

MEA sends new men to Japan, Bangla, Nepal

By Our Correspondent
New Delhi, May 2: Conscious of its nuclear status, India on Monday posted a permanent envoy to the Conference of Disarmament in Geneva. It is for the first time the country has sent a separate official on disarmament to Geneva, where all the nuclear nations already have permanent envoys.

The ministry of external affairs has picked a seasoned diplomat, Mr. Rakesh Sood, for the post. Mr. Sood has been handling the MEA's disarmament division for the last eight years.

Sources said a permanent envoy in Geneva will help the country put across

its nuclear policy at the forum. In Geneva, Mr. Sood will be assisted by Mr. P. Seetharam, who is in the President's Secretariat.

Though India already has a permanent representative in Geneva, a post held by Ms. Savitri Kanadi, Mr. Sood will exclusively handle disarmament affairs. Ms. Kanadi will stick to other issues related to the United Nations.

Sources said having a permanent envoy in Geneva to handle affairs had become unavoidable for India.

There is a feeling that the nuclear issue needs to be addressed in a more

effective manner at the international body. India is facing sanctions declared by a number of countries following its nuclear tests at Pokharan in 1998.

Though many countries have now relaxed their attitudes, it is felt that there is a need to clear the air further.

The appointment of Mr. Sood is part of an ongoing reshuffle in the MEA. Several officials have been posted out. Mr. Alok Prasad, joint secretary in the Americas division, will take over as high commissioner to Mauritius, succeeding Mr. M.L. Tripathi.

Mr. Tripathi has been posted as India's envoy to Bangladesh. In Dhaka, Mr.

Tripathi will replace Mr. Dev Mukherjee, who has been posted to Nepal, replacing Mr. K.V. Rajan. Mr. Rajan will be posted as a joint secretary in the MEA in charge of the East department.

There has been a reshuffle in India's embassy in Vietnam. Mr. Aftab Serb, ambassador to Vietnam, will be the new envoy to Japan.

Joint secretary in the Prime Minister's Office, Prabhakar Shukla has been appointed high commissioner to Singapore. A shakeup has also taken place in the MEA's Gulf division.

India envoy to Sri Lanka arrives in Delhi: Page 2.

SPOTLIGHT

THE ASIAN AGE

3 MAY 2002

Top MEA official appointed to UN Conference

STATESMAN NEWS SERVICE

NEW DELHI, May 3. — The appointment of the external affairs ministry's top expert in the field of disarmament to the post of Permanent Representative to the UN Conference on Disarmament (CD) in Geneva reflects a shift of focus from domestic opinion building to international negotiations.

The government's decision to create the new post comes ahead of forthcoming negotiations on several treaties related to disarmament to be discussed at the CD.

These include not only the CTBT but also the biological weapons treaty, the chemical weapons treaty and the fissile material cut-off treaty, discussions on banning small arms and landmines.

India is keen to influence the course of the negotiations to its advantage, resulting in its decision to create the new post at a senior level. The creation of a separate post would also enable a focus on the area instead of the current practice

where only one Permanent Representative overlooks several different aspects.

Senior officials of the ministry of external affairs point out that India's role in these negotiations has become even more important after it conducted the nuclear tests and any and every aspect of the negotiations has assumed a more important dimension in view of its nuclear status.

The man chosen for the new job, Joint Secretary (DISA), Mr Rakesh Sood, is an acknowledged expert in the area of disarmament and will contribute to the ongoing discussions.

While the task of building domestic opinion is not yet complete, the task of informing public opinion and political parties on the issues related to disarmament, the advantages and disadvantages of the CTBT as also the impact of the treaty on India should the government sign it, has come to a close after several meetings with political parties on this issue.

THE STATESMAN

- 4 MAY 2000

India rules out Army action in Sri Lanka

STATESMAN NEWS SERVICE

NEW DELHI, May 3. — The government today said it was "ready to contribute" to the return of peace in Sri Lanka, but ruled out a military intervention. It said it would work through "humanitarian measures" to mitigate the hardships of civilians.

The external affairs minister told reporters after a meeting of the Cabinet Committee on Security that Colombo had not asked New Delhi for any sort of assistance so far, qualifying his statement at one point by saying there had been no "formal" request.

Mr Lakshman Kadirgamar, the Sri Lankan foreign minister who met with Mr Atal Behari Vajpayee this evening, had said earlier in the day that his country might seek India's help in its latest crisis in the war against the separatist Tamil Tigers.

Mr Jaswant Singh announced categorically that action by Indian forces in Sri Lanka was "completely ruled out".

But he refused to say what "humanitarian measures" India might take, and whether the evacuation of Lankan troops was included in that definition. Nor would he say precisely how India proposed to "contribute" to the return of peace to the island.

Mr Singh, however, did say that "the evacuation of troops was not India's responsibility".

The question whether evacuation is part of military intervention is hypothetical, he felt — it is for Colombo to decide if its forces need to be evacuated.

On whether there could be joint naval operations against LTTE vessels going to the Jaffna peninsula, Mr Singh said military activity in the Jaffna peninsula was not an aspect under the government's consideration.

Reading from a prepared statement, the minister said the government was closely monitoring the situation in northern Sri Lanka, and that the government of the island was in touch with India.

New Delhi, he said, would be "guided in its response to developments by its continued commitment to the peaceful resolution of the conflict within the framework of a united Sri Lanka where all communities can realise their aspirations."

"India will work to mitigate the hardship inflicted upon civilians by the conflict, taking such measures as become necessary in consultation with Sri Lanka," India, Mr Singh said, was already playing host to 100,000 Lankan refugees, and it "hope(d) that the peace sought by all Sri Lankans will soon return to a country that is a close and friendly neighbour. India is ready to contribute to making that hope a reality". He hoped that there would be

■ See LANKA: page 8

LANKA:

(Continued from page 1)

no further arrival of refugees.

Would India agree to play a part in Colombo's talks with the Tigers?

The LTTE, Mr Singh said, was at the moment a banned organisation.

The government would consider every aspect of the ban when it expired.

The CCS met today after Mr Kadirgamar called on the Prime Minister. Mr Singh described the visit as a courtesy call — Mr Kadirgamar, he said, was not on a specific mission; he has been in India for a month-and-a-half for medical treatment.

But, the minister conceded, Mr Kadirgamar must have referred to the situation in Sri Lanka during the meeting. India, he said, had had no talks with the Sri Lankan President, Mrs Chandrika Kumaratunga.

The CCS meeting at the Prime Minister's was attended, besides Mr Singh, by the Union home and defence ministers, the Services, RAW and IB chiefs, the foreign secretary, defence secretary and other senior officials.

THE STATESMAN

5 4 MAY 2001

10-1 SOME REQUESTS FROM COLOMBO: JASWANT

'We will not go down the past road'

By Our Special Correspondent

NEW DELHI, MAY 4. The External Affairs Minister, Mr. Jaswant Singh, today informed Parliament that the Indian Government had received "some requests from the Government of Sri Lanka in the context of the present situation". While stating that all the requests were under the urgent consideration of the Government, Mr. Singh, however, did not elaborate on their nature.

To clarifications sought by

members in the Rajya Sabha on his *suo motu* statement on the "situation in Sri Lanka", the Minister stated that "any kind of military intervention" had been ruled out. He agreed with the suggestion made by Mr. Pranab Mukherjee (Congress-I) in this context and said that as and when the Government planned any initiative on the situation in Sri Lanka, it would take all political parties and, if necessary, Parliament into confidence.

Responding to the views ex-

pressed by several members that the Government should not repeat the 1987 experiment of sending troops to Sri Lanka, Mr. Singh said, "We will not go down the same road." The Government had learned from the experience of previous Governments and had no intention of getting bogged down in the conflict.

The Government was fully aware of the "emotional bondage" between the developments in northern Sri Lanka and parts of India and would keep it in mind.



The Tamil Nadu Chief Minister, Mr. M. Karunanidhi, with his Cabinet colleague, Mr. Arcot Veerasamy, arrives at the Tamil Nadu House in New Delhi on Thursday. — Photo: R.V. Moorthy

The Minister said in its approach to the current situation, the Government would be guided by its continued commitment to a negotiated peaceful resolution of the conflict, within the framework of Sri Lanka's unity and territorial integrity — a united Sri Lanka where all communities could realise their aspirations. It was India's hope that peace would soon return to the island nation, which was a close and friendly neighbour.

Responding to queries from members on the nature of humanitarian assistance India planned to extend, Mr. Singh said at this juncture he could not specify. "In what form and how the assistance would be given, I can't specify at this time. It is an evolving situation. At the moment there is no movement of people, certainly not as refugees."

The Minister was at pains to emphasise that he could not anticipate what would happen within the span of a week in the Jaffna peninsula.

Supply of arms ruled out: Vajpayee

By Our Special Correspondent

NEW DELHI, MAY 4. The Prime Minister, Mr. Atal Behari Vajpayee, has no plan for supplying or selling arms to Sri Lanka to help the island nation tackle the situation in the Jaffna peninsula in the wake of the ongoing conflict with the Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam.

Mr. Vajpayee clarified the Indian position at a meeting here of the BJP's allies from Tamil Nadu today. Answering pointed questions from the representatives of the parties, Mr. Vajpayee said the humanitarian assistance India had in mind related to supply of food, medicine and clothes.

The hour-long meeting was attended on behalf of the Government by the External Affairs Minister, Mr. Jaswant Singh, the Home Minister, Mr. L.K. Advani, and the Defence Minister, Mr. George Fernandes. All the Union Ministers from the State — Mr. Murasoli Maran, Mr. P.R. Kumarangalam, Mr. T.R. Baalu, Mr. S. Ramachandran and Mr. E. Ponnusamy — Mr. P. T. Elangovan (PMK), Mr. Vaiko (MDMK) and Mr. S. Thirunavukkarasu (MGR-AIADMK) were present.

Mr. Vajpayee explained that the proposed visit of the Air Chief to Colombo was a 'goodwill mission' and it had nothing to do with the ongoing conflict.

In an informal talk after the meeting, the Prime Minister termed hypothetical a question on the reported differences among the constituents of the National Democratic Alliance over the nature of the humanitarian aid proposed by the Government, and said there was a "perfect understanding" among them. Asked to elaborate on the requests from Colombo, he said "no agreed proposals were put forth... our policy has been that we favour a united Sri Lanka." There was no delay in consulting the allies on the evolving situation in Sri Lanka. The Government got the full picture only on Wednesday.

Mr. Jaswant Singh termed reports in a section of the press that New Delhi might consider providing some logistical support like sending arms to Sri Lanka totally false and unfounded. "Under no circumstances we are going to play the IPKF role."

The Prime Minister had invited leaders of the allied parties for dinner at his residence but the plan was put off as the Tamil Nadu Chief Minister, Mr. M. Karunanidhi, was scheduled to arrive later in the night for consultations with Mr. Vajpayee on the situation in Sri Lanka. (He has since arrived here.)

Mr. Karunanidhi will hold talks with the Prime Minister tomorrow.

5 MAY 1988

Karunanidhi with PM on giving aid to Lanka

■ But says Lankan problems shouldn't affect Tamil Nadu

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA
NEW DELHI, MAY 5

INDIA on Friday said it could consider providing humanitarian assistance to Sri Lankan government which is locked in a fierce battle with LTTE in the Jaffna peninsula, but rejected any possibility of military intervention.

Humanitarian assistance to Colombo "could be considered if and when sought, but the situation has not arisen yet," External Affairs Minister Jaswant Singh told reporters after an hour-long meeting Prime Minister Atal Behari Vajpayee had with Tamil Nadu Chief Minister M Karunanidhi here.

Replying to questions, Singh said, "There is no question of going down the IPKF route (of 1987). The question of Indian military intervention in Sri Lanka simply does not arise".

The meeting was also attended by Home Minister L.K. Advani, Defence Minister George Fernandes and Commerce Minister Murasoli

Maran. Karunanidhi held consultations with the Centre on the evolving situation in Sri Lanka, Singh said.

"It is Tamil Nadu which is more directly affected by the situation in Sri Lanka," Singh remarked.

Asked if the DMK leaders opposed humanitarian assistance to Colombo, Singh said, "It is a hypothetical issue. It could be considered if and when sought. I cannot say anything now".

Asked whether New Delhi would consider for any via media to resolve the Sri Lankan crisis, Singh said it was for that government to take a decision. India cannot take a decision on its behalf.

Asked to comment on India's stand on reports suggesting that Sri Lanka had sought help from Pakistan, Singh said, "Our stand is well known to Sri Lanka. Our High Commissioner there is in constant touch with the government".

To a question whether Karunanidhi had given any suggestion to help resolve the situation, the External Affairs Minister said

that there were many suggestions. "If I say what the suggestions were, then I have to say what the Sri Lankan government's requests were". Asked whether Karunanidhi was open to humanitarian assistance to Sri Lanka, Maran said, "We are partners of NDA Government. We are not tying the hands of the Government".

Meanwhile, the Tamil Nadu government today clarified the Centre was free to take "any appropriate action" with regard to the situation in Sri Lanka, but cautioned that the "past" should not be forgotten and that there should be no "overflow" of Sri Lankan developments into the state.

"It is the Government of India's privilege to take any appropriate action in the interest of the nation. We do not want to interfere in that," the Chief Minister Karunanidhi said in a statement after the meeting. "We do not want to tie the hands of the Centre but we should not forget the past," he said, adding, "We do not want any overflow of Sri Lankan matter into Tamil Nadu."

INDIAN EXPRESS

6 MAY 2000

Instead of a high and mighty attitude, it should towards its neighbours, India needs to follow a patient approach

Not a nice neighbourhood

WHEN I. K. Gujral was the Minister for External Affairs in the V.P. Singh government, the then Nepalese Prime Minister, Krishna Prasad Bhattarai, came on an official visit. Bhattarai was invited for breakfast at the Prime Minister's residence on the very first day. Talking informally, Mr Gujral asked the Nepalese Prime Minister what his expectations were. Bhattarai pulled out a list from his pocket. Without reading it, Mr Gujral handed the piece of paper to the then Foreign Secretary, Muchkund Dubey, waiting in an adjoining room. He instructed him to ensure that India and Nepal came to an agreement by the evening on all the items listed.

The bewildered Nepalese Prime Minister apparently urged Mr Gujral to at least read the piece of paper first. Mr Gujral is believed to have replied that since he knew that Bhattarai would never get him to sign off Indian sovereignty, anything else was acceptable. He, however, told him that in return Nepal should be sensitive to India's security concerns. Bhattarai got up, shook Mr Gujral's hand and said that he had his solemn promise.

