

US hopes truce will revive peace talks

HT Correspondent
New Delhi, November 30

MR KARL F. Inderfurth, the US assistant secretary for South Asia, said here today that Washington welcomed Prime Minister Atal Bihari Vajpayee's unilateral Ramzan ceasefire offer and hoped conditions would improve in Kashmir for resumption of the dialogue process.

He said the United States was seeking the support of major countries to strengthen the United Nations sanctions against Taliban-controlled Afghanistan. India was one of the countries that have confirmed support if violence does not end soon. He denied there were moves for joint US-Russian military action to stop the halt of Taliban.

Mr Inderfurth is scheduled to attend a meeting of the United Nations Human Rights Commission next week where he will try to convince the body of the need to slap more sanctions on Afghanistan. Though major powers are pressing for fresh sanctions, the UN's Office of the Humanitarian Coordinator for Afghanistan is against it on the premise that it would wreak more suffering on the population of the civil-war torn country.

"Both India and the US have stated that there can be no military solution to the crisis in

Afghanistan. We had targeted Taliban with sanctions hoping it would lead them to expel Osama bin Laden, but unfortunately Taliban has not complied. We are now working towards strengthening the sanctions", Mr Inderfurth said.

Describing his visit, billed as a "farewell" one since a change in Government in the US in January would lead to the expiry of his term, as "most fruitful", Mr Inderfurth said the Dialogue Architecture which was instituted during the March visit to India by President Bill Clinton, would be in place even under subsequent US administrations.

Mr Inderfurth had visited Sri Lanka before he arrived in New Delhi. From here he would be travelling to Nepal and Bhutan. He reserved comment as to why Pakistan was left out of his itinerary. He had visited Pakistan in January this year. Mr Inderfurth had previously expressed the view that he was Pakistan needs to do more on curbing the spread of the influence of Taliban in South Asia and Afghanistan.

"I hope Pakistan will acknowledge the Indian peace initiative and respond positively", he said. When asked for his comments on Islamabad's statement that it would "watch the developments", the assistant secretary said: "We think that should be done".

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U.S. role limited in Indo-Pak. talks

By C. Raja Mohan

NEW DELHI, DEC. 7. As India and Pakistan argue about the shape and structure of their future negotiations, the United States will have a limited but significant role in pushing the peace process forward, informed sources here say.

For the Clinton administration, which has long encouraged India and Pakistan to negotiate seriously on Jammu and Kashmir, New Delhi's unilateral ceasefire comes in its last and fading days.

Although there is little political energy left in Washington during the difficult political transition there, the Clinton administration is said to have communicated to Islamabad last month its strong desire for a favourable response to India's Ramzan ceasefire.

India, however, will be the last one to complain about the positive but low-key

American response to its initiative. As it reaches out to the Kashmir militants and Islamabad, New Delhi is naturally loath to sharing political credit with any external powers.

While the American role in promoting a peace process is limited at this stage, diplomatic observers say Washington will always have a significant impact on the evolution of Indo-Pak negotiations once they begin.

Thanks to the exchange of visits by the U.S. President, Mr. Bill Clinton, and the Prime Minister, Mr. Atal Behari Vajpayee, this year and the new bonhomie between the two nations, the U.S. is no longer seen here as tilting towards Pakistan on the Kashmir question.

The strong American support to India during the Kargil conflict and the perception of U.S. neutrality over Kashmir, leaves Washington in a good position to encour-

age practical solutions to the long-standing dispute between India and Pakistan.

Washington has already begun to move in a pragmatic direction on Kashmir over the last two years. The U.S. pressure on Pakistan during the Kargil crisis to unconditionally withdraw from across the Line of Control was one indication. Mr. Clinton's admonition to Pakistan when he went there briefly earlier this year that "borders cannot be redrawn in blood", was another.

Analysts say Washington has an important responsibility in communicating to the Kashmiri militants as well as to Pakistan that the U.S. and the West have no interest in promoting "self-determination" for the Kashmiri people.

This is essential, they add, given the continuing misperceptions among the Kashmiri dissident leadership that U.S. pressure will eventually deliver New Delhi on the question of self-determination. American

diplomatic activism on Kashmir in the mid-1990s had raised misplaced hopes in Srinagar and Islamabad and these need to firmly corrected, sources here say.

An unambiguous U.S. rejection of self-determination, but empathy with the aspirations for autonomy in Kashmir, should encourage both the militants and Pakistan to develop responsible and moderate positions in the impending negotiations. The U.S. support for any accord between India and Pakistan, observers here say, may also serve as a political cover for the generals in Pakistan if they decide to swallow the bitter pill of political accommodation with India.

They point to the fact that Mr. Nawaz Sharif had to rush to Washington in July 1999 for an American endorsement of the difficult decision to withdraw from across the LoC in Kargil.

The Clinton era in South Asia

By Pran Chopra

Mr. Clinton is leaving America's "engagement in South Asia" in good health from India's point of view. But New Delhi has no room for complacency.

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THE PROLONGED controversy over the choice of the next President of America distracted public attention from an event which deserves it more, the impending end of the Clinton era, which has wrought one of the most important transitions in recent history, and particularly in the relations between the United States and South Asia. If the 1980s saw the end of the cold war, during the Reagan and Bush Presidencies, the Clinton years, the 1990s, evolved a new "post-cold war world order", stable enough and different enough from what went before to be called a new "order".

While the first Clinton Presidency was still trying to grapple with its inheritance, it looked as though the old cold war would soon be followed by another, between the U.S. and China, and the crisis in the Taiwan Straits in March, 1996, underscored the apprehension ominously. But the second Clinton Presidency calmed the waters with a deft combination of the stick and the carrot. The American navy deterred China from intimidating voters during a critical election then impending in Taiwan, and then Mr. Clinton comforted China by inviting it to be a co-partner in the higher management of Asia.

The new order then started falling into place. China decided to prefer the economic gains of peaceful partnership with America over the ideological gains of unenforceable threats. The only other major power centre, the European Union, withdrew its putative challenge to the NATO system controlled by America, as it confirmed during the Yugoslav crisis by agreeing to be an honoured second fiddle. Yesterday's contender, Russia, retired for the time being to lick its wounds while averting its eyes from the fireworks in Belgrade. And America went seriously to work on its new role as the sole superpower and supercop. It is not often that the world order has changed its masters so radically and so rapidly.

Of particular interest to India is the likelihood that it might gain in the new world order as much as it lost in the old.

This had seemed very unlikely when half-way through the second Clinton Presidency, India had to lock horns with America on the difficult but critical issue of the nuclear status it had openly acquired with Pokhran II. The prospect then was that either India would have to forego its new status, with the meagre consolation that Pakistan would also have to do the same, or it would have to face open and combined hostility from all the major powers, with Pakistan too breathing down its neck. But by persevering in the diplomacy of conciliation while holding fast to its main security interests India warded off that difficult choice.

The gap between the Indian and the American nuclear positions has not been entirely closed as yet. But there have been many indications of late that softer choices might be available someday, including an agreed disagreement. The latest indication is also the best, in addition to being a good summing up of the distance the U.S. and India have travelled together, thanks to the understanding of the new South Asia which the Clinton Presidency has encouraged in the U.S., and the distance that remains to be travelled as yet.

One of the promoters of this understanding, Mr. Karl Inderfurth, was in India a couple of weeks ago on a trip which *The Hindu* rightly described as "a farewell visit" which "virtually draws down the curtain on the Clinton administration's engagement of South Asia". In the course of a conversation with the newspaper he painted a picture of the newly-emerged American equation with South Asia, and two features stand out from it. First, an American position on India, Pakistan and the Kashmir issue with which no responsible Indian statesman would disagree much. And second, better prospects on the nuclear issue than at any time since Pokhran II.

Mr. Inderfurth did not need to say much regarding the first feature. Mr. Clinton himself had said all that needed to be during his recent visits to India and Pakistan. The contrast between the two visits is an illuminating piece of the history of South Asia in the Clinton era. But what Mr. Inderfurth said on the second feature, in very measured terms, is worth repeating. "We must be vigilant", he said "that we do not relapse into old ways of dealing with each other... The old sensitivities, and we know what they are, are receding and we are beginning to have a greater confidence in what we have to say to each other. But that does not mean that we will agree on every issue and we should not expect to. Over the next several years we will be testing the proposition that by expanding our relationship to encompass a broad based agenda, we will be better able to narrow our differences on those issues that have proved difficult for us in the past, like non-proliferation..." But what he hoped to see was "a fundamental change in the U.S.-India relationship", a prospect which he said was "one of the high points of (Clinton's) Presidency".

All the steps which enabled his Presidency to reach this particular high point were either carved by Mr. Clinton or with his help. For instance, though the cold war order had ended before Mr. Clinton began his first Presidency, it was he who led America into the new world order in which India is no longer seen as an ally of the Soviet Union, America's enemy in the cold war era, Pakistan is no longer seen as America's "most allied ally" in that war, and America and India are on the same side in facing the worldwide threat of terrorism in the name of religion and the narcotic traffic which funds the terrorist. Mr. Clinton might have had little to do directly with the two other planks — the economy and information technology — on which rest America's new relations

with South Asia (read with India). But no one has done more to bring India's potential to American homes than Mr. Clinton did during his widely televised working holiday in India.

Therefore, Mr. Clinton is leaving America's "engagement with South Asia" in good health from India's point of view. But New Delhi has no room for complacency. It has interests to pursue which can be misunderstood, particularly in America, if they are pursued ham-handedly. For instance, India must trim some aspects of globalisation and liberalisation because they have backfired. But it must trim them with the scissors of facts and figures, not outdated slogans. India may be right in demanding better proof of the "restraint" Pakistan has promised along the Line of Control, and a more sincere response to the ceasefire India has put in place. But India must not fall into the trap Pakistan has set already by suggesting U.N. investigation of complaints by either side. India is right in insisting that the talks with Pakistan will be only bilateral with no mediation by India's own Kashmiris or other parties. But India must acknowledge more candidly that at the end of the day it will have to talk to Pakistan if there is to be anything that can be called a final settlement. India is right in regretting that General Pervez Musharraf has disowned the Lahore agreements, which are the best ever produced by India and Pakistan in half a century of direct or indirect diplomacy. But it must agree to talks with Pakistan as soon as Pakistan agrees to resume the Lahore process, with the same centrality for Kashmir as is accorded to it in the Lahore documents. India rightly insists that the aspirations of India's Kashmiris are India's affair, not Pakistan's. But they must be considered more sympathetically and constructively than they have been, just as the Kashmiris must consider the aspirations of Jammu and Ladakh.

All this has become more necessary, not less, because of the good health in which Mr. Clinton has left America's engagement with South Asia". It needs to be nurtured.

THE HINDU

20 DEC 2000

Bush and the Asian balance of power

By C. Raja Mohan

It will be unwise for New Delhi to rush to the judgment that Washington is all set to treat India as a counterweight to China.

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A S THEY reflect on the political transition in the United States, China is somewhat anxious, Japan very hopeful and India cautiously optimistic about their bilateral relations with Washington. Despite the widespread expectation of a broad continuity in foreign policy under the Bush Administration, the next few months are likely to see the unfolding of an uncertain dynamic in the U.S. relations with the major Asian powers.

Neither Gen. Colin L. Powell, slated to take over as the next Secretary of State, nor Ms. Condoleezza Rice, who will be the National Security Adviser to Mr. George W. Bush, has said too much about Asia in the few days since the two were nominated to these critical foreign policy jobs. Neither of them has any known personal interest in Asia. Ms. Rice is a self-confessed "Europeanist". But the foreign policy establishment of the Republican party has always had a strong interest and expertise in Asia. An assessment of the Bush Administration's approach to Asia would have to wait until the nominations for key positions in the Defence and State Departments dealing with Asia are announced.

Based on what Mr. Bush and his foreign policy advisers said during the presidential election campaign, it would not be incorrect to expect some movement in the U.S. foreign policy towards Asia in the next four years. But the extent and intensity of the movement cannot be predicted. During the campaign, the Republican platform highlighted the policy towards Asia as significantly different from that of the Clinton Administration. The Republican rhetoric, it is argued by many, should not be taken too seriously — for, what they say when in opposition is not what they do when in power.

In the 1992 campaign, the Democratic candidate, Mr. Bill Clinton, accused the then President, Mr. George Bush — father of the present President-elect — of "mollycoddling" the Chinese dictators. A few years later, the President, Mr. Clinton, proclaimed a "strategic partnership" with the same Chinese leaders. While it is important to discount the Republican assertions during the campaign, they must indeed be the starting point for any analy-

sis. Any serious assessment of the U.S. policy towards Asia must also make room for the possibility of change, while appreciating the strong strands of continuity.

The most important declaration of the Bush campaign was that the U.S. under the Republicans would move away from the "China first" policy of the Democrats to a "Japan first" approach. The Republicans argued that Mr. Clinton had neglected the traditional alliance relationship with Japan in favour of a proclaimed "strategic partnership" with China. They insist that alliances which are so vital in times of war must be nurtured with care in peacetime and cannot be neglected.

During the campaign, Mr. Bush also proclaimed that China was not a "strategic partner" but "strategic competitor". These themes have been highlighted since Mr. Bush was declared President-elect. At the ceremony held last week to nominate him Secretary of State, Gen. Powell reemphasised the importance of traditional alliances. He went on to say the U.S. would engage China not as an "enemy or adversary" but insisted that the Asian giant could not yet be treated as a "strategic partner".

The brief remarks by Gen. Powell do not necessarily indicate that a fundamental shift in policy is in the making. The Republican party is itself deeply divided over China. The strong commercial links with it imply that American corporates will not want to see a major disruption in Sino-U.S. relations. Many moderates in the Republican party prefer engaging China to containing it. But there are many geopolitical realists in the party who see China as a long-term threat and argue that the U.S. must begin to take steps to constrain its growing clout in Asia. There are others who are ideologically hostile to China and demand a tougher American line. The eventual Bush policy will depend on how the internal debate in the party and the Administration evolves in the coming months.

The Republican discourse on two other issues has a huge potential to complicate Sino-U.S. relations — Taiwan and missile defences. There is a strong lobby of support for Taiwan among the Republicans, some of whom are determined to open up even the question of "one-China". Beijing, on the other hand, has already cautioned the President-elect not to reopen settled issues, and hopes that the new Administration will abide by the restraint Mr. Clinton has shown on Taiwan. The question of arms sales to Taiwan is one of the early decisions that Mr. Bush

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will have to make next year and it could provoke a strong Chinese reaction.

The U.S. plans to deploy theatre missile defence systems in Asia and develop national missile defence systems are seen in China as constituting a dual threat. On the one hand, they could undermine the effectiveness of the Chinese nuclear arsenal and, on the other, bring Taiwan under the rubric of a missile defence and reduce Beijing's security leverages against the island. China has mounted a strong international political campaign against missile defences, and responded with some concern to Gen. Powell's statement reiterating support for missile defences.

