

## ULTRAS:

(Continued from page 1)

groups responsible for the current spate of attacks in Kashmir and their support groups among Pakistani and Kashmiri expatriates in Britain will fall foul of the new anti-terrorism legislation to come into effect in 2001.

The Act gives police and the home secretary a wider scope to tackle foreign extremist groups operating in the UK.

Till recently, the groups were free to raise funds, recruit and train cadres under the guise of religious or political movements, as long as they did not violate the British law.

But the Act will allow these groups to be banned. Their assets may be seized and the members jailed if it can be proved that they conspired to commit a terrorist offence abroad.

India is not the only country to seek a tougher approach to terrorism by British authorities.

Intelligence services have been asked to step up surveillance of the Islamic recruiting agencies after protests from foreign governments that Britain is a major recruitment and fund raising centre for militants.

Hundreds of young British Muslims are volunteering to fight for militant Islamic groups in Kashmir, Chechnya and Afghanistan.

Despite international condemnation of the recruitment drive, it is the duty of the youth to join the jihad, Al-Mujahideen leader, Sheikh Omar Bakri Mohammed, said. He claims to have enlisted the services of about 700 volunteers.

Security authorities admit they do not know how many British Muslims have joined terrorist groups abroad and claim they are powerless to stop them.

# India wants UK to get tough on ultras

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA & THE TIMES, LONDON

LONDON/ISLAMABAD, Dec. 28. — India will urge the British government to crack down on extremist groups that use England as a safe haven for raising funds, recruiting and training members for operations in Kashmir.

The move comes after the Jaish-i-Mohammed named a British Muslim, Mohammed Bilal (24), as the suicide bomber who set off a blast at the Army headquarters in Srinagar on Christmas Day, killing ten people.

The founder of Jaish, Maulana Masood Azhar, said: "Bilal always aspired to martyrdom and God fulfilled his desire. He is more fortunate than us to die in the cause of Allah in the holy month of Ramzan."

Jaish claims Bilal was born into a Pakistani family in Birmingham and was a

SR 29/12  
"nightclub-going lad" till he became a born-again Muslim at 18 after a dream vision of Prophet Muhammad. He reportedly flew to Pakistan in 1994 to train with Harkat-ul Ansar.

But British consular officials and Indian police have not yet verified the bomber's identity. Police merely said he was a "foreign mercenary."

The Centre will forward details about the suicide bomb attack to UK officials, an official said. If a British connection to the attack can be established, the government will be expected to take action.

"There is a fair amount of cooperation between the two countries, and as soon as the facts are established about who carried out this attack and which group was responsible, we will bring it to their attention," the official said.

India hopes that the militant

Editorial: What next?  
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■ NHRC to discuss 'fake encounter'

■ Decks cleared for Hurriyat leaders' Pak visit

■ See ULTRAS: page 8

THE STATESMAN

29 DEC 2000

# India, U.K. keen on reviving defence ties

By Our Special Correspondent

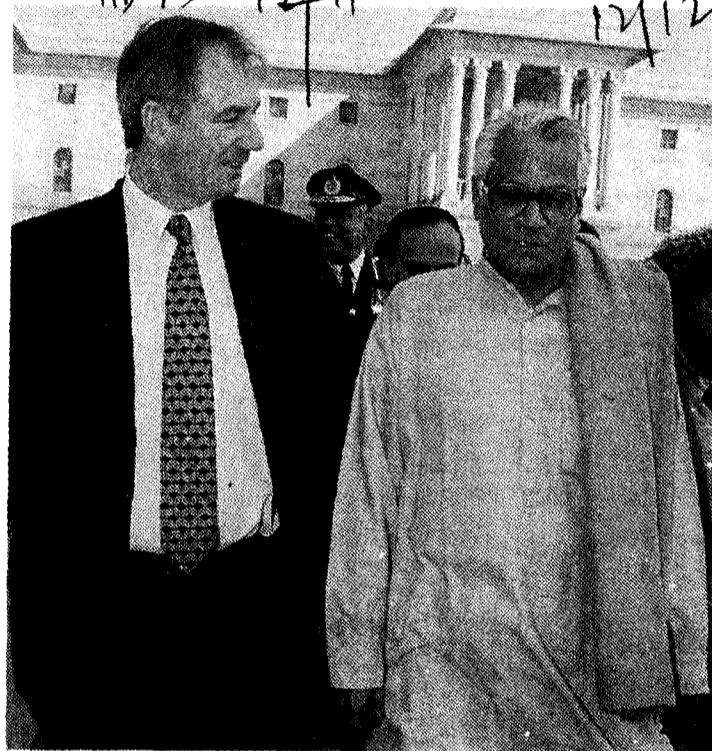
**NEW DELHI, DEC. 11.** India and Britain today looked at ways to revive their defence ties, affected by the Pokhran nuclear tests.

The visiting British Defence Minister, Mr. Geoffrey Hoon, held detailed discussions with his Indian counterpart, Mr. George Fernandes. The Chief of the Army Staff, General S. Padmanabhan, and the Vice-Chiefs of the Navy and the Air Force also called on him. Mr. Hoon met the External Affairs Minister, Mr. Jaswant Singh, separately.

During an address on the British Strategic Defence Review at the United Services Institution (USI), Mr. Hoon said Britain was encouraged by India's declaration of a voluntary moratorium on nuclear testing. Seeking India's permanent commitment against testing, he hoped New Delhi would reinforce it by signing and ratifying the Comprehensive Test Ban Treaty.

Analysts here point out that Britain at one time was a major source of defence supplies to India. A significant portion of the Navy as well the IAF has been based on British equipment.

A core component of the navy's aviation arm including the aircraft carrier, INS Viraat, the Harrier aircraft it boards as well as the Sea King helicopters are of British



**The Defence Minister, Mr. George Fernandes, with his British counterpart, Mr. Geoffrey Hoon, in New Delhi on Monday. — Photo: M. Lakshman**

origin. Defence cooperation between the two sides, however, has slackened since the 1980s. Its revival, is possible in case India buys 66 Advance Jet Trainers from the U.K. The over \$1-billion deal

will not only enhance the quantum of defence trade, it will also enlarge British participation in India's aviation sector. The Hawk deal, for instance, is likely to result in production of the plane

under British licence by the Hindustan Aeronautics Limited. The HAL also has produced the Jaguar long-range bomber under a British licence.

Mr. Hoon will visit the HAL in Bangalore tomorrow along with Mr. Anthony Pawson, Director-General of the British Defence Export Services and the Director-General, Operations and Policy, Mr. Simon Webb.

India, according to sources, has an open mind on purchasing British equipment, but is unhappy with the curbs in supply of parts for Sea King helicopters. These parts are manufactured by the United States which cannot route them to India via Britain because of the post-Pokhran sanctions.

The two sides also discussed ways to enhance cooperation during peace-keeping operations under the United Nations flag. "Mr. Fernandes and I have initiated deeper exchanges on peace-keeping which will help us explore how to work more closely together," Mr. Hoon said adding that soldiers from the two sides had interacted with each other in Sierra Leone recently. While Indians had been deployed under a U.N. mandate, Britain had sent a heavily-armed task force there. Besides Sierra Leone, British troops are deployed in Kosovo, the Persian Gulf and East Timor

12 DEC 2000

THE HINDU

# New equality in ties, says Peter Hain

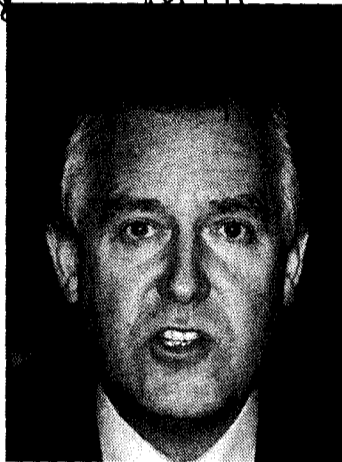
By Hasan Suroor

LONDON, NOV. 18. The Indo-British relations had entered a new phase in the past one year, and both in New Delhi and London there was a much better understanding of each other's perceptions now, the Foreign Office Minister, Mr. Peter Hain, said before leaving for India on a four-day visit. He hoped to build on the "successful" visit of India's Foreign Minister, Mr. Jaswant Singh, to Britain this week, and the recent bilateral contacts between the two countries.

In an interview to *The Hindu*, Mr. Hain noted a qualitative shift in Britain's attitude towards India and said the current state of relations was characterised by a "sense of partnership". The series of mutual visits in recent months, the setting up of the Indo-UK Roundtable on strengthening bilateral cooperation and the emphasis on "natural partnership" had dramatically changed the tone of the dialogue since his last India visit a year ago.

There had been a "difficult" period after India's nuclear test but sometime towards the end of last year, things began to change and, in fact, the turnaround coincided with his own visit to New Delhi in November.

Finally, the two sides had decided to put the past behind them and look ahead. "I think Britain is now approaching India with re-



spect and understanding which had perhaps not always been the case," he said.

There was a "new equality" to the relationship which had nothing to do with the past, and the two countries looked to each other as partners. "I am delighted to be returning to India — this time in a climate of stronger and more confident relationship," he said.

Besides meeting Mr. Jaswant Singh, Mr. Hain would have talks with the Minister of State for External Affairs, Mr. Ajit Panja, the Minister of Information and Technology, Mr. Pramod Mahajan, and the Principal Secretary to the Prime Minister, Mr. Brajesh Mishra. The talks, he said, would cover a wide range of

issues of common interest, including security, disarmament, trade and closer cooperation in information technology. The developments in Sri Lanka — his next port of call — could also come up during the talks as both India and Britain were keen on a negotiated settlement of the ethnic conflict in the island nation. Broadly, his visit was a part of the continuing dialogue and intended to keep up the momentum of bilateral contacts.

On substantive issues, Mr. Hain indicated that Britain would continue to persuade India to sign the CTBT and comply with other international treaties relating to the nuclear regime. He indicated that the issue would be "naturally" discussed but declined to discuss the details. The sense was that both sides would go over their respective positions both on the nuclear issue and India's claim to a permanent seat on the U.N. Security Council.

Mr. Hain said it was not for Britain to support or oppose anybody's claim because the decision would be made by the Asian group. "As Foreign Secretary has said India is obviously a natural contender for the permanent membership of an enlarged security council but it would be for the Asian group to recommend who would occupy a permanent seat allocated to them," he said.

On relations with Pakistan, Mr. Hain said Britain would continue to press for an "unambiguous" timetable for restoration of democracy, and national party-based elections.

"It cannot be business as usual with a military regime but it is in no one's interests to isolate Pakistan. The channels of dialogue remain open but increasing our engagement with Pakistan crucially depends on genuine progress towards the transition to democracy," he said.

## Hain to meet Sonia

Mr. Hain's engagements include a meeting with the Congress president, Ms. Sonia Gandhi, and a lecture in New Delhi on "Modernising Governments: A British Experience". He would explain the devolution process in the U.K. and argue that "devolution of power, good governance, respect for human rights and transparency are increasingly global issues which apply as much to Britain as to any other country." However, he would not push it as a blueprint for India which, he said, had its own model of decentralisation.

In Chennai, Mr. Hain would inaugurate a seminar on promoting Indo-British cooperation in information technology. He said India was poised to emerge as an "IT superpower" and the biggest knowledge-driven economy.

THE HINDU

19 NOV 2000

# Britain backs India for U.N. Council seat

By Hasan Suroor <sup>HD-13</sup>

LONDON, NOV. 14. On the eve of the External Affairs Minister, Mr. Jaswant Singh's meeting with his British counterpart, Mr. Robin Cook, tomorrow the Foreign Office emphasised that Britain supported India's claim to a permanent seat in the U.N. Security Council but said it was finally for the countries in the region to decide.

"Our position is very clear — we back India's claim and we would be happy to see it there," an official said, adding that in the end Britain would be guided by regional consensus.

There was an attempt to play down the suggestion that Britain's position was somewhat equivocal and that between Japan and India, it was more inclined towards Tokyo. If the issue is taken up during the discussion, Britain would reassure India of its support but with the rider on regional consensus. India was, of course, hoping for a more positive outcome.

Mr. Singh's meeting with Mr. Cook is expected to last about 90 minutes which, officials said, was regarded as a fairly long meeting by Whitehall standards and showed the importance Britain

attached to relations with India. The two sides are expected to engage in a wide-ranging review of bilateral relations with emphasis on trade and economic cooperation.

The British side today repeatedly recalled Mr. Cook's statement during his visit to New Delhi in April that the two countries were "natural partners".

"The idea would be to build on this framework and raise the level of dialogue," one official said. International issues of mutual concern were also expected to come up during the talks, terrorism being one of them. Britain has a tough anti-terrorist law and India would expect the legislation to be put to more effective use against terrorist groups hostile to it.

During his meeting with the Secretary of State for Defence, Mr. Geoff Hoon, Mr. Singh is expected to raise the issue of defence spare parts among other things.

Mr. Singh has a hectic schedule ahead with most of the official-level discussions slated for tomorrow. Today, he had a series of informal meetings with leaders of political parties, including the Labour Friends of India.

THE HINDU

14 NOV 2000

# Jaswant fulfils his 'dream'

By Hasan Suroor

14/11 19-19  
LONDON, NOV. 13. The Foreign Minister, Mr. Jaswant Singh, kicked off his three-day visit to Britain this morning by inaugurating a Chair on Indian History and Culture to be set up at Oxford University with an endowment of £ 1.8 millions from the Indian Government. The Chair which would be part of the University's Faculty of Oriental Studies is expected to fill the "gap" in research on Indian history.

During his stay here Mr. Singh would hold talks with his British counterpart, Mr. Robin Cook, and other Ministers as part of what officials described as a "continuing dialogue" on bilateral relations.

They said there was no structured agenda, but the whole gamut of Indo-British relations in the context of the growing mutual cooperation was likely to be discussed.

This is his second visit to Britain this year, and in the summer Mr. Cook had visited India when the idea of an India-Britain roundtable was mooted.

Mr. Singh's visit comes a week after the British Minister, Ms. Patricia Hewitt, had extensive talks in New Delhi, Bangalore, Calcutta and Ahmedabad on expanding the areas of Indian investment in Britain. Britain is greatly interested in getting Indian IT entrepreneurs to invest here, and the

British Government has announced a package of incentives for them.

Among other things, Mr. Singh is likely to take up with British Government the issue of defence spareparts, and also pursue India's case for a permanent seat on the United Nations Security Council. Britain has been hedging its bets on the issue, while making polite noises that it appreciates India's case. Next week, the Foreign Office Minister, Mr. Peter Hain, would be in India to continue the "dialogue".

