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MRS. CHRISTINA ROCCA : *Her Past, Present & Future*

by B.Raman

Mrs.Christina Rocca, who has been nominated by President Bush, subject to Senate confirmation, as the new US Assistant Secretary of State for South Asia in place of Mr.Karl Inderfurth, is presently a foreign policy adviser for Senator Sam Brownback (Republican-Kansas).

Mrs.Rocca, a career officer of the Central Intelligence Agency (CIA) since 1982, resigned from the CIA in 1997 and started working with Mr.Brownback. Mr.Brownback had moved two amendments, adopted by the US Senate in 1999, vesting powers with the President to lift sanctions against India and Pakistan if he deemed it fit.

Mrs.Rocca, who belongs to Washington DC, lives in neighbouring Virginia along with her husband and two children. She is a graduate in history from London's Kings College.

It is believed that she was closely involved in the operations of the CIA against the Soviet troops in Afghanistan in the 1980s. She had twice visited India and Pakistan under her real name.

Mrs.Rocca belonged to the clandestine operations Directorate of the CIA, which sends officers abroad under different cover jobs. In the early 1990s, she monitored the implementation of a plan for the buy-back by the CIA from the Afghan Mujahideen groups and the Inter-Services Intelligence (ISI) of Pakistan the unused Stinger missiles supplied by the CIA, free of cost during the 1980s, for use against the Soviet troops. The CIA apprehended that these missiles might get into the hands of Islamic terrorist groups and might pose a threat to the security of the US President and other foreign VIPs, including the Prime Minister of India.

Lt.Gen.Javed Nasir, the Director-General of the ISI during Mr.Nawaz Sharif's first tenure as the Prime Minister (1990-93), did not co-operate with the CIA in the implementation of this buy-back scheme. It was on the recommendation of Mrs. Rocca that Mr.Clinton placed Pakistan in the so-called watch list of suspected State-sponsors of international terrorism in January, 1993, and demanded that Mr. Nawaz Sharif should remove from the ISI Lt.Gen.Nasir and other senior officers identified by Mrs. Rocca as

colluding with international Islamic terrorist groups. After Mr.Sharif succumbed to the pressure and removed them, Pakistan was removed from the list in July,1993.

Since leaving the CIA in 1997, she has hardly written or spoken on foreign policy issues and has confined her role to advising Mr.Brownback on South Asia and helping him in transacting the business of his Senate Sub-Committee on Near Eastern and South Asian Affairs.

She was a member of a bipartisan group of Washington academics and former government officials constituted by the Washington Institute for Near East Policy, which, in a report on West Asia submitted on January 16,2001,advised the incoming Bush Administration to consider whether the Oslo process has run its course and might usefully now be replaced. It suggested that President Bush himself should "reserve his intensive involvement" in the Middle East peace process "for decisive moments," and reduce the role of the CIA in the Israeli-Palestinian relationship. The report urged the administration to "recognize the sharp differences between" Iraq and Iran, both of which it saw as "major threats to U.S. interests" and to regional stability. It said that the U.S. should act to promote political change in both countries, but should realize that in Iran such change can come though peaceful political dynamics while in Iraq it "will almost surely come only through violence."

The study was guided by a Steering Group, which included amongst others, Senator Brownback himself and she was included as a member of the group on his recommendation. Amongst other members of the group were Mr.James Woolsey, former Director of the CIA during President Clinton's first term, and former Congressman Stephen Solarz, both reputed to be good friends of India and critics of the Clinton Administration's soft approach towards China's clandestine supply of nuclear and missile technologies to Pakistan.

The recommendations of the report for a tougher counter-proliferation and counter-terrorism policy by the Bush Administration should be of interest in assessing Mrs.Rocca's likely views on the subject. The report said as follows:

* "Weapons of mass destruction (WMD) proliferation is perhaps the most serious ongoing security threat to the United States from the region. The new Administration should make one of its highest priorities the preventing of WMD proliferation in the Middle East and, failing that, penalizing, deterring, and containing the proliferant.

* "Build regional and international consensus about non-proliferation. Take the initiative toward creating a Middle East WMD-free zone. Continue to argue for direct negotiations about WMD among all regional

states, based on the principles of a comprehensive peace in the area and intrusive regional inspection mechanisms to ensure full compliance. In the interim, encourage practical steps, such as confidence- and security-building measures.

* "To reduce the attractiveness of WMD, enhance deterrence and prepare a vigorous response to proliferation breakout. Specify that were Iraq to use WMD against another country, the United States would be prepared to use overwhelming military force against Iraq, preferably in a broad UN coalition but, if necessary, only in conjunction with close friends and allies....