This incident, vouched for by several sources, is a graphic illustration of the strength of Indo-Nepal ties. It is also indicative of an approach in foreign policy which came to be known as the Gujral Doctrine — a policy of not looking for parity with one's smaller neighbours and being indulgent towards them provided they did nothing to harm India's security interests.

Present Nepalese Prime Minister Girija Prasad Koirala is not any less friendly towards India than his predecessors. However, he had to postpone his visit to New Delhi scheduled for May 6 at the last minute because even his own party is divided on the issue of providing additional security to Indian Airlines operations. As technical issues are converted into those of sovereignty and national honour in Nepal, a hamstrung Mr Koirala neither seems to know what he can concede to India nor what he can expect from it.

Even in India, Nepal is being viewed through a green-tinted glass. And sure enough, the absurd picture one gets is of a once friendly country that is fast becoming a base for the nefarious activities of

Pakistan's Inter-Services Intelligence (ISI). One can well imagine the bewilderment of the right-thinking Nepalese at such a perception across the border.

This unacceptable state of bilateral relations is not limited to Nepal alone. India's relations are not on an even keel even with Bhutan, Bangladesh or Sri Lanka. And this is when one leaves out Pakistan with its congenitally narrow anti-India perspective.

Consider what is happening with Bhutan. The strength of the Indo-Bhutanese relationship has been that it has not been allowed to become controversial at any point. Last week, however, Bhutanese Foreign Minister Jigmi Thinley and the Indian Foreign Office were reduced to issuing formal denials of the Assam Chief Minister's accusation that the King of Bhutan had breakfast with the ULFA rebels — the suggestion being that Bhutan was somehow supporting these rebels. For domestic political compulsions, relations with Bhutan were sought to be jeopardised.

Bangladesh, of course, suffers from intense international polarisation. It seems paralysed even at the best of times. Even though there can be no doubt that Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina is a friend of India, the bilateral relationship with Dhaka has not really taken off. Bangladesh sits on 10.7 trillion cubic feet of natural gas and India is the closest market for it. Trading in natural gas has the potential of radically transforming the face of Bangladesh. However, such is the perversity of domestic politics in that country that its political leaders would rather jump into the Bay of Bengal than sell any natural gas to India.

As for Sri Lanka, ever since the assassination of Rajiv Gandhi, India's policy towards it essentially has been one of indifference. Yet today, India is being pushed into doing what it does not want to

BY BHARAT BHUSHAN

do. Foreign Minister Laxman Kadirgamar earlier this week pleaded with India to intervene to help rescue the 20,000-odd Sinhala soldiers trapped in Jaffna.

If India refuses to help Colombo, Jaffna may fall sooner than later. Then it would only be a matter of time before LTTE supremo V. Prabhakaran goes for unilateral declaration of independence and announces the formation of Eelam. Moving from Eelam to "Greater Eelam" or a greater homeland for the Tamils requires only a leap of the imagination. Were this to happen, one can well imagine the fallout in Tamil Nadu and its adverse consequences for the unity and integrity of India.

It can be nobody's case that India is surrounded by saintly nations. The point, however, is that if we are condemned to live together with our neighbours, what is being done to make the region a better place?

India has made significant diplomatic strides with the big powers and there is a shift in its foreign policy focus from the region. The policy of economic liberalisation and the second series of nuclear tests in May 1998 have contributed to this shift. Indian economic interests have now become increasingly geared towards the developed economies. Sanctions and the threat of being painted as a nuclear pariah have forced India to concentrate its diplomatic energies in engaging the big powers. While Indian efforts in that direction have met with spectacular success, the problems in the neighbourhood have become increasingly intractable.

Even before the Indian policy of being indulgent to one's smaller neighbours could be allowed full play, it has become a thing of the past. This is a result of changed political circumstances and the growing belief that indulgence will not improve India's relations with its neighbours and that they

themselves have to perceive what their own interests are.

Such a perspective, however, ignores the fact that most of India's neighbours suffer from the small country syndrome — they are so overawed by the size of India that they fail to see their own interests. Their foreign policy then becomes subservient to domestic politicking. Just as defiance of everything American was the test of political correctness during the Cold War in New Delhi, so too in these countries where India has become the constant reference point for everything political. The net result is that whichever way India may choose to see herself, the predominant image in the neighbourhood is that of an ugly Indian.

Instead of taking a high and mighty attitude towards its neighbours, India needs to follow a patient and long-term approach towards them based on a better understanding of these nations as also on a critical self-examination. Despatching powerful plenipotentiaries — a Jaswant Singh or a Brajesh Mishra — to the neighbourhood alone will not help.

What happens in the neighbourhood has a direct bearing on domestic politics in India. Thus, events in Bangladesh affect sentiments not only in West Bengal but also in Tripura and Meghalaya; those in Nepal have a bearing on UP and Bihar; those in Bhutan in Assam and what goes on in Sri Lanka affects Tamil Nadu. India's policy towards its neighbours, therefore, has to take into confidence the regional political leadership in these states and educate them about the national interest so that they do not end up upsetting foreign policy approaches.

An effective neighbourhood policy would also entail better co-ordination between the multiplicity of institutions ranging from the Ministry of External Affairs to Commerce and Home, which often pull in different directions. It would also involve a greater investment in generating intellectual resources to understand the evolution and unfolding of the social processes in the countries of the neighbourhood better. India needs to pay greater attention to its neighbourhood and tend it well or else like a neglected garden it is bound to be overwhelmed by weeds.



DMK will back govt on Lanka

STATESMAN NEWS SERVICE

NEW DELHI, May 5. — The DMK today promised to support the Centre's Sri Lanka policy after the Prime Minister explained why India may have to offer humanitarian aid though it would definitely not lend its army.

Mr AB Vajpayee assured the DMK chief that India wouldn't repeat the mistake of military intervention in Sri Lanka. But any request from Colombo for humanitarian aid won't be ignored lest New Delhi be seen as aiding terrorism.

Mr M Karunanidhi — who had begun by demanding that India stay "neutral" and let the Lankan troops and the LTTE settle the conflict between themselves — then promised that the DMK wouldn't interfere with the Centre's handling of the situation.

"We don't want to tie down the Centre," he told Mr Vajpayee.

But the promise of full DMK support "for any action taken in the interest of the nation" was tempered with a note of caution: "We don't want any overflow of the Sri Lankan crisis into Tamil Nadu."

While Mr Karunanidhi and party colleague Mr Murasoli Maran were huddled with Mr Vajpayee and his external

affairs, defence and home ministers, India received a fresh appeal for help from Colombo.

Mr Jaswant Singh, who briefed reporters about the talks at the Prime Minister's residence, wouldn't reveal the nature of the request. He said: "Our high commissioner in Colombo is ... in touch with the Sri Lankan government."

But he seemed to drop a hint as he repeated Mr Vajpayee's stand that there would be no armed intervention, but that India would consider "requests for help on humanitarian grounds".

That situation has not yet arisen, Mr Jaswant Singh said.

What exactly is humanitarian aid — food, medicine and water for the troops holed up in Jaffna? Mr Singh dodged the question. "Why do you want to take my job? The Prime Minister has already made a statement."

Mr Karunanidhi, asked the same question, said: "I will not say anything other than what Mr Jaswant Singh has said."

The Race Course Road meeting had discussed the appeal from Lankan Buddhist monks that Delhi help rescue the troops holed up in Jaffna. The DMK leaders reminded the government how these monks had criticised India in the 1980s for sending the IPKF.

- Hobson's choice on Lanka, page 6
- Troops regroup to defend Jaffna, page 7
- Editorial: Clear vision needed, page 8

THE STATESMAN

6 MAY 2000

IAF moves planes to the south

Vajpayee to brief Opp on Lanka

STATESMAN NEWS SERVICE

NEW DELHI, May 6. — Mr Atal Behari Vajpayee will brief Opposition leaders on the Sri Lankan crisis on Monday, the PMO announced today.

No Opposition party barring the Congress has, however, shown much interest in the raging civil war on the island where 40,000 government troops are reported to have been cut off by LTTE guerrillas advancing on Jaffna.

In Nagpur, the Union home minister, Mr LK Advani, iterated today that India would not "repeat mistakes of the past" by responding to Colombo's call for help, reports UNI.

But Mr Advani's (and earlier, the Prime Minister's and his external affairs minister's) assertion notwithstanding, the IAF has moved some of its transport aircraft to bases in southern India.

No "alert" has been sounded though, and the Air Force has described its move as only "preparatory action".

The Southern Air Command has very limited transport assets, hence additional aircraft were being moved there, IAF sources said. This would facilitate speedy action if required, they said, but stressed that no missions had been ordered by the government.

With the Sri Lankan army having reported some successes in the last 48 hours, defence analysts pointed out that the critical factor remains control of the air base at Palay, though Jaffna town attracts more public attention. As long as Palay

remains with the army, aerial evacuation of the troops remains a viable option — if the situation so warrants.

Still, with India having ruled out military intervention, the IAF assisting in an aerial evacuation remains a remote possibility. But, said defence analysts, should the fighting reach a stage when supply lines to the civilian population of Jaffna is cut off, a "humanitarian" mission could be undertaken.

However, even air-dropping missions would involve a certain risk unless approved by both the Sri Lankan government and the Tigers. For, should the planes on a mercy mission attract ground fire — from either side — there would be political demands in India for retaliatory action, which could prove escalatory.

The IAF had dropped supplies to Jaffna in 1987, after the Sri Lankan navy had refused to permit a flotilla carrying relief material to enter ports in the peninsula. The LTTE had then welcomed the Indian action, and the planes had remained beyond the range of Sri Lankan anti-aircraft fire.

PTI reported from Rameswaram today that the Indian coast guard, supplied with more arms, has stepped up patrolling in the Palk Straits. There is fear that the Sri Lankan navy may turn their ire on Indian fishermen.

TMC caution: The Tamil Maanila Congress said it welcomed any decision by Delhi on the Lankan crisis as long as it didn't affect security in south India, says SNS Chennai.

THE STATESMAN

27 MAY 2001

India denies mediator's role

Disclaimer comes after Sri Lankan media speculation

P. K. Balachandran/Agencies
Colombo, May 7

THE INDIAN High Commission here has categorically denied reports in the Sri Lankan press and in an international wire service that India is poised to air drop "humanitarian aid" or "non-military logistical help" to the Lankan troops in Jaffna. "The reports are not correct," a ranking diplomat told *The Hindustan Times*.

Denial notwithstanding, the front-page lead story in today's state-owned *Daily News* quoted diplomatic sources in Colombo as saying that India would give "non-military logistical help" if requested. The paper, however, added that its sources did not say whether or not such logistical support meant the provision of airlift and sea transport facility.

Meanwhile, Air Chief A. Y. Tipnis arrived here today amid reports from New Delhi that two large cargo planes were on standby at the air base in Thiruvananthapuram to fly to Sri Lanka with the supplies. However, the Indian High Commission sources here stated that the Air Chief was on a routine visit to Colombo

which was to have taken place last year. "The Air Chief's visit has nothing to do with the present crisis in Jaffna," the sources said.

Meanwhile, the *Sunday Leader*, in its report

Rebel positions bombed

SRI LANKA'S Air Force bombed Tamil Tiger guerrilla positions to blunt a rebel advance on the northern Jaffna peninsula, state media reported on Sunday. The state-run Sri Lanka Broadcasting Corporation reported that the Air Force had bombed around Elephant Pass, the peninsula's gateway held by the LTTE.

Military officials said troops were strengthening defences to ensure the LTTE were unable to push forward their artillery guns to bring the key Palaly airport at the northern tip of the peninsula within firing range.

Reuters, Colombo

on India assuming the role of mediator said that India, while steering clear of any military role, preferred to confine itself to a political role.

Quoting informed Indian sources, it said "New Delhi was now seriously considering the

option of getting involved in a peace initiative despite its stance of remaining neutral. India was committed to the unity and territorial integrity of Sri Lanka on one hand and a political solution that would ensure rights and equality on the other."

India, while actively pursuing "military hands off" policy, wanted to try "politically hands on" policy, it said.

The Observer, in its story, quoting high level diplomatic sources, claimed India would provide "non-military" logistical help, if requested by Colombo. Significantly, the newspaper quoting "highly placed diplomatic sources" said India would not "recognise Eelam", in the event of LTTE capturing Jaffna and declaring an independent state for Tamils.

Meanwhile, the speculative reports about Indian humanitarian aid to the Sri Lankan army came under thick from pro-LTTE elements.

If at all India got involved in the Sri Lankan imbroglio, it would be conditional, and the "patriots", who had sought Indian involvement, would have to ponder over the price they would have to pay in terms of policies, a Lankan analyst warned in *The Sunday Leader* today.

Jaswant doesn't rule out mediation

SF-8
8/5

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

NEW DELHI, May 7. — India tonight did not rule out the possibility of playing the role of a negotiator to bring about a political solution to the ethnic conflict in Sri Lanka if "all sides to the situation asked for it".

"I do not think India has ever been a dishonest broker. And as to playing any role in the situation,

that is a process that can be only engaged in when all sides to the situation asked for it," the External Affairs Minister, Mr Jaswant Singh, told a private TV channel.

On whether India could play the role of a negotiator for a political solution, Mr Singh said: "At present moment the conflict is continuing. Playing the role of a negotiator can come only when Sri Lankan government requires, determines and decides that there is such a role to be played."

He said India was already doing a "great deal" on the diplomatic front but declined to give details saying New Delhi would not talk about it till the

time for it came.

Rejecting the possibility of India sending its armed forces to Sri Lanka, he said New Delhi would not take the IPKF route of 1987.

Asked if humanitarian assistance, which India says it could extend, would include evacuation of Lankan troops from Jaffna Peninsula, He said: "I don't think we should talk

Lanka refugees

CHENNAI, May 7. — An infant died of starvation while a group of 26 Sri Lankan Tamil refugees stranded on a sandy stretch off Dhanushkodi in Rameswaram were rescued by the Tamil Nadu police. The refugees hailing from Vanni in Jaffna Peninsula had hired a boat to come to India, but were dropped on the sandy stretch on Friday night. A police team from Dhanushkodi brought them ashore. They spent the whole of yesterday without food and water and the child had died due to starvation, police said. — UNI

about evacuation of troops because Sri Lanka itself is not talking about evacuation." He said the Prime Minister has already made it clear that possible humanitarian assistance could comprise relief materials,

food and medicines.

Mr Singh said by no stretch of imagination, humanitarian assistance would mean giving arms to Sri Lanka.