At a function at India House here, Mr. Singh said it had been his "dream" to have a Chair of Indian History and Culture at Oxford and he hoped that it would build on the historical "linkages" between India and the U.K. It would be the first such Chair at Oxford, he said describing the occasion as an "exciting moment".

The Vice-Chancellor of Oxford University, Dr. Colin Lucas, hailed it as a "magnificent gift from India". He recalled Oxford's ties with India and said the Chair would add to that relationship. The first Professor is expected to be appointed in October next year, and the choice would be entirely of the university's though the Indian Government would have a representative on the selection panel.

THE HINDU

14 NOV 2001

KARNATAKA / U.K. MINISTER HOLDS TALKS WITH KRISHNA

## Indian firms urged to invest in U.K.

By Our Staff Reporter

BANGALORE, NOV. 2. Inviting Indian industry, particularly the IT sector, to invest in the United Kingdom, the U.K. Minister for Small Business and e-commerce, Ms. Patricia Hewitt, said today it was time that the Indian companies entered the European market.

She was speaking at the "Invest U.K." seminar organised by the Indo-British Partnership here.

Ms. Hewitt said Indian companies could enter the European market through U.K. While the U.S. led the rest of the world in the Internet and personal computers market, the U.K. was the world leader in digital television, entertainment and mobile telephony. The U.K. was the first country in the world to create three platforms — satellite, cable and digital terrestrial. Indian companies could take advantage of the U.K.'s expertise in computer games industry, interactive broadcasting and mobile technology, she added.

India and the U.K., she said, were natural partners. "We each have our natural strengths," she said, and invited Indian companies to take advantage of the fast-changing economy. She called for more joint venture companies between the two countries.

### Praise for Bangalore

Lavishing praise on Bangalore, Ms. Hewitt said the City had emerged as the



Ms. Patricia Hewitt, U.K. Minister for Small Business and e-commerce, who called on the Chief Minister, Mr. S.M. Krishna, in Bangalore on Thursday. The British High Commissioner, Sir Robert Young, is also seen (centre).

software hub of India. Trade between India and the United Kingdom had touched 3 million pounds, she pointed out.

The chairman of Infosys and co-Chairman of Indo-British Partnership, Mr. Narayana Murthy, said the U.K. was the clear leader in Europe in attracting investments. It was perhaps the only country to have a Minister in charge of e-commerce.

The U.K. offered a congenial atmosphere for Indian companies to invest, and one of the advantages was language, he added.

The British High Commissioner to India, Sir Robert Young, said that while

most trade promotions were unilateral, the Indo-British trade promotion was bilateral, involving both the countries.

The Director-General of Computing Services and Software Association (CSSA), Mr. John Higgins, said that while the U.K.'s IT expenditure was 52.3 million pounds in 1999, it was expected to touch 75.7 million pounds.

He said the CSSA led the software and services sector and represented 700 companies.

### Digital divide

Addressing a press conference later, Ms. Patricia Hewitt agreed that the "digital divide" was a serious issue, and said the U.K. was committed to bridging the

divide. She said she had met the Chief Minister, Mr. S. M. Krishna, on Thursday morning and offered to facilitate assistance from the BBC which had expertise in interactive broadcasting.

Ms. Hewitt said she had discussed issues such as the potential of information technology and Internet in education with Mr. Krishna.

She said the U.K. was Europe's largest e-commerce market. Besides, it was the single largest investor in India. The U.K. had taken steps to attract foreign investment, including an announcement of a new entrepreneur policy, on September 4, she added.

THE HINDU

3 NOV 2000

# Tie-up likely with U.K. on IT

By Sushma Ramachandran

NEW DELHI, OCT. 31. India and the U.K. may enter into collaboration in the cutting edge of software development though manpower sourcing from here is also not ruled out.

According to the visiting U.K. Minister for Small Business and e-Commerce, Ms. Patricia Hewitt, there is a need to create awareness about the high level of internet access and software development in the U.K. It is a huge market which could be profitably accessed by Indian firms.

She told *The Hindu* that collaboration between the two countries could encompass a whole range of e-based business consultancy areas. Referring to the U.K.'s own "Silicon Valleys", she said Cambridge and East England had emerged as "Silicon Fens" while Scotland had centres known as "Silicon Glens". These have emerged as centres for development of cutting edge technology in information technology and efforts were being made to tie up with Indian skills to forge a partnership in this sector. She said collaboration was also expected to be significant in small IT business.

Ms. Hewitt who met her Indian counterpart, Ms. Vasundhara Raje, at an earlier conference in the U.K., said the discussions during this trip had focussed on areas of cooperation in both IT and food production industries "where we are very strong".

Ms. Hewitt stressed that one of the areas of special interest for her was the strategy for convergence of broadcasting, telecom and the internet. The U.K. is currently trying to work out a long-term strategy for the convergence of these which, she feels, is inevitable. As India is also working on these lines, she said this will be an



**Ms. Patricia Hewitt, the British Minister for Small Business and E-Commerce.**

important issue of discussion during her meeting with the Information Technology Minister, Mr. Pramod Mahajan.

On the cooperation in IT sector, she said in the private sector it would be more in development of cutting edge software by British companies based in India and then exported globally. An increasing component of software imports into the U.K. was coming from India and in this context she noted that bilateral trade between the two countries rose by 45 per cent in the first eight months of this year. Outlining her objectives during this visit, she said the need for a government-to-government dialogue on developments in this sector was essential. Besides, she pointed to the need to create awareness of the developments in the U.K. in IT. With the market expanding rapidly, she said the U.K. is 18 months ahead of the U.S. in mobile telephony. Digital TV is also achieving high sales ever since its introduction whole third generation mobile phone

development is at an advanced stage. "The U.K. may become the first country where a single device is used as a personal computer, phone and TV," she said.

Ms. Hewitt pointed out that many Indian IT companies were already operating in the U.K. despite the lack of general knowledge that the U.K. is a leader in many information age sectors — mobile telephony, digital television, games and other industries. The U.K. is also the number one destination for inward investment into the European Union and the world's largest second largest overseas investor, she said.

As far as small business is concerned, she said the talks with Ms. Vasundhara Raje had centred around the need to develop a policy framework to provide effective support to this sector.

Ms. Hewitt's itinerary on this visit began on Monday in Calcutta where she attended a conference on e-commerce. She will meet several ministers here apart from Ms. Vasundhara Raje and Mr. Mahajan. These include the Ministers of State for Finance and Commerce, Mr. G.N. Ramachandran and Mr. Omar Abdullah. The next leg of her visit begins in Bangalore on Wednesday where she will attend the IT.Com fair where there will be a substantial British presence. Apart from a meeting with the Karnataka Chief Minister, Mr. S.M. Krishna, she will meet the Infosys chairman, Mr. N.R. Narayanmurthy who is currently co-chairman of the Indo-British Partnership along with Mr. David Jeffries as well as Wipro chief, Mr. Azim Premji.

From Bangalore, Ms. Hewitt will go to Ahmedabad which is significant for her since her constituency, Leicester, has a large population of Gujaratis. She will inaugurate the new British Trade office during her visit.

THE HINDU

1 NOV 2000

# Indo-British diplomacy swings into intensive mode

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Our Political Bureau  
NEW DELHI 17 OCTOBER

**A**S INDIA and the UK get into the intensive engagement mode, foreign minister Jaswant Singh will be travelling to London as part of a series of high-level visits between the two countries throughout this year and well into the next.

Foreign office consultations between the two countries on Tuesday also focused on a possible visit to India by the British Prime Minister Tony Blair.

British Diplomatic Services head Sir John Kerr, who is on a visit to Delhi, also announced that the UK would increase development aid to India from £120 million to £180 million — a decision announced by British minister for international development Claire Short. He met the principal secretary Brajesh Mishra on Monday evening.

British minister for e-commerce Patricia Hewitt will visit Delhi soon to explore avenues for cooperation in IT and e-com-

merce, Sir John said. This announcement came on the heels of reports that the UK had issued 30,000 more work permits for next year to allow more qualified foreign recruits, including IT experts, into the country. A number of these recruits will obviously come from India.

On Tuesday, Sir John referred to the steadily increasing Indian investments in the British technology industry over the past couple of years. Bilateral trade is at a steady £3 billion, promising to rise to £5 billion by the end of the current financial year.

The figure, an increase of around 40 per cent from the 90,000 permits issued last year, follows a relaxation of rules unveiled earlier this month, British employment officials said in London.

British minister for employment Margaret Hodge was quoted as saying that the government was responding to "acute shortages" in sectors such as IT,

adding that the shortage of professionals could "inhibit growth."

Both deputy foreign ministers Peter Hain and Keith Vaz will drop in on Delhi in the next couple of months, as will the trade secretary Stephen Byers and defence secretary Geoffrey Hoon.

Mr Blair's visit will depend on whether he calls general elections next year, as some observers have been predicting.

Sir John, who held intensive foreign office consultations with foreign secretary Lalit Mansingh, did not say whether any request had been made for an amnesty for Peter Bleach, accused in the Purulia arms drop case, on grounds that it was already on appeal.

The situation in Afghanistan and Pakistan featured prominently in the foreign office consultations on Tuesday, as both countries worked out the mechanics of a joint working group (JWG) on terrorism, announced during the recent visit of British home secretary Jack Straw.

*The Economic Times*

18 OCT 2000



# Round Table for thrust to Indo-U.K. ties

By Hasan Suroor

LONDON, OCT. 11. India and Britain would take steps to remove "misconceptions" about each other and to expand areas of mutual interest, it was announced at the end of a two-day India-UK Round Table here on Tuesday evening. The meeting was a follow-up to the first Round Table held in New Delhi early this year, and the two sides identified information technology, science and technology, education, e-commerce and trade and investment as priority areas for cooperation.

In a joint statement the leader of the Indian delegation Mr K.C. Pant, Deputy Chairman of the Planning Commission, and Lord Swraj Paul, co-chairman of the Round Table, expressed satisfaction with the outcome which they hoped would help create a "new partnership" between the two countries. They noted that often there were misconceptions about what was happening in either country and these acted as a barrier to better understanding. There was need to remove them and build on commonalities.

The British Foreign Secretary, Mr Robin Cook, who made an appearance at the Round Table offered Britain's full support to efforts to strengthen bilateral relations. The first Round Table, it may be recalled, was launched by

Mr Cook and the External Affairs Minister, Mr Jaswant Singh, with the mandate to "enhance" the level of Indo-British cooperation.

Mr. Pant and Lord Swraj Paul in their statement repeatedly stressed the importance of Indo-British relations and resolved to do everything possible to strengthen them further. The Indian delegation called on the Prime Minister, Mr. Tony Blair and also met the director of the London School of Economics, Mr Anthony Gideon.

## Preventing Indo-Pak. flare-up was my goal: Clinton

WASHINGTON, OCT. 11. The U.S. President, Mr. Bill Clinton, has said that one of the goals of his presidency was to prevent a nuclear flare-up between India and Pakistan.

"I wanted to try to minimise the turbulence, the possibility of war — and nuclear war — between India and Pakistan, which is something that was not ripe for my involvement until rather late in my term," the President said during an interview with author, Mr. Joe Klein, in New York, the transcript of which has been released by the White House.—  
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THE HINDU

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# Indo-UK forum to explore more cooperation avenues

By L.K. Sharma

The Times of India News Service

LONDON: British foreign secretary, Robin Cook, has highlighted the importance of Britain's "special friendship" with India, commending imaginative efforts to cement it further. On the eve of the U.K.-India round-table meeting in Britain, he appreciated its wide-ranging mandate which goes beyond the economic and commercial ties.

The round-table has as its co-chairmen, K.C. Pant, vice-chairman of the Planning Commission, and Lord Swraj Paul. The initiative was launched by Mr Cook and his Indian counterpart, Jaswant Singh, in April this year when the first meeting was held in New Delhi. The foreign secretary referred to the exploratory work being done by the round-table in areas of education, science and technology, environment and energy, apart from that of business and industry. He said the organisation was bringing a "fresh and innovative approach" to bilateral relations.

Britain takes this semi-official initiative seriously as it has only one other bilateral forum of this kind involving Germany. While the operational issues of trade and finance are basically covered by the Indo-British partnership, this forum is also expected to provide a theoretical underpinning to an

overall relationship and goes as far as examining the media's perception of each other.

Lord Paul said this was not a "talking shop" and that concrete recommendations had been made at the first meeting and followed up later. He said Mr Robin Cook was taking a personal interest in the working of this forum and the British official response to the recommendations made so far has been prompt. He also sought to

## SPECIAL FRIENDSHIP

- Britain takes initiative seriously
- Round-table meet is not a talking shop: Swraj Paul
- India seen in new light

remove the impression in India that the main concern of the forum was commercial relations. The five sessions of the forum will, for example, cover issues of cultural pluralism, education and immigration also.

In Mr Pant, the Indian side has a leader with a rich experience as minister in charge of areas ranging from science and technology, energy and defence. The British team includes academics such as Prof Judith Brown and Tim Lancaster. The UK's reassessment of its place in the world will impact on its relations with India which is seen as a middling power. The Indian worldview will be pre-

dicted by former foreign secretary M.K. Rasgotra.

A similar talk about Britain will be given by Anthony Giddens, director of London School of Economics. His school has had some influence on shaping the dominant ideologies in the two countries in the post-war years.

But since then, the school itself has been transformed from a nursery of the socialist leaders to an institute fit to operate in the marketplace. Prof Giddens has emerged as an advocate of the Third Way and his voice is heard by Prime Minister Tony Blair. The search for an ideology to meet the present-day challenges interests the academics of both the UK and India. Science and technology has largely remained neglected as an area of cooperation despite the past close links between the scientific communities of the two countries. Prof Obaid Siddiqi, eminent scientist, is a member of the Indian delegation.

It is India's comparative advantage and expertise in the field of information technology, as testified by the American market and German interest, that has made Britain look towards India in a new light. However, this intense interest in IT has also meant that little notice is being taken of India's capabilities in other emerging areas of science and technology.

THE TIMES OF INDIA

9 OCT 2007

# Kostunica against western liberalism

Julian Berger  
Washington, October 7

EVEN AS Vojislav Kostunica was being anointed in office on Friday, he sounded a nationalist warning which served as a reminder to the rest of the world that the new Yugoslavia will not rush into the embrace of western liberalism.

"I am deeply convinced that this is the last time that representatives of the international community and friendly countries like the Russian Federation try to resolve our internal disputes," he said.

It was a typically tough uncompromising remark from a man who was unknown outside Yugoslavia a year ago. Mr Kostunica is, first and foremost, a purist. He lives around Belgrade in a battered old Yugo, and his politics are distilled Serbian nationalism.