* "Deepen and extend cooperation on regional missile defenses. Place a high priority on developing, advocating, and helping to implement cooperative defense against missiles among U.S. partners in the Middle East. Such cooperation could begin with the Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) countries, which have decided to coordinate among themselves on missile defense, building on the U.S. proposal for a Cooperative Defense Initiative. Extend this to include Jordan, Egypt, Turkey, and - as circumstances permit - Israel. Encourage use of the Arrow antimissile system by Turkey and eventually Jordan, along with other friendly states in the region.

* "In recent years, state sponsorship of terrorism has become less prominent, just as the region has witnessed an increased threat from non-state actors. The new President should lend high-level encouragement to counter-terrorism cooperation among U.S. allies and friends in order to deal with threats, new and old.

* "Learn from antiterrorism success stories. These include the successes of Turkey against the PKK (Kurdistan Workers Party), Egypt against the Gama'a Islamiyya, and, to some extent, Algeria against the GIA (Groupe Islamique Armee).

* "Insulate antiterrorism efforts from peace process dynamics. Work to convince all parties in the peace process that antiterrorism efforts should be delinked from the ups-and-downs of diplomacy. In this regard, Jordan presents a positive model, whereas the record of the Palestinian Authority (PA) has been uneven. When lax on counter-terrorism, the PA needs to pay a price in terms of its relationship with the United States.

* "Strengthen response to continuing challenges. Enhance efforts to promote international cooperation against violent Islamist extremist networks. Take an

active role in organizing intelligence cooperation - if necessary, playing an intermediary role among countries that do not want to be seen openly sharing information. Work with European and Middle Eastern countries to apply collective pressure on the few remaining states that provide refuge or turn a blind eye to such terrorists, i.e. Iran, Pakistan, Yemen, and the Taliban in Afghanistan.

* "Make more effective use of existing U.S. policy instruments. Follow through on official pledges to pursue terrorists for their crimes even when diplomatically inconvenient, for instance, the Khobar Towers bombing suspects in Iran. At the same time, be prepared to use military force against countries that provide safe haven to terrorists....

* "The process of determining the State Department's list of state sponsors of terrorism has ossified. Consider defining road maps to removal from the list, and order a policy review to seek ways to make the list more effective against governments that do little to prosecute terrorists."

From the Indian perspective, amongst subjects of likely interest and concern to her would be Pakistan's role in Afghanistan, reports of Pakistan flouting the UN arms embargo against the Taliban, the contacts of rogue elements in Pakistan's nuclear and missile establishment such as Dr. Abdul Qadir Khan, the self-proclaimed father of Pakistan's atomic bomb, with the regimes in Iraq and North Korea etc.

The "Dawn" of Karachi reported on her on March 26,2001, as follows:

* "She is generally regarded as a person of balanced and independent views, with good relations with both Pakistani and Indian lobbies - qualities that may also help to provide an indication as to the Bush administration's approach to South Asia.

* "She is familiar with the subcontinent and its intractable problems, and the belief is that she is unlikely to look at the region from any one particular prism. "

The News International of Pakistan circulated the following report on Mrs.Rocca on March 27,2001:

* "As Legislative Assistant of Senator Brownback, Rocca is known to have helped him formulate a more active US policy towards South Asia. She also shares Senator Brownback's views on a tough US stance towards China.

* "Since she had worked as Brownback aide for considerable time, the Senator might be an important prism to analyse Rocca. As Chairman of the Foreign Relations Subcommittee on Near Eastern and South Asian Affairs, Brownback played a key role in convincing the Congress not to ignore South Asia, which remains the most dangerous flash point on earth. Brownback maintains a balanced approach between India and Pakistan-supporting increased relations with India without dumping Pakistan.

* "Rocca is known to have varied interests in South Asia as well as the Middle East. She is an activist for the freedom of Tibet, which indicates her anti-China bias. Some Indian experts see that factor favouring New Delhi.

* "She was part of the Presidential Study Group - a bipartisan, blue-ribbon commission of The Washington Institute- which recently suggested to the President policy options on the Middle East. If the recent paper produced by the Institute-co-signed by her as part of the group-is any indicator of her views, Pakistan can expect a tougher stance on issues like terrorism. The group devotes a section to this issue, bracketing Pakistan with Iran, Yemen and Afghanistan. It says that the process of determining the State Department's list of state sponsors of terrorism has ossified. It recommends that Washington order a policy review to seek ways to make the State Department's list of states sponsoring terrorism more effective against governments that do little to prosecute terrorists. Understandably, she is just a co-signer in the study and should not be judged from one isolated paper. But like her boss, she is likely to be part of that growing bipartisan consensus against terrorist activities."

(The writer is Additional Secretary (retd), Cabinet Secretariat, Govt. of India and, presently, Director, Institute For Topical Studies, Chennai. E-Mail: corde@vsnl.com)

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