During the final days of the U.S. campaign, the Chinese went public with their anxiousness about the many disconcerting elements of the proposed Bush policy. But the leadership in Beijing is confident that it will be able to persuade the new crew in Washington to avoid confrontation and stay on a moderate course. China in the past successfully used different levers in U.S. domestic politics and played its diplomatic cards in the international arena to prevent Washington from getting too high-handed. Chinese leaders have known the former President, Mr. Bush Sr., quite well since the days he opened the first American mission in China in the 1970s. They are also confident that the free trade and commercial orientation of the Republicans will help to

dampen some of the ideological enthusiasm for containment in Washington under the new dispensation.

While Beijing will indeed face some challenges in the management of Sino-U.S. relations in the coming months, Tokyo has every reason to be pleased with the change of guard. It bitterly complained about "Japan passing" when Mr. Clinton declared a strategic partnership with China in June 1998 and skipped going to the long-standing American ally. Japan will now look forward to the Republican Administration fulfilling its promise to refurbish U.S.-Japan alliance. Among the ideas floating around in Washington are expanded military cooperation and letting Japan play a much larger role in Asian security management.

India is once-removed from the central dynamic of the U.S.-Japan-China triangle that dominates the politics of the region. India, however, is hopeful that in the coming years its own standing in the region will steadily improve and eventually make it an important component of the Asian balance of power. There is some excitement in New Delhi over the Republican promise to treat India as an emerging power in Asia. Some in the Bush team seem to acknowledge Indian security concerns vis-a-vis China and others have often talked about an enhanced Indian profile in the region.

But it will be unwise for New Delhi to rush to the judgment that Washington is all set to treat India as a counterweight to China. Instead of looking for a new cold war in Asia between the U.S. and China, India should focus on enhancing its own economic weight and deepening its political engagement with all the major powers in Asia.

India's relations with the U.S., China and Japan remain way below potential. India will also find it hard to play a larger security role in Asia unless it leads the subcontinent towards greater economic integration and brings a little more credibility to its "look east" policy. India must keep an eye on the unfolding balance of power politics in Asia; but its immediate priorities lie in trying to solve problems in its own neighbourhood, in particular with China and Pakistan.

THE HINDU

21 DEC 2000

Clinton in Ireland on peace mission

BY BRIAN WILLIAMS.

Dublin, Dec. 12: President Bill Clinton arrived in Dublin on Tuesday and was immediately hailed as a "one-off" statesman more than welcome to stay involved in Northern Ireland peace talks when his presidency ends.

The fulsome praise came from Britain's Northern Ireland minister Peter Mandelson as Mr Clinton began a three-day visit to Dublin, Belfast and London that he hopes will exorcise some lingering demons of the past from the troubled British province. Making possibly his last official foreign visit at a time when he still does not know who will succeed him as President, Mr Clinton said he planned one last peace shot on Northern Ireland.

Mr Clinton was a prime mover behind the scenes in helping to

carve out the landmark 1998 Good Friday accord which sought to end 30 years of sectarian strife between the province's Protestant majority and Catholic minority.

But Northern Ireland's home rule government has become bogged down in rows over how to reform the predominantly Protestant police force and get the rebels to disarm. "Both issues reflect the lingering demons of the past and we just have to get over and try to purge a few more," Mr Clinton said before leaving Washington.

Mr Mandelson played down expectations of a major breakthrough but left no doubt that if anyone could do the impossible it was Mr Clinton.

"I think he is a one-off. He is a cross between a thoroughly charming and charismatic human being and a political computer," Mr Mandelson said. (Reuters)

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Europeans foresee closer ties with U.S.

49-16 By Batuk Gathani 15/12

BRUSSELS, DEC. 14. The average Europeans' ambivalence to the U.S. presidential election after weeks of legal wrangling may perhaps be justified. This is happening amid the growing perception in major European Union capitals that a subtle "shift in emphasis" in Euro-American relationship could be in the offing with the advent of the Bush administration. Although senior European Government officials and politicians may have hoped for a Gore victory, they are coming to terms with the advent of the Bush era, which has raised wider expectations on Euro-American trade and security fronts.

Most Europeans agree that much will depend on Mr. Bush's ability to launch a dialogue of reconciliation and seek commonality of purpose amid his supporters and adversaries, in a nation that is equally divided. The European media has been impressed by Mr. Bush's record on this score and praise has been lavished on his ability to seek consensus among political adversaries. This is rated as Mr. Bush's "star quality" and is widely described as more amiable, approachable and a "good communicator."

Mr Bush is "neither an ideologue nor pedantic" but described as a "pragmatist and a dedicated achiever." Important sections of European media have blamed Mr Gore's "stiffness in human relations" and "bad tactical campaigning" for not fully exploiting eight years of prosperity of the Clinton era. This is

widely attributed as the cause of Mr Gore's downfall. Commentators were impressed by the tone and sentiments of both the leaders' television speeches where they pledged to work for national reconciliation.

The average European is also amazed by the seemingly minor role that foreign policy played in the U.S. poll campaign. In major European capitals, there is concern about the enormous military and diplomatic might of the world's sole remaining superpower. Among the E.U. countries, the U.S. has rated Germany as the "most important" among its allies, although Britain claims to have a "special relationship" with the U.S.

Little is known of Mr. Bush's views on international issues. His critics say he has a "superficial" knowledge of international affairs and almost no experience in foreign policy. The Europeans feel that Mr. Bush may be constrained by a sceptical American public and split Congress and this may hamper his ability to pursue any ambitious foreign policy or trade agenda. The general view is that Mr. Bush, like Mr. Bill Clinton, may adopt centrist global policies.

The 15 E.U. member states have also embarked on a more intimate trans-Atlantic dialogue for a stronger U.S.-E.U. partnership amid the growing realisation that the U.S. is poised to remain as the most powerful economy in the world. After nearly a decade of prosperity and economic growth, dark clouds are gathering on the U.S. horizon with prospects

of a recession and the current debate on both sides of the Atlantic is whether the economy will have a "hard" or "soft" landing.

Many feel that the U.S. is investing more resources and efforts in the Asia-Pacific region and on managing relations particularly with China and Japan, as the U.S. Congress is becoming less internationalist and more protectionist and assertive. The Bush victory is rated as a likely boost for the markets. As a financial commentator puts it, "in theory, a less interventionist Republican administration should be good for equities."

The E.U. Governments are evolving their own foreign and security policy. The other day, Mr. William Cohen, the outgoing U.S. Defence Secretary, told NATO members that Europe's defence plans in the background of structuring a new army could be damaging for NATO. He said Britain was endangering NATO because it "pursues a leadership role in Europe" while France was trying to "weaken" and undermine the U.S.

Mr. Cohen's comments raised many eyebrows in Europe. It remains to be seen how the Bush administration will cope with the challenges of what one European official described as the "crises of uncertainty and enigma".

Many Europeans also feel that the Bush administration is likely to pursue "less emotive and committed" policies with Israel and may develop a healthy appreciation of the Arab perceptions of major West Asian issues.

THE HINDU

15 DEC 2000

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No Balm in Gilead

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Perhaps no other region, barring the US itself, watched the cliffhanger American presidential election with such rapt attention as West Asia. When it was finally announced that the winner was George W Bush, apprehensive Israeli and Palestinian leaders welcomed him and expressed their faith that he would continue pushing forward the fractious peace process. But it was clear that both sides were unsure of the level of involvement which could be expected from the president-elect who has blithely displayed his ignorance of foreign affairs. Even if he were to develop an intense interest in West Asian politics — among the most complicated in the world — he will be far too preoccupied for quite some time assuaging the bitter sentiments generated by his controversial assumption of office. The question can also be asked: Can Mr Bush succeed where even the charismatic and highly knowledgeable Bill Clinton could not? Mr Clinton pulled out all the stops to secure a lasting peace in the region. He worked relentlessly, notching up more air miles for the West Asian cause than any of his predecessors, only to see the whole edifice fall apart as his presidency drew to a close. Perhaps there is a lesson to be learnt from Mr Clinton's inability to bring the two sides together, even though the then Israeli prime minister Ehud Barak and Palestinian leader Yasser Arafat gave him as much support as their constituencies permitted. The historic divide is so great that no peace can be imposed by a third party; at best an outsider can only be a facilitator.

Irrespective of the role the US will or can play, the recent violence in the West Bank has intensified the bitterness between both sides; it will take years for a measure of trust to be rebuilt. It was an acknowledgement of just how much things had gone out of hand that prime minister Ehud Barak resigned and called for fresh elections. By doing so, Mr Barak had clearly hoped that he could go back to the people and get a fresh mandate to push forward the peace process. But as always in the turbulent politics of West Asia, things are not going to be quite so easy. The Israeli parliament has overwhelmingly approved a preliminary bill which will permit former prime minister Binyamin Netanyahu to contest the prime ministership. The bill amends an earlier condition that any contender for prime minister had to be a member of parliament; Mr Netanyahu has been in something of a political wilderness for over a year. Though it was hardline Likud leader Ariel Sharon who has looked after the party's health during Mr Netanyahu's absence, the latter appears to have taken it for granted that he will be the party's automatic candidate for prime minister. This could spell trouble for Mr Barak. While Mr Netanyahu had a less than successful track record as prime minister, he has an image as a strong proponent of Israeli security and as being opposed to any concessions to the Palestinians. Though Israeli public opinion has, by and large, favoured the peace process, the recent violence has made many question its feasibility. Even if Mr Barak were to win, he would still inherit a parliament where he does not have a majority; the Knesset has not been disbanded. With political instability in Israel and an America preoccupied with itself, the prospects of the peace process getting back on track don't look too bright at the moment.

THE TIMES OF INDIA

16 DEC 2000

U.S. policy on W. Asia may focus on oil

By Kesava Menon

MANAMA (BAHRAIN), DEC. 15. The Bush family's return to the White House is likely to herald the return of certain old West Asian hands to the centre of U.S. foreign policy. For the countries and peoples of West Asia, this would be a mixed blessing. Foremost among the changes is that "Big Oil" will probably regain its pre-eminence as the main engine of U.S. policy towards West Asia and North Africa.

In the firm of Bush-Cheney-Powell that seems all set to take office by the end of January, the senior partner is of course the least experienced man, not only in national affairs, but also in the petroleum politics that is so crucial to West Asia. After all, Mr. Richard Cheney and Gen. Colin Powell were the central figures in ensuring that the "free world's access to vital energy resources" was sustained the last time it was subjected to a serious politico-military challenge. Mr George W. Bush might not have the direct connection to the U.S. oil industry that his father and his Vice-President-to-be have had. But then, a Texas Governor's links to the oil industry cannot be too far behind that of a senior executive of Halliburton (the oil-industry servicing firm) as Mr. Cheney was till he resigned to fight the elections.

What the firm is faced with foremost is the unfinished business of Iraq and its President, Mr. Saddam Hussein. Mr. George Bush Senior and his Defence Secretary and Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff have come under some criticism for not having "finished off" Mr.

Hussein when they had the chance. On the obverse, Republicans in the U.S. Congress have been quite persistent in their criticism that the Clinton-Gore team has allowed Mr. Hussein to slowly but steadily wriggle free of the shackles placed upon him. But the efforts mounted at the initiatives of both the Congress and the administration over the last eight years to build up a domestic Iraqi opposition against Mr. Hussein have proved a dismal failure.

While the other part of the twin-bladed effort to squeeze Mr. Hussein out of office — the harsh economic embargo imposed on Iraq — has caused untold misery to the Iraqi people, its impact on the longevity of the Iraqi regime has been virtually nil. At the same time, the global oil industry has reason to be confident that it has discovered the strength to resist Mr. Hussein's ability to convulse the market. Even in the current hard situation where oil prices are riding at levels not seen for years, Mr. Hussein might be able to effectuate slight fluctuations in prices. But it is fairly obvious that Iraq too needs some stability in the oil market simply because it is desperate for hard cash.

Apart from the question of need, the next U.S. administration would find it far more difficult than the earlier Bush administration to keep in place the mechanism whereby the squeeze on Iraq was applied. Allies in the Gulf crisis such as Syria and Turkey already have flourishing, if somewhat clandestine, ties with Iraq and Saudi Arabia the regional lynch-pin of the anti-Iraq coalition has become increasingly sensitive to the domestic outrage at the

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sufferings of the Iraqi people. Under these circumstances, would the incoming Bush administration base its Iraq policy on an ideological approach?

Iran, the other country at which the US's "dual containment" policy was conceived during the earlier Bush administration, is at a crossroads. Mr. George W. Bush, whether compassionate or not, still describes himself as a conservative and that probably precludes a chance that he will respond to the Iranian President, Mr. Mohammed Khatami's call for a "dialogue of civilisations" with any degree of alacrity.

Even Mr. Bill Clinton did not gush with a response to Mr. Khatami's overtures. In any event, the Khatami Presidency and his reform movement are currently caught up in a life or death struggle and it does not appear likely that the Bush administration will, or will even need to, make any moves till Iran votes again in presidential polls in the coming May.

Everyone will, of course, be watching to see what Mr. George W. Bush and his administration will do on the Israeli-Palestinian imbroglio. Here again, fast moves are unlikely because they have seen how little all the commitment and energy that Mr. Clinton invested in this question has wrought. Once again, the Republican administration is likely to be more sensitive to the Muslim populated oil rich countries of West Asia.

If this brings about some balance in the administration's treatment of the Israelis and the Palestinians, the Arab world will have some reason to be satisfied.

THE NEW YORK TIMES

16 DEC 2001

Bush to name Powell secretary of state

FROM PATRICIA WILSON

Austin, Dec. 16 (Reuters): President-elect George W. Bush reached across party lines yesterday by meeting Democratic Sen. John Breaux on ways to bring the country together after the divisive presidential election.

The meeting between the Republican governor of Texas and the centrist Democratic Senator from Louisiana came as Bush prepared to name retired Gen. Colin Powell as his secretary of state, a Republican source said.

Powell would be the first person named to the new Cabinet, which Bush has to put together in a hurry because the time between Election Day and Inauguration Day on January 20 was cut in half by the protracted legal battle over the voting in Florida.

The announcement will come 11 days after Bush, Powell and vice-president-elect Dick Cheney were expected to appear together at Crawford High School, a few miles from Bush's remote ranch in central Texas, the source said.

Bringing Democrats into

Bush's Cabinet has been mentioned as one way to reach out to the Opposition after the Texas governor won the White House with only one vote to spare in the Electoral College and lost the popular vote to Democrat Al Gore.

There was no word whether Bush offered Breaux any job, but the governor said after the meet-

ing, "One of the things the Senator made clear is that he wants to stay in the Senate and work to get to get things done."

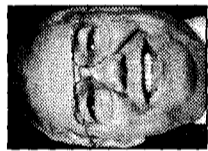
"I'm honored to have his commitment to work with me," Bush said in his first news conference since being declared President-elect two days ago. "John Breaux is the kind of person with whom I

can work."

Bush also expressed some concern that the nation's economy could be heading for a slowdown and he "looked forward to going to Washington to make the case" for his \$1.3 trillion tax cut. Bush heads to Washington next week for meetings with congressional leaders, Gore and President Bill Clinton. Yesterday, he pushed ahead with truncated transition arrangements for his January 20 takeover from Clinton, conferring on personnel with Cheney and his chief of staff Andrew Card. A se-

nior Bush adviser said it was too early to disclose Bush's choices to fill any of the 6,000 posts open. "We're in the process of talking with various people," the adviser said.