This is no urbane cosmopolitan liberal eager to embrace the West. This is a man, who accused Slobodan Milosevic of treason for signing the Bosnian, and then the Kosovo, peace deals. He has had warm words in the past for the indicted Bosnian Serb war criminal, Radovan Karadzic. He went to Kosovo two years ago to show his support for the Serb cause and was photographed brandishing an AK-47

machine gun alongside nationalist militants. And yesterday, he sounded an almost xenophobic note.

But unlike Mr Milosevic and his fellow Serbian warlords, Mr Kostunica is as devout a democrat as he is a nationalist. Along with other nationalist academics, he was sacked from his university post by the Tito regime; unlike most, he refused to take his job back in 1989 when Mr Milosevic took power in Serbia.

He was born in the Serbian heartland, in the village of Kostunici. When he returned there during the campaign, he gave a wistful speech steeped in the mysticism, which lies at the core of the every man nationalism, which flourishes across the Serbian plains.

It is a romantic backward-looking nationalism, which still mourns the defeat in 1389 by the Turks. Mr Kostunica has suggested the adoption of an old national anthem written at the height of a 19th century upswelling of nationalism.

This is the sort of thing which brings tears to Serbian eyes, but it does not answer the question of how he will square his vows to defend Serb interests in Bosnia, Kosovo and Montenegro with his commitment to non-violence and the rule of law. He pledges to lay the gun aside (he claims the AK-47 in the 1998 photograph was put into his hands). (Guardian News Service)

# Emphasis will be on IT: Pant

Vijay Dutt  
London, October 7

MR K. C. PANT, heading the Indian delegation to the second UK-India Round Table meet in London, said in an exclusive interview to *The Hindustan Times*, "We will be exploring various avenues to strengthen bilateral relations."

He will, during the meet starting today (Sunday) at the Warren House Conference Hall, stress on closer trade ties in the Information Technology. "It will be in the long-term interest for the UK and India. We will continue the process (of better ties) we began in New Delhi during the first meet there."

In the Round Table, set up to explore possibilities for identifying areas of mutual interests, India

and UK will discuss proposals for cooperation in education, science, economy and technology.

Mr Pant told *The Hindustan Times* that exchanges of ideas between the two delegations during the Delhi meet were useful. "Several presentations were made for exchanges in the IT sector."

He said that software exports from India have almost touched \$

## Indo-British Round Table

370 million as against \$ 130 million worth of exports from the UK.

"Experts in the field predict that by 2008 the bilateral trade in software would be around \$ 5 billion," said Mr Pant. The Foreign Office sources said that Britain already has "strong" ties with India and the UK side headed by Lord Swaraj Paul has a very good rapport with

Mr K. C. Pant, Planning Commission's Deputy Chairman.

Lord Paul also iterated that the UK and India have the best possible relations. "We are looking forward to the outcomes of the deliberations here." A statement from Foreign Secretary Robin Cook, on the eve of the meet was also issued by the Foreign and Commonwealth Office. Mr Cook

welcoming the delegation said, "I applaud the work of the UK-India Round Table under the joint chairmanship of Lord Swraj Paul and Pant."

"The Round Table has a mandate to identify ways of enhancing the relationship between Britain and India in a wide range of areas, not just in economics and commerce, but also in education, science and technology, information technology, environment and energy."

Indo-UK ties have acquired a special significance in the current global scenario

# A friendly visit

BY JACK STRAW

**M**Y VISIT to India comes at a significant point in Indo-British relations and is part of a series of high-level visits in both directions — five of my ministerial colleagues, including Foreign Secretary Robin Cook have visited India last year. More senior level visits are planned. Home Minister L.K. Advani, Foreign Minister Jaswant Singh and Indian Defence Minister George Fernandes have recently visited the United Kingdom. Prime Minister Tony Blair will also meet Prime Minister Atal Behari Vajpayee in New York.

India is a key player on the global stage, at the United Nations and the Commonwealth. India continues to make an important contribution to international peacekeeping with her troops playing a valuable role in Sierra Leone under very difficult circumstances.

While I am in India, I will be discussing with Mr Advani and his colleagues how we can take forward our cooperation on a wide range of areas such as international terrorism, organised crime and drugs, and policing. I will want to look at how the UK and India can develop legislative measures which will enable us to sign up to a bilateral Prisoner Transfer Agreement.

I will also be taking the opportunity to discuss the issue of forced marriage — a practice which the British Government believes is a breach of fundamental human rights. In the UK, we have recently introduced a major programme of measures to combat and bring about an end to the practice of forced marriage, both in the UK and overseas.

The UK Government is fully supportive of the tradition of arranged marriages which operate successfully throughout many communities and we have been careful to highlight the distinction between forced marriage and the tradition of arranged marriage.

Indian visitors are very welcome in Britain. Last year over 158,000 UK visas were issued in India — twice as many as in any other country. Customer service is a high priority and our surveys show satisfaction rates of 90 per cent and more. We offer a same day service for all visit visa applications, with a refusal rate of only 10 per cent. Over 5,000 Indian students came to study in the UK in the past year and more than 6,000 Indians have settled there.

We are continuously trying to improve our visa service and some of the major initiatives we are taking are:

- The relaxing of work permit procedures, especially in the fast moving hi-tech industries.
- Introducing streamlined procedures for student

applications.

- Restoring appeal rights for family visitors.
- Allowing regular travellers to apply in person without the need to go to the High Commission in person.

- Improving waiting facilities and speeding up visa delivery times.
- We are also trying to see how we can expand our visa service in India, and elsewhere on the subcontinent.

Besides, there are more than one million people of Indian descent now living in the UK. They are influential and successful in business, politics and the arts. They are an important part of Britain's economy, and our culture would be unimaginable without them.

The British Government is keen to build on the warm relationship that our two countries already enjoy at a time when India is set to emerge as a super power in the new millennium. India and Britain share democratic values and a global vision on issues from trade to the

environment, and we are bound together by many cultural ties. Trade between us is worth over £ 4 billion a year and it is set to reach £ 10 billion soon. The UK is India's second largest export market.

The UK has £ 3 billion invested in India, which is the largest cumulative total of any country. In the meantime, we are keen to encourage more Indian firms to invest in the UK. We are launching a new scheme that will make it easier for Indian innovators and entrepreneurs to set up enterprises in Britain. Under the new scheme, people with business experience and ideas will be able to apply to set up businesses in the UK. It will relax existing arrangements by no longer requiring these people to use personal funds to start up their business.

The UK is working with India to alleviate poverty, with £ 125 million of development assistance. This is set to increase to £ 180 million over three years. There is also a real engagement of education, culture, science and technology linking our two countries. The British Council's operation in India is its biggest anywhere in the world.

India and the UK already work well together on many issues. But I am convinced that there is much more that we can do. We have an exceptional relationship to build on. I like to think of it as a natural partnership and look forward to an era of renewed and increased collaboration and friendship with India.

Jack Straw is British Secretary of State for Home Affairs



India and the UK already work well together on many issues.

But I am convinced that there is much more that we can do

# India keen on strong defence ties with UK

By L.K. Sharma

The Times of India News Service

LONDON: An Indian official delegation conveyed to its hosts here that Britain should endeavour to appear to be a reliable supplier of defence equipment and that India was keen to have bilateral cooperation that went beyond occasional sales of the military hardware. India's sad experience about service and spares supply assurances by the manufacturers here was again brought up at the two-day meeting of the the Indo-British defence consultative group.

The Indian delegation was led by defence secretary T.R. Prasad and the UK side by permanent under secretary K. Tebbit. India recently complained about the difficulties it was facing with regard to the spares and services for the Sea Harrier jump jets and Sea King helicopters. Since then the situation regarding the Harriers has improved. Of course, Britain can hardly help with regard to the equipment which gets affected by American sanctions either because the British supplier has since then been bought over by the Americans or was using an American technology in the equipment.

The group finalised a work programme after meetings that covered defence supplies as well re-

search and development. A memorandum of understanding on defence research had been signed by the two countries more than 10 years ago but it remained on paper. The topic of defence research came up on the agenda of the group meeting and it was decided to initiate some activity. The group discussed general topics such as the management of change, UN peace-keeping and regional security.

The Indian delegation was briefed about the smart procurement initiative and the defence logistics organisation. Britain is keen to promote exports to India not only because India represented a big market but also because supplies to India do not cause a political embarrassment unlike in the case of those countries whose human rights record is questioned by the activists. India's plan to acquire an advanced jet trainer is of particular interest to Britain.

The joint group's meeting followed the visit to Britain by Indian defence minister George Fernandes, and those by Indian service chiefs and a meeting between Brajesh Mishra, India's national security adviser and principal secretary to the prime minister, and British defence secretary Geoffrey Hoon. The British defence secretary will be visiting India later this year.

THE TIMES OF INDIA

3 AUG 2000

HO-13  
5/9

## India, U.K to set up JWG

By Our Special Correspondent

**NEW DELHI, SEPT. 4.** India and Britain today agreed to set up a Joint Working Group to counter terrorism, drug trafficking and other related crimes. At a joint press conference here, the visiting British Home Secretary, Mr. Jack Straw, and the Union Home Minister, Mr. L. K. Advani, said the modalities of the proposed JWG would be worked out by the officials of the two countries next month.

Describing his nearly 90-minute long discussions with Mr. Advani at the North Block as "very comprehensive", Mr. Straw said matters of mutual interest in "huge areas" were discussed. Assisting Mr. Straw in the discussions was a six-member delegation. On the Indian side, the Union Home Secretary, Mr. Kamal Pande, two Special Secretaries and other senior Home Ministry officials were present.

Mr. Advani said a Home Ministry team would visit the U.K. in October to work out modalities of the JWG to make it as comprehensive as possible. Mr. Straw said the suggestion to set up the JWG was mooted by Mr. Advani during his visit to London in June. The JWG on terrorism is likely to further plug the loopholes in respective domestic legislation against people who have committed crimes in each other's countries. India and the

U.K. already have an extradition treaty in place which is working "satisfactorily", officials said.

To a question, Mr. Straw said the case of Peter Bleach, a British national currently lodged in a Calcut-

### Visa rules eased for entrepreneurs

**NEW DELHI, SEPT. 4.** Britain today said it has relaxed visa rules to allow Indian entrepreneurs in Hi-tech areas of Information Technology and E-commerce to do business in the United Kingdom.

"From today, new rules come into force for entrepreneurs who wish to do business, particularly in the area of Information Technology and E-commerce," the visiting British Home Secretary, Mr. Jack Straw told presspersons after over an hour-long meeting with the Home Minister, Mr. L.K. Advani here.— PTI

ta jail with regard to the Purulia arms drop case, was discussed. Britain did not mean to intervene in India's judicial process but wanted the hearing on appeal speeded up, he said. "The case was discussed in a context that showed respect towards independence of the judici-

ary." According to official sources, the agenda of Mr. Straw's visit included discussions on a possible bilateral prisoner transfer agreement, cooperation on international terrorism and organised crime, collaboration on anti-drugs trafficking and immigration matters.

On immigration, Mr. Straw said new rules for entrepreneurs had been worked out and added that there were a lot of opportunities for people with substantial skills of e-nature. Faced with an increasing crunch of skilled personnel, the British Government is toying with the idea of opening up several segments of the job sector to immigrants. Mr. Straw added that more facilities would be introduced for applicants in the British High Commission in Delhi and consulates in Mumbai, Chennai and Calcutta.

Mr. Advani was presented a copy of the recent anti-terrorism law passed by the British Parliament, which would come into force from October.

On the report that one of those who hijacked an Indian Airlines aircraft to Kandahar last year was a British national, Mr. Straw said his Government was aware of it and had also experienced the hijacking of an Ariana Afghan airlines plane, adding that the extradition treaty with India was to take care of these problems.

THE HINDU

5 SEP 2000

# Indo-British team to fight terrorism

SR-5  
5/9 ✓

## STATESMAN NEWS SERVICE

NEW DELHI, Sept. 4. — India and Britain will set up a joint working group (JWG) to fight terrorism and drug trafficking, and a team of senior Indian officials will go soon to Britain to finalise the technicalities. India already has a JWG on terrorism with the USA and a somewhat similar arrangement with Russia.

The JWG was announced here today after a 90-minute meeting between the visiting British home secretary, Mr Jack Straw, and the home minister, Mr LK Advani. India proposed the arrangement when Mr Advani visited Britain ear-

lier this year. The arrangement would serve as a mechanism for regular exchange of information between the two countries.

The JWG would "give currency to our relations", Mr Straw said when the two leaders interacted with reporters after their meeting. "It would cover all areas of common concern", Mr Advani said.

Mr Straw said the case of Peter Bleach, did figure in the discussions, but in the context of his respect for an independent Indian judiciary. It had been suggested earlier that Bleach serve the remainder of his sentence in a prison in the UK. There was no specific dis-

cussion, Mr Straw said, on the extradition to India of a British national who had been one of the persons released from an Indian jail to secure the freedom of the passengers held hostage during the hijack of IC-814 last year. The menace of hijacking had been discussed in general terms.

Mr Straw, who is on a week-long visit, said suggestions for some changes in the system of issuing visas had been received. He had been informed that the number of visas issued in India had doubled last year. Britain, he said, had decided to broaden opportunities for experts in IT and e-commerce from India to visit the UK.

THE STATESMAN

- 5 SEP 2000

WEDNESDAY, SEPTEMBER 6, 2000

## COUNTERING TERRORISM TOGETHER

INDIA AND BRITAIN have decided to set up a Joint Working Group (JWG) to counter terrorism. The proposal was mooted during the London visit of the Home Minister, Mr. L. K. Advani, and firmed up now on the arrival of the British Home Secretary, Mr. Jack Straw. Apart from discussing a strategy to forge closer cooperation in dealing with the menace of terrorism on a bilateral basis, the JWG will provide an institutional mechanism to step up coordination in tackling the problems of drug trafficking and related crimes. The two countries already have an extradition treaty in place and the JWG should provide an ideal vehicle to maintain close contact and exchange information on terrorism and other major concerns. Now that the new Terrorism Act 2000 of the U.K. takes effect from October, the JWG could help plug the loopholes in the domestic legislation as well as the rules and regulations to be framed by the two countries in the future. Like the Joint Commission, it would be a regular meeting ground for the Home Ministries to sort out problems coming in the way of enhanced cooperation in the fight against terrorism.

Bilateral ties between India and Britain have returned to the fast track after the slow-down in 1998 over the Pokhran tests. The Foreign Minister, Mr. Jaswant Singh, the Defence Minister, Mr. George Fernandes, and Mr. Advani have had fruitful visits to London. Negotiations for the purchase of a fleet of Advanced Jet Trainers (AJTs) from British Aerospace for the Indian Air Force are at an advanced stage. The AJTs are a long-pending need for the IAF, especially in the context of the alarming crashes of MiG 21s in recent years. At least 55 MiG aircraft have crashed in the past four years, causing considerable concern about the safety of these Russian-made aircraft. A better alternative had to be found to phase out the ageing MiG fleet with the IAF.

