatures have risen dramatically over the last four decades.. The "U.S. Global Change Research Program Climate Science Special Report," compiled by a group of scientists from 13 federal agencies, found with high confidence that it was "extremely likely that more than half of the global mean temperature increase since 1951 was caused by human influence on climate. "The report is part of the National Climate Assessment, which has been congressionally mandated to be conducted at least every four years since 1990. A National Academies of Science committee reviewed the study and agreed with its accuracy. The report contradicts claims by President Donald Trump and some members of his administration, who have disputed the connection between greenhouse gas emissions and climate change.

This tour d'origin of Donald Trump's foreign policy is only a faint picture of a world to be unfurled in future. For now it can only be a kaleidoscope of the real world we live in.

(The writer is a retired Secretary and Ambassador of Bangladesh)

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