The Bush transition announced plans yesterday to form Policy Coordination Groups to help Cabinet nominees prepare to govern. The groups will be small teams of three to six people who will gather information from government agencies and departments to help the incoming administration.



Bush, Powell

with me," Bush said in his first news conference since being declared President-elect two days ago. "John Breaux is the kind of person with whom I

Peace push in W Asia as Clinton packs his bags

ERIC SILVER
STATESMAN NEWS SERVICE

JERUSALEM, Dec. 16. — Despite continuing bloodshed in the West Bank and Gaza, wary Israeli and Palestinian leaders yesterday set their sights on a possible peace agreement before Mr Bill Clinton's term expires on 20 January.

Earlier this month the American President told a visiting Israeli minister that once he puts the Ireland trip behind him, he would be ready to devote the last month of his reign to West Asian peacemaking. As a lame-duck, he said, his diary was clear.

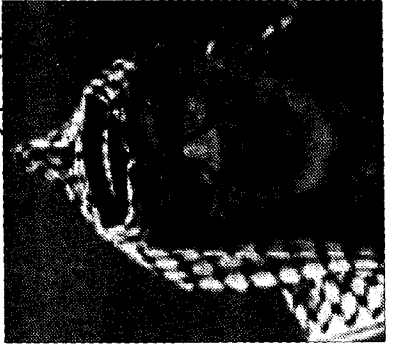
The Israelis and Palestinians are now testing each other's intentions to see whether to take him up on it. Within the next week, they should know the answer. If it is a "Yes", Mr Clinton might come to the region for one final push, or host another summit in the USA.



Mr Barak: Does he have enough time?



Mr Clinton: One last shot



Mr Arafat: Can he rein in gunmen?

have something to know his voters in elections tentatively set for 6 February. Weekend opinion polls found him trailing his Right-wing Likud challenger, Mr Benjamin Netanyahu, by a massive 19 points.

Yet, the same polls indicate that Israelis want peace and are prepared to pay the territorial price Mr Barak floated at the Camp David summit in July. Support is also growing for the former Prime Minister, Mr Shimon Peres, now a vigorous 77, to run for his old job as a peace candidate.

"The big question," the Israeli diplomat said, "is whether Mr Arafat wants an agreement, or whether he is striking a tactical pose." Palestinians say that Mr Arafat will also have to assess whether it is worth risking an unpopular compromise when Mr Barak may have neither the time nor the power to deliver.

Western diplomats question farms and building sites.

ARAB FUNERALS

JERUSALEM, Dec. 16. Thousands of Palestinian mourners chanting "Death to Israel" today began burying the dead from the latest bloodshed. Thousands of mourners waving Islamic and Palestinian flags marched in a funeral procession in Gaza for Nourreddin Abu Safi (22), one of seven Palestinians killed in five separate shootings yesterday.

One of the seven was a 70-year-old man who died today in a hospital in Jenin from wounds caused by Israeli fire in the West Bank, Palestinian hospital officials said. Mohammed Fahad Abdel-ghani Ma'ali was shot as he crossed a road near a clash at Ajar, south of Jenin, they said. — Reuters

Bush will retain the broad content of U.S. foreign policy

By Jai Taraporevala

MUMBAI: The election of George Bush as the next U.S. President does not signify any basic shift in the country's foreign policy. Although its broad content will remain the same, there are likely to be a few changes in emphasis.

Mr Bush can be expected to promote the search for a National Missile Defence (NMD) system. But the extent to which he is able to move in this direction will hinge on the technological feasibility of the project and the degree of opposition from Russia and China.

The new administration could lay less emphasis than its predecessor on reaching arms control agreements with Russia. This should be seen in terms of Mr Bush's aim to shore up U.S. military power, the Republican party's views on the NMD programme and its opposition to the ratification of the CTBT.

Mr Bush's assertion that he would like to adopt a tougher stand on the issues of human rights, Taiwan and missile technology exports in the relationship with China should not be taken at face-value. After all, Washington's move to grant Beijing Permanent Normal Trading Relations status has reduced its bargaining leverage with the latter. Besides, American companies have a substantial business stake in China and it is in the politico-strategic interests of the U.S. not to undermine the policy of constructive engagement with the People's Republic.

Advancing the search for peace in West Asia will not be easy because of the intractable na-

ture of the issues involved in a final status accord, the hardening of feelings on the ground and the likely continuation of the refusal of the U.S. to place sufficient pressure on Israel.

The firm U.S. stance against Iraq will continue, not least because such a line was set in place during the administration of George Bush senior. But just how much success can be achieved through such a strategy is debatable because of the growing leakages in the sanctions regime and the inability of the inspection machinery to play any meaningful role in Iraq in the post-UNSCOM period.

Mr Bush's campaign statements

notwithstanding, a substantially lower level of American involvement in UN-peace keeping missions is not on the cards because of geopolitical considerations. Mr Bush has described the scale

of the U.S. involvement in the Balkans as unduly large. But the fact remains that the European Union contributes 80 per cent of the budget and 90 per cent of the international force in the region.

As far as ties with India are concerned, Mr Bush will lay less emphasis than Mr Clinton on nuclear non-proliferation and the CTBT and more on economic questions. On trade issues, there could well be increased calls for greater market access for U.S. exports and less pressure on developing nations like India to accept labour and environmental standards such as non-tariff barriers in the WTO charter.



George Bush



Al Gore

NEWS ANALYSIS

THE TIMES OF INDIA

19 DEC 2000

W Asia peace focus shifts to USA

REUTERS

579
JERUSALEM, Dec. 18. — Efforts to revive the West Asian peace process shift to the USA today as Israeli and Palestinian negotiators go to Washington for separate talks with US officials against a backdrop of continued bloodshed.

The Israeli foreign minister, Mr Shlomo Ben-Ami, and peace negotiator, Mr Gilead Sher, were to leave tonight for the talks, as were the Palestinian information minister, Mr Yasser Abed Rabbo, senior negotiator, Mr Saeb Erekat, and preventive security chief, Mohammed Dahlan.

The diplomatic offensive may be President Bill Clinton's last chance to score a West Asian peace accord before his successor, Mr George W Bush, takes office on 20 January.

In Ramallah, Mr Abed Rabbo

19/12
said: "We will start consultations with the Americans on Tuesday in Washington and the Israelis will have their own consultations with the Americans, and if there is a need, there will be trilateral meetings."

Mr Yasser Arafat said he was ready to meet Mr Ehud Barak, but only after proper preparation. "If it is needed, why not? but...We have to prepare for this meeting," Mr Arafat said. Mr Abed Rabbo, however, played down hopes of a summit and said there had been no progress in exploratory talks with Israel. "We want to guarantee the success of such a meeting and it should be clear that a summit is not for negotiations but for signing," he said.

Israeli political sources said a Barak-Arafat meeting would be possible only after the round of

Washington talks.

Despite the diplomatic efforts to ease the 12th week of violence raging in the West Bank and Gaza Strip, the blood continued to flow.

Clashes between Israeli troops and Palestinians have resulted in the death of at least 329 people, most of them Palestinians. Thirteen Arab Israelis and 38 other Israelis have also died.

In two separate incidents in the West Bank yesterday, two Palestinian men, accused of being collaborators with Israel, were killed by Palestinian gunmen, hospital sources and Palestinian villagers said.

The body of an 18-year-old youth was found in Aboud village, near Ramallah. He had been killed by a bullet in the head, Israeli police said. The Palestinian Radio reported that villagers said Jewish settlers killed him.

THE STATESMAN

19 DEC 2000

USA condemns Suu Kyi detention

WASHINGTON, Sept. 1. —
The USA has condemned the
Myanmarese government for
denying Nobel laureate Ms
Aung San Suu Kyi the freedom
to travel within her own coun-
try, saying that it will deepen
the country's isolation in the
international community.

Freedom of movement is a
fundamental human right and
denying Ms Suu Kyi this right
is an offence to free people
everywhere, Vice President Mr
Albert Gore said.

The Myanmar government's
claim that Ms Suu Kyi's safety
was endangered if she trav-
elled to join other National
League of Democracy leaders
in a nearby township was inac-
curate, he said.

"It is a clear attempt by
Burmese (Myanmarese)
authorities to deflect attention
from their harassment of Ms
Aung San Suu Kyi and the
democratic opposition," Mr
Gore said.

Each day the authorities
restrain Ms Suu Kyi, Burma's
isolation from the internat-
ional community deepens, he
warned. — PTI

WEST

US 'appreciates' Indian stance on talks with Pak

S Rajagopalan
Washington, September 2

AHEAD OF the Prime Minister Atal Behari Vajpayee's visit, the US has conveyed its broad appreciation of India's position that cross-border terrorism should cease before any resumption of dialogue with Pakistan could be considered. It has also promised to strengthen cooperation with India on counter-terrorism measures.

Foreign Secretary Lalit Mansingh, who held consultations here with US Undersecretary of State Thomas Pickering to prepare the ground for the Prime Minister's visit, outlined an elaborate agenda for the Vajpayee-Clinton talks on September 15 to keep up the new momentum on Indo-US relations.

Apparently to set at rest doubts that the Prime Minister's health may cast a further shadow on the

visit, Mr Mansingh told newsmen that Mr Vajpayee's schedule in Washington was actually being expanded. However, prior to that in New York, "some time would be provided for rest" after his UN address and other engagements.

On Kashmir, India stuck to the stand that Pakistan should stop aiding and abetting terrorism from across the border if the stalled dialogue were to be resumed. It has also made clear that Pakistan cannot be a party to the current (disrupted) dialogue with outfits like Hizbul Mujahideen.

To questions on the US's response to India's terms for dialogue with Pakistan, Mr Mansingh commented: "The Americans have shown appreciation of our position." He, however, parried supplementaries on whether the US position now reflected a fundamental change from its earlier insistence on resumption of dialogue.

The Foreign Secretary ruled out the possibility of any meeting between Mr Vajpayee and Pakistan's Chief Executive Gen Pervez Musharraf on the sidelines of the UN millennium summit in New York.

At his meeting with Mr Pickering, which also constituted the third round of Foreign Office consultations between the two countries, Mr Mansingh did not bring up the issue of post-Pokhran sanctions "since our position is known". In reply to a query, he said: "We have not appealed to them to lift the sanctions."

On the CTBT issue over which the US is not ready for any compromise, Mr Mansingh informed that the Indian Government was still in the process of evolving a national consensus. A discussion in Parliament could not get under way because of Power Minister Rangarajan Kumaramangalam's

death on the scheduled date.

Questioned on the progress of nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation talks between the two countries, the Foreign Secretary said: "The gap has narrowed, though not bridged." He disclosed that there could be a meeting between External Affairs Minister Jaswant Singh and Secretary of State Madeleine Albright.

The Vajpayee-Clinton meeting would review progress on the points set out in the "Vision Statement" issued at the end of the US President's Indian visit last March. The elaborate "dialogue architecture" envisaged as a follow-up activity has been completed over the past six months.

A joint statement would be issued at the end of the Prime Minister's visit. In addition, there will be a separate statement on Indo-US cooperation in IT and Biotechnology.

THE HINDUSTAN

Clinton puts NMD system on hold

'Fears of China's reaction affecting India prompted decision'

HTC and PTI
Washington, September 2

W W HTC-8

PRESIDENT BILL Clinton has decided to leave the question of deploying the controversial National Missile Defence (NMD) System to his successor. The system has been plagued by test snags and loud protests from Russia and China.

Clinton's decision was prompted by fears of China accelerating its inter-continental ballistic missile (ICBM) programme "that could have an effect on India" and others in Asia, according to US National Security Adviser Sandy Berger.

"One of the concerns about an NMD system is the impact it will have particularly in Asia where the Chinese have plans to increase their programme," he said.

"It is not inconceivable that NMD would accelerate these plans (of China to accelerate ICBM programme) and that could have an



effect on India, that could have an effect on Pakistan, Japan, etc," Berger added.

Referring to the NMD system, he said at this stage though NMD is "promising", it is "unproven" and "there are critical elements of the programme that have yet to be tested like the intercept booster."

There were two major test failures of the much-touted system to put up a security umbrella to intercept incoming long range ballistic missiles. The snags led to a fierce internal debate on future moves on the project, followed by indications of considerable delay in any event. Clinton made the announcement to leave the matter to his successor in the course of a speech at Georgetown University on Friday. "We have made progress but we should not move forward until we have absolute confidence the system will work," Mr Clinton said.

He also conceded that more time would be necessary to resolve the diplomatic row over the issue with Russia and China. Some of the European allies of the US had also voiced concern over the US's plan.

In Clinton's original scheme of things, the security umbrella was intended to become operational by 2005.

Estimated to cost between \$ 25 billion and \$ 60 billion, it was particularly meant to tackle

missile attacks from states like North Korea, Iran and Iraq.

"I simply cannot conclude, with the information I have today, that we have enough confidence in the technology and the operational effectiveness of the entire NMD system to move forward to deployment," Mr Clinton said.

Republican presidential candidate George W. Bush, who has made the "decline" in the state of defence of the United States a major campaign issue, announced later that he (in the event of victory) would deploy the National Missile defence system "at the earliest possible date".

That Clinton's decision would become an important election issue became clear with Bush portraying it as evidence of failed leadership on national security matters.

Vice-President and Democratic presidential nominee Al Gore, however, welcomed the decision, saying it would provide the requisite time to more thoroughly test the technologies.

"I welcome the opportunity to be more certain that these technologies actually work together properly," he said.

While announcing his decision, President Clinton maintained that it would not significantly delay the deployment if the next president decided to proceed with the project.

THE HINDUSTAN TIMES

TUESDAY, SEPTEMBER 5, 2000

49-12
MR. CLINTON'S STRATEGIC PAUSE 59

EXPLORING THE FRONTIERS of outer space for an absolutely unprecedented strategic defence of the United States, its outgoing President, Mr. Bill Clinton, has suddenly decided, even if somewhat predictably though, to pause and let his successor ponder. Being rightly withheld now by Mr. Clinton is what he, in his constitutional role as the supreme protector of the U.S. national interest, might have wished to deliver as his parting gift to the American people — a presidential commitment to order the commencement of work for the calibrated deployment of a truly futuristic system. Christened the national missile defence (NMD) shield, the proposed American system, definitively shelved for the present, is a magnificent obsession of the international diplomats and media personnel alike. The NMD is still officially classified as an unproven technological wonder while critics see it as a political recipe for skewing the existing global strategic-military order without necessarily creating a new balance in its place. With Mr. Clinton deciding to pass the buck (in one of several metaphoric images) to the man who will move into the White House next January, the deployment of any type of NMD shield may be delayed by at least a year, the likely new timeframe being 2006 or 2007. The assumption still is that the next U.S. president may not throw Mr. Clinton's strategic brainchild out with the bath water. The presidential candidates of the Democrats and the Republicans — the Vice-President, Mr. Al Gore, and Mr. George Bush, respectively — have expressed their general inclination to pursue the NMD agenda, albeit with varying degrees of commitment. They will perhaps prefer differing technological parameters, too, but the two are not reckoned to be totally out of step with Mr. Clinton on this strategic super-highway.