It is not as though there are no problems. The immigration rules and procedures in Britain have remained a stumbling block in bilateral relations. Britain had to withdraw some of the proposed changes in the conditions for the issue of visa to many Asian visitors, including Indians — calling for a huge deposit as a guarantee. But Mr. Jack Straw has also the mission to beckon Indian businessmen, particularly in the Information Technology (IT) and e-commerce sectors. He announced the easing of visa rules for entrepreneurs. Significantly, London would be dismantling the present framework laying down financial norms about the entrepreneurs capacity to do business. Given India's growing clout in IT, it is not surprising that Britain should start wooing Indian IT giants and professionals — who are already in demand in major markets such as the U.S., Germany, Japan and Southeast Asia. But what matters most is the cost of doing business and the treatment of foreigners, especially those who come to work. There should be no discrimination.

Trade and investment interests apart, terrorism is bound to top the Indian agenda in its dealings with the West. London has unfortunately earned the dubious distinction of being the global headquarters for a variety of terrorist groups, operating through a front. At the height of the terrorist crisis in Punjab, Sikh groups used the U.K. as a formidable base. Now the Kashmiri groups have also established a hold in London and other world centres. One of the hijackers of the Indian Airlines flight last year to Kandahar was reported to be a British national. With the new Terrorism Act and through some determined action, the British Government must put an end to terrorist or secessionist groups using its soil to carry on their war and campaign against other states. The Blair regime must come out loud and strong against all forms of terrorism and its practitioners.

THE HINDU

6 SEP 2000



# Happy reversal of past attitudes

By K. K. Katyal

19/13

The positive outcome of the talks between the Home Minister, Mr. L. K. Advani, and his British counterpart, Mr. Jack Straw, is to be hailed not only because of the promise of effective steps to stop the use of the Britain as a springboard for terrorist actions in India, but also because it signifies a happy reversal of the attitudes exhibited in the past, to the acute dismay of New Delhi.

Think of the Margaret Thatcher era when her Conservative Government justified its non-action on an issue of extreme sensitivity to India on the basis of a ham-headed interpretation of the legal provisions, or of the days when the leaders of the Labour Party, while in the Opposition, repaid the lavish hospitality offered to their invited delegations to Pakistan with effusive support to its case on its problems with India, specially, the Kashmir issue — think of all this and the significance of the understanding of our stand will be clear. The irritants that used to plague the bilateral relationship those days are, happily, things of the past. Also gone is the chill that developed in the wake of India's nuclear tests in 1998, when the U.K. was among those adopting a hard line (supporting a punitive approach to India, calling for de-weaponisation etc.).

The British stand was different from that of France, which said it had no difficulty in coming to terms with India's nuclear reality. It was different also from the position taken by Russia which, while firm in its opposition to New Delhi's nuclear plans, maintained — even stepped up — cooperative dealings in various areas, defence not excluded. India and the U.K., thus, had quite a distance to cover so as to restore normalcy. They have been able to do it, to a large extent.

From the early eighties, the British stand on matters of deep concern to India passed

through different phases — to settle down to the present position, satisfactory from the Indian standpoint. Towards the turn of the nineties, the Thatcher Government's stand on terrorism was considered here somewhat ambivalent. While it spoke of its commitment to crush terrorism, several caveats were added. For instance, Mrs. Thatcher had no compunction in saying that "the peaceful advocacy of secession is not in itself against the law, howsoever strongly we may disagree with it." Also, her Government projected the country's legal and judicial institutions in a way as to appear unequal to the task of fighting terrorism.

In the early nineties, London's stand changed as was evident from the remarks of the then Home Secretary (Minister) that "the British Government condemns the use of violence for political gain anywhere in the world

## NEWS ANALYSIS

and we support the Indian Government in its efforts to deal with terrorist violence. We recognise the difficulties facing the Indian Government and the need for exceptional measures to deal with law and order." Such formulations were elaborated in the later part of Mr. John Major's tenure. The twist given to human rights issues, however, was not entirely to India's liking.

By and large, New Delhi had no serious problem with the Major Government's stand on Indo-Pakistan matters and Kashmir — the need for respect of human rights, resumption of political process in Jammu and Kashmir, cessation of external support to violence. It regarded Kashmir as a matter that needed to be resolved bilaterally by India and Pakistan under the Shimla Agreement.

The Labour Party, then in the opposition,

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was, however, seen as showing total lack of understanding of India's concerns and interests. This was because a sizable number of Labour MPs depended on the support, in their constituencies, of immigrants from the Pakistan-occupied Kashmir, from Mirpur in particular. On its part, Islamabad used this leverage to its advantage and extended invitations to Labour leaders to visit Pakistan. The party's National Executive, in 1995, took a clearly pro-Pakistan line on Kashmir — referring both to the Shimla Agreement and the U.N. Resolutions and to the historical responsibility of the British Government.

New Delhi was, naturally, apprehensive when the Labour Party assumed power in 1997 — lest the stand taken by it in the past should be reflected in the new Government's policy. It did not lose time in sending Mr. Murasoli Maran, Commerce Minister, to London to brief the Prime Minister, Mr. Tony Blair. India could derive comfort from the fact that the Labour in office appreciated its views. Earlier this year, Mr. Peter Hain, junior minister in the foreign office, for instance, was emphatic that "cross-border terrorism is proving to be an enormous threat to the stability of Jammu and Kashmir. We look to Gen. Prevez Musharraf to see that such terrorism stops. We also look to Gen. Musharraf, who is widely seen as the author of the Kargil incident last year, to ensure that nothing like that ever happens again."

On nuclear issues, the gaps in the positions of the two sides remains wide. But they have resolved not to let this divergence become an impediment in the rest of the bilateral field. The U.K., however, would need to work for a change in the widespread perception here that it toes the U.S. line on major issues, rather than taking an independent stand.

THE HINDU

7 SEP 2001

# UK concern over cross-border terrorism

India  
UK  
51-3

10/9

## STATESMAN NEWS SERVICE

CALCUTTA, Sept. 9. — The British home secretary, Mr Jack Straw, said here today that cross-border terrorism was a matter for concern and he had discussed the issue with the Union home minister, Mr LK Advani.

He added that the issue cropped up during his discussions with the chief ministers of West Bengal, Maharashtra and Gujarat. Mr Straw met Mr Jyoti Basu today.

According to Mr Straw, his visit was to strengthen ties between the two countries and work together on issues like crime, drugs and international terrorism. Efforts would also be made to improve cooperation on policing, he said.

The British home secretary said effective operation of its extradition treaty with India was a must. The treaty should be fair to the accused and the country asking for extradition.

Referring to the Kashmir issue Mr Straw called for negotiations and an end to violence. According to him, cross-border terrorism should be stopped at any cost.

Elaborating on the Kashmir issue he said: "Our position is very clear. We strongly believe that violence offers no solution. We believe the problem can be resolved by Indo-Pak negotiations." He iterated the UK government's condemnation of Pakistan-sponsored terrorism.

He said he had general discussions with Mr

Basu, describing the talks as "constructive".

"We learnt about the impressive developments in information technology in Calcutta in the past three years," he said.

Mr Straw also discussed issues like law and order with the chief minister. "The question of cooperation between our police forces and additional training and assistance we can offer to the West Bengal police also figured in our discussions", Mr Straw said.

On the Peter Bleach issue, the British home secretary said: "In no sense has Bleach been abandoned by the British government." Mr Straw had expressed concern at the long time taken for Bleach's appeal to be heard. The release of five Latvians had also been discussed.

On the issue of trade and commerce Mr Straw said the UK was eager to strengthen bilateral trade with India.

There had been an improvement in export figures on both sides, he said.

Regarding possibilities of people from this country going to the UK, Mr Straw said his country would let in more skilled people from India. Throughout the country there has been 158,000 visa applications.

Replying to a question on whether his country would allow access to files concerning Netaji's disappearance Mr Straw said: "In such cases we always do our best".

Mr Straw visited India from 4 to 9 September at the invitation of Mr Advani.

THE STATESMAN

10 SEP 2000

# We haven't abandoned Bleach: Straw

HT Correspondent  
Calcutta, September 9

BRITISH HOME Secretary Jack Straw today denied allegations that his Government had abandoned Peter Bleach, prime accused in the Purulia arms drop case.

The matter, he said, had come up during his discussions with Chief Minister Jyoti Basu.

"I have conveyed the concerns expressed to my Government to Mr Basu," Straw, in the city on the last leg of his six-day tour of India, told reporters. The "concerns", he said, covered two basic aspects—the delay in hearing Bleach's appeal and the amnesty granted to his five co-accused. The British Home Secretary said he had also discussed the matter with Union Home Minister L K Advani.

Reacting to Bleach's complaint that he had been "abandoned" by his own country, Straw said: "We have been providing the same consular services to Peter Bleach as we would to any other British citizen arrested in a foreign country."

Straw made it clear that his Government's intervention in the Bleach case was in keeping with the policy of "respect for the judicial process in a democratic country".

He refused to comment on Bleach's charge that the police of his own country had framed him. "I have replied to those allegations in Parliament and I have nothing more to add to that."

British Deputy High Commissioner John Mitchiner said that the mission here had taken up with the authorities allegations of mistreatment of Bleach in prison "as has been necessary from time to time".

Mitchiner confirmed that his office had received a request from the West Bengal Government for



Jyoti Basu with British Home Secretary Jack Straw at the Writers' on Saturday. Photo: Ashok Nath Dey

access to secret records on the 'disappearance' of Netaji Subhas Chandra Bose that is being investigated by a commission of inquiry. "We have requested the State Government to let us know the names of their duly authorised representatives who would go through the records," he said.

Straw added that granting permission for access to the records would not be a problem, given the friendly ties between the two countries.

Speaking about his meeting with Basu earlier in the day, Straw said a number of issues of mutual interest were discussed. The discussions, a sequel to Basu's trip with a trade delegation from this state to UK in July, centred primarily

around trade, commerce and industrial partnerships.

Significantly, the law and order situation in the State too was discussed, along with enhanced cooperation between the police forces. "I am impressed by what I have been told about the development in the IT sector in this State," he added.

Reiterating his country's position that the Kashmir imbroglio could be sorted out through bilateral discussions between India and Pakistan, Straw repeated UK's condemnation of cross-border terrorism. He said some amendments were being brought about in UK's extradition laws "to make them effective and fair both to the fugitive and the requesting State".

## Arms seized

THE POLICE seized one AK-47 rifle and a 9 mm pistol from Gour Mahato, Sabir Saudagar and Mannan Saudagar, residents of a Purulia village from the Bagila railway station in Burdwan district on Friday night.

The arms were part of the cache airdropped over Purulia in December 17, 1995. These three had bought these arms from Jaipur village and had come to Bagila in search of a buyer. Acting on a tip-off, police chased them and found they were carrying these arms in a gunny bag.

HTC, Calcutta

THE HINDUSTAN TIMES

10 SEP 2000

# India, U.K. for co-operation in power sector

By L.K. SHARMA

The Times of India News Service

LONDON: India and Britain will increase their cooperation in the field of power and other infrastructural sectors. A memorandum of understanding between the two countries will cover the areas of regulatory mechanism, advanced transmission technologies, utilities management, and fly ash products and disposal.

P.R. Kumaramangalam, power minister, met trade and industry secretary Stephen Byers and finalised a proposal for sharing expertise in the power sector. He also assured investors that the decision-making process affecting new power projects had been streamlined and there need not be any fear of delays.

British companies are involved in some of the proposed power projects, and the minister explained that the initial hurdles which delayed projects had been overcome.

In the past few months, some 13 new projects with a total capacity of 2500 MW had reached the stage of financial closure.

There was coordination among various government agencies and the progress of proposals was being monitored.



P.R. Kumaramangalam

Economic reforms in the power sector were being implemented and privatisation of distribution would improve recovery of charges. The regulatory mechanism was even more independent than the one in Britain.

Action had been initiated in several states for curbing the theft of power and non-payment of bills. In Delhi, the collection had shown a dramatic increase. The additional revenue amounted to about Rs 40 crore a month. Accountability was being

introduced in the power sector and there would be transparency with regard to fuel consumption, generation costs and environmental impact. A consolidated bill governing different facets of the electricity industry would replace several old pieces of legislation.

The minister said the private sector's participation had been much below the targets and it was only in the state sector that the generating capacity had been added in any significant measure.

The minister said BHEL of India was one of the leading organisations of this type in the world.

As power minister, his endeavour was to ensure that its capabilities were strengthened and its share in the global market was increased.

THE TIMES OF INDIA

1 JUL 2000

# UK defence deal divides South Block

FROM PRANAY SHARMA

**New Delhi, July 8:** The Tony Blair government's decision to ease the embargo on sale of defence equipment to Pakistan has vertically split the Indian foreign ministry establishment.

After mulling for over 48 hours, Delhi today hazarded a muted response, saying it was "disappointed". "We believe that this step is not in consonance with the spirit of the stand taken by the Commonwealth and, indeed, by the British government in respect to the situation in Pakistan," South Block said.

It was the Indian High Com-

mission which made sure that there was no sharp reaction. Realising that it would be a reflection on their performance, Indian diplomats in London lobbied hard to play down the issue, arguing that the Blair government has also decided to issue 65 of the 70 licences for arms sale to India.

They added that it wasn't so sudden after all. According to them, a senior Indian official, when he visited London recently, was apprised of the Blair government's stand vis-a-vis Pakistan.

The 65 licences issued will help India get £1 million-worth underwater cables and rubber gaskets for torpedoes that the navy des-

perately needs.

The Blair government has also repaired and returned one of the two naval vertical-landing and take-off aircraft which had been held up in the UK. A second naval aircraft in full service condition is expected to be returned soon.

Yet, despite Britain's efforts to maintain a quid-pro-quo policy — which suits India well — the fact that the Blair government is trying to hide behind technicalities and downplay its decision to resume arms supply to Pakistan is not totally lost on South Block.

Those who wanted a strong reaction from Delhi argued that London's move amounts to ac-

ording legitimacy to the junta in Islamabad and was a clear violation of British foreign secretary Robin Cook's self-proclaimed "ethical foreign policy".

Cook had called for a strong response from the world community after Pervez Musharraf's military coup last year. That the ban was eased despite Musharraf's reluctance to restore democracy has fuelled speculation that London is trying to pave the way for greater engagement with the junta.

The quid pro quo formula also indicates that UK is trying to put Delhi back in the South Asia box by maintaining parity with Islamabad. Licences for arms supply to

both India and Pakistan were stopped after the May 1998 nuclear tests. Though many countries have reviewed their policy and started engaging with Delhi, their attitude towards Pakistan remains a little different. The decision not to deal with Islamabad doesn't solely stem from the nuclear tests but also from later developments like the Kargil intrusion and the military coup.