The Bharatiya Janata Party general secretary, Mr KN Govindacharya, today said in Raipur that India should help create a congenial atmosphere for finding a political solution to the ethnic issue in Sri Lanka, adds UNI.

THE STATEMENT

28 MAY 2001

USA, China frown at Navy's S China Sea exercise

DESIKAN THIRUNARAYANAPURAM
STATESMAN NEWS SERVICE

WASHINGTON, May 8. Indian warships preparing to sail into the South China sea for joint military exercises with Vietnam could provoke action from Beijing and Washington, the *Washington Times* reported today.

China claims the Spratly Islands and other shoals and islands throughout the South China Sea.

The USA has 100,000 troops in the Pacific, and an aircraft carrier battle group in Japan. It has pledged to maintain free navigation through one of the world's most strategic waterways on which vast quantities

of West Asian oil moves to Japan and South Korea.

According to the *Times*, the US and Chinese reactions follow a 14 April statement by Mr George Fernandes that Indian naval and coast guard ships would shortly launch joint training and exercises with their counterparts from Vietnam and Japan "to stem the increasing menace of pirates in international waters".

An Indian newspaper had reported that the exercises would take place in October, but an Indian official in Washington said the manoeuvres

could start at "any time".

The *Times* report said the naval exercises announcement came as India beefs up its "so-called 'blue water' navy by seeking to add a second and possibly a third aircraft carrier and one or more submarines capable of firing long-range missiles".

Stratfor, a Texas-based intelligence reporting group, said India planned to leave four to five warships, a submarine and air reconnaissance planes in the South China Sea for some time after the exercises end. India is also planning to launch a Kilo-class subma-

rine capable of firing ballistic missiles, Stratfor said.

The daily quoted a senior US official as saying that India's naval exercises "are not done to poke a finger in Beijing's eye but to rehearse their capability to function as a blue-water navy and let people know they are around". China, according to him, was still considered to have only a "green water" or coastal navy, although it is now working to build long-range naval power.

But there is yet no US effort to use India as a counterbalance to China's growing power. "India is not going to become

ANTI-PIRACY GUNS AIM AT FLEXING REGIONAL MUSCLE, THINK WASHINGTON, BEIJING

part of a formal alliance against any country in Asia," the official, deeply involved in President Clinton's recent India visit, said. "We would not ask India to do that in any event. But what the naval exercises will do is underscore that India is beginning to arrive as a serious player."

The Chinese embassy in Washington said the exercises must not violate the "sovereignty and territorial integrity of the countries in the region".

Not all territorial waters belonged to China, however, he said: "Many are international

waters". According to the *Times*, India's foray into the South China Sea is a response to China's setting up of naval and intelligence bases on Myanmar's Coco Islands off the northern tip of the Andaman and Nicobar islands.

The exercises, the daily quoted a leading defence analyst as saying, "is striking in that it validates a growing impression that India is determined to assert itself as an Asian power. (They) link ... two countries that see China as a security problem, (and) ... mean India is injecting itself into the great territorial dispute over the South China Sea."

11 MAY 1995

9 MAY 1995

9 MAY 2000

WORLDS OPPOSED

The Congress has kept a low profile in the widening national debate on how India should react to the crisis in Sri Lanka. One spokesman has cautiously talked of preserving Sri Lanka's integrity. However, anonymous partymen are already upholding Rajiv Gandhi's decision to send Indian troops to the island in 1987. The implication being that intervention should not be ruled out today. This is exactly the sort of policy din expected of the official opposition party. This confusion recently reached new levels over the party's stand on the minimum nuclear deterrent. Ms Sonia Gandhi had given a thumbs up to the idea when Mr Bill Clinton came calling. A small coterie overturned this by claiming, on the basis of sentiment rather than historical accuracy, that endorsing a deterrent ran counter to Rajiv Gandhi's position. The Congress position on the comprehensive test ban treaty is that a "national consensus" is needed. But formulating such a consensus first requires the country's political parties have a perspective. Consensus cannot arise from a vacuum. The Congress has similarly alternated between praise and criticism of the Lahore peace process and India's response to the Kargil conflict.

An opposition party can take three different tacks on foreign policy. First, it can be opportunistic and oppose any act of the government. Politically this is not without a certain logic. The general public pays attention to foreign policy mostly when the government commits a *faux pas*. Therefore, when blunders occur, a perpetually critical opposition appears remarkably foresighted. Second, the opposition can decide there is no room for partisan interests in foreign policy. The party in power speaks on behalf of the country to the rest of the world. Opposition criticism therefore only undermines the national interest. Finally, and more sensibly, the opposition formulates a worldview that will allow it to join with or divide from the government, depending on the merits of specific issues. Unfortunately, the Congress lacks a contemporary worldview. Nehruvian dictums are obsolete post-Cold War. However, the party seems unable to develop an alternative hypothesis. This ensures its interventions are *ad hoc* and vulnerable to pressure groups whose only strength lies in decibels or access. It also means policies decided one day are overturned the next.

The Congress is reportedly trying to put its house in order. A special cell to decide on nuclear policy has been established. However, its formulations still seem blurred. The party is expected to continue to avoid endorsing a deterrent and still genuflect to the Rajiv Gandhi plan for nuclear abolition. It will not reject the CTBT out of hand. This has the odour of political compromise rather than hardnosed security thinking. It also reflects a lack of an institutional memory. There is evidence to show Jawaharlal Nehru did not take global abolition seriously. Rajiv Gandhi abandoned the idea near the end of his term and gave the green signal to weaponize India's nuclear capability. At least the Congress should become consistent in its public statements. From that foundation a coherent post-Cold War vision could yet develop. The truth is that the Atal Behari Vajpayee government needs a functional, intelligent opposition. It needs a Congress that can show up its own faults and constructively evolve national policies on the international front. It is to the benefit of both, and the country, if an opposition party can serve as a proper foreign policy foil to the party in power.

THE TELEGRAPH

MAY 2000

India to intervene only if asked by Chandrika, LTTE

Udayan Namboodiri
New Delhi, May 9

INDIA, while not yet a mediator, has entered the Sri Lankan theatre, but not yet as a mediator. "India will be kept in the picture," Mr Jaswant Singh, Minister for External Affairs, told BJP Parliamentarians today.

Norway, which is playing the role of facilitator of talks between the Sri Lankan Government and LTTE, has agreed to keep India and the United States informed about the progress of negotiations between the two warring sides, and a delegation from Oslo is expected in New Delhi in a couple of days.

Coming from the External Affairs Minister a day after he confirmed India's agreement to play mediator in the conflict, this is considered significant. India will step into the breach to play a direct role only if asked to do so by both the Kumaratunga Government and the LTTE. Since the LTTE is an organisation banned by New Delhi, the Norwegians will play the role as contact with the Tigers, it is learnt.

The political ramifications of the Vajpayee Government's lending of

a commitment to Colombo on "humanitarian assistance" policy, though kept under check for the time being, threatens to spill over

sense of urgency on New Delhi's part to clutch at every straw of hope for an early, political solution to the conflict.

Tamil parties are playing their bit in this affair. The NDA's allies, PMK and MDMK leaderships publicly stated faith in the concept of a Tamil Eelam over the past few days has resulted in quite a stir within the ruling coalition and pitched the two directly opposite the DMK, as also the national policy that upholds the concept of a unified Sri Lanka.

Meanwhile, India's disinclination to send troops or military hardware to assist the Sri Lankan Army (SLA) has been appreciated by the Sri Lankan High Commissioner in New Delhi, Mr Mangala Moonasinghe. In an interview to *Star TV* today, he said the "stupidity" of the Ranasinghe Premadasa Government had resulted in the withdrawal of the IPKF from the island. He hinted that Sri Lanka would purchase military hardware from Pakistan, China and Israel if necessary. There was no factor of "assistance" about this. The High Commissioner ruled out the SLA accepting the LTTE's offer for a cease-fire.

A.Y. Tipnis to submit report

INDIAN ARMED forces are closely monitoring the military situation in Jaffna. Sources said Chief of Air Staff A.Y. Tipnis is expected to submit an overall assessment report of the ground situation to the Government. He met the Sri Lankan President, Deputy Defence Minister Anurudha Ratwatte and Army Chief Srilal Weerasunga. He is scheduled to visit an airbase in Sri Lanka.

HTC, New Delhi

once the Sri Lankan Air Force intensifies its bombings on civilians to cover the Army's fight-back.

Reports from Chennai indicate a state of alert on the possibility of fresh hordes of refugees arriving over the next couple of days to join those already here, thanks to the growth of the "agents" who organise such crossings. Therefore, the

THE HINDUSTAN TIMES

10 MAY 2000

10 MAY 2000

India committed to NPT regime short of joining it, says Jaswant

AGENCIES
NEW DELHI, MAY 9

INDIA said today that it could not join the nuclear non-proliferation treaty (NPT) as a non-nuclear weapon state and statements by NPT states about New Delhi rolling back its nuclear programme were mere diversions to prevent focussed attention on the basic goals of the NPT.

In a statement in Parliament in the context of the sixth NPT review conference under way in New York, External Affairs Minister Jaswant Singh said India's commitment to global nuclear disarmament and lasting non-proliferation remained undiluted. While willing to commence negotiations on nuclear weapons convention, India also remained ready to participate in agreed and irreversible steps to pre-

pare the ground for such negotiations.

He said a global no-first-use agreement and a non-use agreement against non-nuclear weapons states would meet the longstanding requirement for legally binding negative security assurance and assurances to nuclear-weapon-free zones.

Jaswant Singh said another positive development would be a commitment by nuclear weapon states not to deploy nuclear weapons outside their own national territories. Nuclear weapon states also need to take steps to lower the alert status, through gradual de-alerting actions, consistent with policies of no-first-use and the defensive role of nuclear weapons.

He said tactical weapons that lend themselves to war fighting roles need to be eliminated. These would be some positive and concrete steps

in the right direction.

The Minister asserted India had been a responsible member of the international non-proliferation regime and will continue to take initiatives and work with like-minded countries to bring about stable, genuine and lasting non-proliferation, thus leading to a nuclear-weapon-free-world.

Jaswant Singh said that in 1995, the NPT was extended indefinitely and unconditionally and 187 countries were today parties to it. The proponents of NPT cite these developments as evidence of NPT's success yet, it is also clear that there exist strong differences even among the NPT states parties. Three of the five review conferences held so far failed to reach any agreement on a final document. The non-nuclear weapon states parties to the NPT have increasingly felt let down by the

lack of progress on disarmament, as well as non-compliance with the basic provisions of the treaty."

He said the nuclear weapons states parties to the NPT and their allies had not diminished the role of nuclear weapons in their respective or collective security calculus on the contrary, new doctrines and justifications had been developed. NATO's new strategic concept, announced last year, ten years after the end of the cold war, re-emphasises a need for the continued retention of nuclear weapons. The nuclear weapons sharing arrangements within NATO also posed serious questions about compliance.

"Such developments are clear and continuing violations of the provisions of the NPT. This the NPT community has been unable to discuss, let alone deal with," the Minister added.

INDIAN EXPRESS

10 MAY 2000

WEDNESDAY, MAY 10, 2000

INDIAN CONSENSUS ON SRI LANKA

DESPITE SOME DIFFERENCES at the all-party meeting on Sri Lanka, convened by the Prime Minister, Mr. A. B. Vajpayee, a broad consensus seems to be emerging in shaping the Indian response to the island's ethnic crisis. As the Information Minister, Mr. Pramod Mahajan, put it, there were four issues on which there was broad agreement: no military intervention; commitment to unity and integrity of Sri Lanka; full protection to the island's minorities; and the need for a peaceful resolution of the conflict within the framework of the Sri Lankan Constitution. To set at rest all speculation and propaganda on the issue, Mr. Vajpayee has clarified that India was not for a separate Eelam and there was no question of recognising such a state. Any solution would have to be within the framework of Sri Lanka's "unity and territorial integrity". That fairly sums up the emerging consensus on the developments in Sri Lanka. It is clear from the deliberations that the Government and the major parties want to protect India's regional security and strategic concerns. The Foreign Minister, Mr. Jaswant Singh, has clearly hinted that India was prepared to play a mediator's role if both sides to the conflict ask for it.

What has struck a jarring note in this all-party meeting is the clash of views among the constituents of the National Democratic Alliance (NDA). Apart from the Tamil Maanila Congress (TMC), which is in the Opposition, even the Telugu Desam, an ally of the NDA, raised questions on public support for the LTTE or its demand for a separate Eelam. The reference was obviously to the statements from two NDA constituents from Tamil Nadu — the MDMK of Mr. Vaiko, and the PMK of Dr. S. Ramdoss. It is one thing for these parties to adopt political resolutions on the Eelam issue at their conferences, but quite another to be in

Government and advocate secession in another country. Political leaders cannot be immune to the problems faced in Kashmir. India cannot adopt double standards either in combating terrorism or supporting secession. All that India, or any other mediator or facilitator, can do is to bring the two parties together and keep them engaged in negotiations. The LTTE is known for its tough negotiating skills and does not need any external help to make its demands. In any case, foreign policy cannot be held hostage to chauvinistic voices from Tamil Nadu that do not even reflect the sentiment of the people of the State. It is good that Mr. Karunanidhi has distanced the DMK from such demands.

The Prime Minister's initiative to consult first the allies from Tamil Nadu, then the Chief Minister and finally all the political parties in order to build a consensus on formulating a new approach to the Sri Lankan crisis needs to be welcomed. He and the Foreign Minister may not be in a position yet to share all that Colombo has conveyed. The situation keeps changing all the time and Sri Lanka may be more confident now of defending Jaffna than it was a week ago. At least one thing is clear — India will not commit the same mistakes it did in the 1980s and burnt its fingers. But it cannot let the problem in its backyard fester for decades and affect the regional security environment. At the same time, it cannot advocate, endorse or support a call for secession in a sovereign country, especially when divisive groups in India are clamouring for the same. Keeping the national and security interests in mind, India has made it known that its 'good offices' are available in the search for a negotiated, political solution to resolve the ethnic crisis in Sri Lanka. There is not much more that can be done at this stage.

