

Sheikh Hasina Speaks Up on US Plot

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The exclusive report in today's Economic Times carrying Sheikh Hasina's first remarks after her ouster from power will come as a slap on the face of the nincompoops in our country who are waxing eloquently about developments in that country as a stand-alone democracy moment in regional politics.

[Hasina told ET,](#)

"I resigned, so that I did not have to see the procession of dead bodies. They wanted to come to power over the dead bodies of students, but I did not allow it, I resigned from premiership. I could have remained in power if I had surrendered the sovereignty of Saint Martin Island and allowed America to hold sway over the Bay of Bengal. I beseech to the people of my land, 'Please do not allow to be manipulated by radicals.'"

The ET report citing Awami League sources implied that the hatchet man of the colour revolution in Bangladesh is none other than Donald Lu, the incumbent Assistant Secretary of State for South and Central Asian affairs who visited Dhaka in May.

'I could have stayed in power if ...': Sheikh Hasina claims US role in her ouster from Bangladesh

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Screenshot from [Times of India](#)

This is credible enough. A background check on Lu's string of postings gives away the story. This Chinese-American 'diplomat' served as political officer in Peshawar (1992 to 1994); special assistant to Ambassador Frank Wisner (whose family lineage as operatives of the Deep State is far too well-known to be explained) in Delhi (1996-1997); subsequently, as the Deputy Chief of Mission in Delhi from 1997-2000 (during which his portfolio included Kashmir and India-Pakistan relations), inheriting the job, curiously enough, from Robin Raphel, whose reputation as India's bête noire is still living memory — CIA analyst, lobbyist, and 'expert' on Pakistan affairs.

Indeed, Lu visited Bangladesh in mid-May and met with senior government officials and civil society leaders. And shortly after his visit, the US announced sanctions against then

Bangladesh army chief General Aziz Ahmed for what Washington termed his involvement in “significant corruption.”

Image: U.S. Department of State – [Ambassador Donald Lu](#) (From the Public Domain)



After his Dhaka visit, Lu [told](#) Voice of America openly,

“Promoting democracy and human rights in Bangladesh remains a priority for us. We will continue to support the important work of civil society and journalists and to advocate for democratic processes and institutions in Bangladesh, as we do in countries around the world...”

“We [US] were outspoken in our condemnation of the violence that marred the election cycle [in January] and we have urged the government of Bangladesh to credibly investigate incidents of violence and hold perpetrators accountable. We will continue to engage on these issues...”

Lu played a similar proactive role during his past assignment in Kyrgyzstan (2003-2006) which culminated a colour revolution. Lu specialised in fuelling and masterminding colour revolutions, which led to regime changes in Albania, Georgia, Azerbaijan, Kyrgyzstan and Pakistan (ouster of Imran Khan).

Sheikh Hasina’s disclosure could not have come as surprise to the Indian intelligence. In the run-up to the elections in Bangladesh in January, Russian Foreign Ministry had openly alleged that the US diplomacy was changing tack and planning a series of events to destabilise the situation in Bangladesh in the post-election scenario.

The Foreign Ministry spokesperson said in a [statement in Moscow](#),

“On December 12-13, in a number of areas of Bangladesh, opponents of the current government blocked road traffic, burned buses, and clashed with the police. We see a direct connection between these events and the inflammatory activity of Western diplomatic missions in Dhaka. In particular, US Ambassador P Haas, which we already discussed at the briefing on November 22.

“There are serious reasons to fear that in the coming weeks an even wider arsenal of pressure, including sanctions, may be used against the government of Bangladesh, which is undesirable to the West. Key industries may come under attack, as well as a

number of officials who will be accused without evidence of obstructing the democratic will of citizens in the upcoming parliamentary elections on January 7, 2024.

“Unfortunately, there is little chance that Washington will come to its senses and refrain from yet another gross interference in the internal affairs of a sovereign state. We are confident, however, that despite all the machinations of external forces, the issue of power in Bangladesh will ultimately be decided by the friendly people of this country, and no one else.”

Moscow and Beijing have nonetheless taken a scrupulously correct stance of non-interference. True to Russian pragmatism, Moscow’s Ambassador to Bangladesh Alexander Mantytsky noted that his country “will cooperate with any leader and government elected by the people of Bangladesh who is ready for equal and mutually respectful dialogue with Russia.”

That said, both Russia and China must be worried about the US intentions. Also, they cannot but be sceptical about the shape of things to come, given the abysmal record of the US’ client regimes catapulted to power through colour revolutions.

Unlike Russia, which has economic interests in Bangladesh and is a stakeholder in the creation of a multipolar world order, the security interests of China and India are going to be directly affected if the new regime in Dhaka fails to deliver and the country descends into economic crisis and lawlessness as a failed state.

It is a moot point, therefore, whether this regime change in Dhaka masterminded by Washington is ‘India-centric’ or not. The heart of the matter is that today, India is flanked on the west and the east by two unfriendly regimes that are under US influence. And this is happening at a juncture when signs are plentiful that the government’s independent foreign policies and stubborn adherence to strategic autonomy has upset the US’ Indo-Pacific strategy.

The paradox is, the colour revolution in Bangladesh was set in motion within a week of the ministerial level Quad meeting in Tokyo, which was, by the way, a hastily-arranged US initiative too. Possibly, the Indian establishment was lulled into a sense of complacency?

British Foreign Secretary David Lammy reached out to External Affairs Minister S. Jaishankar with a phone call on August 8 coinciding with the appointment of the interim government in Dhaka, which the UK has welcomed [while also urging](#) for “a peaceful pathway to **an inclusive democratic future**” for Bangladesh — much as the people of that country deserve “accountability.” [Emphasis added.]

India is keeping mum. The only way Bangladesh can figure a way out of the foxhole is through an inclusive democratic process going forward. But the appointment, ostensibly at the students’ recommendation, of a US-educated lawyer as the new chief justice of the Supreme Court in Dhaka is yet another ominous sign of Washington tightening its grip.

Against this geopolitical backdrop, a commentary in the Chinese daily Global Times on Thursday titled [China-India relations easing, navigating new realities](#) gives some food for thought.

It spoke of the imperative for India and China “to create a new kind of relationship that reflects their status as major powers... Both countries should welcome and support each

other's presence in their respective neighbouring regions." Or else, the commentary underscored, "the surrounding diplomatic environment for both countries will be difficult to improve."

The regime change in Bangladesh bears testimony to this new reality. The bottom line is that while on the one hand, Indians bought into the US narrative that they are a 'counterweight to China', in reality, the US has begun exploiting India-China tensions to keep them apart with a view to advance its own geopolitical agenda of regional hegemony.

Delhi should take a strategic overview of where its interests would lie in this paradigm shift, as the usual way of thinking about or doing something in our neighbourhood is brusquely replaced by a new and different experience that Washington has unilaterally imposed. What we may have failed to comprehend is that the seeds of the new paradigm were already present within the existing one.

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