All these arguments forced foreign minister Jaswant Singh to approve a muted reaction. But the toned-down response also implies that Singh worked out a compromise between the two rival factions in the foreign establishment.

THE TELEGRAPH

Licences issued on case-to case basis'

# India 'sore' at UK-Pak defence deal

9-uk  
51-5  
11/2

STATESMAN NEWS SERVICE

NEW DELHI, July 10. — India on Saturday expressed "disappointment" at the British government's decision to issue export licences for the supply of defence equipment to Pakistan.

The move is being viewed here as evidence of Britain's desire to engage itself with the military regime in Pakistan.

Reacting to the decision, that became public knowledge in a reply in the House of Commons earlier last week, the external affairs spokesman said, "We believe that this step is not in consonance with the spirit of the stand taken by the Commonwealth, as indeed by the British government in respect of the situation in Pakistan."

In his reply in the House of Commons, the British minister of state for foreign affairs, Mr Peter Hain, had said the government had issued 20 standard individual export licences for a narrow and well-defined range of equipment while rejecting another 26.

Export licence applications would continue to be assessed on a case-by-case basis, Mr Hain said.

Britain is still concerned about defence exports to Pakistan in the light of the Kargil incursion, the military coup and possibility of diversion to undesirable end-users and continued regional tensions, he added.

The external affairs spokesman here, however, made no such distinction while expressing India's disapproval. He added that the Indian High Commission had been in touch with the British government to communicate India's disappointment.

While there had been no official British embargo on the sale of arms to Pakistan, there was a go-slow policy that came

into operation following the Chagai tests. What has irked India however is that the unofficial restriction has been lifted against Pakistan despite Britain's professed desire not to engage with the Musharraf government.

While there was no official reaction on what the step signalled, the government, it is learnt, sees this as evidence on the part of the West to re-engage Pakistan.

The implications of the British decision were political rather than military, according to defence ministry sources. They saw no real danger in Pakistan once again getting equipment supplies from manufacturers in the UK.

The general feeling was that the British government had bowed to pressure from its defence industry. Its commercial credibility could have been affected had the freeze on sales to Pakistan persisted indefinitely.

Defence officials rejected the suggestion that India and the UK had struck a deal under which substantial arms sales to India had been cleared to "compensate" for lifting the ban on concluding previous arrangements with Pakistan.

Although the British freeze had been imposed on both countries in the wake of their 1998 nuclear tests it had been lifted from India quite some time ago.

There had been some problems, a few still linger, it was admitted. But the fact that negotiations for the Hawk AJT, and the Jaguar programme had recently been extended, proved that there was no need for a secret deal, officials said.

Indo-British defence relations had to be seen in a much broader context said the MEA spokesman, pointing out that the Indo-British Defence Committee had met recently.

THE STATESMAN

11 JUL 2000

## 'Shift' in U.K.'s stand on Kashmir

NEW DELHI, MAY 17. There has been a "landmark shift" in the United Kingdom's stand on Kashmir and New Delhi is getting full cooperation from London on extradition of terrorists who took shelter in that country, the External Affairs Minister, Mr. Jaswant Singh, told the Lok Sabha today. *9-UK*

This change in attitude is not inadvertent but due to New Delhi's carrying conviction with its policy on various issues, the Minister said while replying to a supplementary during question hour.

In the Rajya Sabha today, the Defence Minister, Mr. George Fernandes, said the Pakistani Army had carried out certain troop readjustments on the LoC and some reserve formations had been moved from their permanent locations close to the LoC.

He said the Kargil misadventure by Pakistan had resulted in a major defeat for that country. As a face saving measure, Pakistan has renewed campaign to step up militancy to prove to the world that the State continued to remain a 'flash point' requiring intervention by the international community. — PTI, UNI

THE HINDU

18 MAY 2000

# Economic ties focus of Cook visit

## STATESMAN NEWS SERVICE

NEW DELHI, April 14. — Sustaining the recent upswing in Indo-British relations and seeking fresh areas of cooperation are the sentiments underlying the forthcoming visit of the British foreign secretary, Mr Robin Cook. The launch of the Indo-British Round Table will be a highlight of the trip.

While there has been no formal change in the British position on India's having taken the nuclear path, and indeed perceptions also differ on Jammu and Kashmir, those differences are not being permitted to stand in the way of bolstering the ties, particularly in the economic sphere.

Though Britain "continues to regret" Pokhran-II, "we recognise reality", said the British High Commissioner, Sir Rob Young, here today.

"We are engaged in detailed discussions on these complex,

difficult issues. The discussions have been detailed and fruitful."

He said Mr Cook had developed a cordial relationship with the Indian external affairs minister, Mr Jaswant Singh.

Indeed before the official interaction begins on 17 April, Mr Cook and his wife will have spent Sunday with Mr and Mrs Jaswant Singh in Jodhpur. "A bit of talking, a bit of sight-seeing" is how Sir Rob said the plans go. Mr Cook and his delegation will arrive here tomorrow afternoon. No official engagements are planned.

Visits to the joint-venture Bharti BT Internet Ltd. which

has promoted Mantra Online, the entrepreneurship-development NGO Bharatiya Yuva Shakti Trust and the Apeejay School in Noida will occupy Mr Cook on the morning of 17 April.

That will be followed by a round of formal talks with Mr Jaswant Singh,

and then a seminar on "Privatisation - Learning from the UK" at which British and Indian officials, business leaders and so on will share views. Later that evening, Mr Cook will call on the Prime Minister, Mr Atal Behari Vajpayee, and the leader of the Opposition in the Lok Sabha, Mrs Sonia Gandhi.

The next morning, Mr Cook will go to "Palna", where the Delhi Council for Child Welfare runs a creche, orphanage and school. He will present it a car bought with British funds.

The launch of the Round Table on 18 April is aimed at finding non-traditional avenues of cooperation, firming up what is already in place.

The deputy chairman of the Planning Commission, Mr KC Pant, and Lord Swraj Paul will be co-chairmen of the group that includes eminent personalities from various walks of life. Attaching much importance to the meeting of the group that will be spread over a day and a half, Sir Rob hoped that it would add a dimension to the bilateral relationship that civil servants could not conjure up.

The aim was for the group to make concrete proposals. The group would meet again in London in autumn.



Mr Robin Cook



# India, Britain to hold wide-ranging talks

HT Correspondent  
New Delhi, April 14

BRITAIN'S FOREIGN secretary Robin Cook's four-day visit to India beginning tomorrow is expected to clear some of the grey clouds that have formed over bilateral relations and set the two countries on a new, mutually rewarding course based on convergence of strategic and economic interests.

The visit, his second in two years, has a strong personal content this time. Mr Cook and his Indian counterpart, External Affairs Minister Jaswant Singh, have been reported as striking a "friendship" in recent months. Mr Singh will accompany the visiting Foreign Secretary to Jodhpur for a quiet weekend before returning to New Delhi on Monday to start the official leg of his tour which include substantive talks with Mr Singh.

The Foreign Secretary is also expected to call on the Prime Minister, the leader of the Opposition, the Prime Minister's principal

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secretary, besides flagging off the Indo-UK Roundtable, inaugurating a CII-organised seminar and visiting an NGO.

The unilateral announcement in February to impose a visa-bond scheme on certain categories of Indian visitors to the UK had created a furore in India. Mr Cook's deputy, Mr Keith Vaz, who was then on a tour of India was hard put to defend the scheme. Subsequently, the British Government clarified that the scheme would only be tested through a "pilot project" beginning October this year. However, the exclusion of Pakistanis from the project put a question mark over the British Government's intentions.

While that matter hangs, observers will be keenly following Mr Cook's visit for Britain's latest Kashmir position. At the end of the London round of talks in January between Mr Cook and Mr Singh, the British Government lent its support to India's concerns on terrorism in the region. The British High Commissioner in India, Sir Rob

Young, said today that "regional issues" would certainly figure on the agenda of Mr Cook's talks with Mr Singh. The High Commissioner pointed out that the general thrust of British policy on Kashmir is well known and Mr Cook's statements have been in line with it.

The British Foreign Secretary had created controversy when he accompanied Queen Elizabeth II to India in 1997 by making statements against the Indian policy on Kashmir. However, he had subsequently departed from this view by preferring the issue to be sorted out bilaterally between India and Pakistan.

However, Sir Young maintained that there was no change in Britain's stand on India's nuclear programme. Britain, he said, "continues to regret India's path towards nuclearisation but recognises the reality". For the past 18 months, Britain has been engaging in substantive discussions on the issue which have been "fruitful", he said.

Mr Cook had reiterated after the London

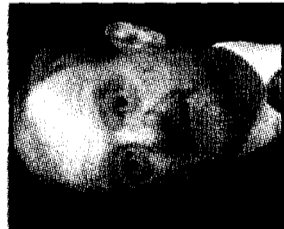
round of talks that Britain was keen on India signing the Comprehensive Test Ban Treaty (CTBT) in the interests of regional stability.

The Foreign Secretary's visit is also expected to prepare the ground for a possible visit to India by British Prime Minister Tony Blair. The visit has been in the offing for more than a year now. The setting up of the India-UK Round Table, a forum of non-governmental intellectuals and industrialists, is a sign of increased British interest on India as its function will be to constantly supply inputs to government policies aimed at enhancing mutual cooperation.

The Indian side in the Round Table will be headed by Deputy Chairman of the Planning Commission KC Pant while Lord Swraj Paul will lead the British representation. Sir Young said the selection of Lord Paul as the head of the British side was reflection of the acknowledgement of the British Government to the vast contributions made by Indian-origin British nationals to the development of that country.

# 'India, Britain must become better partners'

**Robin Cook, British Foreign Secretary**



**W H E R E**  
**W I L L**  
always be a special friendship between Britain and India. The nature of that friendship changes as the world changes. That is what my visit to India is about - the ties between two friendly countries adapting in their own ways to the economic and political changes of the 21st century. The relationship is in robust health. Jaswant Singh had a very successful visit to London in January and since then we have spoken several times.

I am very much looking forward to starting my visit by having lunch with Jaswant and his wife near their home in Jodhpur. The good friendship we have struck up as Foreign Ministers reflects the state of relations between Britain and India. It is a relationship which Tony Blair values highly. He and I are both keen to deepen

and strengthen the partnership between our countries. We have much in common. We share our democratic values and we both play a pro-active role on the international stage.

Britain recognises that India is a clear contender for a permanent seat on the UN Security Council, should agreement be reached on enlarging the Council.

We have a broad common agenda, stretching from trade policy to terrorism. India is going to be a 21st century power. It is on track to become one of the world's top ten economies. I am keen to see for myself the progress the Indian economy is making, particularly in information technology.

This will be one of the main themes of my visit. India has enormous potential to thrive and prosper in the knowledge-based industries of the future. This is something which our two countries have in common. We are both strong democracies with strong economies. The Indian Government is making strides on economic reform. For instance, the opening up of the insurance sector is a positive step.

Both India and Britain have entrepreneurs and technical specialists who are

great assets in the new global economy. There is much that we can learn from each other in a two-way process as our economies take advantage of the opportunities presented by the revolution in information technology. I want to see how Indian business is seizing these opportunities. It is important that the benefits of globalisation are not confined to the economic powers of the last century, but are shared by countries like India.

A country's economic strength is a factor in its influence on the world stage. That is one reason why Britain is able to play a positive international role. Our economy is in good shape.

The same goes for India. Your growth forecast for this year is 6 per cent, your inflation rate is around 13 per cent, your exports grew by 12 per cent in the second half of 1999, and your government is pursuing a programme of economic reforms which should ensure that you maintain your economic momentum. I will be looking at some examples of modern Indian economic success and meeting some of your leading businessmen.

This will be the main focus of my visit - a modern partnership between two mod-

ernising countries - but inevitably I will also be discussing some of the difficult issues which India face. It is important that militants and those supporting them understand this. We are doing what we can to make sure they get this message.

We have been urging restraint and dialogue on Pakistan.

Britain has taken a firm line on the military coup in Pakistan. I was at the Commonwealth meetings which suspended Pakistan from membership of the councils of the Commonwealth. I have said all along that there is no such thing as a good military coup, and I will continue to press for a timetable for a return to the democratic rights of the people of Pakistan.

Finally, Jaswant Singh and I will be launching a major and exciting initiative during my visit. That is to establish the UK/India Round Table. It will bring together leading opinion-makers from various fields of the two countries. They will be able to exchange views in a relaxed atmosphere, with the aim of injecting fresh thinking into our relationship and looking at ways of dealing with misperceptions of the UK in India and vice versa. I am sure the Round Table will be a success.

## Robin Cook arrives in New Delhi

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STATESMAN NEWS SERVICE

NEW DELHI, April 15. — The British Foreign Secretary, Mr Robin Cook, arrived here by a special aircraft this afternoon on a visit to which India appears to be attaching a high degree of importance.

That a non-business day trip to Jodhpur tomorrow, where the External Affairs Minister, Mr Jaswant Singh, will play host, precedes their official interaction is a pointer to the mood in which the talks are expected to be held.

Although no formal agreements are scheduled to be signed, it is likely that Mr Cook's visit will remove the roadblocks that Pokhran-II had thrown up in the bilateral military cooperation.

A meeting of the defence consultative group could take place later this year and the invitations recently extended to India's Chiefs of Staff to visit the UK are likely to be accepted, according to the ministry of external affairs.

Though the countries do have differences over some WTO-related matters and issues of nuclear non-proliferation, the official line is that they do not constitute obstacles to a close bilateral relation. That perceptions coincide on several other important issues off-sets the differences.

THE STATESMAN

16 APR 2000

# India and the Anglo-Saxons: a new entente?

By C. Raja Mohan

**NEW DELHI, APR. 15.** The visit by the British Foreign Secretary, Mr. Robin Cook, beginning today highlights the prospects for a new bonhomie between India and the Anglo-Saxon nations.

One of the many unintended consequences of the successful visit by the U.S. President, Mr. Bill Clinton, to India last month could be the acceleration of a new entente between India and the Anglo-Saxon world.

Close on the heels of Mr. Clinton's visit came the Australian Foreign Minister, Mr. Alexander Downer. Senior officials from Canada were here last week and would be followed by those from New Zealand next week.

Ending decades of political divergence, India and the Anglo-Saxon nations are rediscovering their shared democratic values. They are also focusing on cooperation among themselves (both bilateral and multilateral) in shaping the "new economy" that is impinging on the world.

Great Britain, Australia, Canada and New Zealand have special ties that bind them to the U.S., and exercise diplomatic influence in international affairs and in various regions far out of proportion to their size and standing.