RECEIVED

11 MAY 2000

SOFT STATE

5-6 Show some foreign policy guts 13/5

A BAD mistake in realpolitik is to pull one's punches — a habit in which South Block excels. Thus, Kargil notwithstanding, there is no overall strategy to deal with Pakistani mischief. Thus, notwithstanding the crucial regional imperative of ensuring Sri Lanka's territorial integrity in the face of the threat posed by the LTTE, whom we trained and equipped in the days of MGR and Rajiv Gandhi, there is only palaver and double talk from New Delhi. And, this, from a BJP-led government that thinks of itself as a hard-headed realist. If the BJP are indeed what they think they are, they will have to cripple Pakistan's mischief-making capability, and in the context of Sri Lanka, as this newspaper has vigorously argued, respond to the urgent requests from Colombo. Pakistan is a near-renegade member of WTO and has so far refused to act on basic treaty obligations like MFN status. It is also the stumbling block to creating a South Asian free trade zone, which will benefit the whole region. But this obstacle to free trade and international commitments freely made and as freely broken, causes little prejudice to Pakistan. The artificially low trading volumes between the countries does not mean that Pakistan has to do without what it wants. Indian cultural kitsch is available in Pakistan, as are a wide variety of consumer goods. Worse, Indian industrial products, many of them vital for Pakistan's military machine, find their way across without hindrance. How? Plain smuggling. Which robs the Indian exchequer of revenue and, more important, feeds Pakistan's capacity to wage *Jihad-e-Asgar*.

What should India do? One, clamp down hard on smuggling, beginning with our side of the border across land and sea routes. Two, insist on reciprocity. During the somewhat unreal debate in the Lok Sabha when it was discovered that we had bought sugar from mills in Pakistan owned by Nawaz Sharif's family, it was right to urge that the price was right and logistics convenient; we should have gone on to tell Pakistan that trade is not a one-way street nor are international obligations under WTO optional and used the opportunity to get better recognition of the advantages of trade between neighbours. We were defensive, perhaps because by the time the deal was discussed, Kargil had erupted. But we should have done it earlier. Third, government must declare that certain products are banned for sale to Pakistan, citing their use in building that country's military-industrial capacity, which is directed chiefly at India. Fourth, and again pointing out Islamabad's delay over the MFN issue as well as its support for cross-border terrorism, New Delhi should consider denying Pakistan the advantage of exporting raw materials and agricultural commodities to India. The US, openly and wilfully, adopts all of these policies without so much as a by your leave, with considerable success; its foreign policy is clear when it comes to dealing with rogue states. India too must firmly declare that Pakistan cannot get unofficial help from this country — via private profiteering and political pusillanimity — and act on it until good sense prevails. BJP has the bluster to make speeches about this. Does it have the guts to make a policy of it?

THE STATESMAN

13 MAY 2000

Second Indian battalion to be deployed on Monday ¹³⁷⁵

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA
UNITED NATIONS, MAY 12

THE second Indian battalion of peacekeepers is expected to be deployed in Sierra Leone by Monday, a United Nations spokesman said on Friday. India has offered one mechanised unit, a special forces unit and a helicopter unit as part of its force, the spokesman said.

This is part of the United Nations attempt to beef up its fighting capacity to take on the Revolutionary United Front (RUF) fighters in Sierra Leone. The Indian battalion is ready to be transported, the spokesman said, adding the United States, Netherlands, and Russia are among the countries providing the transport. Two parachute companies of the Jordanian forces comprising 240 men and 31 medical

personnel are also expected to land at the Lungi airport in the capital of Freetown within 48 hours. The remaining peacekeepers that Jordan plans to send should be available by the end of the month.

DATELINE

SIERRA LEONE

Meanwhile, Secretary General Kofi Annan said if the international community fails in Sierra Leone, it would have broader impact on Africa. Some other nations too have offered help which could take the strength of peacekeepers above the 11,100 sanctioned but the spokesman declined to provide details. Efforts are on to sort out the

command structure if a separate West African force is introduced in Sierra Leone which is not under the United Nations command as being proposed by the Africans.

The Security Council has also scheduled a meeting at 0530 hrs IST on Saturday to discuss the situation in the country.

Annan also appealed to the world community not to abandon the people of Sierra Leone who have put their faith in the world body. Addressing an open meeting of the Security Council on Thursday night, Annan asked the RUF rebels to release the five hundred peacekeepers they are holding as hostages.

Several African ambassadors demanded strong action to tackle rebels, saying the credibility of the United Nations was at stake.

INDIAN EXPRESS:

1 MAY 2000

Revitalising India-East Asia ties

By V. Jayanth

10-12 16/5 9. f. Panin ✓
AT LEAST some of the Southeast Asian (Asean) Governments began to feel that after Pokhran-II and the launch of the U.S.-India strategic talks, New Delhi's 'Look East' policy was getting out of focus. Kargil and the persisting friction with Pakistan, and now the crisis in Sri Lanka have become major concerns of the Government of India. But these should not distract New Delhi's attention from its east.

A string of high-level visits from Asean and the visit by some Indian Ministers to that region have helped to restore the earlier warmth in bilateral relations. The Heads of Government/State from South-east Asia came to reassure themselves that New Delhi had not abandoned its engagement with East Asia. With this Vajpayee Government appearing more stable, they sought to build a foundation for a new economic partnership.

On top of it all, the recent Asian Development Outlook released by the Asian Development Bank (ADB) has reconfirmed earlier forecasts that the Indian economy will maintain its firm growth path and move to the 7 per cent rung this year. All this only encourages ASEAN and even Japan as well as South Korea to work for a better relationship with India to enhance trade and investment opportunities. Before getting into the act, their leaders wanted to ensure that New Delhi was ready to reciprocate. They did not want to enlarge the sphere of cooperation if India was going to be preoccupied with just the U.S. and Europe.

The Foreign Minister, Mr. Jaswant Singh, entered the stage at a turbulent time and has helped see through the post-Pokhran crisis. After the initial stage of fire-fighting, he has returned to the task of seeking and building strategic partnerships, with friendly countries in both the East and the West. Even as he went about his task, Asean Governments were trying to gauge the coalition experiment going on in India since 1996. Finding this Vajpayee regime more stable than the past few coalitions, they decided it was time to review the whole gamut of cooperation with India.

Now that most of East Asia has reco-

vered from the financial crisis of 1997 and there are indications of stability in Indonesia, the time appears ideal for India and that region to build on the foundation that is already there towards a mutually beneficial partnership on the political, economic and security fronts. With the next annual Asean Ministerial Meeting coming up in July, along with that of the Asean Regional Forum, now is the time to review the 1996-2000 phase and prepare a blueprint for the first decade of the new millennium. Even

Now that most of East Asia has recovered from the financial crisis of 1997, the time appears ideal for India and that region to build on the foundation that is already there.

among the Asean Governments, it may be essential to choose the right partners for the future. Indian Ministers have ventured out to fathom the waters, even as Heads of some Asean Governments were here.

The year 2000 has provided several opportunities to rework the equations. First, it was the Singapore Prime Minister, Mr. Goh Chok Tong, who chose to visit India after a gap of five years. Then came the new Indonesian President, Mr. Abdurrahman Wahid, and finally, the Cambodian Prime Minister, Mr. Hun Sen. All three were seeking a new economic and political equation with India. There was always a cordial relationship with Singapore, which was proving to be mutually beneficial. But with Indonesia, there were problems with the previous regime. As for Cambodia, New Delhi had to pick up the threads again to come to terms with the new strongman, Mr. Hun Sen.

Mr. Goh Chok Tong came to meet up with the Indian political leadership and visit some of the potential investment destinations of Singapore businessmen. He appeared convinced that New Delhi's Look East policy was back in place and the time was ripe for the two economies to upgrade their cooperation. His business delegation focussed on the south — Andhra Pradesh, Karnataka and Tamil Nadu. These States have responded positively to

the visit and the Centre too followed it up. The new Minister for Information Technology, Mr. Pramod Mahajan, led the IT task force to Singapore to forge a partnership with companies in the island State. It was an ideal sector to strike a partnership.

Mr. Wahid brought a new message from Indonesia. His predecessor, Gen. Suharto, did not really engage India too seriously. So his administration was also lukewarm, though business houses could see the potential in this bilateral relationship. Indo-

nesia hopes to forge a strong Asian axis involving both China and India, without in any way straining the excellent ties Jakarta enjoys with the U.S. Once the socio-political tensions ease in the archipelago, Indian industry and trade must take a hard, second look at the immense opportunities there in the rebuilding of a shattered economy.

As for Cambodia, it was always on India's political radar. But because of the power struggle there, no definite moves could be made with either of the two major players. Now that Mr. Hun Sen is firmly in the saddle, there should be no problems in moving forward. Given the solid political investment made in Cambodia in the past, the focus now must be on enhancing the strategic dialogue with such a key state in Indochina. While on Indochina, Mr. George Fernandes became the first Indian Defence Minister to visit Vietnam recently. This has been swiftly followed up with a Vietnamese Navy (military) mission to India and they were shown all the facilities and potential for a strong partnership on this front.

The Finance Minister, Mr. Yashwant Sinha, was in Thailand for the ADB meeting this month and had an opportunity to discuss the emerging economic scenario in Asia, particularly East Asia, with his regional counterparts. Though he took a dif-

ferent view on the need for a regional monetary fund or mechanism, the message that he appears to have left was one of wanting to be counted along with the Asean-plus-Three (South Korea, China and Japan) in a new pan-Asian platform.

That must be the real objective now for India. Mr. Goh was quite receptive to the idea of inviting India to Asean's informal summits, to which the leaders of China, Japan and South Korea were already invitees. Without letting up on the new equation India is building with the U.S., it must work to become a part of the East Asian caucus and ultimately a member of the Asia Pacific Economic Cooperation (APEC) forum.

From the U.S. to Australia, every leading economy in the world has recognised India's economic potential and its real areas of strength — especially IT. The Indian companies must now go global and forge joint ventures with leading players in every region to get a foothold in that market. Only then can they really become global players.

India must take up with the Economic and Social Commission for the Asia Pacific (ESCAP) the feasibility of providing the southern connection to the proposed trans-Asian Railway. This will link up India and the subcontinent, with Southeast Asia, Indochina, China, Russia and Central Asia. These are the kind of projects that can provide meaning and substance to any new partnership and help develop the hinterland countries, which badly need that connectivity.

It may be time too to enter into a dialogue with Malaysia and Thailand, which have not been able to come to terms with the new India as they recover from the economic crisis. Equally important it will be to convince Japan it is time to move forward from Pokhran and the CTBT.

India is already trying to engage China and the proposed visit by the President, Mr. K. R. Narayanan, could provide the right occasion to kick-start a new bilateral relationship with Beijing, setting aside the persisting differences. It may be worthwhile pursuing Moscow's concept of a new triangular equation among Russia, China and India.

16 MAY 2000

Significant shift in Britain's stand on Kashmir: Jaswant

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 the issue of extradition of terrorists who took shelter in that country, External Affairs Minister Jaswant Singh told the Lok Sabha today.

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.

Mr Jaswant Singh said the British statement in the House of Commons in the wake of the Kargil/conflict was a landmark shift in the Labour party's thinking on Kashmir, leading to better understanding of the Indian position on J&K, the Line of Control (LoC) and terrorism.

Mr Singh said the LoC is a treaty document as a result of the Simla Agreement and was a confidence

building measure.

The Minister said in a comprehensive statement on Jammu and Kashmir in the House of Commons, the UK Government had stated that it was "important to recognise that the incursions,



and the continued violence of the militants in Jammu and Kashmir, have done nothing, and can do nothing, to promote a durable solution in Kashmir."

The statement also said "evi-

dence suggested that the militants have little in common with the ordinary people in Kashmir, and do not represent them," he said.

Mr Singh said this stand of the UK Government was reiterated by its Minister of State in the Foreign and Commonwealth office in the House of Commons in response to a question on January 18 when he said "Pakistani cross-border terrorism is proving to be an enormous threat to the stability of Kashmir. We look to General (Pervez) Musharraf to make sure that under his regime such terrorism stops. We particularly look to General Musharraf, who is widely seen as author of the Kargil incident last year, to ensure that nothing like that ever happens again."

The Foreign Minister said the UK had also stated that they welcomed the action already taken by the Indian authorities in addressing human rights concerns with the Human Rights Commission acting as an effective custodian and promoter of human rights. (PTI)

THE HINDUSTAN TIMES

18 MAY 2000

Indo-French strategic

ic military, nuke dialogue begins

New Delhi
18 MAY

INDIA AND France on Thursday opened a strategic dialogue on bilateral military cooperation, security situation in Asia and Europe and on armaments and the nuclear issue.

The first-ever high-level dialogue was initiated when visiting French defence minister Alain Richard held a long meeting with his Indian counterpart George Fernandes here.

The two sides will start official delegation-level talks on Friday. Richard is accompanied by a nine-member team including his diplomatic adviser Aubibert, military adviser Gen Thorette and Bernard Ouvrieu, who represents the French defence ministry on the Indo-French Joint Committee on Defence.

A defence ministry spokesman did not give details of the meeting but sources said Richard's visit will lead to sign-

ing of the deal for sale of 10 additional Mirage 2000-H multi-role aircraft to India to bring up the Mirage squadron of IAF to full strength.

The French minister, who landed at Agra this morning in a special French Air Force plane, visited the Taj Mahal before beginning his hectic two-day schedule.

Richard's visit follows high-level defence exchanges between the two countries. Army chief Gen V.P. Malik had visited Paris earlier this year and it was followed by a visit to New Delhi last month by the French chief of defence staff.

The French minister's visit here assumes significance in the wake of recent statements by Fernandes that India will soon give a go-ahead for a number of defence acquisitions like AJTs weapon locating radars, (WLRs), main battle tank and high altitude unmanned aerial vehicles (UAV).

The Franco-German Cobra weapon locating radar is bidding for the Indian contract along with a WLR systems from Ukraine. A high-level Indian defence team recently witnessed Cobra trials in Germany.

However, it appears that the French Alpha jet are not in contention for the multi-million dollar AJT deal as the jet's manufacturers Dassault did not respond to latest tenders floated by IAF making it look like India had reached a "single vendor stage" on the deal with only British Aerospace's Hawk-100 left in the race.

The French minister, during his visit, will call on President K.R. Narayanan, Prime Minister Atal Behari Vajpayee and external affairs minister Jaswant Singh.

Soon after his arrival at South Block, Richard was presented a tri-service guard of honour and later, the three service chiefs called on him.

— PTI

The Economic Times

1 MAY 2000

19 MAY 2000

TN CM meets PM on Lanka

HT Correspondent
New Delhi, May 19

TAMIL NADU Chief Minister M Karunanidhi today discussed with Prime Minister A B Vajpayee the latest developments in Sri Lanka where the LTTE was continuing to push forward in the north and east.

Mr Karunanidhi's discussion with Mr Vajpayee assumes significance in the context of the visit of the overall commander of Sri Lankan Armed Forces, Gen Roshan D'Silva Daluwate, to India recently and preparations by New Delhi to meet any emergency.