Mr. Clinton has sensibly cited four critical reasons for postponing the NMD deployment decision at this stage while sustaining a 'robust

research and development programme' so as to make the planned system 'work reliably under realistic conditions'. The first cardinal requirement adduced is a further series of test-flights in the 'Star Wars' strategic games to overcome the resistance of 'targets' that could be 'more challenging' than those already simulated within the NMD-cosmos. The failure of a much-publicised experiment last July, as also its fallout of doubts about the evolving state of the NMD knowhow, are easily seen as a prime consideration before the U.S. President. The second reason pertains to the growing diplomatic hiatus between the U.S. and Russia, in its position as the old Soviet Union's successor-state, over the NMD's scope at the outer reaches of an expansive technology. While Mr. Clinton maintains that no nation could steal a veto over the U.S.'s security interests, he is left with no option but to recognise Russia's *locus standi*, given also the need to redefine his notion of strategic defence in a manner consistent with the spirit if not also the letter of the bilateral Anti-Ballistic Missile Treaty.

Closely related to Washington's diplomatic compulsion to keep Russia in good humour, in view of Moscow's own strategic strength and sensibility, is the need to avoid rumblings among America's Western friends. Mr. Clinton is keen on counting the support of the allies, whose territory could indeed serve as the base for some crucial NMD-shield components. While West Europe is worried about a possible backlash from Russia and China, Beijing's 'regional' shadow figures as the fourth but not the least consideration in Mr. Clinton's book of commonsense on this uncommon project. He wants to avoid 'stimulating' a nuclear arms race in South Asia as the direct sequel to China's anticipated reaction to the unfolding of any NMD shield. The Prime Minister, Mr. Atal Behari Vajpayee, can usefully ascertain this with Mr. Clinton during their prospective summit in Washington.

THE HINDU
5 SEP 2000

Clinton skirts Kashmir, plays expansive host to reticent PM

CHIDANAND RAJGHATTA
WASHINGTON, SEPT 16

INDIA and the United States resumed their landmark millennial year dialogue on Friday with a forceful assertion by President Clinton that a "very strong partnership" between the two countries is needed to make an ideal world.

"If you look at the way the world is going, it's inconceivable to me that we can build the kind of world we want over the next 10 to 20 years unless there is a very strong partnership between the United States and India," Clinton told newsmen in the Oval office ahead of his talks with Prime Minister Vajpayee.

The American President set the tone for an emerging special relationship with gracious and thoughtful words on a balmy fall day.

"If we speak with care, and listen with respect, we will find common ground and achieve common aims," he said, lavishing praise on India's history, culture and diversity and the fascination America held all this in.

"This is a time of new hope and new opportunities in Indo-American ties," Vajpayee said in his brief remarks, before the two leaders repaired to the Oval office for one-on-one talks before they join their respective delegations.

As Vajpayee's motorcade drew into the White House, Clinton stepped forward to greet the Prime Minister and solicitously led him by the elbow to the dais, seemingly aware of Vaj-



Prime Minister Vajpayee with US President Clinton at the arrival ceremonies at the White House on Friday — PTI

payee's ill health. Throughout the ceremony, he was caring and deferential towards the elderly, slow-moving leader.

Clinton sought out words from Vajpayee's own poetry to thread the destiny of the two countries together. "Prime Minister Vajpayee, in your speeches you talk of India's ability to cherish its own marvelous diversity. In your poetry, you write of the importance of unity, saying that people of many faiths can have one dream in every

eye. "In America, we, too, have a dream of unity amidst our diversity. If people as diverse as we can affirm our common humanity and share common dreams, surely we can and should embrace common endeavors," he said.

Even on the question of nuclear proliferation — the one area of discord between the two sides — Clinton trod gingerly, saying they would "talk about our common interests in slowing the spread of nuclear weapons, and the broader consequences of proliferation in South Asia."

There was no mention of Kashmir, except perhaps for the President's reference to the discussion they would have on "our common desire to seek peace through dialogue in South Asia."

(Appropriately perhaps, the White House band played "Ruffles and Flourishes" among the honours before the leaders arrived.)

Clinton also made it clear where his heart lay when it came to the nature of nation-states, saying "it is not only India's democracy, but India's manner of achieving democracy that will forever inspire America."

But as has been evident throughout this trip, Vajpayee comes across better in more informal settings. At the Oval office meeting, he bantered with Clinton about what a good idea the millennium summit in New York was and how his only regret was that speakers had only five minutes each. Clinton, an expansive speaker joked that "if they had longer, we would still be up there; we wouldn't be down here talking."

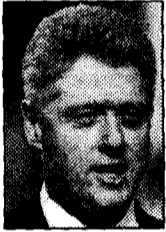
INDIAN EXPRESS

17 SEP 2000

Bill Clinton fails to end West Asia impasse

By Jonathan Wright

UNITED NATIONS: U.S. President Bill Clinton on Wednesday failed to break the impasse in talks on peace between Israel and the Palestinians but the U.S. will keep trying to bridge the gap, the White House said.



Bill Clinton

"I have no breakthrough to report," White House spokesman Joe Lockhart told reporters after Mr Clinton, with deadlines looming, had separate talks in New York with Israeli Prime Minister Ehud Barak and Palestinian President Yasser Arafat. "I don't have anything on further meetings except that we will remain in the process as they move forward," he added.

The Israelis had said the meeting with Arafat was crucial because Clinton wanted to see signs that the Palestinian leader was willing to give ground on Jerusalem—the main obstacle to a peace deal at the Camp David summit in July.

U.S. secretary of state Madeleine Albright held talks with Mr Barak later on Wednesday, White House National Security council spokesman P.J. Crowley said. Mr Crowley gave no details of the discussion.

Mr Lockhart said Mr Clinton and the two leaders went over a number of ideas for trying to bridge the differences. "I'm not going to get into what those ideas were nor am I going to try to forecast how successful or unsuccessful these approaches might be," the spokesman added.

The U.S. had tried to play down expectations from Mr Clinton's meetings, his first with Mr

Barak and Mr Arafat since the 15-day Camp David meeting broke up without agreement. But all the parties say the need for progress is urgent, as the U.S. goes into elections and Mr Barak faces the prospect that his government will collapse in October.

Wednesday's inconclusive meetings came just a week before the September 13 deadline for a final Israeli-Palestinian peace treaty.

Mr Arafat has reserved the right to proclaim statehood, even without Israel's blessing, on that day, but has said a final decision is up to the PLO's top policy-making body, which is to convene on Saturday. Mr Arafat has hinted that the PLO council was likely to delay a statehood proclamation until later this year.

However, Mr Lockhart dismissed September 13 as "an artificial date". (Reuters)

THE TIMES OF INDIA

8 SEP 2000

U.S. apologises to N. Korea

SEOUL, SEPT. 7. The United States today sent a letter to North Korea apologising for airline security checks which led Pyongyang to withdraw from the U.N. Millennium Summit, South Korea's Foreign Minister, Mr. Lee Joung-Binn said. "A letter from a high-ranking U.S. official was delivered to North Korea today," Mr. Lee said.

"In the letter, the U.S. expressed regret at the 'mistake' by American Airlines and hoped that the incident would not have any negative impact on the development of U.S.-North Korea ties," he said.

North Korea cancelled its attendance at the Summit, claiming their delegation was told they would be subject to a strip search before they could board an American Airlines flight from Frankfurt to New York.

Pyongyang accused Washington of orchestrating the incident in order to scuttle a planned meeting between the North's nominal head of state, Mr. Kim Yong-Nam, and South Korea's President, Mr. Kim Dae-Jung, to follow up on the Korean summit with the North's supreme leader, Mr. Kim Jong-Il in June. Washington expressed regret at the incident but insisted there was no official U.S. Government involvement. — AFP

THE NEW YORK TIMES

SEP 7 1999

10-12 8/9
FRIDAY, SEPTEMBER 8, 2000

A WIN-WIN VISION

THE MILLENNIUM SPIRIT is obviously proving so irresistible to many world leaders that the outgoing U.S. President, Mr. Bill Clinton, has sought to excel himself as a communicator in the public domain by visualising the ideal of an interdependent world in which all states and entities can be the winners and none the loser. A special niche of international spotlight has of course been reserved for the speech that he delivered at the ongoing United Nations millennium summit. Paradoxical though, this honour is entirely in tune with the realpolitik supremacy of the United States and not its stature measurable in other ways. But the right to dream, even while trying to be pragmatic, is a political luxury that the summit, by its own rationale as a diplomatic-ceremonial extravaganza, does inevitably offer the leaders. Indeed, Mr. Clinton is not alone in wanting to be a visionary statesman, although the magic of a 'swan-song' speech at the U.N. as the U.S. President is an additional inducement in his case. It is no surprise that the scope for idealism is high at this summit despite its being billed as an event that may help to reinvent today's global order, such as it exists, in a manner which the hard-headed leaders of the world can agree upon.

Reckoned by the skewed realities of today's global politics, the high point of Mr. Clinton's near-utopian prescription is his line that "we must look for more solutions in which all sides can claim a measure of victory and move away from choices in which someone is required to accept complete defeat". The context for this win-win vision is as much political as it can be apolitical too. Discernible, though, is that such an order of absolute fairness and justice is not ingrained in his own separate advocacy in the very same speech that the U.N. must continue to enforce the Security Council's resolutions in regard to Mr. Saddam Hussein's Iraq. Signif-

icantly in contrast, a view gaining much international currency at this time is that these resolutions, largely masterminded by the U.S. in a mood of pax Americana, have hurt the hapless Iraqi people more than their master. The U.N. Secretary-General, Mr. Kofi Annan, has indeed voiced a similar sentiment at this time, the prime theme being the need to avoid the humiliation of whole communities.

Now, the tapestry of Mr. Clinton's thoughts and words can doubtless be dissected in other ways too by the pundits in a rapidly globalising world that is being knit by the marvels of information technology. Yet, broadly acceptable are his call for a reform of the U.N.'s system of rather poor financial resources and his assertion that the price of global peace and prosperity must be shared by all, including the U.S., in fair proportions. The finer point, however, is that Mr. Clinton is still hedging the question of the U.S.'s own financial contributions to the U.N. behind the facade of universal fairness. On an altogether different plane, a deep diplomatic nuance and not a pious platitude characterises Mr. Clinton's plea for "principled compromise" as a sane alternative to "confrontation" in such areas of the world as South Asia (shorthand for the enduring India-Pakistan dispute over Kashmir). It is inconceivable that Mr. Clinton, by saying this, is calling for a solution that may not be acceptable to India. But, given the comprehensible global focus at this time on the utility of the U.N. as a clearing house of ideas on peace and prosperity, it comes as no surprise that Pakistan's military ruler, Gen. Pervez Musharraf, should seek to invoke the world body's perceived relevance to the Kashmir issue and call for no-war pacts and the like involving India. It is now upto the Prime Minister, Mr. Atal Behari Vajpayee, to turn the focus away from vacuous issues.

Castro

BY ANTHONY GOODMAN

United Nations, Sept. 8: Cuban President Fidel Castro spoke for the first time with his US counterpart Bill Clinton and shook his hand in a crush of UN dignitaries, officials said on Thursday.

Diplomats and other observers believed it was also the first time since Mr Castro, 74, took power in 1959 that the Communist leader had shaken the hand of an American President. This could not be officially confirmed. The chance meeting between the leaders of two nations separated by 40 years of enmity took place on Wednesday at the United Nations Millennium Summit.

Mr Castro and Mr Clinton had attended a lunch for the roughly 150 world leaders taking part in the summit and were making their way to a conference room for a group photograph when the encounter took place. They found themselves pushed together at a choke-point in the crowd and "there was a handshake and an exchange of words," a UN source said. The White House confirmed that the handshake had taken place. (Reuters)

Clinton shake hands at summit

N. Korea livid over Frankfurt airport fiasco

BY OUR CORRESPONDENT

New Delhi, Sept. 8: North Korea has let loose a verbal barrage on the United States for the Frankfurt airport incident and termed it a "brigandish and brazen faced act." Enraged by the incident, North Korea's ambassador to India Pakmyong Gu told *The Asian Age* on Thursday that the US had acted like a "rogue state." Quoting the statement of North Korea's foreign office, the ambassador said that US is the biggest rogue and pirate state in the world.

North Korea pulled out of the UN Millennium Summit in New York after its presidential delegation on way to New York was frisked by security agencies at Frankfurt airport.

Mr Pakmyong Gu said that the security officials of the US airline flight, which the North Korean entourage was scheduled to take, insisted that the delegation's baggage be checked. He called for international community to denounce the incident. The North Korean ambassador said that India as a leader of the Non-Aligned Movement has been a friendly country which supported his nation. He said India will be officially apprised of the Frankfurt incident. There has been no reaction from New Delhi so far.

A strongly-worded statement released from Pyongyang said: "Through this incident, we have clearly realised that though the US is talking about improvement of relations and about... talks... it dislikes our external relations being expanded."



HEAR YE: US President Bill Clinton speaks as British Prime Minister Tony Blair looks on during the UN Security Council meeting at the United Nations on Thursday. At the right is US secretary of state Madeleine Albright. (AP)

Art in the UN: Voicing timeless ideas

London, Sept. 8: Norman Rockwell came up with a mosaic. Pablo Picasso stuck to paint. And Superman joined forces with Wonder Woman in his bid to rid the world of evil. As world leaders gather for a Millennium Summit at the United Nations, a new book reveals 50 years of art deployed by the global body in its drive for a better world.

"Whether recent or half a century old, the artwork depicts ideas and values that are timeless. Through them, with an eye on the future, we can gain a fresh perspective on the human condition," said Kofi Annan, Secretary-General of the United Nations, in an

introduction to the new collection. *For a better world: Posters from the United Nations* bills itself as the first comprehensive collection of the UN's vast gallery of posters with a purpose. Predictably enough, fluttering doves loom large, along with raised weak limb or plucky child in sight.

"To behold a single well-wrought poster is a pleasurable thing. To see this array of UN-produced posters is to immerse oneself in the recent history of humanity's most appalling calamities and its most admirable aspirations," designer Paul Davis, himself a UN poster artist, wrote in the book. (Reuters)

UN MILLENNIUM SUMMIT

11

We cannot mediate on Kashmir: USA

NEW DELHI, Sept. 17. The USA "cannot be a mediator" on Kashmir, nor does it wish to "impose" its views on New Delhi, the US assistant secretary of state said today.

The USA recognises it as an issue that has to be resolved "bilaterally", Mr Karl Inderfurth said and hoped India and Pakistan would resume talks.

Responding to questions on Indo-American ties, Mr Inderfurth told Star News in Washington that the USA would like India to sign the CTBT for its own interests and as a world leader of disarmament. "However, it's India's decision ... when it should be done."

The USA will work with India "across-the board" on international issues, including Afghanistan, as part of its approach for new ties, he said.