Not all of this influence come from the widely perceived sense that these countries are either the "camp-followers" of the United States or its "self-appointed vanguard".

But Great Britain has deep historic linkages in various regions of the world; and through years of diplomatic activism both Canada and Australia have built up impressive foreign policy portfolios.

Despite the common heritage of the English language, the similarity of legal and political systems, and intense contacts at the societal level, the relations between India and the Anglo Saxon world could not overcome the rigours of the Cold War.

Attempts after the Cold War to rebuild political ties between India and the Anglo-Saxon world tended to falter because of the deep divergence over the core national security concerns of India — nuclear weapons and Kashmir.

But the Clinton visit might have begun to change things.

The remarks here by the British High Commissioner, Mr. Rob Young, echoed the new line from the U.S. to the effect: "We don't like your decision to test nuclear weapons; but we acknowledge the new reality."

Equally significant has been the new role Britain has played in putting the military regime of Gen. Musharraf in the dock. Following the coup in Islamabad on October 12 last year, Canada and Britain led the charge at a Commonwealth ministerial meeting to suspend Pakistan from the organisation.

"No coup is a good coup," was the memorable line from Mr. Robin Cook on that occasion. For the first time the rhetoric on shared commitment to democracy has acquired a new operational meaning.

During his visit Mr. Cook wants to consolidate the "modern partnership" between India and Britain. His efforts will get a big political boost, if Mr. Cook can bring greater clarity to the British position on Kashmir.

There is no doubt here about the positive evolution of the British stand on Kashmir during the recent months. Mr. Cook's line during the Kargil crisis was indeed constructive.

But can Britain take it step further? Would Mr. Cook insist, a la Clinton, that borders in the subcontinent "cannot redrawn in blood?" Would he make it clear that a successful Indo-Pak dialogue would require an end to cross-border terrorism?

16 APR 2000

# UK makes new beginning with Robin Cook's visit

**JYOTI MALHOTRA**  
NEW DELHI, APRIL 16

**AWARE** that British Foreign Secretary Robin Cook's last official trip to India nearly three years ago was a veritable disaster, London seems to be making every effort to present his four-day visit, which began from Saturday, as a milestone in the special Indo-British relationship.

Publicly at least, New Delhi appears to be willing to return the compliment, with Minister for External Affairs Jaswant Singh inviting Cook to holiday back home in Jodhpur on Sunday before both sides knuckle down to more sensitive issues - such as nuclear matters and Kashmir - on Monday morning at Hyderabad House.

British High Commissioner Rob Young was at pains to stress this "positive" aspect of the bilateral relationship at a press conference on Friday even as he added that London "continues to regret that India has chosen the particu-

lar path it has been developing nuclear weapons".

Asked about Britain's position on Security Council resolution 1172, which in the wake of the Pokharan tests called upon India (and Pakistan) to return to its non-nuclear weapon status, Young said, "Our view remains as it has. The resolution remains in force. We continue to regret India has chosen this particular path... But we recognise the reality. We have been engaging in detailed and fruitful discussions (on the subject)".

Clearly, it considerably helps New Delhi's position that none other than Bill Clinton has affirmed US support for India on maintaining the sanctity of the Line of Control as well as made it plain that Islamabad must make the first moves on controlling cross-



**British Foreign Secretary Robin Cook arriving with his wife at Palam Airport in New Delhi on Saturday — Express photo by Virendra Singh**

border terrorism.

With Blair following Bill on most other issues, it seems likely that Cook will also tread the path his American colleagues laid out so clearly less than a month ago. So, from Jodhpur - not Nayla - to Hyderabad House, Britain's representative is likely to lay to rest some of the demons that have dogged the relationship in recent years.

Nearly three years ago Cook, then accompanying Queen Elizabeth, was castigated by the press when he sought to mediate between India and Pakistan on Kashmir. In the shadow of then PM I K Gujral's reported comment that Britain was a "third-rate power", the trip turned out to be a diplomatic lesson on how not to conduct relations.

But even as New Delhi and Washington have moved

closer on most contentious issues - from Kashmir to India's nuclear status - and Delhi builds bridges with the other nuclear powers, London has in recent months scrambled to return to its special relationship with Delhi. From Kargil to the military coup in Pakistan to the hijacking of IC-814, Britain has been critical of Islamabad.

It has helped too that Singh has visited London, in an official or unofficial capacity, more times than any other Western capital in the months since Pokharan.

But despite the overlay of bilateral bonhomie, the Labour Party in power has never really disowned its earlier 1995 statement - when it was out of power - that as the former "imperial power", Britain continues to own the responsibility of mediating the dispute between India and Pakistan.

Curiously, too, New Delhi has also not bothered to make public any assurances it may have re-

ceived from London making clear that that 1995 statement is history.

The Cook visit indicates that both sides may be willing to finally come to terms with their differences.

New Delhi continues to remain suspicious about certain moves by London, such as the recent visit by British General Charles Guthrie to Islamabad, ostensibly to send a tough message to General Musharraf and Co.

But with the world now willing to accept its de facto nuclear status, New Delhi also realises the pointlessness of being standoffish with major international players.

The atmosphere around Cook's visit, then, is already in place: an Indo-UK Round Table will be inaugurated (of which the co-chairmen will be Deputy Chairperson of the Planning Commission K C Pant and British businessman Swraj Paul), a car will be donated to the 'Palna' orphanage and a seminar with CII is being organised.

# Britain toes US line on South Asia

STATESMAN NEWS SERVICE

NEW DELHI, April 17. — Britain today repeated several American formulations on issues related to the South Asian region, echoing President Bill Clinton's stand on the need for dialogue and restraint, the need for a cessation of violence in Kashmir and calling on India to adhere to the CTBT.

The visiting British Foreign Secretary, Mr Robin Cook, virtually ruled out any role for Britain, even in urging India and Pakistan to resume their dialogue, his restraint emerging as a sharp contrast to his previous visits when he had managed to raise hackles through his provocative statements.

While there was no departure

in Britain's policy either towards the issues of nuclear proliferation or Kashmir, Mr Cook's tone during this visit lacked the abrasiveness of the past, a fact that the Ministry of External Affairs was keen to point to.

Addressing a joint press conference with the Union External Affairs Minister, Mr Jaswant Singh, Mr Cook said he was deeply pained by the violence in Kashmir which affected civilians the most. Saying violence made the problem worse, Mr Cook referred to the U S President's statement that the modern world does not permit boundaries to be redrawn in blood. "The only way forward is through dialogue and through creating positive political conditions in

Kashmir", he said, adding that "serious dialogue requires real restraint. Both are essential to make progress." In response to a question, he said respect for the LoC was part of the policy of restraint. Asked whether Britain had any role in urging the two countries towards a dialogue, Mr Cook said, "We have to be asked for help before we can be of assistance".

Mr Cook said India and Britain shared concerns over Afghanistan as a centre for terrorism and drug-trafficking, and had also exchanged their common experience of terrorism and hijacking during the talks.

He also referred to the mutual wish to see a restoration of democracy in Pakistan. "The continuing absence of a real road map back to democratic

rule will be a matter of deep disappointment to those of us who meet in the Commonwealth Ministerial Action Group in two weeks time."

Mr Cook iterated his government's hope that India would adhere to the CTBT. He described this, as also the need for confidence building measures in the region as part of the unfinished business of the UN Security Council resolution 1172 following the nuclear tests by India and Pakistan.

He described India as a natural contender for permanent membership of the Security Council and said India's economy was on the track to join the world's top ten. Britain would be opening two new trade offices, in Ahmedabad and Hyderabad. Britain also pro-

posed to increase its assistance for the development programme and wanted to cooperate with India in the area of information technology and telecommunications.

Speaking on the occasion, Mr Jaswant Singh drew attention to the development of a close political understanding between the two countries, an example being the problem of terrorism and its ramifications on which the two countries were cooperating.

The discussions had also covered regional developments in Europe and South Asia and the two countries were determined to enrich the relationship with positive developments even as they "work together to check and reverse negative phenomenon."

# India a 'natural contender' for Council seat

**HT Correspondent**  
New Delhi, April 17

**BRITAIN CONSIDERS** India a "natural contender" for a place in the United Nations Security Council and would like the Kashmir dispute settled mutually between India and Pakistan through "dialogue and restraint," Foreign Secretary Robin Cook announced here in what is seen as the most affirmative British statement in favour of India.

Mr Cook, whose mannerisms and "body language" was much mellowed than what was evident in his two earlier visits to the country (as shadow Foreign Secretary in 1996 and as part of Queen Elizabeth II's delegation in 1997)

made it clear that his visit this time had more to do with engaging India, the future economic powerhouse, than India, the nuclear problem. The presence of Lord Swaraj Paul, the House of Lords MP, at the bilateral talks this afternoon, made it clear where the British focus of the India agenda lies.

On his two earlier visits, Mr Cook had harped on the human rights abuses in Indian Kashmir and argued for Britain's right to mediate in the unsolved problem of transfer of power to its former colonies. But, this time the Foreign Secretary seemed bound on this visit by the rapidly changing sce-

nario in bilateral ties with India since November 1998. Also, indication was overflowing from his statement at the end of the bilateral talks with External Affairs Minister Jaswant Singh that the views of the White House and the Whitehall had more or less converged where Kashmir and the Musharraf regime are concerned.

## Cook-Jaswant Parleys

He asked Pakistan to respect the Line of Control in Jammu and Kashmir and referred to President Bill Clinton's remark over Pakistan Television. In fact, he quoted expressly from that speech, saying: "As President Clinton said, the modern world does not permit

boundaries to be redrawn in blood. The only way forward is through dialogue and through creating positive political conditions in Kashmir." He also harped on the by now familiar Clintonian demand for a "roadmap for return to democratic rule in Pakistan", adding that Pakistan's obvious failure to do so would be a "matter of deep disappointment" at the May 2-3 meeting of the Commonwealth Ministerial Group in London.

The bullish forecast for the Indian economy envisaged by Britain would put London's anxiety over India's reluctance to sign the CTBT in the backburner.

More details at:  
[www.hindustantimes.com](http://www.hindustantimes.com)

# Cook praises India for Lahore process

By C. Raja Mohan

**NEW DELHI, APRIL 17.** Proclaiming a natural partnership with India in the new century, the visiting British Foreign Secretary, Mr. Robin Cook, moved the United Kingdom today closer to India on finding a way to reduce tensions between India and Pakistan over Kashmir.

In an exclusive conversation with *The Hindu*, Mr. Cook recalled the British experience in Northern Ireland to suggest that there can be no meaningful dialogue between India and Pakistan in "circumstances of violence".

On the Indian position that there can be no talks with Pakistan unless there was an end to cross-border terrorism, Mr. Cook said, "to have a successful dialogue without an end to violence will be too challenging a task for diplomats".

Mr. Cook praised India for taking the initiative for an Indo-Pak peace process at Lahore last year, and regretted that it was undermined by the Kargil episode.

At a joint press conference earlier with the External Affairs Minister, Mr. Jaswant Singh, the British Foreign Secretary echoed the U.S. President, Mr. Bill Clinton's formulations on Kashmir. He said "the modern world does not permit boundaries to redrawn



**The External Affairs Minister, Mr. Jaswant Singh, with the British Foreign Secretary, Mr. Robin Cook, at the Hyderabad House in New Delhi on Monday.** — Photo: V. Sudershan

in blood". Questioned on the similarity of the British position with that of the United States, Mr. Cook said London was in regular touch with the U.S. on issues relating to the sub-continent. "We have a better chance of being heard if we give the same message," he said.

Asked whether Britain, like the U.S., was conveying a tough message to Pakistan on terrorism,

within the international community that the absence of cross-border terrorism is an essential element in the resumption of a meaningful dialogue between India and Pakistan.

The Government is also satisfied with Mr. Cook's forthright in asserting that India as an emerging power was "a natural contender for permanent membership of the Security Council".

India and Britain continue to differ on some nuclear issues like the Comprehensive Test Ban Treaty, and have agreed to initiate a dialogue on disarmament and non-proliferation to reduce their differences.

With India in the midst of a controversial campaign to isolate the military regime of Gen. Pervez Musharraf in Pakistan, Mr. Cook called for an early restoration of democracy there.

Sharing his concerns about the forces of extremism in Pakistan, Mr. Cook said his objective "is to enable the people of Pakistan to freely choose for themselves what identity and what future direction they want their country to travel and that requires democracy".

Arguing that "democracy can be a wonderful, moderating influence", Mr. Cook said, "the danger of extremism is much greater when power is held closely rather than shared widely".



# Britain to work with India on U.N. reforms: Cook

By Our Special Correspondent

**NEW DELHI, APRIL 18.** Britain today said it would work with India on the reforms in the United Nations, but did not make its support for New Delhi's presence in an expanded Security Council explicit.

The visiting British Foreign Secretary, Mr. Robin Cook, said today after his meeting with the Prime Minister, Mr. Atal Behari Vajpayee, that London saw New Delhi as a "clear contender" for a permanent seat in the U.N. Security Council.

Describing his talks with the Prime Minister as "good and successful," Mr. Cook said India and the U.K. were both committed to the Security Council's reforms. The Security Council, he said, should reflect the world of this century rather than the previous one. The progress on the Kashmir issue should be premised on a dialogue and termination of violence, he added.

## Round Table launched

With an eye to the future, the two sides launched a Round Table of eminent persons which would brainstorm a multifaceted relationship between the two countries in the coming years. "Our partnership is not just because of our shared history but because of our common approaches and perspectives," Mr. Cook said soon after the joint launch of the Round Table with the External Affairs Minister, Mr. Jaswant Singh.

The Round Table will be chaired by the Deputy Chairman of the Planning Commission, Mr. K. C. Pant, and the British industrialist, Lord Swraj Paul. The forum includes scientists, bureaucrats and journalists and would look at ways to enhance trade and promote cooperation in the fields of science and technology, energy and infrastructure.



**The British Foreign Secretary, Mr. Robin Cook, with the Prime Minister, Mr. A. B. Vajpayee, at Parliament House in New Delhi on Tuesday.** — Photo: V. V. Krishnan

Mr. Singh who had proposed the establishment of a forum in January during his London visit clarified that the Government would not set its agenda.

Later, Mr. Cook had a meeting with the Minister for Industry and Commerce, Mr. Murasoli Maran, where the two sides expressed the intention to enhance the bilateral relationship further. Mr. Cook pointed out that the U.K. was one of the largest foreign investors in India and the second largest trading partner of India.

Responding to this point, Mr. Maran appreciated the fact that British companies ranked third in the list of countries in terms of cumulative foreign direct investment (FDI) approved during January 1991 and January 2000 with approvals touching nearly \$ 4.5 billions but pointed out that ac-

tual inflows from that country during this period were only about \$ 663.2 millions.