As part of India's contingency plans, ships are already deployed along the southern coast and ready to evacuate trapped Sri Lankan soldiers or Tamil refugees in case the LTTE captured Jaffna. Besides, the Navy and Coast Guard have stepped up surveillance along the Tamil Nadu coast.

However, there has been no exodus from Sri Lanka even after the fall of Elephant Pass on April 22 and advancement of the LTTE towards Jaffna.

Mr Karunanidhi, who arrived last night to attend a meeting of the Cauvery River Authority, which was abruptly postponed following the Karnataka Chief Minister's

refusal to participate in it, also discussed with Mr Vajpayee some of the pending projects in the State.

Home Minister L K Advani and

'12 LTTE suicide bombers arrested'

IN A major breakthrough, the Sri Lankan police have arrested 12 suspected LTTE suicide bombers, who were to assassinate several important personalities, and seized 120 kg of explosives, media reports on Friday said. The police arrested a suspected LTTE cadre, while he was attempting to obtain a forged passport. State-run Daily News said. Following his arrest, the police seized 120 kg of explosives at Ukulan near northern Vavuniya town. The arrest also led to the detention of 12 suspected LTTE suicide bombers, who revealed "they were assigned to assassinate several leaders," it said. **PTI, Colombo**

Environment Minister T R Baalu were present during Mr Karunanidhi's discussion with Mr Vajpayee.

Since his last discussion with the Prime Minister on May 5, Mr Karunanidhi has

gone on record that his government was fully cooperating with the Centre and that the LTTE would not be allowed to enter Tamil Nadu.

On May 12, the Chief Minister had categorically declared that his government would give no room for any activity by the LTTE in the State. However, he said, "We will be happy if they get Eelam either through negotiations or armed conflict". Mr Karunanidhi said there was no question of the DMK backing any moves by the LTTE on Indian soil.

The next day, he clarified that his statement did not mean that there was any difference between his government and the Centre on the present crisis. He also said his anxiety was that the present offensive should end and lead to negotiations. According to him, recognition to Eelam was a different matter. Despite all the developments that had taken place, if the present war ended and a political solution was achieved, he would be all the more happy. Mr Karunanidhi said.

He also said his statement should not be taken to mean he would raise his voice on behalf of Tamil Nadu for the creation of Tamil Eelam. However, he made it clear that for achieving this objective he would neither accept nor welcome the presence of the LTTE in Tamil Nadu.

THE HINDUSTAN TIMES

20 MAY 2000

India preparing diplomatic moves over Fijian problem

Udayan Nambodiri
New Delhi, May 19

INDIA HAS expressed its "dismay and regret" at the developments in Fiji and is preparing for another round of diplomatic heckling of the new regime which forcibly took over from the year-old Mahendra Chaudhry regime today.

Like in 1987, when Lt Colonel Sitiveni (Steve) Rabuka usurped power from the Indian origin prime minister, this time too the Pacific "powder-keg" stands on the brink of prolonged chaos which could lead to another period of isolation for the tiny nation.

Britain, Australia, New Zealand and the Commonwealth secretary general have joined India in hitting out at the impresarios of the latest coup. The External Affairs Ministry spokesman said today that as a member of the Commonwealth, Fiji is party to the Harare Declaration and Millbrook Action Programme. Fiji had joined other heads of governments at the last Commonwealth Summit in restating the Commonwealth's fundamental political values in favour of democracy over military dictatorship, which led to Pakistan's suspension. Now it risks the same fate itself.

Telecommunication links between New Delhi and Suva snapped during the day. The Indian High Commissioner, Mr I. S. Chauhan, called New Delhi around noon to give a brief resume of events as of that hour. He also informed that the Indian staff at the mission there, along with their families, was safe. Understandably, the first official response of the

MEA spoke of an "attempted coup".

Of the total population of 772,655, ethnic Indians make up 43.6 per cent, while indigenous Fijians (Melanesians) constitute 51 per cent. Therefore, cultural ties impact directly bilateral relations between India and Fiji. The political and economic clout of descendants of Indian indentured labourers, made them targets of ethnic hostility since the early eighties. They are also accused of resisting assimilation in the local society.

New Delhi's relations with Suva, which were excellent till the 1987 coup, soured rapidly thereafter. India worked towards what it termed the "illegal" regime's isolation, banned bilateral trade and periodically issued statements of concern at the growing number of attacks on people of Indian origin by elements backed by the military Junta. The dictators hit back in May 1990 by ordering the Indian mission in Suva closed.

By the mid-nineties, Fiji embarked upon a "review" of its Constitution. India closely followed the process out of a concern that ethnic Indians should not lose their rights in an environment when the demographic balance was tilting against them. Till the sixties, people of the Indian origin made up more than 50 per cent of Fiji's population, but after that there was a steady decline. Fijians also make up 95 per cent of the military of the country. In 1997, India dropped its Opposition to Fiji's re-entry into the Commonwealth following enactment of the new Constitution. The first election in the new era was held in 1999 and the same year saw India reopening its mission in Suva.

Pacific Powder-keg

THE HINDUSTAN TIMES

10 MAY 1999

India ready for 'role' in Sri Lanka: PM

By C. Raja Mohan

NEW DELHI, MAY 20. As the military situation in the Jaffna peninsula begins to evolve rapidly, the Government is moving closer towards some hard decisions on Sri Lanka.

The Prime Minister, Mr. Atal Behari Vajpayee's remarks here today that India was "ready" to take any step "if necessary", reflects the sense here that the Government can no longer duck its responsibilities in Sri Lanka.

With the Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam (LTTE) reportedly gaining ground in the offensive against Jaffna, an Indian decision to intervene, in some form, in Sri Lanka may be imminent.

Mr. Vajpayee told reporters that the situation in Sri Lanka was "changing rapidly" and the Government was "keeping a close watch".

Officials here say the Government is in continuous contact with Colombo through its mission there and is evaluating various options in the event Jaffna does fall in the next few days.

The timing and nature of the intervention will depend on ground situation as well as the political attitudes of Colombo and the LTTE towards an increased Indian role in the conflict.

The immediate trigger for an Indian intervention is the fate of the nearly 30,000 Sri Lankan troops in the Jaffna peninsula. India might have to play some part in evacuating these soldiers if they are trapped by the LTTE.

The Government is debating whether an Indian humanitarian intervention must take place only in a "permissive" environment, with LTTE's consent, or whether it could go ahead even in "hostile" conditions.

The LTTE has already issued an ultimatum to the troops to "surrender" or face the consequences. It also offered not to harm the surrendering forces and hand them over to the International Committee of Red Cross. Colombo meanwhile insists its troops will fight on.

It is in this context that the merits of an Indian sponsored "ceasefire" and the likely reactions of the two sides are being discussed here. One variant of the proposal is a ceasefire coupled with an evacuation of Sri Lankan troops assisted by India.

If Colombo arrives at the judgment that it cannot hold onto Jaffna and believes it is important to save its troops, it may favour such a ceasefire. But with the LTTE appearing to seize the initiative, it is

by no means clear whether the rebels' leadership would adopt reasonable positions. Equally unpredictable is the nature of the political fallout in Colombo when it loses control over Jaffna.

Fernandes reiterates stand

By Our Staff Reporter

NEW DELHI, MAY 20. The Defence Minister, Mr. George Fernandes, today said India could not be compelled by anyone to play a role in resolving the ethnic conflict in Sri Lanka and reiterated the country's stand on non-military intervention.

Commenting on the Sri Lankan Foreign Minister, Mr. Lakshman Kadirgamar's statement that events in Jaffna might force India to play a role, he said New Delhi had already made its position clear.

"There is no question of New Delhi intervening militarily, though we can provide humanitarian aid including helping in evacuation," Mr. Fernandes told reporters after addressing the South Asia Conference on "Legacy of Mahbub-ul-Haq: Human Development" organised by the Institute of Social Sciences here.

THE HINDU

21 MAY 2000

India ready with help, says Lanka

STATESMAN NEWS SERVICE

CHENNAI/BANGALORE, May 20. — A Lankan minister who arrived in Chennai en route to Bangalore today revealed that Colombo and New Delhi have "worked out" the "details" of the assistance India would give to his country's troops battling the LTTE in Jaffna.

In New Delhi, despite the defence minister clarifying that India could not be "compelled" to resolve the crisis, and that there was "no question" of a military intervention, the Prime Minister announced that Delhi was "ready" to take some steps.

But neither Mr Atal Behari Vajpayee nor the Sri Lankan minister gave out any details.

"Details regarding assistance from India have been discussed by my senior, the foreign minister, Mr Lakshman Kadirgamar. It has been worked out," Mr Lakshman Kiriella, Sri Lanka's deputy external affairs minister, told reporters at Chennai airport this morning.

Mr Kiriella flew to Whitefield near Bangalore to speak at a function organised by the Sathya Sai Baba Foundation. He did not talk to reporters in Bangalore.

"No political connotations should be drawn from my visit", Mr Kiriella said. Sri Lankan chief of defence staff, General Rohan de Silva Daluwate, too had recently come to India, apparently also to seek the Baba's blessings. The General too had gone to Whitefield.

The situation on the island was "rapidly changing", and

India was ready to take some steps if necessary, the Prime Minister told reporters after opening a meeting of the Inter-State Council in Delhi.

India was keeping a close watch on developments, and has already offered humanitarian assistance, he said.

Even without Mr Kiriella's announcement, there has been speculation that India is readying to launch itself into the Lankan crisis in some way. Gen. Daluwate's hush-hush visit to Thiruvananthapuram, headquarters of the southern air command, could have been to oversee preparations for India's assistance to his forces.

Fifteen thousand Indian troops have been moved to Thiruvananthapuram, and residents of Tamil Nadu's Kanyakumari and Tirunelveli districts say there has been nightly movement of aircraft along the Thiruvananthapuram-Colombo air corridor.

The pro-rebel web site www.tamilnet.com today said the Tigers had captured Jaffna's second-largest town, Chavakachcheri, and shelled both Palaly air base and Kankesanthurai sea port out of action.

It called on the soldiers to surrender "to avoid the continuing bloodbath", and promised they "will be treated with dignity and honour" and handed over to the International Committee of the Red Cross within 24 hours.

But in Colombo, Mrs Chandrika Kumaratunga vowed not to give in. "I will not betray the country even if I am killed," she was quoted as saying.

THE STATESMAN

1 MAY 2001

9/5/70
HD-13

Vajpayee briefs President on Sri Lankan situation

2365

By Our Special Correspondent

NEW DELHI, MAY 22. The Prime Minister, Mr. Atal Behari Vajpayee, today briefed the President, Mr. K.B. Narayanan, about the developments in Sri Lanka. Mr. Vajpayee called on the President this evening, as Mr. Narayanan is scheduled to leave for a state visit to China on May 28. The Prime Minister is believed to have informed the President about the just-concluded Budget session of Parliament.

Earlier in the day, Mr. Vajpayee presided over a meeting of the Cabinet Committee on Security, which reviewed the Sri Lankan situation.

The Prime Minister and his senior advisers took stock of the developments and the possible contingency plans, should some kind of Indian involvement become necessary.

It is believed that contingency plans for evacuation of the trapped Sri Lankan troops were considered.

According to authoritative sources, India has not received any official request from the Sri Lankan Government for assistance, though various functionaries of the Sri Lankan Government have been hinting to the contrary.

The meeting was attended, among others, by the Defence Minister, Mr. George Fernandes,

the Finance Minister, Mr. Yashwant Sinha, the Principal Secretary to the Prime Minister, Mr. Brajesh Mishra, the Foreign Secretary, Mr. Lalit Mansingh, the Cabinet Secretary, Mr. Prabhat Kumar, the three service chiefs and the Deputy Chairman of the Planning Commission, Mr. K.C. Pant.

Apart from the collective deliberations of the Cabinet Committee on Security, the Prime Minister is being briefed daily on the situation in Sri Lanka.

Today's meeting assumes significance as the Prime Minister would be virtually in and out, more out than in, of town for the next 10 days.

THE HINDU

23 MAY 1970

Jaswant rules out military intervention

FROM PRANAY SHARMA

Teheran, May 23: India today made it clear that it will not go for military intervention in Sri Lanka, though it is willing to provide "humanitarian assistance" in Jaffna on a request from Colombo.

It also expressed disappointment at Australia's attempt to accord legitimacy to Fijian coup leader George Speight, who ousted the democratically-elected government of Mahendra Chaudhry last week. India has decided to raise the issue with Commonwealth nations and the European Union to ensure that their policy towards coup leaders in different parts of the world remains consistent.

Indian foreign minister Jaswant Singh, now in the Iranian capital, is going to London tomorrow to chair a meeting of Indian heads of mission in Europe. He will meet British foreign minister Robin Cook and Commonwealth secretary-general Don Mackinnon to discuss the developments in Fiji.

Singh said here this afternoon: "India will not enter into a fire-fight on Sri Lankan soil even if it finally has to engage in humanitarian assistance." On Sri Lanka, where the Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam (LTTE) and government troops are battling over Jaffna, the Tiger stronghold, Singh explained that India is willing to provide humanitarian assistance to Sri Lanka but first a request has to be made by the Chandrika Kumaratunga government.

Referring to Indian Prime Minister Atal Behari Vajpayee's recent remark that India was watching the developments in Sri Lanka closely and was ready to take any step necessary, Singh said this meant that Delhi was ready with a contingency plan, but that does not include a military intervention.

The Indian foreign minister

also pointed out that the question of humanitarian assistance can only be made after a "definition of the military situation of Jaffna" is worked out.

India is of the view that talking about withdrawal of the Lankan army when it is fighting the Tamil Tigers is "extremely demoralising" for the troops. Therefore, an assessment of whether the Sri Lankan troops can hold onto Jaffna or are likely to cave in on the face of the LTTE onslaught has to be made first.

Singh said Norwegian envoy Erik Solheim, facilitator between Colombo and the Tamil Tigers, had a role to play in making the two parties come to the negotiations table. "Norway has a role to play since it has been chosen by both the Sri Lankan government and the LTTE as a facilitator," he added. Solheim, now in Sri Lanka, will be in Delhi within a day or two to keep the Indian leaders posted about the developments in Jaffna.

Earlier, the Indian foreign minister had expressed doubts on whether the Norwegian initiative in Sri Lanka will lead to a solution. But though a definite picture has yet to come out of Sri Lanka, the Indian leadership appears to be satisfied with the role the Norwegian envoy is playing by trying to talk to the two sides and also by keeping Delhi apprised of the latest developments.

