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**ASSIGN
BUSTER**

President Clinton retired in Jan. 2001, and left behind him eight years of brilliant leadership, charisma, economic prosperity and international prestige. He travelled round the world and won fresh accolades for his country. He visited India in March 2000 and also Bangladesh and Pakistan. His trip was an instant success and further strengthened Indo-US relations.

President Clinton, however, was never away from controversies. His pardons on the eve of his retirement were also embroiled in controversy. The Democrats lost the elections, though entailing a lengthy counting procedure; which exposed holes in the U. S. electoral system.

George W. Bush won after a lengthy and protracted counting mess, Al Gore lost the elections by a whisker. The Democrats are the biggest gainers following the Bush bungling the IRAQ invasion. In retrospect it is obvious that a reason for the aggression just did not exist and the circumstances were concocted to suit the Bush imperialistic designs. The Democratic Party lost the Nov. 2004 Presidential elections.

President Bush was re-elected for the second term. Senator Edward Kerry campaigned relentlessly, but could not match the Republican Party's juggernaut and lost narrowly in some of the key states, a repetition of 2000 elections. The Democrats won impressive gains during the elections to the two Houses in mid-2007. For the first time in over a decade, they control both the Senate and the House of Representatives. Ms Nancy Pelosi was elected as the first woman Speaker of the House. The US is set to stay put in IRAQ for many years.

About 4000 US troops have been killed by late 2009, and the ground reality in Afghanistan is equally grim. The war against Islamic militancy is nowhere near a solution; children as young as 15 are being trained to be suicide bombers. Hillary Clinton, wife of former President Bill Clinton, U. S. Secretary of state has visited South Asian countries in 2009.

The death of Benazir Bhutto on Dec. 27, 2007 in a suicide attack has further strengthened the militants and their resolve to dislodge the Americans from Afghanistan.