Was there convergence on issues like Kashmir? Mr Inderfurth said: "This is a relationship built first and foremost on the fact that we are the world's largest and oldest democracies. We have values and we are countries that celebrate diversity." - PTI

THE STATESMAN

18 SEP 2000

US threat to stop aid to Indonesia

JAKARTA POST
ASIA NEWS NETWORK

JAKARTA, Sept. 19. — The US defence secretary yesterday threatened to stop crucial aid to Indonesia if it does not disarm pro-Jakarta militia and resolve the At-ambua issue.



Mr William Cohen

"Failure to do so will have consequences on Jakarta's relations with the international community and it could jeopardise economic assistance to Indonesia," Mr William Cohen said.

(The warning pricked a nationalist nerve in Indonesia, with politicians criticising Washington and students protesting against the demand, adds AP.

(Dozens of demonstrators burned US and UN flags outside the American Embassy today, and accused the Clinton administration of meddling in Indonesia's internal affairs.)

During his one-night stop here, Mr Cohen met with the President, Mr Abdurrahman Wahid, minister of defence, Mr Mahfud Mahmud, and military commander, Admiral Widodo AS, yesterday. The talks focussed on the recent killings of three UN aid workers and the activities of armed militia in West Timor.

Mr Cohen said the US

AMBON BLASTS

AMBON, Sept. 19. — Hundreds of shoppers fled when two bombs exploded near a crowded market here today.

No one was hurt in the blast, but three people were injured in the stampede that followed. The troops created more panic by firing warning shots to control the crowd.

In Jakarta, security was beefed up at a courthouse, a day before a close Suharto aide, Mohamad 'Bob' Hasan, goes on trial for corruption. He is charged with embezzlement of state money. — AP

President had asked him to highlight Indonesia's disappointing response to the death of the UN workers.

The incident shows that no programme of repatriation or transmigration can move forward until security is restored and the militia is disbanded, Mr Cohen said.

"In the meetings, I emphasised the importance of investigating the incident and punishing all persons involved. I appreciated the government's commitment to disarming the militia," Mr Cohen said.

Mr Cohen said he had not set a deadline for resolution of the matter "but the Indonesian government is expected to do that in the immediate future."

After the incident, the UN Security Council had issued a

resolution demanding Indonesian action to disarm the militia and resolve the refugee problem. The UN also said it would dispatch a team to Indonesia to discuss the implementation of the resolution. But Indonesia has since said such a mission was at this time "inappropriate".

The Security Council still intends to send a mission to Jakarta and Atambua, Mr Cohen said.

He said the USA would provide financial aid to Indonesia in the handling of East Timorese refugees. "The USA has repeatedly offered to help shoulder the cost involved, including the cost of repatriating refugees."

Mr Wahid and the military leadership reportedly assured Mr Cohen that Indonesia is prepared to move quickly and decisively to deal with the West Timor crisis.

"Mr Cohen said we can't just discuss this continuously, there must be concrete action," Mr Mahfud said. But he blamed the USA for depriving the Indonesian military of necessary equipment to tackle the militia problem in West Timor.

The speaker of Indonesia's top Assembly, Mr Amien Rais, railed against the US demand to disband the militia. "If a superpower like the USA tries to bully us and if we squirm under its threats, we'll be regarded as a lesser nation," he said, adds AP.

THE STATESMAN

20 SEP 2000

U.S. stance, no good news for Pak.

40-14 By P.S. Suryanarayana

A definitive clarification by the United States after the latest Clinton-Vajpayee parleys is that Washington has already abandoned its 'zero-sum games' with India and Pakistan. The U.S. will not treat India and Pakistan as a choice of one over the other. An abstinence from old-style favouritism, which had suited Pakistan, is said to be in tune with the strategic ethos of the unfolding post-Cold War era.

This is no good news for Pakistan, though it is an obvious plus for it that the U.S. will continue to engage a militarised polity presided by Gen. Pervez Musharraf. Now, irrespective of Washington's geostrategic compulsions for wanting to interact with New Delhi and Islamabad on the basis of their respective merit, despite India's status as a possible democratic ally of the U.S., Pakistan's psycho-political pique is not without reason.

During a visit to Islamabad in 1994, the U.S. Deputy Secretary of State, Mr. Strobe Talbott, had first spelt out Washington's post-Cold War disenchantment with its own zero-sum calculus. Pakistan's political-military establishment of the day was not amused, and its reasoning behind the scene was that any straightening of the U.S.'s pro-Pakistan 'tilt' would only be a gain for New Delhi even without that being a pro-India posture. Because the pendulum swing was after all away from Pakistan.

After Ayub Khan had first envisioned a for-

eign policy of harnessing Pakistan's geostrategic advantages, without the latter-day hype of the West being a friend and not the master in this regard, the Cold War suited Islamabad. The U.S.'s incremental pro-Pakistan 'tilt' was formalised as a result of Islamabad's secret role in bringing about a thaw in Washington-Beijing ties in 1970-71. This was later consolidated during the anti-communism phase of the Afghan civil war in the 1980s.

Ironically, the latest U.S.-India view of the Taliban-dominated Afghanistan as a haven for international terrorism can, in a normative sense, turn out to be a new headache for Pakistan. But Islamabad is still left with some diplomatic cards. From Pakistan's perspective, the proposed U.S.-India dialogue on Af-

NEWS ANALYSIS

ghanistan and the intensification of their interaction on counter-terrorism can still flounder if Washington ignores Islamabad as a possible intermediary for engaging the Taliban. There is a price that Pakistan may extract.

Partially welcome to Pakistan is the U.S.'s assertion that it will not play zero-sum games with India and China, too, despite Washington's rising recognition of Beijing as a factor in New Delhi's strategic calculations. Given the history of this triangular equation, any new zero-sum game in this sphere by Washington in the present context, said to be not on the cards (though) to Pakistan's obvious relief, may have only suited India. The latest

vote in the U.S. Senate for a permanent normal trading relationship with China is good for Pakistan too.

While the U.S. is concerned no less with the suspected Sino-Pakistan nexus over ballistic missiles, the main American focus has not yet zeroed in on the kind of Beijing-Islamabad axis as portrayed in the fictionalised 'dragon fire'. Pakistan's prime interest will actually lie in India's response to any move by China to break the informal consensus of the Nuclear Club on non-proliferation issues in the event of the U.S. deciding to build a 'Star-War' national missile defence (NMD) system.

Pakistan is, therefore, expected to watch very closely how far India can honour its latest commitment to the U.S. concerning the Comprehensive Test Ban Treaty (CTBT). For Pakistan, the question is whether India will wait for the dust to settle in regard to the NMD issue before honouring the word about not blocking the CTBT's entry into force. A point that Pakistan will monitor is how the CTBT's so-called 'escape-clause' about the paramouncy of a supreme national interest will be viewed by the U.S. as also India.

Pakistan can still count as a blessing the growing international concern over a 'nuclearised' South Asian in the context of the unresolved Kashmir issue. But there is no cheer for Pakistan in the U.S. refusal to mediate at this stage. Overall, though, there is some solace for the hawks in Pakistan in the fact that the U.S.-India ties will attain full potential only when New Delhi can satisfy Washington on non-proliferation issues.

23 SEP 2000

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Peace by Piece ^{us} _{WFS}

There is nothing that US President Bill Clinton would like more than a foreign policy success in West Asia — indeed he has devoted an enormous amount of time to bringing the two sides to the table. But when he is perceived as less than an honest broker, the chances of this happening become more distant. Mr Clinton stands to squander a great deal of the goodwill he enjoys with the Palestinians if he carries out his disquieting proposals: To move the US embassy from Tel Aviv to Jerusalem and to review Washington's relationship with them if Mr Yasser Arafat goes ahead and unilaterally declares an independent state. Clearly, when the chips are down, Mr Clinton is seen as being on the side of Israel. While Mr Clinton's actions will shore up Israeli Prime Minister Ehud Barak's fortunes at a time when he is facing a severe political crisis, the ultimate goal of pushing forward the peace process will not be served. Foreign Minister David Levy, true to type, threatened to withdraw from the government even as three hawkish parties quit accusing Mr Barak of giving away too much. Mr Levy had sought that Mr Barak invite the hardline Likud into government, something the prime minister is loath to do on the grounds that this would cripple his efforts to finalise a peace deal. However, Mr Levy has now committed himself to voting with the government against a no-confidence motion which will ensure that Mr Barak survives at least until the Knesset reconvenes in October.

But in the meantime, Mr Clinton's proposals have caused considerable damage to Israel among Arab leaders. The issue of sovereignty over Jerusalem is the most contentious in the peace process with both sides claiming it as their capital. In recent times, efforts have been afoot to share sovereignty over Arab east Jerusalem. But Mr Clinton's remarks have led to Arab nations closing ranks and accusing him of bias against the Palestinians. Indeed, close ally Saudi Arabia has unequivocally stated that Jerusalem should be the capital of a future Palestinian state. Egypt's President Hosni Mubarak and Libyan leader Muammar Gaddafi have also come out in support of a unified Arab position on Palestinian rights. It was expected that as he winds down his presidency, Mr Clinton would have less time to address the peace process; what was unexpected was for him to create such a setback. It is quite obvious that Mr Arafat is in an unenviable position. He has very little to trade with. People in the occupied territories, especially the youth, are getting increasingly restive. Experts fear that in the absence of any gains on the ground, there could well be a return to some sort of intifada-like situation. Mr Clinton must now make efforts to show that he is seized of Palestinian constraints and refrain from moving the US embassy into what is clearly disputed territory. If he does so, he will definitely be accused of making Jerusalem, one of the most holy sites to three great religions, a pawn in the political game. He has to be seen to be above such partisanship if he expects to be taken seriously as negotiator-in-chief in the peace process.

THE TIMES OF INDIA

1 AUG 2000

US tells Hizbul to resume talks on Kashmir issue

S Rajagopalan
Washington, August 9

THE US has regretted the Hizbul Mujahideen's withdrawal of cease-fire and called for resumption of talks on the Kashmir issue. Significantly, while issuing this call, it has refrained from tendering any advice to India to coopt Pakistan in the talks with Hizbul as insisted upon by the militant outfit.

Washington has also refused to be drawn into a debate on whether India should offer "unconditional talks" by noting that it was for the parties concerned to work out the structure of the talks. "It's not for us standing here to make conditions," State Department spokesman Richard Boucher said.

The comment was generally seen

as yet another rebuff to those wanting the US to play a more proactive role on the Kashmir issue by either acting as a mediator or, in the present limited context, asking India to include Pakistan in the talks with Hizbul.

In a formal reaction to Tuesday's development, the spokesman said the US would encourage resumption of talks between the militant outfit and the Indian Government. "We would urge all sides to nurture and continue the process of peace," Mr Boucher said.

"Decisions on how the talks are actually structured need to be made by the parties involved in the discussions and in the issue. It has always been our belief that it is up to the parties themselves to shape the process and to clear the road to

peace. We have also consistently encouraged direct discussion between India and Pakistan," he said.

The spokesman also cited President Bill Clinton's oft-repeated prescription for resolution of the Kashmir issue: Restraint, respect for the Line of Control, renunciation of violence and renewal of dialogue.

To questions whether Washington had played a role in getting Hizbul to declare a cease-fire and talk with the Indian Government, Mr Boucher said the US would not want to claim any particular role for itself. All the same, it has consistently encouraged renunciation of violence. "We have done that with all the parties fairly consistently," he said.

THE HINDUSTAN TIMES

10 AUG 2000

US echoes Indian position on dialogue with Pakistan, faults Hizbul's tactics

S Rajagopalan
Washington, August 10

IN WHAT must be music to New Delhi's ears, the US has strongly endorsed India's consistent position that "a climate of trust must be created through sincere efforts to end the violence" for resuming the stalled Indo-Pak dialogue.

Washington has also criticised the Hizbul Mujahideen's tactics, saying the militant outfit ought not to have come up with a new condition of coopting Pakistan after offering to talk to India without preconditions.

The State Department's immediate reaction after the Hizbul broke off the ceasefire on Tuesday was one of expressing regret and counselling resumption of negotiations. By Wednesday, however, it came

up with a detailed response that was clearly supportive of the Indian position.

"It's not helpful for the Hizbul Mujahideen to insist on a new condition after the ceasefire and offer of dialogue was announced and accepted by India," spokesman Richard Boucher said. As he put it, the August 8 deadline and inclusion of Pakistan in the talks "was added afterwards."

While conceding that in the final analysis the Kashmir issue cannot be resolved without a direct Indo-Pak dialogue, the spokesman said that to make such a discussion possible, a "climate of trust must be created through sincere efforts to end the violence". The wishes of the Kashmiri people should, of course, be taken into account in all this, he said.

The question kept popping up in different forms at the State Department briefing, but the spokesman stuck to the stand. When a correspondent asked if the US agreed that there could be no Indo-Pak dialogue unless cross-border terrorism ended, Mr Boucher said that for such a dialogue to resume and succeed, a climate of trust would be needed. "A climate where the violence can end and where the wishes of Kashmiri people can be taken into account," he added.

Offering a more "expansive" reaction to the developments, Mr Boucher said in categorical terms: "We think it's not helpful for new conditions such as the one of the August 8th deadline to be added after the ceasefire and offer of dialogue was announced and accept-

ed by India."

The spokesman drew a clear distinction between the Hizbul-Indian Government talks and the Indo-Pak dialogue by saying the set of discussions between New Delhi and the militant outfit "has value and we would urge those sides to resume this".

The US on its part would "encourage" the Hizbul to resume the cease-fire and the dialogue with the Indian Government, he said. Asked if the Kashmir issue would dominate the agenda of talks when Prime Minister Atal Behari Vajpayee visits Washington in mid-September, he said the US's interest on the Kashmir issue was quite clear and remarked: "I could repeat the four 'Rs' to you, if you'd like me to, but I'm sure it will be discussed this time as well."

THE HINDUSTAN TIMES

11 AUG 2002

US tells Pak to avoid path of violence

Our Political Bureau
NEW DELHI 10 AUGUST

THE US has reportedly spoken to Pakistan about the killings of 100 Kashmiris last week.

This, ministry of economic affairs sources said, was a follow up of the conversation between US president Bill Clinton and Atal Behari Vajpayee soon after the killings. Mr Clinton had promised he would speak to Pakistan about the incident.

The government-to-government communication is the first indication of the US holding Pakistan responsible for the killings. It is also qualitatively different from the US State department reaction on Wednesday which called upon the Hizbul Mujahideen to resume

the ceasefire, but refrained from directly mentioning Pakistan.

Analysts believe a formal communication to Pakistan on rejection of violence is a crystallisation of the US position on killings which holds Islamabad directly responsible for the violence.

Sources also said that cross-border terrorism of the variety that Pakistan indulges in is regarded as a violation of the line of control (LOC). It also cuts through the chaff of "indigenous militant groups" and the "internal dynamics" of the Kashmir movement.

It is also a reiteration of the fact that Pakistani militants operating in Kashmir was violating the LOC.