On Fiji, Singh said the situation was "a delicate one" and India cannot assert itself too much as it may harm the Fijian Prime Minister, under house-arrest by the armed rebels. Singh, however, said he will make it clear during his discussions with Cook and Mackinnon to ensure that the Harare Declaration and the Milbrooke initiative on coups and undemocratic methods to overthrow governments are not encouraged.

THE TELEGRAPH

24 MAY 2002

Neighbour as peacemaker

Involvement does not necessarily mean taking sides

THERE is increasing realisation in New Delhi that India cannot keep aloof from the events in Sri Lanka. And that, sooner than later, it will have to play a role consistent with good neighbourliness and India's security and strategic interests. The alternative is to let other powers make a foray into Sri Lankan territory, which will not be in the country's long-term interests. Both the parties concerned — the Sri Lankan government and the Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam (LTTE) — have admitted, if not in so many words, that India is the one country which can play a decisive role in bringing about peace in the island nation. Both Norway, which has been in the forefront of brokering a peace deal, and the United States, which is keen to lend a helping hand to the peace process, recognise India's role. However, the country's present stance of "complete neutrality" is dictated in the main by two factors: the nightmarish experience over the deployment of the Indian Peace Keeping Force (IPKF) in Sri Lanka in the mid-eighties and the political pressure from some of the constituent parties of the National Democratic Alliance government. It is often forgotten that involvement does not necessarily mean taking sides in the ongoing conflict.

India has already made it clear to both the interlocutors and the parties concerned that under no circumstances will it involve itself militarily in the Sri Lankan situation. After all, as the IPKF experience had taught it, any military involvement can only be counter-productive. While recognising this, India cannot shy away from its responsibility as a well-intentioned neighbour. In other words,

nothing prevents the Indian government from providing humanitarian assistance to the war-affected people. It is still a matter of conjecture as to when Jaffna falls to the Tigers. But the Sinhala troops are sure to lose control of the town, of that there is no doubt. In such an eventuality, the 40,000 or so Sri Lankan troops now amassed in the Jaffna peninsula will become sitting ducks for the LTTE. This is too frightening a scenario to contemplate and it should not be allowed to happen. It is in the evacuation of these troops that India can help. How far evacuation is possible without the cooperation of the LTTE is, of course, a matter of speculation.

Ideally, the evacuation should be preceded by a ceasefire. This will make India's task easier. Thus one of the main objectives of the peace-brokers should be to bring about a ceasefire. Given the intransigence of the parties concerned, this is easier said than done. In the past, the efforts to bring about a rapprochement between the LTTE and the Sri Lankan government could not succeed precisely because of the lack of confidence the Sinhals and the Tamils have in each other. This means countries like Norway and India are up against a wall in their bid to bring the warring sides to the negotiating table. On the settlement of the ethnic dispute, whether it should be through partition, as advanced by the LTTE, or devolution of power as conceded by the Sri Lankan government, is for the people of Sri Lanka to decide. Whatever be the case, India's role cannot be any different from what the people of Sri Lanka want it to be. This is the basic premise on which India should make its moves.

INDIAN EXPRESS

4 MAY 1988

6/2/29/5

THE POLITICAL FACTOR

FOR CONNOISSEURS OF THE INDIAN POLITICAL THEATRE

S: INDIA, ISRAEL, NORWAY ON VERGE OF GETTING INVOLVED

Vaiko asks Israel to stop military aid to Sri Lanka

Our Political Bureau
NEW DELHI 23 MAY

EVEN AS the Indian government weighs its current options over mediation in the fast developing ethnic conflict in Sri Lanka, MDMK chief and ally in the ruling NDA, Vaiko, today directly urged Israel to stop arms supply to the government in Colombo.

Vaiko also met the Prime Minister A B Vajpayee and Defence minister George Fernandes in the day to brief them of his party's perception on the conflict which has been on intermittently for more than two decades.

Vaiko is believed to have been reassured that active intervention by India was not on the anvil until such time as a 'break-through' developed in the current deadlock in the Sri Lankan conflict between the LTTE and the Sri Lankan forces.

Significantly, sources said that the MDMK chief sought to convince both Mr Vajpayee and Mr Fernandes that should a circumstance calling for India's intervention in the Sri Lankan conflict arise, it should not be without conditionalities attached.

While this was not spelt out specifically, it is perceived in political circles that Vaiko's pos-

sible reference may have been to the possibility of an economic blockade against the LTTE bastions, one option that the Colombo government is seen as favouring to smoke out the group.

During his 90-minute tete a tete with the Israeli charge d'affaires here, Mr Dan Stav, Vaiko is understood to have issued an appeal, through the diplomat, to the Israeli government for the immediate stoppage in supply of arms to Colombo.

Sources said that the MDMK chief, long known as an open supporter of the LTTE in its struggle to wrest Eelam in Sri Lanka, placed the conflict in Lanka in the context of a highly emotive issue to the Israelis: that of the prolonged struggle for, and the subsequent creation of Israel as a Jewish nation from Palestine in West Asia against all odds in the first half of the century.

The development acquires significance in view of the official wait and watch stand adopted upto now by the Indian government in the crisis in the neighbouring nation to the south. Vaiko's head on appeal to Israel among nations including Pakistan that Sri Lankan president Chandrika Kumaratunga is reported to have harnessed arms from urgently for use in

the conflict recently is perceived as virtually verging on the proactive, particularly considering the reluctance of the NDA government, of which he is part, to jump the gun in the current sensitive situation.

The MDMK chief subsequently met Prime Minister Vajpayee prior to his proposed visit to Bhopal, later cancelled, and briefed him at length on the viewpoint of his party regarding the ongoing crisis. "I am thoroughly satisfied that the government of India will proceed carefully and the necessary caution on the issue," Vaiko said subsequent to his talks with the PM and with Defence minister George Fernandes during the day. The talks were themselves held in the background of reports that the Norwegian diplomats in Colombo had already approached the Indian government on the possible role that it could play in resolving the crisis.

Sri Lankan foreign minister Lakshman Kadirgamar had held on Monday to a state owned newspaper that "The Norwegians have been in touch with the Indians with our consent and on our request..they have recognised India's valuable position in the region, they have recognised the inevitability of Indian involvement in this issue."

The Economic Times

3 MAY 2000

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India woos the Islamic world

By C. Raja Mohan

The new initiative towards the Islamic world is an important adventure in India's foreign policy and deserves strong domestic political support.

INDIA IS reaching out and touching the Islamic world. The External Affairs Minister, Mr. Jaswant Singh's recent visit to Iran, and his claim that the two countries are natural partners are part of a new thrust in India's foreign policy. It is based on the belief that there is enormous scope for pragmatic and profitable engagement between India and key Islamic nations. Mr. Singh also plans to travel to Saudi Arabia in the next few weeks. This will be the first visit by an Indian Foreign Minister to the Arabian Kingdom in nearly two decades. Meanwhile the interaction between India and other Gulf kingdoms is also beginning to grow.

The recent trips to India by Turkey's Prime Minister, Mr. Bulent Ecevit, and Indonesia's President, Mr. Abdurrahman Wahid, reflected the new possibilities for cooperation between India and leading Islamic states. Turkey and Indonesia are two major pillars of secular order in the Islamic world and are emerging as valuable interlocutors for India. For too long, India has been diffident in seeking viable strategic partnerships with major Islamic nations. India had given a virtual free-run to Pakistan in mobilising political support from these states, in the name of Islamic solidarity, in its disputes with India. Weighed down by the Pakistan factor, handicapped by flimsy economic linkages with the oil-rich nations, and overawed by the Islamic politics in the Middle East, Indian diplomacy was paralysed.

Three new factors have given India unprecedented opportunities to turn a new leaf in its relations with the Islamic world. One is the rise in religious extremism and terrorism that is threatening peace and stability within the Islamic states. Two, there is a new convergence of commercial interests with the petroleum-rich nations. And three, India's economic potential and its improving relations with the United States and other great powers are altering the perception of the relative weights of New Delhi and Islamabad.

Sensing the new opportunities, India has begun to shed its traditional inhibitions and step forward to a new engagement with the Islamic world. Over the last

one year, India has consciously sought to press home, in multilateral forums as well as in bilateral relations, the new opportunities. As the centre of gravity of international terrorism begins to shift from the Middle East to the subcontinent, India's campaign on the issue has begun to pay dividends. Much like India and the Non-Aligned Movement a decade and a half ago, the Arab nations and other Islamic states had in the past generally tended to dismiss terrorism as a problem of the West. But as terrorism came home to threaten the political order within and across the Arab world, there is greater sensitivity now about the need for international cooperation in battling the menace. Turkey, Egypt and Algeria have been among the worst affected by terrorism. Saudi Arabia, too, has been threatened by major acts of terrorism. It is not surprising then that the Arab League for the first time in decades recently passed a resolution condemning international terrorism.

Meanwhile, the rise of religious extremism in Afghanistan in the form of the Taliban and its linkages to the narcotics trade and international terrorism have sharpened the anxieties in the Islamic world. No one in the region appears immune from the new dangers from the Taliban. The Central Asian Republics are shaken by the signs that the forces of destabilisation are spilling across their southern borders with the Taliban-controlled Afghanistan. Given their fragile political structures and the lack of any experience in dealing with terrorism in the Soviet days, these new nations are in a state of great political vulnerability.

For Iran, the Taliban has become a major source of anxiety at many levels. First, Taliban's claim to represent the most militant form of anti-Western Islamic ideology challenges the leadership role that Iran believes it has in the Islamic world after Khomeini's revolution in 1979. At

another level, the extremist Sunni radicalism of the Taliban is seen as a threat to the Iranian revolution steeped in Shia faith. More important, the Taliban's brutal treatment of Shia minorities as well as the Persian-speaking communities in Afghanistan puts Iran at loggerheads with Kabul.

At the secular, geo-political level, the Taliban and Pakistan have sought to cut Iran out of the new great game for the exploitation of hydrocarbon resources in Central Asia. Iran sees itself as the principal gateway to Central Asia from the Indian Ocean. Pakistan and the Taliban have sought to develop pipelines and transportation corridors from Central Asia to the Indian Ocean, with the aim of marginalising Iran.

Saudi Arabia and the Gulf countries are mostly conservative Islamic states. The radicalism of the Taliban and its future impact on the stability and security of their oil-rich region concern them. The Taliban has also given refuge to Osama bin Laden, who has sworn to overthrow the rule of the House of Saud in the Arabian kingdom. The emergence of Afghanistan and Pakistan as the principal sources of destabilisation in the region has created a new community of interests between India and the Islamic states in favour of moderation and rejection of political violence. Over the last one year, Mr. Jaswant Singh has attempted to build on this by focussing on the dangers from the medieval malevolence that is running riot in Afghanistan.

On the economic front, India has initiated what Mr. Singh calls energy diplomacy to create new economic and political relationships with the countries. India has emerged as one of the top five consumers of petroleum products in the world. Its dependence on the Gulf for oil and natural gas is expected to grow dra-

matically in the coming years. This interdependence, Mr. Singh says, is not a source of weakness, but of strength. The trick, according to him, lies in using India's position as one of the major markets for energy resources to build lasting partnerships with the petroleum-producing nations. Many countries in the Gulf and Central Asia have large reserves of natural gas that are lying unused. They are looking to India as the principal export destination. They are all keen on creating long-term energy relationships with India by building pipelines from the Persian Gulf to India.

The Persian Gulf is also a major source of hard currency remittances for India from its expatriate labour. A stable and prosperous Gulf will also become an important market for India's manufactured goods and cultural products. The prospects of energy and economic integration between the Gulf and India will have significant consequences for the geopolitics of the region.

Mr. Singh's energy diplomacy must still overcome the problem of Pakistan as a physical and political barrier fusing the economic destinies of India, the Persian Gulf and Central Asia. India can achieve this by either finding a way to go to the Gulf by skirting Pakistan or binding Islamabad in a network of economic arrangements that will force political moderation upon it.

The success of India's energy diplomacy is premised on a rapid economic growth and the ability to deliver greater prosperity to the nation in the coming years. Equally important is New Delhi's commitment and capacity to deepen the respect for the rights of religious minorities within. Success on these two fronts will further differentiate India from Pakistan, raise the commercial interest of the Islamic world in India, and remove the few remaining irritants in the ties between the two sides. The new initiative towards the Islamic world is an important adventure in India's foreign policy and deserves strong domestic political support.

WORLD VIEW

25 MAY 2000

Menon may be envoy to China

By Our Special Correspondent

NEW DELHI, MAY 24. The Indian High Commissioner in Colombo, Mr. Shiv Shankar Menon, is likely to be posted to Beijing as India's new Ambassador. The current Ambassador to China, Mr. Vijay Nam-bair, is being shifted to Pakistan, as per an earlier announcement.

Mr. Menon is rated very highly by the Vajpayee foreign policy establishment, and his proposed posting in Beijing is being cited as the high priority the Government accords to its relationship with China.

Mr. Menon's job in Colombo is likely to be taken up by Mr. Gopal Gandhi, currently Secretary to the President, Mr. K.R. Narayanan. Mr. Gandhi has had a remarkably successful stint as India's High Commissioner to South Africa.

However, the changes are not likely to be effected in a hurry. For, the consents of the host Governments has yet to be received. For another, Mr. Menon will obviously be not asked to move till the

present turmoil in Sri Lanka settles down to a reasonable equilibrium. In another change in the offing, Mr. Pawan Varma is slated to be the Ambassador to Cyprus.

Judge declines to discuss Microsoft motion

WASHINGTON, MAY 24. The judge hearing the Microsoft case today turned down a request by the software giant to consider a motion to dismiss the Government's proposal to break up the company, and moved immediately to consider anti-trust remedies.

The Microsoft Corp's lawyer, Mr. John Warden, said there were only two items on the agenda as far as he was concerned — the company's proposal to strike down the Government's plan to break up the company, and the schedule for further proceedings. But the judge, Mr. Thomas Penfield Jackson, decided otherwise. — Reuters

25 MAY 1998

India and the major powers

By Mohammed Ayooob

110-12
20/5

The U.S. President, Mr. Bill Clinton, has come and gone. The Russian President, Mr. Vladimir Putin, is expected to visit in the autumn. In the meanwhile, the President, Mr. K. R. Narayanan, is in China. Other high-level officials from France, Germany, Britain, and Russia have also visited New Delhi trying to hawk weapons or engage in commercial deals. The Indian profile in the international system has grown visibly in the past few years. Economic liberalisation and the consequent spurt in growth are substantially responsible for the greater visibility India has acquired recently. However, changes both in India's strategic environment and in its strategic posture have also played a large role. The Indian nuclear tests of May 1998, New Delhi's responsible behaviour following the tests and its measured response to Pakistani provocations in Kargil in 1999 have added to India's image as a mature regional power.