Mr. Cook also brought up the point that India was maintaining a very high import tariff on foreign liquor (at the rate of 243 per cent) and wanted to know whether there was any proposal to bring this duty down.

Mr. Maran, on his part, reiterated the Indian position on various non-trade issues being raised by the developed countries, especially core-labour standards which India felt should be kept out of the World Trade Organisation framework and left to the International Labour Organisation. Mr. Cook appreciated India's concern in this area saying cheap labour was India's core competitive advantage which could not be taken away.

THE HINDU

15 APR 2000

## Divide & Ruse

The British foreign secretary has echoed the changed US line on Kashmir that borders cannot be redrawn by blood, mediation is not feasible in the circumstances, violence should stop, restraint should be observed and dialogue is the way to solution. It is significant that these views have come from a British foreign secretary who belongs to the Labour party; new evidence has surfaced which suggests that the partition of India was promoted and implemented by a Labour party-run British government as the basic thrust of its Cold War strategy vis-a-vis the perceived Soviet threat to the "Wells of power" in the Persian Gulf. *The New York Times* has carried an account of how Britain pressured the US in 1953 into using the CIA to topple the Iranian Prime Minister, Mossadeq. It was the British Labour Party's refusal to endorse Lord Louis Mountbatten's acceptance of the Maharajah of Kashmir's accession which created the Kashmir dispute and encouraged Pakistan to entertain hopes of acquiring Kashmir. The British intelligence assessment of that time was that India would not be able to hold together in view of its enormous diversities while for Pakistan Islam would prove to be a strong bond. This reinforced the traditional Muslim League view that India would disintegrate. Kashmir became the central thrust in that drive to shatter the unity of India and continues to dominate the thinking of the Pakistani military, bureaucratic and middle class elite and the many extremist Islamic groups.

If there is to be durable peace between India and Pakistan this mindset has to be effectively countered. In order to do that two steps are essential. First, the Pakistanis have to be persuaded that the western powers which supported Pakistan in order to use it as a convenient instrumentality in the Cold War have no more use for Pakistan, and that they are, in fact, reviewing and adjusting their policies to match their current national interests. Secondly, the Pakistani myths about partition, the Kashmir issue and their military prowess vis-a-vis India, have to be demystified to enable the Pakistani leadership to come to terms with both the historical and current realities. Unfortunately, the Indian failure to record history has given Pakistan an advantage in the information campaign that is being waged around the world. It would benefit all concerned — Britain, the US, Pakistan and India — should the Indian government decide to sponsor a detailed and objective study of the genesis of partition and subsequent developments in the subcontinent. There is enough material available in the form of recently declassified British and US documents as well as Indian records which our government has unwisely not declassified and released. Dealing with Pakistan through an effective information campaign is a new experience for India. 'Satyameva Jayate' may be India's national motto. However, for the world at large to access this truth, it must be sought, declassified, put together and made public.

THE TIMES OF INDIA

20 APR 2000

# Clinton visit echo in British warmth

STATESMAN NEWS SERVICE 5/8

NEW DELHI, April 20. — Does the Indo-British bonhomie generated during the recent visit of the British Foreign Secretary represent a change in the Labour government's attitude towards India?

While both countries claimed to have moved closer, some analysts feel the positive atmosphere of the visit should be credited to the Clinton visit rather than a re-thinking on part of the Labour government.

Pointing out that there has been no radical departure of British foreign policy, analysts

point out that Mr Robin Cook largely echoed the formulations of President Clinton, quoting him, both in form and substance.

"Several countries were expected to take their cue from the Clinton visit," says a senior analyst, adding that the months following the visit of the US President would see several countries vying with each other to extend a hand of friendship to India.

The most positive overtures are expected from countries whose foreign policy is largely influenced by the USA, foremost among them being

Britain. South Block mandarins, in fact, are convinced that it would not require much effort on their part to improve relations with these countries.

Evidence of the seriousness that India attaches to engaging with Britain to narrow the differences was apparent in the recent decision to institute a formal dialogue on proliferation-related issues.

The dialogue — instituted during Mr Cook's visit, nearly two years after the Pokhran tests — on the issue of nuclear non-proliferation and disarmament will be at the level of officials, unlike India's high-profile

dialogue at a ministerial level with the USA.

But while the two governments also dwelt on the importance of the Indo-British round table, inaugurated during Mr Cook's visit, the first meeting has already raised doubts about its validity and whether it would go beyond being a talking shop.

While unwilling to dismiss it at the first instance, a member of the high-profile body said the foreign ministry had tried to guide the sessions along a bureaucratic framework, quelling the possibility of the frank discourse that was envisaged

THE STATESMAN

21 APR 2000

# India may retaliate to UK visa bond proposal

HT Correspondent  
New Delhi, January 31

INDIA TODAY expressed strong reservations against the British Government's proposal that "some short-term" visitors from this country would need to provide cash bonds of 10,000 pounds for visits to the United Kingdom.

A Ministry of External Affairs spokesman said: "It is our expectation that in consular matters any new rules or guidelines adopted by a country should be implemented across the board on a non-discriminatory basis for citizens of all countries."

"We would like to clarify that in the event that such rules and guidelines are instituted, we reserve the right to take reciprocal action," the spokesman categorically stated.

He, however, said: "We are ascertaining facts about the issue. The information we have at present is through press reports as we have not been extended the courtesy of being consulted."

Earlier in the day, British Deputy High Commissioner Tom Macan claimed that the proposed scheme would apply to a small minority of applicants for visit visas who, while satisfying the British visa-issuing officer on all other grounds, are unable to satisfy him that they

intend to return to India at the end of their stay.

Under the scheme, to be implemented later this year, if the visitor gets back within the stipulated visa period, the money will be returned. Otherwise it will be forfeited.

However, Mr Macan added a rider by saying that even in such cases the persons would not "automatically" get the visa and it would still be at the discretion of the visa officers.

The Deputy High Commissioner clarified that no one who currently qualifies for a visa to visit the British Isles will be required to post a bond, contending that "the proposed bond of 10,000 pounds should enable more people, not fewer, to visit the UK. But it would not enable people to visit whose applications are unsatisfactory on any other grounds."

This scheme will be discussed during the four-day visit of Mr Keith Vaz, British Minister of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs. Mr Vaz arrives in the Capital tomorrow.

Mr Macan claimed that the British Government had decided to consider the scheme following requests and suggestions by the large Asian community in Britain. "The scheme, subject to its success, is likely to be extended to Pakistan, Bangladesh and some of the

African countries," the diplomat said.

Replying to a query on the substantial bond amount, Mr Macan said in all likelihood the bond in a majority of cases would be sponsored by those in the United Kingdom, who wish to have their relatives visit them.

During his visit, Mr Vaz will also examine the possibility of extending visa operations in Ahmedabad, Mr Macan said. For this, a feasibility study would be launched, he added.

Mr Vaz, who will be in the Capital for two days, will call on Prime Minister Atal Behari Vajpayee, Home Minister L. K. Advani besides meeting Minister of State for External Affairs Ajit Kumar Panja and Foreign Secretary Lalit Mansingh.

The Comprehensive Test Ban Treaty (CTBT) issue is likely to figure during the parleys in which the full range of bilateral relations besides global and regional issues would be taken up.

Mr Macan said the focus of the visit would be on visa operations conducted by the British missions in Delhi and Mumbai. According to him, at the all-India level, of the 1.75 lakh applications for UK visas received last year, 1.57 lakh visas were issued and 18,187 applicants were refused visas.

THE HINDUSTAN TIMES

- 1 FEB 2000

# Visa bond suggestion rubbish: Vaz

2/2  
'Indian reaction perfectly proper'

HT Correspondent  
New Delhi, February 1

HT-20  
"IT'S ABSOLUTELY rubbish, nonsense to suggest that people have to provide bonds of £10,000 to get into Britain," said British Minister of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs Keith Vaz here today.

He emphasised that "no decision" had been taken on the controversial visa bond scheme.

The purported decision, Mr Vaz told a Press conference, was based on a "leak". All the same, he agreed that the strong Indian reaction of "retaliatory" moves was "acceptable and perfectly proper".

The Minister said that visas would continue to be issued in the normal way, preferably within 24 hours. Nobody will be required to bring cheques or guarantees, he added.

Dwelling on the visa bond scheme, he said it was a response to proposals from minority ethnic communities in the UK. It was to apply only to those cases where the visa-issuing officer had refused the visa, being unsure whether a family visitor intended to leave at the end of a visit. He said it would not apply to most family visit applicants.

In the earlier scheme of things, an appeal to a judge used to be allowed against the decision of the Entry Clearance Officer. But the earlier John Major Government had scrapped it.

Mr Vaz said relatives of persons denied visas used to come to him, offering to provide guarantee for the applicants or put up a bond.

The Labour party, he said, had pledged in its last election manifesto that it would ease the burden of those who had been refused a visa. He said that he himself had cam-



Keith Vaz

paigned for it. The Government plans to restore the right to appeal.

Mr Vaz was asked why a bond scheme was being pursued if the right to appeal was to be restored. In reply, he said, "That's why no decision has been taken".

He said no decision had been taken on whether India would be a part of the pilot scheme, which is to be carried out in several countries. There was no question of the scheme discriminating against South Asians, he said.

He added that if India was chosen for the pilot project, the British High Commissioner would explain the scheme to Indian officials.

Mr Vaz said he would be launching a feasibility study to look at the possibility of extending Britain's visa issuing services in Ahmedabad and Chandigarh.

## British Home Office gives its go-ahead

London, February 1

THE BRITISH Home Office has announced it is going ahead with a pilot scheme that could force visitors to Britain to file bonds before they travel.

"We will launch a pilot scheme for six months beginning October this year," a spokesman for the Home Office said. He declined to specify where the pilot schemes would be launched.

The spokesman said the amount sought may not be £10,000 as proposed in a study within the government. But the amount is expected to be pretty high because a relatively small amount would defeat the purpose for which it is intended.

He made it clear that the British government is considering the introduction of a bond scheme and that a pilot project has been agreed upon. The spokesman's remarks came as indication that the government is sticking to its plans despite the strong opposition the move has evoked within the South Asian community.

The statement from the Home Office came in the wake of denials issued in Dhaka by Britain's Minister in the Foreign Office, Keith Vaz. The move comes just as Vaz is on a visit to Bangladesh and India supposedly to ease visa restrictions.

But given the fact that the largest minority community in Britain is South Asian, it is they who will be affected primarily. And according to the spokesman, the scheme envisages heavy bonds, even if it is not all of £10,000 each.

Indian community leaders here say that does not make it better or even less discriminatory. There is no plan to introduce such a scheme for Australians or Canadians for example.

Meanwhile Indian-born mayoral candidate Ram Gidoomal has moved to make the proposal a key issue in the elections. He has asked other mayoral candidates to take a position publicly on where they stand on the issue. (IANS)

THE HINDUSTAN TIMES

- 2 FEB 2000

# India-U.K. accord to liberalise air services

By Our Special Correspondent

**NEW DELHI, FEB. 3.** India and U.K. have agreed to liberalise air services to and beyond the two countries in an agreement finalised here on Wednesday, after two days of hectic negotiations.

The agreement came about in accordance with an understanding reached between the Union Minister for Civil Aviation, Mr. Sharad Yadav, and the Deputy Prime Minister of Britain, Mr. John Prescott, in December 1999.

The new pact recognises the growth in demand for air services between and beyond the two countries which reflects the continuing economic growth in India and the U.K..

The U.K.-based Virgin Atlantic finds a mention in the agreement as a designated carrier of U.K. which will, along with the British Airways, provide "active and ongoing assistance to Air India—India's designated carrier—in their dealings with the slot coordinator at Heathrow airport in London" says the agreement.

This has reference to India's demand for convenient landing slots at Heathrow for Air India.

The agreement allows Air India to carry freight and trans-Atlantic passengers beyond U.K. to the U.S. and Canada on all of its 16 services per week under the bilateral agreement. It can now carry passengers to other destinations in addition to Chicago and New York in the U.S. and to other points in addition to Montreal and Toronto in Canada.

So far Air India operates only 10 of its 16 services to U.K., while it has entered into a code-share with Virgin Atlantic to use three of its unutilised entitlements.

The new agreement allows U.K. carriers to terminate all of their 16 services per week in India, as against only 11 flights permitted to do so earlier. Five flights had India only as a transit destination.

The pact removes the limit on the number of services U.K. carriers may operate to Chennai.

They can now operate any number of their services to Chennai, as against only four earlier on. U.K. carriers have also been allowed to raise their flight frequency from U.K.-Delhi to Calcutta from three to six services per week. Both countries agreed in principle on a code-share with a third country.

The talks were led by the Director-General Civil Aviation, Mr. H.S. Khola, for India, with the Civil Aviation Secretary, Mr. Ravindra Gupta, joining in briefly to help remove the glitches.

THE HINDU  
- 4 FEB 2000

# 'Sanctions shouldn't be used to enforce labour standards'

Since the Indo-British Partnership was formed in 1993, trade and investment ties between the two countries have grown greatly. The latest initiative to be launched under the umbrella of the Partnership — the 'Global Enterprise Initiative' (GEI) — aims at furthering ties between the two countries, through the medium of small and medium sized companies. In an exclusive interview with the *Economic Times*, Mr Stephen Byers, Secretary of State for Trade and Industry, UK, talks about the GEI, Indo-British trade and investment and the UK's position on issues before the WTO. Excerpts

**Can you tell us a more about the GEI? What do you expect to achieve from it and why have you selected only small companies?**

If you look at the existing trade that goes on between India and the UK, it's very much the large companies that are trading with each other and there's a clear gap as far as small businesses are concerned.

For understandable reasons, small businesses often concentrate either on their local or regional economy or even the domestic economy but they seldom think about trading internationally. So we're looking at ways in which we could encourage small businesses to look at the opportunities that exist in terms of trade. And we thought we could work out a package that includes some financial assistance, help with travel, a bit of support in terms of learning — going to a business school — those sorts of things, very practical proposals. That's the essence of the GEI.

We're setting a target of 200 companies and that, I think, is a feasible objective that we've set ourselves. They will be in a range of areas: some will be IT, some will be food and so on; it will be a range of activities that these companies will be involved in. We are not necessarily looking at small in the sense in which the term is used in India.

We may look at micro businesses but what we are basically saying is that if you have good ideas and are keen to trade then you'd be

more than welcome to look at the enterprise initiative. It's not restricted to any particular size. It's very much private sector-led — we help by establishing the initiative but then we want the private sector to drive it. We'll market the schemes, people will be aware of it, and then will hopefully come along.