The Economic Times

11 AUG 2000

US opposed Israeli plane sale to India

Jerusalem, August 20

THE UNITED States is opposed to an Israeli sale of Phalcon airborne warning system to India, which Washington contends could escalate tension between Islamabad and New Delhi.

The American Opposition stems from concerns that the sale of Phalcon spy plane to New Delhi could undermine stability in South Asia, altering the fragile balance of power between India and Pakistan, English daily Ha'aretz quoted an unidentified official as saying.

The US does not perceive any threat from India to its own security, but are wary of tension escalating in India-Pakistan stand-off in the wake of a possible Phalcon deal, he said.

An Israeli official said today the sale of Phalcon spy plane to India is the main stumbling block in the signing of a new Israel-US agree-

ment for the supervision of Israeli arms exports, the daily reported.

Israel also fears that the United States could cast a veto, cancelling the sale of the advanced reconnaissance aircraft, the official said.

The US last year agreed to Israeli sale of a sophisticated land-based radar device, that draws upon technology used by the Phalcon airborne system, to India on the condition that Tel Aviv confer in Washington prior to supplying the radar equipment to the Indian Army, Ha'aretz said.

The Americans have demanded an Israeli promise for prior consultations concerning military sales to India, Pakistan, China and Russia — the four problematic countries in the US list, the daily said.

Earlier, the US had asked Tel Aviv to inform prior to any export of weapons and military supplies to 27 "states of concern" — including India and China. (PTI)

THE HINDUSTAN TIMES

21 AUG 2000

21 AUG 2000

Israeli Phalcon sale to India in trouble 21/8

By Kesava Menon HD-1A

*US (W)
D.D.K. 15/8*

JERUSALEM, AUG. 20. The U.S. administration is reported to be opposed to the Israeli sale of an advanced Airborne Early Warning System (AEWS) to India. Concerns that the Phalcon airborne system could undermine stability in South Asia by altering the balance of power between India and Pakistan was said to be the basis for the U.S. opposition.

The report which appeared in today's edition of the respected Israeli newspaper *Ha'aretz* was sourced to an unnamed US official. A report in *Ha'aretz* several weeks ago had noted that the U.S. administration was trying to set up a special system to monitor weapons sales from Israel to India and 26 other countries. Today's report that the U.S. administration was considering active opposition to the deal suggested that the matter was being taken a step forward.

The daily report also stated that the proposed sale of the Phalcon system was the main stumbling block to the signing of a new U.S.-Israel agreement for the supervision of Israeli arms exports. Israeli officials were said to be concerned that a new arms exports supervision agreement would enable the U.S. to veto the India deal.

Under the circumstances it was not clear whether the report about U.S. opposition to the Phalcon sale was an inspired leak — to inform Israel that whether or not the export supervision

deal was in place, opposition to the India deal would remain.

The supervision agreement is germane to U.S. strategic concerns. Originally the U.S. had wanted Israel's exports to twenty-seven countries be subjected to the terms of this agreement. Now the U.S. reportedly wanted weapons exports to only four countries — India, Pakistan, Russia and China — to be brought within the ambit of the agreement.

Pakistan, of course, does not have diplomatic relations with Israel and the question of arms deals between them should not normally arise unless the U.S. was privy to some special information.

Israel's weapons deals with Russia and China, as also with India, are extremely lucrative. While the U.S. does not consider weapons sales to India as a potential threat to their own forces, they feel that advanced technology in the hands of China, could pose such a threat. It is possible that the U.S. is threatening to jeopardise the India deal, so that Israel softens its objections to the export-supervision agreement.

U.S. officials were said to have promised their Israeli counterparts, in the course of talks held in Washington, that they did not plan to cast an automatic veto on arms deals, even in respect to deals pertaining to the four countries. However, the U.S. wishes that Israel give prior notice of transactions with the four countries.

THE HINDU

21 AUG 2008

U.S. objection to Phalcon deal irks Israelis

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HD-19
26/8

By Kesava Menon

TEL AVIV, AUG. 25. While there have been no official pronouncements on reports concerning U.S. objections to the sale of an Israeli airborne early warning system to India, resentment is growing here over the idea that the U.S. might try to stop the sale. Analysts, and officials speaking in private, believe Washington has no basis to object to the sale.

Ha'aretz, reputed Israeli newspaper, reported earlier this week that the U.S. would oppose the sale of the Phalcon early warning system. According to an unnamed U.S. official, source of the story, Washington believes that India's acquisition of the system will unsettle the military balance between India and Pakistan and further destabilise the sub-continent. The U.S. is trying to get Israel to sign an agreement whereby Israeli arms sales to four countries will be monitored by the U.S. Although the U.S. promised it would not exercise a veto in respect of armament deals, the transaction with India is being threatened with such a veto.

The U.S. had recently blocked the sale of the Phalcon system to China. Analysts here criticised Tel Aviv for the manner in which it went about cancell-

ing the contract. They point out that the Government did not gain anything from the U.S. for acceding to its demand and at the same time only succeeded in irking the Chinese.

Some Israeli papers pointed out that the Chinese President, Mr. Jiang Zemin, did not receive Israel's Regional Cooperation Minister, Mr. Shimon Peres, when he visited China recently. (Mr. Peres went to China — as he has come to India — to explain Israel's position on the talks held with the Palestinians at Camp David last month). The papers said this was a deliberate snub intended to show Beijing's displeasure over the cancellation of the contract.

While the Israel Government had drawn part of the criticism for the cancellation of the China deal, there was an undercurrent of resentment at the U.S. arm-twisting. This resentment is becoming far more pronounced over the reported U.S. objection to the Indian deal. In the case of China, analysts point out, the U.S. had a plausible argument — that China's possession of the system could be detrimental to American forces if they were drawn into a conflict between China and Taiwan. But the reasons cited in support of the objection to the Indian contract are not considered valid in any way.

THE HINDU

26 AUG 2000

Clinton to assess progress at Camp David talks

THURMONT (U.S.), JULY 24. The U.S. President, Mr. Bill Clinton, has rejoined the West Asia peace talks at Camp David, hoping to build on what he said was headway made while he visited Japan.

Mr Clinton arrived yesterday by helicopter at the Camp David presidential Retreat after a three-day absence to attend the Summit of the Group of Eight industrial nations in Okinawa. He left the White House for Camp David accompanied by his daughter, Chelsea.

Asked about the prospects for an agreement, Mr. Clinton crossed his fingers and waved them, saying, "I've got my fingers crossed." He was expected to meet his negotiating team to make what aides said would be a crucial assessment of the talks after a weekend in which the Israeli Prime Minister, Mr. Ehud Barak and the Palestinian President, Mr. Yasser Arafat, mixed informal negotiating with forays away from the Camp.

Meanwhile, sources said Mr Arafat was determined to resist pressure at the talks to give up claims on Jerusalem, the toughest issue blocking a final deal.

Palestinian officials said Mr Arafat's unwavering determination to end 33 years of Israeli occupation of Arab east Jerusalem was strengthened by a flurry of political activity in West Asia by some Arab leaders on Jerusalem. Mr Arafat insists he has no mandate from the Arab and Muslim world to give away what they see as Palestinian rights in the city.

Officials said he had enlisted the support of Arab and Muslim rulers to fend off U.S. and Israeli pressure to show flexibility on Jerusalem. "A clear Arab position on Jerusalem will back Arafat's stance at Camp David. Concrete steps must be taken by the Arabs and Muslims to show Clinton that Arafat's ability to manoeuvre is nil," a senior Palestinian official said.

Progress at the talks hinges on resolving the status of the city sacred to Jews, Muslims and Christians. — Reuters

THE HINDU

Clinton warns W. Asia rivals

199 28/7
Jerusalem, July 28 (Reuters): US President Bill Clinton warned in remarks broadcast today of far-reaching ramifications if West Asian leaders took unilateral actions and torpedoed the push for peace.

"I think it would be a big mistake to take a unilateral action and walk away from the peace process, and if it happens, there will inevitably be consequences not just here but throughout the world. I mean that things will happen," Clinton said on Israel Radio.

Palestinian President Yasser Arafat has said he intends to declare an independent state after a September 13 target date whether or not he and Israeli Prime Minister Ehud Barak reach an agreement by then.

Israel Radio broadcast excerpts from an interview which Israel Television was due to broadcast in its entirety later in the day. The radio said Clinton was answering a question about a US congressional threat to curb aid to the Palestinian Authority should Arafat declare a state unilaterally.

Israeli security officials have

warned a unilateral declaration could trigger an outbreak of regional violence.

Israeli officials have said Israel could respond by annex West Bank and Gaza lands it still occupies. Under peace deals, Israel has transferred about 40 per cent of the lands to self-rule.

Israel-Lebanon border

UN peacekeepers took up positions on the Lebanese-Israeli border today to extend their authority over the area occupied by Israel until two months ago, UN military sources said.

In a sign that the long-awaited deployment of peacekeepers was beginning, UN troops raised their blue flag on the border at Manara, opposite an Israeli settlement.

Lebanon, still disputing that Israel has fully withdrawn, played down the significance of the move. Witnesses saw the peacekeepers from the UN Interim Force in Lebanon go to the areas of Yaroun and Manara in the central sector of the former occupation zone in southern Lebanon and take up positions beside the border.

THE TELEGRAPH

29 JUL 2000

Albright holds talks with N. Korean leader

By Amit Baruah

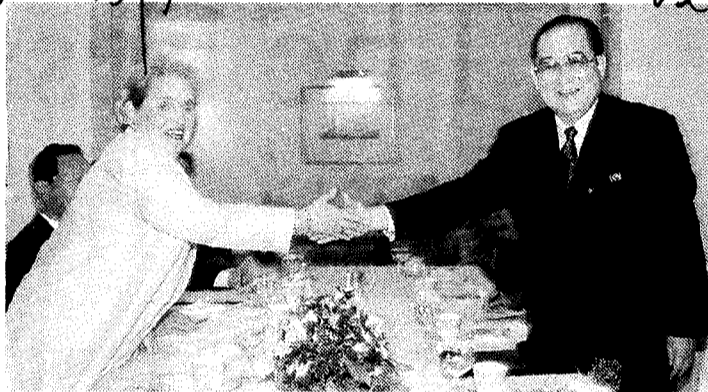
BANGKOK, JULY 28. The United States Secretary of State, Ms. Madeleine Albright, and the North Korean Foreign Minister, Mr. Paek Nam-Sun, held the highest-level talks since the Korean War, on the sidelines of the ASEAN dialogue partners' meeting today.

"My meeting today with Foreign Minister Paek constitutes a substantively modest but symbolically historic step away from the sterility and hostility of the past," Ms. Albright said after the talks.

"I have been direct in stating American concerns about all aspects of the missile threat, nuclear weapons related activities and the importance of achieving the goals of the agreed framework", she said.

Ms. Albright also stated that she had not been able to glean any additional information about North Korea's reported offer to scrap its missile programme in return for help in space technology.

Separately, the Chinese Foreign Minister, Mr. Tang Jiaxuan, told a



The U.S. Secretary of State, Ms. Madeline Albright, shakes hands with the North Korean Foreign Minister, Mr. Paek Nam-sun, during a historic meeting on Friday following talks at the ASEAN Post-Ministerial meeting in Bangkok, Thailand. It was the highest level meeting between the two countries in a half century of hostility. — AP

meeting of ASEAN and its dialogue partners that the development gap between the South and the North needed to be bridged. The concept that human rights could override sovereignty had "eroded the foundation of the norms governing international

relations and threatened the sovereignty and security of developing countries".

Calling upon the world community to share the benefits of globalisation, the Chinese Minister said: "In view of the growing

accumulation of wealth by a few countries or interest groups and the widening gap between the rich and poor in the whole world, we appeal to the developed countries to fulfill their duties and obligations, further open their markets to developing countries, offer them financial and technical assistance, and work hand in hand with them to reform the financial architecture, improve the rules pertinent to international trade and establish a just and reasonable new economic order."

He also maintained that international relations needed to be democratised. "To impose a certain system, value or development model on other countries does not represent the progress of history. On the contrary, it will only aggravate injustice and inequality that may occur in the process of globalisation." The Chinese Foreign Minister also stated that "economic globalisation should be a process leading to the common prosperity of the South and the North, rather than one of polarisation of the world".

U.S. urges Pak to resume talks

WASHINGTON: The United States has asked Pakistan to take "concrete steps" for resumption of a "productive dialogue" with India and a return to the Lahore spirit with the provision that there would be "no more Kargils".

Stressing that a solution to the problems in Kashmir would have to be "home grown" and not imported from outside, assistant secretary of state Karl F. Inderfurth said that efforts being undertaken by the Indian government to address Kashmiri concerns were a positive development that would produce beneficial results over time.

In this context, Mr Inderfurth,

who is in charge of South Asia at the state department, welcomed the release of the Hurriyat leaders.

During an interview here, Mr Inderfurth spoke of a new relationship with India, emphasising that Pakistan was not a factor in this. "The differences between India and Pakistan are obvious. Right now we have more opportunities to pursue with India, and frankly, right now we have many more concerns about the direction Pakistan is heading.

But we are not making a choice between either and we are not attempting to tilt in this relationship. We would like to see the word 'tilt' consigned to a historical period

that we have gone beyond," he said.

Mr Inderfurth expressed the hope that Pakistan would take "concrete steps that would allow a productive and serious dialogue" to be resumed between Pakistan and India. "We would like to see a return if not to the city of Lahore, to the spirit of Lahore, with the provision of no more Kargils," he said.

What assurances Pakistan should give India for the talks to take place was to be determined by the two parties, he said, recalling that President Clinton had made it very clear that "we are concerned and we see ourselves playing a supporting, encouraging role." (PTI)

THE TIMES OF INDIA

8 MAY 2000

India has a key role in Sri Lanka, says Inderfurth

By Malini Parthasarathy

WASHINGTON, MAY 17. The Clinton administration is "very concerned" that the intensification of the conflict in Sri Lanka, as reflected in the battle for the Jaffna peninsula could bring on a "humanitarian crisis" and would therefore like to see an early end to the hostilities in the peninsula but is also very clear that the United States would favour a solution to the crisis "that would be within the framework of Sri Lankan unity and territorial integrity".

Laying out the administration's view of the current crisis in Sri Lanka, the U.S. Assistant Secretary of State for South Asia, Mr. Karl F. Inderfurth, made categorically clear in a conversation at his office today that the United States would not at all entertain any notions such as that of the LTTE of a separate state of Tamil Eelam. "We would not, nor do we believe that the international community would, recognise a unilateral assertion of independence." The United States, he said, was closely consulting with the Indian Government and was supportive of the Norwegian initiative to facilitate negotiations between the Sri Lankan Government and the LTTE.