However, much of this has been achieved without forethought and often without the clear articulation of a game-plan on the part of India's policy-makers. What is needed is deep reflection about the nature of the world in which India has to operate at the beginning of the new century. The most important part of this reflection, in strategic terms, is to analyse the intentions and capabilities of the major powers that have the wherewithal to harm India's security, political and economic interests in the foreseeable future. It is also essential to extrapolate from visible trends the nature of the evolving relationship among the major international players themselves. This will help India position itself to take maximum advantage of the competing interests among the major powers and the likely tensions from such competition.

All this must be done without ideological blinkers or preconceptions regarding the inherent "nature" of any major power. The logic of being a major power usually supersedes all other considerations in determining its long-term actions. If India aspires to enter this exclusive club, it must learn to understand how this logic operates in the case of other powers. It

must adopt the time-tested maxim that in international politics there are no permanent friends or enemies only permanent interests. Furthermore, even interests change, as one's own capabilities and those of other relevant powers undergo transformation.

This means that New Delhi must embark on three major exercises concurrently. First, it must draw up a checklist of issues on which its interests and objectives converge or diverge from those of the three major powers—the U.S., China and Russia. Second, it must come to a considered conclusion about the capacity

What is needed is deep reflection about the nature of the world in which India has to operate at the beginning of the new century.

as well as the likely motivation of each of the three powers to advance or harm Indian interests. Third, it must systematically analyse the relations among the three major powers to be able to take advantage of any problems and contradictions, both current and potential.

There are no fundamental points of conflict between India and Russia, the weakest of the three powers, in areas of vital concern to India. However, Russia's potential to aid India, while still considerable in terms of weapons supply, is limited because of its economic incapacity and its technological retardation, especially in those areas most relevant for the new century. Russian supply of sophisticated weapons to China, although understandable in the light of its economic plight, should also cause alarm bells to ring in New Delhi. The Chinese are interested not so much in finished Russian products as in Russian weapons technology, both directly transferred and reverse engineered. The transfer of Russian equipment is in the long run bound to have an adverse impact on the conventional balance between India and China. This does not mean that India should stop buying arms from Russia. It should continue to do so where necessary, but at the same time it must be aware of grow-

ing Russian economic dependence on arms sale to China and what this may entail for India's own defence preparedness. China's objectives toward India, despite the recently-witnessed bonhomie in bilateral relations, are clearly malevolent. Nothing else can explain the nexus between Beijing and Islamabad in terms of conventional arms supply and, more important, the transfer of nuclear weapon design and missile components and technology by China (and its surrogates) to Pakistan. There is a long-term Chinese design evident in this relationship. This is to tie down India so completely in the

subcontinent as to prevent its emergence as a major power, and a competitor to China, in the wider Asian region. New Delhi must not be taken in by the current "soft" rhetoric emanating from Beijing. Lavish Chinese banquets for visiting dignitaries do not make up for the transfer of M-11 missiles to Pakistan. New Delhi must work harder on building long-term strategic relations with Japan, the other Asian power seen as a competitor by China, and therefore, India's logical potential ally in Asia. Relations with Taiwan should also be cultivated, even if clandestinely, while maintaining the fiction of Chinese sovereignty over the island. If the U.S. can have flourishing relationship with Taiwan under those terms so can India.

Indian's interests diverge from those of the U.S. on the question of nuclear proliferation. But on a whole host of other issues ranging from countering terrorism to containing China, Indian and American interests are beginning to converge in a major fashion. If a Republican President succeeds, Mr. Clinton, American suspicions of China in the security realm will multiply in geometric proportions. Even the Clinton administration, despite its increasingly discredited rhetoric regarding China being a "strategic partner", has become much more wary of China's long-

term goals and ambitions not only in Asia but globally. This explains some, probably much, of the effusiveness Mr. Clinton demonstrated toward India during his recent visit. India has a vested interest in tense relations between China and the U.S. It elevates India's position in American strategy. Also, China and not the U.S. poses the greatest threat to India's security. Any diminution in Chinese involvement is an additional bonus for India.

India must also learn to exploit potential contradictions in Russian-Chinese relations. While Moscow has sold arms to Beijing with great abandon during the past few years, elements within the Russian Government and its strategic community are extremely suspicious of Chinese long-term intentions and, therefore, its capabilities. This has to do both with the historic Chinese and Russian rivalry in Central and East Asia and to the Russian fear of a Chinese demographic invasion into the sparsely-populated Russian Far East.

India's representatives in the major capitals must learn to deal with, and use, elements within the host Governments and among their opinion moulders whose political and strategic inclinations converge with India's long-term objectives. Neither the American nor the Russian Governments are monoliths. This applies even more to the wider strategic communities in the two countries. Using "friendly" elements within these Government and communities to further Indian ends are a perfectly legitimate exercise under current diplomatic norms. Indian diplomats must master the art of using the domestic political processes within the host countries to advance India's strategic interests.

However, none of this can be done without clarity of strategic thinking and demonstration of political purpose within the corridors of power in New Delhi. One awaits indications that someone somewhere in New Delhi is attending to this critical task.

The writer is University Distinguished Professor of International Relations, Michigan State University, USA.

Jiang pitches ties high and far

FROM SANKARSHAN THAKUR

Beijing, May 29: In an atmosphere described as "rare in its cordiality and personal chemistry", presidents K.R. Narayanan and Jiang Zemin today resolved to take Sino-Indian relations to a new high, differences on a range of issues from New Delhi's nuclear programme to Beijing's political and military support to Pakistan notwithstanding.

While Narayanan said India and China should treat themselves "not as rivals but as neighbours complementing each other", the Chinese leader responded with a novel positive-sounding formulation: "From a strategic height we must continue to work for constructive partnership of cooperation in the 21st century".

Key as phraseology is to Chinese diplomacy, Jiang's repeated emphases on "raising the height" of bilateral ties is seen as significant, particularly in the backdrop of deep Chinese misgivings about the nuclear blasts.

"The extremely warm personal chemistry between the two leaders was evident throughout the talks," an Indian spokesperson said. "President Jiang departed several times from his prepared text to speak in English and the phrase used time and again was 'scale high and look far.'"

One of the peaks India and China may now scale together to look far is the creation of an eminent persons' group to suggest ways of invigorating ties. The proposal for the group was made by Narayanan and readily accepted by Jiang.

The spokesperson faulted suggestions that the talks lacked depth or substance in view of the nominal nature of the Indian President's office. "There was nothing to suggest that they were in any way inhibited about discussing anything with him (Narayanan). They were very clear and categorical and frank," the spokesperson said.

The two presidents first met for about 45 minutes with a core

set of aides and then followed up talks at the imposing Great Hall of the People in central Beijing flanked by delegations.

For the Indians, perhaps the positives went a little beyond the chemistry of atmosphere and the nuances of phrases. Jiang made no mention of the Pokhran blasts and India's changed nuclear status. There was little to indicate, of course, that the Chinese have moved closer to accepting India's case for going nuclear. But they are making it plain they are prepared to get ahead despite irritants.

Jiang said the two should now focus on greater people-to-people contacts, increased economic exchanges and "improved cooperation on international issues".

But the air of commonality did not obscure abiding concerns. Narayanan raised Pakistan's export of terrorism to India and sought China's support in fighting terrorism. The Chinese leader said his country was opposed to terrorism but made no specific references to Pakistan. Jiang also did not respond directly to Narayanan's request of support for India's case for permanent membership of the UN Security Council.

Jiang expressed apprehensions about the possibility of the Dalai Lama and the Karmapa indulging in anti-China political activity from Indian soil. He called the Dalai Lama a political leader and expressed the hope that he and the "clique around him" will not be permitted to indulge in political activity.

THE TELEGRAPH

U MAY 29

Problems in Fiji, Sri Lanka involving Indian diaspora propel govt. into action

By Manoj Joshi

NEW DELHI: After nearly two years of intense diplomacy to soothe the international community's anger over the Pokhran tests, the Indian government finds itself transfixed with two vexatious problems that do not directly concern this country. However, they cannot be set aside as they involve the Indian diaspora.

The troubles in Sri Lanka and Fiji have been termed by external affairs minister Jaswant Singh as "delicate" and "complex" precisely because they centre on the Indian diaspora. Realising that any public comment or policy declaration could exacerbate the situation, the government has been wary of adopting a public posture on these issues. Yet, says a high government official, speaking on condition of anonymity, India is working on the lines of well thought-out plans whose central goal is to promote democratic solutions benefiting both the diaspora and the host countries.

It is for this reason, says the official, that India is sending a senior career diplomat, secretary in the ministry of external affairs Sudhir Devare, to the Pacific region, to consult with key players like Australia and New Zealand on ways in which to untangle some of the snarled skeins of the Fiji situation.

The central aim of Indian policy in Sri Lanka, said the senior official, was to work towards a devolution of powers to the benefit of the Tamil minority. "If we have to aid an evacuation, we will do so," he noted, but the main aim is to work towards a lasting settlement of the ethnic strife in the island.

The official is quite clear that India will involve itself in broker-

adventure."

The official pointed out that President Chandrika Kumaratunga's 1995 offer could be a good starting point for the process. After all, it was in advance of that position that India and Sri Lanka had arrived at their 1987 bilateral agreement.

According to the official, Indian policy had to take into account the management of sentiments in Tamil Nadu. But, at the same time, it was based on the assumption that the LTTE does not represent the sentiments of all Sri Lankan Tamils. "We are talking about India's relations with Sri Lanka, not with the LTTE," he emphasised.

India's antipathy to the LTTE is well-known, as is its assessment that the organisation cannot be trusted. It is in this context that India has welcomed the role of the Norwegian mediators and the international Red Cross as 'shock absorbers' of sorts.

Whatever position India takes on the diaspora-related issues in Fiji or Sri Lanka, the Pokhran nuclear tests and this country's prowess in information technology seem to have helped it rediscover its larger political role in the world. In the process, India has realised the strength it gets from its overseas communities. This is the essential message of its diplomacy in Fiji and Sri Lanka.



George Speight

ing a ceasefire between the two Sri Lankan warring parties. According to him, the government views as red herrings options such as mediation or intervention. "Our main focus is devolution. We don't want to be side-tracked into a military

THE TIMES OF INDIA

31 MAY 1997

Lanka civil war: India sees no major breakthrough

Udayan Nambodiri
New Delhi, May 30

INDIA HAS assessed the latest civil war position in northern Sri Lanka as one heading towards a no-win situation for both sides. The Sri Lankan Army (SLA) and LTTE, are expected to dig into their heels and fight a seesaw battle for some time. As things start today, not very much is expected to happen on the ground by way of convincing breakthrough by either side. The initiative is still with the LTTE but with every passing day this initiative is getting blunted, sources said.

The Indian High Commissioner in Colombo, Mr Shiv Shankar Menon, who was here for consultations over the weekend, is learnt to have briefed South Block on the latest ground situation. Over the past two days, the SLA has launched two counter attacks. Though not much should be read into their outcome, they are believed to have considerably boosted the forces' morale.

"The LTTE is not in a position to carry out pitched battles in built up areas. Therefore, it may try to avoid a blood bath in Jaffna. On the other hand, the SLA is steadily getting a grip on the situation. The President has already ruled out evacuation", sources said.

Though heading for an impasse, the new reality may be pregnant with possibilities. While the Norwegian facilitation of LTTE-Colombo talks continue, India is hopeful that President Chandrika Kumaratunge may be in a position to work out a consensus with

Opposition Sinhala parties on her devolution package of 1995 which lies in a limbo for lack of across the board political support.

India, though keeping its Lanka policy focused on facilitating the passing of a just political and economic devolution package, would not intervene in Colombo's internal politics to play a mediatory role. The government of India does not want to be sidetracked into military adventurism or peripheral activity", a senior official said. The Norwegians are performing that task quite ably.

The official, or semi official, recognition that could be bestowed on the LTTE, treated world-wide as a terrorist outfit, is a problem that can be brought on board at a later stage. India has already made it clear that it does not view the LTTE as the only representative of the ethnic Tamils of Sri Lanka.

For now, India's sights are keenly focused on seeing the Sinhalese and Tamil population accept each other as indivisible parts of the Sri Lankan national whole. Isolating the LTTE will come later.

The overriding hope harboured here is that once a workable devolution package is hammered out, the LTTE would find it impossible to survive in the democratic process. New Delhi's humanitarian assistance offer, while still open, is conditional. If requested by either side, directly or through the Norwegians, India would fly in assistance but only after securing Red Cross guarantees. While carrying out its task, India is not willing to shed a single drop of its soldiers' blood, an official reiterated.

News Analysis

THE HINDUSTAN TIMES

3 MAY 1995

India mobilising opinion

By Our Special Correspondent

NEW DELHI, MAY 30. A senior official of the Foreign Office, Mr. S. T. Devare, is to leave for Australia and New Zealand in the next few days in an effort to mobilise international opinion in the matter of the ongoing constitutional turmoil in Fiji. This will be the first overt effort to be made by India. Mr. Devare is also likely to visit Suva, capital of Fiji.

So far the Government had refrained from any direct involvement, lest New Delhi's exertions be seen as provocation, which could rebound to the disadvantage of the ethnic Indian community in Fiji. But it is stated on good authority that India has been in touch with Australia, New Zealand, Britain. In the next few days the Commonwealth Ministerial Action Group is likely to be activated. The CMAG is expected to set up a "range of markers" which the new governing arrangement in Suva must subscribe to, failing which the Commonwealth could

think in terms of economic measures and ultimately invoke the Harare principles. However, there is a realisation that there are definite limits to economic interventionism in Fiji.

The Indian approach, in tandem with other concerned countries in the region, is to ensure that there was no return to the 1990 constitutional scheme of things, which institutionalized racism by debarring Fijians of Indian origins from holding high offices. The official judgment about the coup leader Mr. George Speight is that his action add up to "terrorism".

The Vajpayee Government has found itself increasingly under pressure at home to be seen as doing something about the developments in Fiji. Today the BJP came out strongly in favour of international sanctions against Fiji to pressure it to restore a democratic order.

Over the last ten days the BJP has been silent on Fiji, but today the party took note of the devel-

opments at a meeting of its foreign affairs cell, chaired by Mr. N. N. Jha, and attended among others by Mr. Brajesh Mishra, Principal Secretary to the Prime Minister. The party is clear that a legitimate prime minister has been overthrown, the president has been dismissed and the 1997 Constitution has been disbanded. "This was a cause for worry. We do not want some Fijians (read ethnic Indians) to become second class citizens," argued Mr. Venkaiah Naidu, the party spokesman. He further argued that it was "natural" for India to worry about the happenings there as 40 per cent of the population was that of ethnic Indians.