**The Indo-British partnership has been fairly successful in promoting trade but when it comes to foreign direct investment (FDI), UK's share in actual FDI inflows has been steadily declining. Why?**

First of all, there's been a lot of interest in investing in China in the past few years. Companies which ten years ago may have invested in India have invested instead in China. Secondly, there was a degree of frustration about the delays in contracts coming to finalisation. The issue is that if you are thinking of investing hundreds of millions of pounds and some of these projects are big projects, people will look long and hard at them. And if there are going to be delays in the project coming on stream — and there have been one or two projects, in the power sector in particular, that have experienced delay and the deal hasn't been concluded.

It's not a general criticism. Nevertheless, there has been a slight perception that there may be all sorts of difficulties, all sorts of delays. Having said that, there are a lot of businesses that, having invested in China, are once again looking at India. And I think there are real benefits from investing in India. The government is saying positive things about FDI, making it easier, lifting restrictions and that will send out a very important signal to companies thinking of investing in India. I am confident that people in my position can argue that India is a good place to do business.

**Is it that the equity caps on FDI in various sectors been a problem?**

I think, in some areas, there has been a degree of resistance because of things like the ceiling on foreign equity. When you look at intellectual property rights, patenting and so on then there may be reservations in particular

sectors but that does not apply across the board and there are many companies that have been prepared to enter into a joint venture (JV) without a majority stake. **As the leader of the UK delegation to the WTO talks at Seattle, how do you regard the impasse? Is it the end of the road for free trade?**

Our view is that we think Seattle was a missed opportunity and we really all lost out as a result of our failure to agree to a new round of negotiations. While I was there, I spoke with your minister Maran and I know he shares our concern and our frustration about the lack of progress at the Seattle talks.

We now need to do a few things. First of all we need to drive forward a programme to reform the WTO itself. I think what Seattle demonstrated is that the WTO has grown enormously — 135 member-states. Many of them felt their interests are not being taken into account, so we need to find a way to see that it becomes far more

*The Economic Times*

11 JAN 2000

P. T. O.

inclusive in the sense of allowing all members to play a part.

Secondly, it needs to be far more open and transparent regarding how decisions are made. That's not the case at the moment and we need to change that. Thirdly, we need to look at how we can build the capability of all member states. Big countries, like India and the UK, have a lot of expertise and experience and we know how international negotiations are conducted.

But there are smaller countries — all they've got in Geneva, the head quarters of the WTO is one person, often in an office above a shop with a telephone and a fax machine that doesn't always work. We need to build confidence in their capability. If we do that, it will make a major difference.

Then there are issues that we need to move on more quickly. First of all, the Uruguay round is seven years old. We need to see that it is fully implemented and this is where India has been push-

ing very hard. We think there should be speedy action, not a renegotiation but a proper implementation. We need to think of how tariffs can be reduced because the view of the UK is that we will all benefit from tariff reduction. If trade is far more open and free, it leads to greater economic growth and prosperity. **What is the UK's position on bringing non-trade issues into the WTO?**

We need to be clear that the WTO is about trade and we shouldn't be using sanctions that operate within the WTO in relation to non-trade issues. More specifically for labour standards, we've got the ILO which is there to deal with labour matters. And we would extend that to environment as well. For that we have the United Nations.

**Do you think the system of decision-making by consensus followed in the WTO is too idealistic given the increase in members, with disparate interests?**

I agree it's certainly not going to be easy to arrive at consensus. But I also think there is no alternative. The WTO has developed as an organisation. It's not just more powerful. I believe — and this is something that the UK has pursued all along — that it may be idealistic, but it is an agenda that is worth pursuing. I'm confident that in the end we will be successful. It is far better to have tried, even if we are not successful, than to not have tried at all; so it's a very important part of the agenda. **So if it comes to the crunch and it looks like labour standards are going to enter the WTO talks, will the UK support the Indian government stand?**

We've made our position on this very clear — at Seattle, President Clinton wanted the sanction route in the WTO to be used to enforce labour standards but we disagree with that and I will be saying as much in my speech at the CII partnership summit. As far as the UK is concerned, trade sanctions should not be used to enforce labour standards. The US has been told of our position on this issue.

Here I must clarify, we don't have a problem with labour stan-

dards being discussed; it's just that we are against using sanctions to enforce them. I see the WTO talking to the ILO, talking to the UN and so on, on how we can improve economic prospects, labour standards and improve growth prospects. What we don't agree is with the WTO using its power to impose trade sanctions on labour matters. That, we think, is wrong.

We all benefit from dialogue so we'd be happy to talk about it. I think if we can rule out trade sanctions being used so that countries like India have the assurance that it won't be used against them, then they may be willing to at least talk about it. But when you have people like President Clinton calling for trade sanctions, then of course there will be great resistance to even talking about it because there will be a worry that it will be used against their interests.

Concern about labour standards is a common issue. That applies to all countries where labour standards are not as good as we'd like to see. But standards will improve through economic growth not through imposing trade sanctions. **What is the UK's position on the multilateral agreement on investment?**

The OECD talks have collapsed and they are not going to be resurrected. We think the WTO should consider investment. Many countries that would be affected by such an agreement are not members of the OECD and are not involved in the negotiations whereas in the WTO that is not the case. Everybody can be involved and if they are not in agreement they can block it because of the consensus principle in the WTO.

But the reason we need to have some rules regarding investment is that investment is already taking place, MNCs are already investing and there are problems in some cases.

I can understand the apprehension of countries in allowing pre-establishment rights so I agree we can't be too prescriptive. Basically, you need some basic ground rules by which the system will operate and we feel the WTO is the best body to bring this about.

*The Economic Times*

31 JAN 2000



# Jaswant, Cook talks may cover nuclear issues

110-13 By Thomas Abraham 1371

LONDON, JAN. 12. The External Affairs Minister, Mr. Jaswant Singh, is to arrive in London from Rome tonight for an extended visit during which he will hold bilateral talks with Britain and resume his dialogue with the U.S. Deputy Secretary of State, Mr. Strobe Talbott.

Mr. Singh will begin with two days of meetings with his British counterpart, Mr. Robin Cook, and other senior British Ministers. This is the External Affairs Minister's second official visit to Britain, and is part of the growing cooperation between the two countries on a range of issues.

For example, during the recent hostage crisis, Mr. Jaswant Singh telephoned Mr. Cook, and officials from both sides were in contact with each other. Britain has condemned the recent hijacking of the Indian Airlines aircraft in no uncertain terms, and the situation in the region following the Pakistani coup will be on the agenda.

India had been trying to maintain interna-

tional pressure on the military regime, and Mr. Singh will no doubt make this point to his British counterpart. Britain has adopted a policy of limited engagement with the regime in order to encourage an early restoration of democracy, and the British chief of Defence Staff, Sir Charles Guthrie, is on his way to Pakistan. India and Britain have a regular dialogue on nuclear issues at both the ministerial and official level, and Mr. Singh and Mr. Cook will continue this process. There are also pressures within the British Government to resume arms sales to Pakistan, as shown by minutes of a Government meeting published in *The Guardian* newspaper. According to *The Guardian*, the Defence Minister, and the Trade and Industry Ministers were in favour of restarting sales, while the Foreign Office and the International Development Ministries were in favour of keeping the informal ban on arms exports. There are 80 pending applications from manufacturers who wish to sell to Pakistan.

Mr. Jaswant Singh will also be meeting the

Defence Minister, Mr. Geoff Hoon, where this could figure. The External Affairs Minister will also meet the Deputy Prime Minister, Mr. John Prescott.

During his last visit a year ago, both sides had extended invitations for a Prime Ministerial visit. Mr. Vajpayee had invited Mr. Blair to visit India at an early date, and Mr. Blair had reciprocated. There has been no further movement in this direction, but the two Ministers could move towards setting definite dates.

On Monday, Mr. Jaswant Singh will begin the 10th round of the Indo-U.S. nuclear dialogue with Mr. Strobe Talbott. The last round, held here did not make any significant progress towards resolving issues such as the India's signature of the Comprehensive Test Ban Treaty and the U.S. export controls on nuclear technology to India. Since then, officials from the two sides have met in Washington to try and take matters forward. Both sides want to see progress ahead of the U.S. President's planned visit to India this year.

THE HINDU

13 JAN 2000

# India, U.K. to jointly combat terrorism

By Thomas Abraham

LONDON JAN 14 India and Britain have agreed on measures to cooperate against terrorism at a meeting between the External Affairs Minister, Mr. Jaswant Singh, and his British counterpart Mr. Robin Cook. Speaking to journalists after a two-hour meeting over lunch, Mr. Cook said he and Mr. Singh had agreed to "giving the highest priority to defeating global terrorism and to making sure we cooperate fully in winning this battle." Speaking to Indian journalists later, Mr. Singh said both countries had agreed on certain steps which would be made public later.

The recent hijacking of an Indian Airlines aircraft and steps to combat terrorism were the major focus. Mr. Cook said he had expressed his personal appreciation of Mr. Singh's role in bringing the hijacking issue to a close. Mr. Singh said the hijacking was "fully discussed" and that India would be sharing information with Britain.

Mr. Cook briefed Mr. Singh on the British Chief of Defence Staff, Gen Sir Charles Guthrie's visit to Pakistan and emphasised that there had been no softening of Britain's attitude towards the military regime. Also the visit had not been in connection with British arms sales to Pakistan. "There was no discussion of arms sales, and there are no arms sales between Britain and Pakistan," he said. The Guthrie's visit had raised some concern in New Delhi, and Mr. Cook was at pains to

explain to Mr. Singh that Britain was not changing its opposition to the Musharraf regime. The visit was to explain two aspects of British policy to Gen Musharraf: that Britain expected the military regime to take steps to restore democracy and set up an accountable government; and that it expected the regime to respect its obligations to maintain regional stability and combat terrorism. The visit was to "make sure that our policy is understood," he said.

Mr. Cook reiterated Britain's interest in seeing India sign the Comprehensive Test Ban Treaty (CTBT). That would be not only in India's interest, but also in the interest of regional stability.

The ministers characterised the meeting as excellent and declared that bilateral relations were in an "excellent shape." This is in contrast to the freeze in the ties in the wake of the Pokhran II nuclear tests, when officials and Ministers on both sides avoided all contact. Mr. Cook and Mr. Singh have established a good personal rapport and referred warmly to each other at their joint press conference.

They announced the formation of an Indo-British Round Table, a think-tank that would suggest ways to strengthen bilateral relations. Mr. Singh said he had invited Mr. Cook to visit New Delhi to inaugurate the new body.

Ways to stimulate the growth of bilateral trade were also discussed. It had reached the highest-ever level, but Mr. Singh said "the full potential of Indo-British trade has yet to be realised."

THE HINDU  
15 JAN 2000

# India, U.K. pledge to fight terrorism 11-15

LONDON: Indian external affairs minister Jaswant Singh and his British counterpart Robin Cook pledged on Friday to co-operate in fighting terrorism in the wake of the hijacking of an Indian Airlines plane last month.

Mr Singh and Mr Cook also discussed the disputed Kashmir region and nuclear proliferation — sensitive issues for both India and Pakistan — and announced the launch of a “round table” forum to exchange ideas between London and New Delhi.

“Britain remains fully and totally committed to combatting international terrorism in all its forms and shall co-operate with India in this regard,” Mr Singh told reporters.

“We did discuss concrete aspects of this co-operation and at the appropriate time they will be made public.”

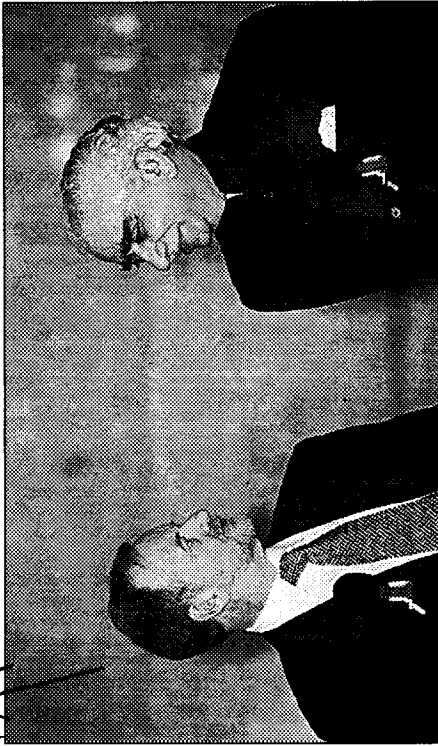
As investigations continue into the hijacking of an Indian Airlines flight from Nepal to Afghanistan in December, Mr Singh said India

regime on non-proliferation,” he said.

Mr Singh, who is scheduled to reprise his marathon arms control dialogue with U.S. deputy secretary of state Strobe Talbott in London next week, deflected reporters’ questions about New Delhi’s plans on signing the CTBT.

Mr Cook also briefed Mr Singh on the visit to Pakistan this week by chief of defence staff Sir Charles Guthrie, who said London would not turn its back on Islamabad after the military coup in October but wanted to see a clear road towards democracy.

Mr Singh laid the blame for tensions squarely on Pakistan, saying that “daily encouragement of cross-border terrorism” must stop so that “the proper environment for a dialogue is created”. “My message to the young of both countries is to grow beyond the mistakes of the past and to move towards the path of reconciliation, peace and accord,” Mr Singh said. *(Reuters)*



External affairs minister Jaswant Singh with Britain's foreign secretary Robin Cook at a joint press conference at Lancaster House in London on Friday.

would send Britain more information in the next week.

Besides co-operating in fighting terrorism, Mr Cook said he told Mr Singh of Britain’s interest in moves by India towards signing the Comprehensive Test Ban Treaty (CTBT) on nuclear weapons.

“Such a step would be not only in the interests of India but in the interests of reducing tension in the region and contributing to the world

## ~~Bid to boost~~ 18/1 ~~Indo-UK trade~~ 18/1 **HT Correspondent** New Delhi, January 17

THE INDO-BRITISH trade and investment mission is exploring new opportunities in order to double bilateral trade from 4 billion pounds at present to 8 billion pounds.

This was stated here today by leader of the mission, Sir Jeremy Hanley, former minister of state for foreign affairs. He said the trade between the two countries had doubled in the last six years and the endeavour would be to double this figure again.

The mission's members who have arrived include Sir Nicholas Finn, a former high commissioner to India, and 20 senior directors and executives of leading UK companies. Sir Nicholas said that the mission is exploring new investment opportunities at a time when the Government has a good chance of permanence and providing the right environment for second generation reforms. In his welcome address, Arun Bharat Ram, CII vice-president, said the visit of the delegation was part of the various initiatives the CII to seek British expertise and investment in key sectors while encouraging Indian investment in UK as well.

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**18 JAN 2000**