Mr. Inderfurth emphasised that the United States had "long believed in the need for a negotiated political solution to the Sri Lankan conflict, one that would include constitutional reform and devolution of power." In this regard, the United States supported the Norwegian initiative. Mr. Inderfurth recalled that along with the U.S. Under-Secretary of State, Mr. Thomas Pickering, he had met the Norwegian special envoy, Mr. Erik Solheim, who had briefed them about the Norwegian peace



initiative in Sri Lanka. Mr. Inderfurth said that Mr. Solheim had informed them of the "willingness" of the Norwegian Government to play the role of an honest broker, listening to both parties and trying to bridge differences." Mr. Solheim had clearly "felt that the fighting in the Jaffna peninsula was a setback in terms of an immediate effort... this would have to resolve itself in some fashion" before the Norwegian peace initiative could proceed. Mr. Inderfurth said that the Norwegian special envoy had impressed the American officials "with his knowledge of the situation in Sri Lanka and his commitment to performing his role."

Mr. Inderfurth said that he had noted Mr. Solheim's remark during his later visit to New Delhi that India was the only external power with a role in the resolu-

tion of the Sri Lankan conflict. Asked whether the Clinton administration would go along with that view, Mr. Inderfurth said: "We believe that India is the key outside power and that anything to be done by the international community must be done very much with India." The United States was "well aware of the legitimate interest that India has in Sri Lanka" and respected that. The administration also recognised that the Indian Government was "moving cautiously to determine the most appropriate role for India to play and we certainly understand India's desire not to become involved militarily." The Clinton administration appreciated India's willingness to consider humanitarian assistance if the need arose and would likewise be willing to extend such assistance, Mr. Inderfurth said. What was significant in the current situation was that there was now a "community of concerned countries" which had expressed their view of the Sri Lankan crisis and that Sri Lanka was "clearly in the forefront of the international community's concerns at this point..", Mr. Inderfurth said, pointing to the statements made by the European Union and the U.N. Secretary-General, Mr. Kofi Annan, as instances of this international concern.

Asked why the United States was not explicitly throwing its weight behind the Kumaratunga Government's package of peace proposals which contained the crucial elements of constitutional reform and devolution of power, that the United States had said was necessary for a resolution of the conflict, Mr. Inderfurth said, "We have long said that we believe that President Kumaratun-

ga's proposals would serve as a basis for a political settlement taking into account the interests of all the Sri Lankan people...while we do not want to be in a position of endorsing one package or another...it's not for the United States to do that, it's for the Sri Lankans to do so." He added that the United States had urged the opposition UNP and its leader, Mr. Ranil Wickremesinghe, to work with the Kumaratunga Government. "We were encouraged after the national election when the UNP leader, Mr. Ranil Wickremesinghe, stated that his party would sit down with the Government to start discussing whether or not a consensus could be developed..."

Would the United States offer assistance to the Sri Lankan Government if the military situation in the Jaffna peninsula deteriorated further and the Sri Lankan army found itself trapped? Mr. Inderfurth's response was: "No request has come from Sri Lanka for the assistance of the United States... we are clearly concerned about the situation and as with other Governments, including India, we will look at the requests if they are made... we would not want to see a humanitarian crisis unfold." He said that the Clinton administration was especially concerned about the safety of civilians in the Jaffna peninsula and that it had "urged both parties to observe relevant international standards of conduct with respect to both combatants and civilians and to facilitate humanitarian relief efforts." Mr. Inderfurth also pointed out that the U.S. Under-Secretary of State, Mr. Thomas Pickering, who is visiting New Delhi later this month will also be going to Sri Lanka.

THE HINDU

INDIA

10 MAY 2000

BIG BROTHER WATCHES: DEVELOPMENTS UNDER CLOSE SCRUTINY OF POWERS THAT BE IN US

US to back India stand on Lankan crisis

Our Political Bureau
NEW DELHI, 24 MAY

THE US, on Wednesday, backed India's stand on the Sri Lankan ethnic crisis even as Norwegian special envoy Eric Solheim met officials here to discuss various options, including evacuation of trapped soldiers, to facilitate restoration of peace in the island.

The United States under secretary of state for political affairs Thomas Pickering, who held talks with defence minister George Fernandes and foreign secretary Lalit Mansingh, said America will support "any constructive role India takes in the Sri Lankan crisis." He made clear the US stand on the ethnic problem which has been rocking the island state for several years now.

Echoing the Indian position, Mr Pickering emphasised that the US was against supporting any independent state being carved out of Sri Lanka while rejecting the possibility of a military solution. Both the US and India have banned the LTTE, branding it a "terrorist organisation."

"The US is watching developments carefully. While discussing the situation in Sri Lanka, we expressed our concern and hoped for a peaceful settlement," he added. Mr Pickering visit is part of a routine foreign exchange visit where Asian security is meant to be discussed as per an agreement signed between Prime Minister Atal Behari Vajpayee and US President Bill Clinton.



FOREIGN PARLEYS: US under-secretary of state Thomas Pickering replies to a reporter's question in New Delhi as Indian foreign secretary Lalit Mansingh (right) looks on

We informed India what we are doing and they have informed us about their plans," Mr Solheim said. The Norwegian envoy also denied that he was carrying any formal message from Colombo. "We have no formal request to hand over. Both the Indian and Sri Lankan governments are closely in touch and there is no need for them to communicate through Norway," he added.

Mr Mansingh said Mr Solheim briefed India about their initiative but added that India's stand remained the same. "We are willing to extend humanitarian assistance but only if a request is made. Till now there is no such request," he held.

On the home front, the evacuation offer by India with the rider that proper conditions be laid as well as a formal request be made by Sri Lanka — was viewed with some apprehension by Tamil allies

He is also scheduled to travel to Colombo this week. On the other hand, Mr Solheim also called on Mr Mansingh, for the second time since the crisis. He said various options were discussed in the talks but refused to elaborate on specifics. There was an indication that the meeting did not reap any positive results.

"There are various options.



SEEKING SOLUTIONS: Norwegian special peace envoy to Sri Lanka Erik Solheim speaks to reporters after a meeting with Lalit Mansingh in New Delhi on Wednesday

within the NDA. MDMK general secretary Vaiko reportedly said in Chennai that evacuation of Sri Lankan troops from the Jaffna peninsula could lead to the government there resorting to an economic blockade in a bid to subjugate the minority Tamils.

He added that his apprehensions were based on past experience, when Jaffna had slipped out of government control prior to 1995 and Sri Lanka had imposed economic embargo on Tamils. "I don't know under what circumstances and on what conditions the evacuation will take place," he said.

The Puthiya Tamizhagam, on the other hand, said India should only send troops only if

both sides agreed. "If India sends forces without the consent of both parties involved, it will definitely hurt the sentiments of people of Tamil Nadu," Mr Krishnaswamy said.

Meanwhile, the Southern-based navy and the air force were put on full alert with joint surveillance exercises continuing off coastal areas of Tamil Nadu and Kerala.

Meanwhile, Air Chief Marshal A.Y. Tipnis' arrival in Thiruvananthapuram was considered significant in this context though officially it was said that the air chief's visit was scheduled earlier and had nothing to do with the Lankan crisis. However, the official stand failed to convince many.

U.S. moving warships towards Sri Lanka

By Atul Aneja ^{HD-1}

NEW DELHI, MAY 25. In an apparent show of solidarity with Sri Lanka, the United States has reportedly moved an element of its naval task force from the Gulf towards the southern Arabian sea, highly-placed sources in the Government have said. The assessment here is that the U.S. warships were being moved towards southern Arabian sea. The warships were possibly being re-located so that they could be moved towards Sri Lanka, if required.

By moving its ships towards the Sri Lankan periphery, the U.S. might be sending a powerful message of support to the Sri Lankan forces. The presence of these ships was likely to concretise Washington's verbal support for Sri Lanka's unity and territorial integrity.

The movement of these warships, according to analysts, also corroborated the recent assertion by the visiting U.S. Under Secretary of State for Political Affairs, Mr. Thomas Pickering, that Washington intended to keep a close watch on the developments in Sri Lanka. Sources here clarified that by nudging its ships closer, the U.S. was not challenging India's primacy in the zone. On the contrary, the U.S., as indicated by

Mr. Pickering on Wednesday, would like India and Norway to play a leading role in resolving Sri Lanka's ethnic strife within a "regional" framework.

The U.S. endorsement of a regional approach also had two other key connotations, analysts say. The U.S. formulation could mean that Washington, as of now, does not favour the resolution of the Sri Lankan crisis through the U.N. route. Besides, Washington might be signaling its reluctance to involve any more extra-regional players in Sri Lanka.

Britain, a possible participant in international diplomacy in Sri Lanka, today rejected the involvement of a "multiplicity of negotiators" in ending the strife.

The British High Commissioner to India, Mr. Rob Young, fully endorsed the Norwegian initiative for ending Sri Lanka's civil war.

The movement of the U.S. ships had been preceded by a show of strength by the Indian navy to boost the morale of Sri Lankan forces. The Navy, along with the Coast Guard, earlier this month conducted an exercise between Visakhapatnam and Chennai involving a Kashin class destroyer, Khanjar class corvettes and off-shore patrol vessels.

Killings in Batticaloa: Page 13

THE HINDU

2 MAY 2000

'U.S. not to take any action in Sri Lanka'

By Atul Aneja

NEW DELHI, MAY 26. The United States has told India that it did not wish to "take action" in Sri Lanka, the Foreign Secretary, Mr. Lalit Mansingh, said today to reports that U.S. warships had been moved from the Persian Gulf towards the southern Arabian sea.

Mr. Mansingh said he had raised the issue with the visiting U.S. Under-Secretary of State for Political Affairs, Mr. Thomas Pickering. "He assured that they did not intend to take any action in Sri Lanka. We go by that," Mr. Mansingh said after briefing the press on the coming visit of the President, Mr. K.R. Narayanan, to China.

Analysts pointed out that the U.S. was monitoring the developments in Sri Lanka but did not wish to play a military role. The U.S., they said, was committed to a "regional" initiative to get the crisis resolved, which meant backing a lead role by India and Norway. All the three countries — India, the U.S. and Norway — rejected Tamil secession in Sri Lanka, but supported a possible framework to address the genuine aspirations of all Sri Lankans, including the minority Tamils.

The movement of U.S. ships from the Gulf towards the Indian Ocean has generated more than one view within the Government. A section of officials was of the view that the movement of a few ships from the Fifth Fleet was "routine". The U.S. Navy, they said, regularly switched ships between their fleets. Some warships between the Pacific Fleet and the Fifth Fleet, operating in the Gulf, are regularly swapped.

Ships of the Fifth Fleet, now in the periphery of Sri Lanka, are therefore merely transiting through these waters. This movement, in other words, is not connected to the developments in Sri Lanka.

Yet another view emerging within the Government was that the U.S. was moving its ships in the light of the developments in Sri Lanka. Elements of the Fifth Fleet, sources said, could be moved either in the Red Sea, the Persian Gulf and the Indian Ocean. A switch of some ships between the Fifth Fleet and the Pacific fleet, therefore, did not mean that these vessels were merely in transit and would automatically get de-inducted from the area.

27 MAY 2000

U.S. concern over fate of Jaffna civilians

By Nirupama Subramanian

COLOMBO, MAY 29. The United States Under-Secretary of State for Political Affairs, Mr. Thomas Pickering, on Monday reiterated his country's opposition to an independent Tamil Eelam and voiced the concern of the international community about the fate of around 4.5 lakh civilians trapped in the embattled Jaffna peninsula.

Washington's gesture of support came as the Jaffna peninsula experienced a third day of uneasy quiet, with troops and LTTE fighters holding on to their respective positions but not engaging in any serious fighting.

Mr. Pickering met the Sri Lankan President, Mrs. Chandrika Kumaratunga, the Foreign Minister, Mr. Lakshman Kadirgamar, the Constitutional Affairs and Justice Minister, Mr. G.L. Peiris, and the Leader of the Opposition, Mr. Ranil Wickremesinghe.

He held discussions with representatives of Tamil political parties represented in Parliament.

Mr. Pickering, one of the seniormost U.S. officials to visit the island in recent years, underlined Washington's position for a negotiated political settlement within the framework of a united Sri Lanka.

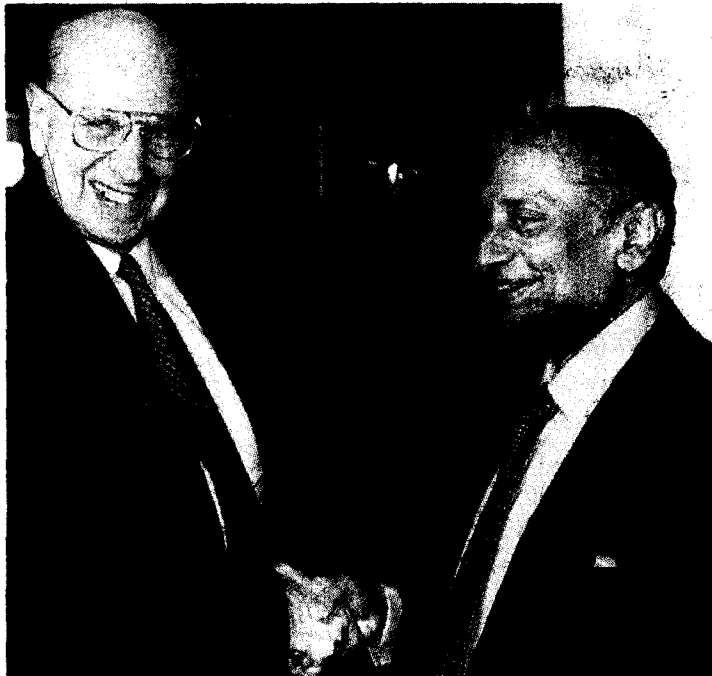
A Foreign Ministry press release said the Norwegian initiative to

facilitate a dialogue between the Sri Lankan Government and the LTTE was also discussed.

"We want peace to come to this part of the world. We hope to be supportive of the process to help find peace," Mr. Pickering told mediapersons. He said he had

stressed this during his talks in New Delhi last week.

Mr. Pickering, here on a one-day visit on the third-leg of his three-nation South Asia tour, spoke of U.S. concern over the "humanitarian catastrophe" taking shape in the peninsula.



The U.S. Under-Secretary of State for Political Affairs, Mr. Thomas Pickering, with the Sri Lankan Minister of Foreign Affairs, Mr. Lakshman Kadirgamar, in Colombo on Monday. — Photo: Sriyantha Walpola

"We would be deeply concerned that there is a human, humanitarian catastrophe in the making, certainly in the northern parts of the country," he said.

The Foreign Ministry here said Mr. Pickering had been briefed on measures to "ensure the continued welfare of the civilian population in the peninsula, especially in the current context".

Mr. Pickering's expression of concern for Jaffna civilians came in the wake of a weekend appeal by the United Nations High Commission for Refugees to both sides to ensure the safety of the civilian population as a war of words erupted between the Government and the LTTE over a temporary ceasefire declared by the latter last Saturday.

Accusing the LTTE of attempting to "induct more cadres and supplies" to the peninsula during the ceasefire, the Government said in a statement its troops had thwarted these attempts using tanks and mortars.

Meanwhile, the LTTE, which had said its declaration of a "unilateral" ceasefire was to enable civilians to move out of the Thamarachchi division of Jaffna peninsula, the present theatre of operations, accused the Government of not respecting the truce, and of preventing the movement of people by shelling the area.

