US Polls & Implications for Pakistan (Pakistan Observer)

Shams uz Zaman, Mr.
US polls and implications for Pakistan
Shams uz Zaman

The confident President Obama after being re-elected is expected to adopt more bold positions on domestic and foreign policy issues as he faces numerous challenges on domestic and foreign issues. US still remain divisive and polarized, a display of which came after thousands of citizens in around 18 states filed petitions for “secession from the Union to create their own new government”. Another major challenge at the domestic front is of economic recovery and tax cuts on which Republicans and Democrats have divergent positions.

The first major policy speech made by Obama after the re-elections was regarding avoiding the “Fiscal Cliff” but its little early to say if the Democrats and Republicans would put aside their differences to resolve the issue. On the foreign policy front there are numerous complex challenges including Afghanistan, Iran, Pakistan, Syria, China, Russia and relocation of Al-Qaeda in Yemen and sub-Saharan Africa. With the prospects of a new team of officials taking over the Department of Defence, Department of State and Central Intelligence Agency President Obama needs sincere advisors and analysts with more rationalism and less conservatism.

There are lot of US academics offering advice to the US policy makers. Some are rational despite being critical; others’ thinking process seems to be blocked by their prejudices and hatred. With regards to Pakistan academics like Christine C. Fair, Daniel Pipes, Charles Krauthammer and Hussain Haqqani etc are few examples whose opinions are cynical and overshadowed by their personal bigotry and abhorrence towards specific issues. Daniel Pipes and Charles Krauthammer suffer from a deep rooted Islamophobia while Christian C Fair is very unfair when it comes to Pakistan and her last few articles in Foreign Policy not only undermines her academic credibility but also indicates of her paranoiac syndrome towards Pakistan. Mr. Hussain Haqqani’s writings on Pakistan after the momogate humiliation become understandable which usually reflects of his personal vendetta towards Pakistani institutions. It still remains unclear that how much influence such voices enjoy on the US policy makers, but the recent trends indicates that the gulf
between the US and Pakistan is growing and problems are likely to compound rather to become simplified in the post May 2 period, until and unless President Obama moves away from stereo type of thinking regarding Pakistan which appears less likely.

Pakistan has become dependent on the foreign aid despite immense domestic potentials mainly because of governance issues. Self-sufficiency is not something which remains out of reach, but just that it has so far not become the priority of the ruling elite who remains badly addicted to foreign aid. The much of foreign aid has either been misappropriated or has been wasted away in futile projects thus has overall contributed very less to the economic growth and prosperity. Ground realities just substantiate these assertions. On the other hand, growing economic and political issues in the US dictate that the flow of aid to Pakistan would eventually be capped and bulk of US forces would depart from Afghanistan thus leaving Pakistan and Afghanistan to find their own destiny.

Apparently, no dramatic change is expected for Pakistan after the US elections and Pakistan will have to find regional solutions to the regional problems besides learning to stand on its own feet. State like Russia, China, Iran, Turkey and Saudi Arabia therefore gains added importance for Pakistan. China has already invested a lot in Pakistan while Iran and Russia have shown their interest in mega gas pipeline projects on which Pakistan has yet to take a decisive action. As Europe further plunges into economic recession, the world donor agencies like IMF and World Bank might not find enough funds to bail out Pakistan. The Pakistani military therefore might have to play some constructive role behind the scene at this critical juncture to convince the government that now there is no other solution to survival except for self-sufficiency.

—The writer is an MPhil research fellow at NDU.

http://pakobserver.net/detailnews.asp?id=182388