THE HINDU

30 MAY 200

Clinton slams Republicans for ridiculing S. Asia trip

Aziz Haniffa

WASHINGTON 31 MARCH

US PRESIDENT Bill Clinton has accused Republican leaders of torpedoing any leverage he may have had in securing non-proliferation guarantees from India and Pakistan during his trip to South Asia by shooting down the Comprehensive Test Ban Treaty (CTBT) in the Senate.

During his trip to the sub-continent, Mr Clinton failed to convince either India or Pakistan to agree to sign and ratify CTBT or garner any commitment from them to reverse their nuclear weapons programmes.

Speaking at a Democratic National Committee (DNC) luncheon in New York, Mr Clinton said that upon his return from South Asia last week, he was incensed by Republican criticism of his trip, especially remarks that he did not "get anything" from it.

"I noticed a member of the other party in the Senate criticising me for going to India and Pakistan because I didn't get anything for it," Mr Clinton, a Democrat, said. "That is, they didn't

agree to sign the Comprehensive Test Ban Treaty, or to the other efforts that I'm making to try to stop them from building up nuclear weapons."

"Well they didn't," he acknowledged. But, he asserted that what the Republicans "didn't point out is that I lost all leverage I had when the Republican Senate defeated the ratification of the Comprehensive Test Ban Treaty (CTBT)."

"I thought, that is real gall. Man, for a guy to stand up and say that...One of their great strengths is, by the way, that they have no guilt and no shame. I mean, they'll say anything. You know, you'll never see them blink about it," Mr Clinton said.

The President said he just couldn't "imagine a reason for the United States not to sign the Comprehensive Test Ban

Treaty unless you believe that we will be more secure because you think we can always win any arms race, so it's okay if everybody else starts to get in the nuclear business as well."

Mr Sam Brownback, a Republican who chairs the Senate Foreign Relations subcommittee on South Asia, described Mr Clinton's visit to South Asia as "a bust."

House Republican Whip Tom DeLay said Mr Clinton had hardly anything to show for the trip that is estimated to have cost upwards of \$50 million — the most expensive presidential trip ever undertaken that included, besides Air Force One, 77 air force support aircraft being used, including large carriers. Mr Brownback said he was disappointed that the legislation he had worked on for two years, which gave the President authority to waive all sanctions against India, had not



Clinton: I love my India

been used by Mr Clinton. "The President goes to India and hardly lifts any sanctions at all," he said. "This is a relationship that is ripe for growth and instead we got a trip that was mostly symbolic."

A spokesman for Senate Majority Leader Trent Lott, reacting to Mr Clinton's ridiculing of Republican lawmakers who had rejected CTBT, alleged: "These countries have already signed and broken a nuclear non-proliferation treaty."

The spokesman, Mr John Czwartacki, said: "It's hard to believe that more paper is the answer. I think this President needs more of an emphasis on diplomacy and less emphasis on photo-op foreign policy."

Last year, Mr Clinton lost his major foreign policy initiative when the Republican-led Senate rejected CTBT by a 51-48 vote. Mr Clinton had called the vote "reckless partisanship." The US had the dubious distinction of becoming the first nuclear weapons power to reject the 154-nation agreement on eschewing nuclear weapons testing after pushing for the treaty and virtually trying to arm-twist India and Pakistan to sign and ratify it.

— IANS

India, Uzbekistan sign key security pacts

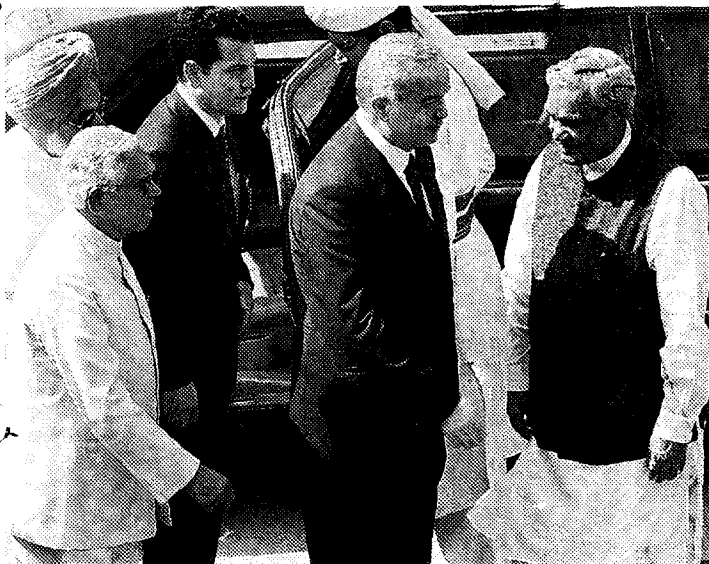
By Atul Aneja

NEW DELHI, MAY 2. India and Uzbekistan today signed several key agreements to fine tune their political relationship to face the onslaught of cross-border terrorism mushrooming from the Afghanistan-Pakistan extremist hub.

Concerned about the serious challenge posed to regional and national security, the visiting Uzbekistan President, Mr. Islam Karimov, and the Prime Minister, Mr. Atal Behari Vajpayee, signed a joint declaration on principles which will anchor future relationship.

The declaration has been signed in the backdrop of an urgency felt both in New Delhi and Tashkent for a joint front to counter the threat of destabilisation to Central and South Asia from Taliban-dominated Afghanistan. Sources here point out that Uzbekistan, which shares a common border with the other four Central Asian republics — Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan and Turkmenistan — is aware that it is the fulcrum around which the security of resource-rich Central Asia revolves.

From a military angle, armed inroads can be made into Uzbekistan across the legendary Amu Darya which separates the country from Afghanistan. The possibility of such a thrust has increased with the Taliban now sitting at the northern city of Mazar-e-Sharif, which is around three hours driving distance from



The President of Uzbekistan, Mr. Islam Karimov, being received by the President, Mr. K.R. Narayanan, and the Prime Minister, Mr. A.B. Vajpayee, at Rashtrapati Bhavan on Tuesday. — Photo: Anu Pushkarna.

the Amu Darya. Reports from Uzbekistan also say Kandahar in Afghanistan has become the base for the formation of the United Uzbek Opposition. This opposition is likely to be joined by the Pakistan-backed Taliban. The choice of Kandahar as the springboard for an onslaught into Uzbekistan is significant as it is not far from Quetta in Pakistan, from where the area can be kept well supplied.

India, on its part, fully shares Uzbekistan's security concerns. Consolidation of radicalism in Central Asia can only have nega-

tive security repercussions on Kashmir.

While India and Uzbekistan discussed the regional security situation, it was in the backdrop of the increasing extra-regional presence in the area. Russia, anxious to keep the insurgency in the Caucasus insulated from radical forces in Central Asia is engaging the Central Asians in a major military and diplomatic exercise. A coalition of four Central Asian republics, minus Turkmenistan has also been formed to counter extremist threats.

China, also sensing the rise of

extremism in its oil-rich Sinkiang province, has also launched a major cooperative initiative along with Russia to engage the Central Asians under the framework of the Shanghai-five. Reacting to the Russian inroads, the U. S. has recently shown greater activism in the region as was evident in the visit to Central Asia by the U.S. Secretary of State, Ms. Madeline Albright, in April.

Aware of the high stakes involved, the Uzbek President was quick to declare his rejection of extremism from Afghanistan. "Afghanistan has become a hot-bed and training ground of international terrorism. Such activities are absolutely unacceptable to us. We cannot accept the policies of certain countries supporting Taliban", he said soon after being accorded a ceremonial welcome at the forecourt of the Rashtrapati Bhavan. Mr. Karimov described India as Uzbekistan's "natural ally" in the fight against terrorism which, he said, had acquired "explosive" dimensions.

Both sides today signed an extradition treaty and a legal assistance pact on criminal matters. A "mutual assistance" agreement between the two customs authorities was also finalised.

India has also finalised an agreement to extend another 10 million dollars of credit to Uzbekistan. Besides, the two countries signed pacts in the fields of agriculture research, culture, information and mass media.

THE HINDU

5.3 APR 2000

India, Ireland to set up IT working group

HT Correspondent
New Delhi, April 7

INDIA AND Ireland are setting up a joint working group on exploring the possibility of bilateral co-operation in the areas of information technology.

Irish deputy Prime Minister Mary Harvey and information technology minister Pramod Mahajan will sign the agreement on Saturday. The proposal is to undertake bilateral co-operation in the areas of IT and establish a separate mechanism for fostering business to business alliances.

The idea behind setting up the group is to tap new markets through strategic alliances with overseas countries.

In addition, NASSCOM and the Irish Software Association (ISA) have also signed a MoU for increasing trade and cooperation in the software and services sector.

Software exports to Ireland during 1998 were close to \$11 million, which accounted for just 0.71 per cent of the total software exports from India. Software is one of Ireland's fastest growing business sectors with annual growth rates of 15 per cent for the past two years.

Addressing a CII meeting, the Irish leader said that the scope for co-operation between the two countries was considerable. Harvey urged Indian corporates to consider investing in Ireland as that would provide them with a gateway to the European union and the African market. "Indian investors should consider joint ventures in order to access market knowledge that Irish corporates have built", she said.

THE HINDUSTAN TIMES

8 APR 2000

Visit sparked Sikh carnage, says Clinton

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA (W)

WASHINGTON, April 15. — President Bill Clinton has said 35 Sikhs were massacred at Chatti Singhpora in Jammu and Kashmir on 20 March because he was visiting India.

The killers don't want the turmoil in the state to be eased, he said.

"I'm sure they were murdered because I was there. Those people lost their lives because I went to India and Pakistan," he said during a fund-raising luncheon for Georgia Democratic representative, Ms Cynthia McKinney, at Atlanta yesterday.

"The people who don't want their turmoil to be eased used my trip there as a pretext to highlight the difficulties. And somebody, we do not know who, killed perfectly innocent people — who, I might add, had never before been targeted in all the conflicts in Kashmir," Mr Clinton told the gathering, among whom were many Sikhs.

15 APR 2000

Pentagon seeks delay of arms sale to Taiwan, says paper

WASHINGTON: The Pentagon will recommend against the controversial sale of four Aegis destroyers to Taiwan but favours selling the island long-range radar that can peer deep into China to detect missile launches, the *Washington Post* reported on Monday.

The newspaper quoted sources close to the deliberations as saying that the Pentagon had decided to recommend putting off Taiwan's request to buy several major new weapons.

These include submarines and P-3 Orion anti-submarine aircraft, as well as four Arleigh Burke-class destroyers equipped with the Aegis battle management system, a radar and computer array capable of simultaneously tracking more than 100 targets on land, in the air and at sea.

Pentagon spokesmen could not be reached for comment. Taiwan's desire to buy the Aegis ships, priced at \$1 billion each, has posed a tough dilemma for the Clinton administration, which will infuriate China if it approves the sale and anger key Republicans in Congress if it does not.

Instead of the destroyers' sale, the Pentagon will recommend a comprehensive study of Taiwan's naval defence needs, which could lead to future sale of some or all of the weapons requested, the newspaper reported, quoting an official involved in the discussions. Defence secretary William Cohen last month expressed confidence in Taiwan's "very capable military" despite a reported new Pentagon assessment that Taipei was more vulnerable to attack from China than generally recognised.

The U.S., while supplying military hardware to Taiwan for its defence, recognises only Beijing as the legitimate government of China. It is due to decide on the sale of the Aegis destroyers by the end of April, when Taiwanese officials will arrive here to discuss the requested arms.

After pro-independence politician Chen Shui-Bian won Taiwan's presidential election earlier this month,

Beijing threatened to attack the island if it attempted to secede, although both sides have since toned down their rhetoric.

A senior Chinese official warned earlier this month that a US transfer of high-tech military equipment to Taiwan would be considered a hostile act and would be "the last straw" in US-Chinese relations.

Sen. Jesse Helms, the influential North Carolina Republican who heads the Senate Foreign Relations Committee, recently urged Washington to send a clear signal to Beijing by approving Taiwan's request for defence purchases.

Under the Pentagon's recommendation, the long-range radar, known as Pave Paws, would be sold only after Taiwan shows how it would be integrated into its air defence system, the newspaper said.

Then the US would deliver it within one or two years, the paper quoted an administration official as saying. The system is designed to detect and monitor ballistic missiles and can be linked to missile defence systems. The Pentagon has also decided to back the sale of advanced medium-range air-to-air missiles to Taiwan on the condition that they be stored in the US. While this would be the first sale of such weapons to any Asian country, storing them on US soil would help to avoid an arms race in Asia, the *Post* quoted a Pentagon official as saying.

Taiwanese forces would be trained in the US to use the missiles. A Pentagon official said the missiles would be moved to Taiwan if China acquired a similar, Russian-made missile called the AAX-12.

The Pentagon also wants to sell Taiwan an upgraded version of the maverick air-to-ground missile, a Pentagon official told the paper.

Under the Taiwan Relations Act of 1979, passed when Washington re-established diplomatic relations with Beijing and downgraded them with Taipei, the U.S. committed itself to providing Taiwan with enough weapons to enable it to defend itself. (Reuters)

THE TIMES OF INDIA

18 APR 2000

US tells Pak to set nice tone for talks with India

Washington, April 28

THE UNITED States (US) has asked Pakistan to help create necessary conditions for making meaningful the dialogue that its military ruler General Pervez Musharraf is trying to have with New Delhi.

Speaking here yesterday on the "US Policy in South Asia: The Road Ahead", Under Secretary of State for Political Affairs Thomas R Pickering referred to Gen Musharraf's repeated offers to start dialogue with India and said, "We are asking New Delhi to consider very seriously the possibilities for resuming this dialogue".

But, Pakistan now should do its part to help create the peaceful conditions needed to make such a dialogue meaningful. This need not be a matter of public fanfare, proclamations or even comments, what matters the most is to be able to see the reality on the ground, he said.

Mr Pickering, who is visiting New Delhi for discussion with India on Asian security, welcomed India's release of several leaders of the Kashmir All-Party Hurriyat Conference, indicating a willingness to talk with them. Reportedly, other Hurriyat leaders might be released soon, he added.

Today, the question is how best to move towards the objective of calming the conflict, and the answer, in our view, is through peaceful dialogue between India and Pakistan, in the spirit of the Lahore meeting between their two leaders in February 1999".

Pak cautioned against economic stagnation

THE UNITED States has said Pakistan "has a last chance to save itself from economic stagnation, or worse" and if it makes the right moves in this direction, Washington and the international economic community will lend appropriate support to it.

"If it (Pakistan) makes the right moves in this area, the US and the international economic community will be prepared to lend appropriate support in offering its people prospects for a better life," US Under Secretary of State for Political Affairs Thomas Pickering said at John Hopkin School of Advanced International Studies in Washington on Thursday.

On Bangladesh he said, the US wants to work with the country to develop its economic potential. In the case of energy, there is added potential for the development of regional cooperation.

PTI, Washington

find their own way to at least coexist in peace and even better to begin their dialogue over all of these questions, Mr Pickering added.

(UNI)

THE HINDUSTAN TIMES

29 APR 2000