Not just the BJP, even the Congress(I) has demanded a "pro-active" approach towards the Fiji developments. The Congress(I) and the BJP believe the Government should be mobilising Commonwealth opinion and precedents against the illegal overthrow of the democratic Government in Fiji.

BJP Govt sends feelers to Islamic nations

JYOTI MALHOTRA & SAURABH SHUKLA
NEW DELHI, APRIL 5

THE BJP Government is making a concerted effort to reach out to the Islamic world, with External Affairs Minister Jaswant Singh likely to visit Iran and Saudi Arabia sometime in May.

Both visits are said to be especially significant, not only because of the conflicting political dynamics taking place within these countries, but also because both are key nations in West Asia.

Interestingly, the first signs of a thaw are now being seen in the

relationship between Iran and the US, after more than 20 years of a political deepfreeze, which is bound to have its own impact, also on the oil politics of the region.

Singh told The Indian Express that he would "firsthand" explore the reported offer by Iran to build an overland gas pipeline to India, about which Pakistan yesterday officially gave permission for its passage through its territory.

Singh also met the foreign minister of Turkmenistan, Boris Shikmuradov, on Tuesday, who is here to check out the Indian view, also on a proposed gas pipeline from southern Turk-

menistan, via Afghanistan and

Pakistan. All these nations in the region realise, analysts pointed out, that unless India, with its booming economy increasingly reliant on energy resources, agrees to be the end-user of any of

namics, with Indians constituting the largest expatriate source of labour in the Gulf. New Delhi is also keen to institute some sort of mechanism in Riyadh that will look into complaints of human

External Affairs Minister Jaswant Singh may visit Iran, Saudi Arabia; Panja on trip to Tunisia, Sudan, Egypt to further interaction

these pipelines, they will not be financially viable.

Indo-Saudi relations, on the other hand, have their own dy-

rights violations of these workers.

Meanwhile, Minister of State for External Affairs Ajit Panja has left for Tunisia, Sudan and Egypt,

to further interaction with nations of north and central Africa.

While the trip to Tunisia is to co-chair the eighth meeting of the Indo-Tunisia Joint Commission, the visit to Sudan is to initiate people-to-people contact between the two countries, besides resolving the issue of blocked funds in Sudan. Panja will meet Egyptian Foreign Minister Amr Moussa during a transit halt in Cairo.

"These visits were due for a long time and will give an opportunity to us to explain our position with regard to Pakistan and cross-border terrorism as these countries are members of the Organisation of Islamic Unity," Panja said.

India is also exploring Sudan as a potential trading partner. Panja's visit might also focus on strengthening scientific and technological cooperation between the two countries besides a discussion on the situation in South Asia.

In Tunisia, Panja will co-chair the eighth meeting of the Indo-Tunisian joint commission and will meet the Tunisian Prime Minister Mohammed Ghannouchi, and explore the possibility of strengthening political ties and economic cooperation between the two countries, besides explaining New Delhi's concerns on cross-border terrorism.

INDIAN EXPRESS

6 APR 2000

INDIA GOES ABROAD: HOLDING HER OWN AT THE NAM MINISTERS MEETING

India wants military states out of NAM

Cartagena (Colombia)
9 APRIL

INDIA, ON Sunday, demanded that the membership of military-ruled states like Pakistan should stand withdrawn from the Non-Aligned Movement (NAM) and asked other member states to support a comprehensive international convention against terrorism.

Without naming any country, external affairs minister Jaswant Singh told the opening session of the NAM ministerial meeting here that autocratic governments which subvert the constitutional process should have no place in the movement.

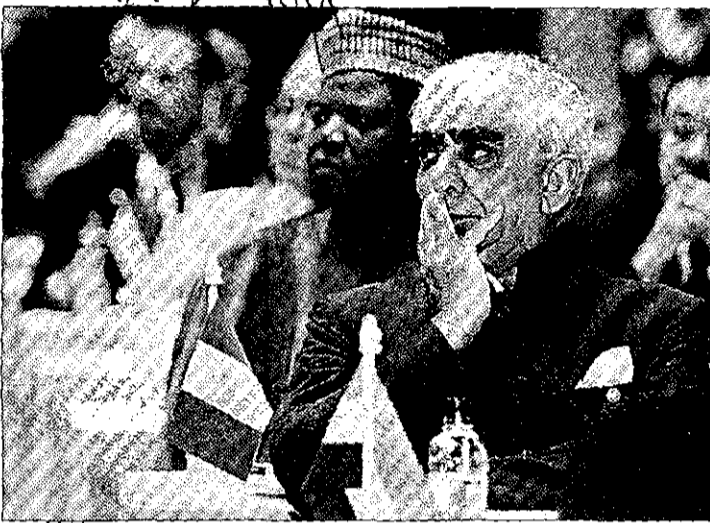
He cited conventions in the Commonwealth and Organisation of African Unity (OAU) where regimes overthrowing democratic governments were not allowed in their summits.

Singh told the two-day conference that the movement must commit itself "uncompromisingly" to democracy, the rule of law and preservation of fundamental rights and liberties.

"The Organisation of African Unity (OAU), whose members constitute the largest section of our movement, has decided that no ruler who has usurped power will be allowed into its summits, so too has the Commonwealth," he told delegates of the 115-member nam.

In an obvious reference to Pakistan, Singh regretted that the image of the developing countries got tarred because of "isolated lapses" and that they are seen as states where governance is "weak, abusive or corrupt."

However, Indian officials said the move to isolate military regimes in nam was not aimed against only Pakistan as there are two other members states — Myanmar and Ivory Coast — who also have autocratic governments.



Foreign minister Jaswant Singh listens to the opening speech of Colombian President Andres Pastrana at the inauguration of the 12th meeting of NAM foreign ministers in Cartagena, Colombia on Saturday

AFP

On terrorism and its linkages with narco-trafficking, Mr Singh urged the movement to work to strengthen the international consensus and legal regimes against the menace.

He said member states should give their "fullest support" to India's proposal for a comprehensive international convention against terrorism for

adoption by the UN.

Declaring India's commitment to the objective of global elimination of nuclear weapons, Mr Singh suggested the formalisation of a no-first-use agreement internationally as a step towards delegitimising nuclear weapons, an approach adopted in the Geneva protocol on chemical and biological weapons. — PTI

India rejects doctrine of humanitarian intervention

Sujit Chatterjee

CARTAGENA (Colombia) 9 APRIL

INDIA TODAY rejected the doctrine of "humanitarian intervention" thrown up for discussion by UN Secretary General Kofi Annan, saying it was yet another proposal to subvert the sovereignty and territorial integrity of a nation.

Making its views clear at the ongoing Non-Aligned ministerial conference in Cartagena, Indian delegation, led by external affairs minister Jaswant Singh, explained that any such instrument for intervention by powerful countries in "so-called trouble spots" was bound to be "misused politically." "Any such measure adopted by the UN can be used with an element of complete arbitrariness and lead to disturbing the stability of the world order," a senior Indian delegate to the conference said. — PTI

Dhaka to urge India to ratify Indira-Mujib pact

Pradip Kumar Chakraborty

DHAKA 9 APRIL

BANGLADESH WILL urge India to set a timeframe for ratification of the 1974 Indira-Mujib border treaty for the smooth resolution of outstanding border problems during five-day talks between the border forces of the two countries. The talks are scheduled to begin in New Delhi on Monday, officials said on Sunday.

"We have fixed the treaty ratification issue as our main agenda. We are optimistic about getting a concrete decision and timeframe from the Indian side for the same," Bangladesh Rifles director general Major General A.L.M. Fazlur Rahman said.

The other issues that are expected to be raised by the Bangladeshi side during the discussions include construction of an overbridge at the check post point of the Tin Bigha corridor (Dohagram-Angarpota enclave), and other matters relating to cross-border crime.

Mr Rahman will lead a sixteen-member Bangladeshi delegation at the talks. The Indian side will be headed by the Border Security Force (BSF) chief E.N. Rammohan.

Dhaka has been pressing New Delhi for long for a ratification of the Indira-Mujib treaty, which requires a constitutional amendment in the Indian Parliament.

Sources said the Indian side would take up various issues, including insurgency activities in the Northeast border areas, smuggling and other border-related subjects. — PTI

The Economic Times

10 APR 2000

Delhi for NAM bar on military states

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

CARTAGENA (Colombia), April 9. — India today made a strong demand for expulsion of military-ruled states like Pakistan from the Non-Aligned Movement, asserting that regimes subverting democracy process have no place in it.

Pakistan didn't respond to India's stand on the issue but raised Kashmir by stating its oft-repeated position that it was the "root cause" of tension in South Asia.

In his short address coming hours after Mr Jaswant Singh's speech, the Pakistani Foreign Minister, Mr Abdul Sattar, made no reference to return of democracy in his country, nor did he attempt to counter New Delhi's position.

DHAKA-AGARTALA BUS SERVICE

CARTAGENA, April 9. — India and Bangladesh today agreed to start a new bus link between Agartala and Dhaka, the second between the two neighbours after the Calcutta-Dhaka service. This decision was taken during a bilateral meeting Mr Jaswant Singh had with his Bangladeshi counterpart, Mr Abdus Samad Azad, on the sidelines of the NAM ministerial meet.

The two ministers were of the view that only a minor problem over a small stretch of road needed to be ironed out for the Agartala-Dhaka bus service to become operational. — PTI

"The Organisation of African Unity (OAU), whose members constitute largest section of our movement, has decided that no ruler who has usurped power will be allowed into its summits, so too has the Commonwealth," Mr Singh told the NAM foreign mini-

sters' conference here.

Mr Singh said the 115-nation movement must commit itself "uncompromisingly" to the rules of democracy, the rule of law and preservation of fundamental rights and liberties.

Indian officials said the move to isolate military regimes in

NAM was not an effort aimed only against Pakistan as there were two other members — Myanmar and Ivory Coast — which too had autocratic governments.

They recalled that the Commonwealth had suspended Pakistan's membership during the Durban summit last November.

The NAM foreign ministers' conference tonight finalised its declaration calling for convening an international conference at the earliest to arrive at an agreement for the complete elimination of nuclear weapons within a specified timetable.

The 231-point declaration is scheduled to be formalised by the ministers at their concluding session later tonight.

THE STATESMAN

10 APR 200

Dictator-ruled states should be kept out: NAM

Udayan Nambodiri
Cartagena (Colombia), April 10

IN A clear diplomatic triumph for India, the non-aligned Foreign Ministers' conference today endorsed New Delhi's position that military-ruled States should not be represented in the Non-Aligned Movement (NAM). The final view, however, would be taken by the NAM summit in Dhaka next year. External Affairs Minister Jaswant Singh had raised the issue prominently at the conference. Without naming Pakistan as such, he had made a strong plea to keep out from NAM countries with undemocratic governments and those that sponsored terrorism.

The declaration adopted by the Foreign Ministers' conference stated: "We welcome the decision of the Organisation of African Unity (OAU) in Algiers in July, 1999 calling for the restoration, before the OAU summit, of constitutional legality in states whose governments had come to power through unconstitutional means. We strongly recommend that this issue be considered by the movement (NAM) at the next summit (at Dhaka in 2001)."

Thus, the biggest gain for India has been in getting NAM to acknowledge the need to reinvent itself as a forum of nations based on the rule of law. Though solemn and anti-Pakistani, NAM could not resist the temptation to redefine its political culture.

The OAU member states make up the single biggest bloc in NAM.

By pleasing them, India has extracted not just help in embarrassing the Parvez Musharraf regime, but also insurance against another round of India baiting at the forthcoming summit of the Organisation of Islamic States (OIC) at Qatar. After all, a large number of OAU members are also part of OIC. So when Qatar wanted a resolution moved welcoming the staging of the summit, India swiftly moved in a rider explicitly mentioning that NAM members like itself who are not part of OIC would not be subject of unacceptable commentary.

Rhetoric continued to be poured on the burning economic questions before the developing world. The usual praises were showered on existing, multilateral and United Nations declarations striving for co-operation. Similarly, condemned was the G-8 domination of world trade (especially the unfinished agenda concerning agriculture and textiles of the Uruguay Round).

On Afghanistan, NAM has for the first time documented its official condemnation of the Taliban. Of course, this is bound to leave Pakistan unamused. But Indian diplomats are satisfied that riders that Pakistan may try to push in later would only figure in the appendix of the document. The document has categorically recorded disapproval of the "continuing use of Afghan territory, especially areas controlled by the Taliban, for the sheltering and training of terrorists and the planning of terrorist acts."

See also Page 14

THE HINDUSTAN TIMES

11 APR 2001

Missionary Zeal

Democracy as Foreign Policy

By SIDDHARTH VARADARAJAN

IF proof were needed of Indian foreign policy being stuck in a rut, one need look no further than the country's performance at the recent meetings of the Nonaligned Movement and the Group of 77. Far from having a pro-active agenda of turning these moribund organisations into vehicles that could advance the interests of India and the developing world as a whole, the Vajpayee government expended its energy in seeking to isolate Pakistan. Time was when Islamabad would calibrate the success or failure of its participation in international forums by the number of times it was able to mention the word 'Kashmir'. Sadly, New Delhi too now seems to be obsessed with carrying bilateral baggage to multilateral meetings.

The fight against 'international terrorism' has become a staple, with much importance being accorded to a draft convention which would do nothing to end the menace in India. And now, our foreign policy agenda and vocabulary has been expanded by the inclusion of another chimerical goal, 'democracy'.

Thanks largely to India's insistence, the 13th NAM foreign ministers conference at Cartagena ended with the international grouping adopting a stand against the subversion of democracy in member states. The conference's closing declaration — which incorporates the democracy norm for the first time in NAM's history — must now be endorsed by the movement's summit meeting to be held in Dhaka next year before it becomes official policy. In the event that the summit ratifies the Cartagena declaration *in toto*, three countries might be suspended from membership: Pakistan, Myanmar and the West African state of Cote d'Ivoire.

Drifting Agenda

Until recently, such a development would have been almost unthinkable. It would also have been considered out of step with the founding principles of nonalignment, one of which was non-interference in the internal affairs of sovereign states. In its heyday, NAM tolerated a plurality of political and economic systems. Some were socialist, others capitalist. Some had communist political systems, some multi-party and some unabashedly dictatorial. However, the common link between them all was the decision by its members to refrain from any formal military linkage with either the US or the erstwhile Soviet Union. In practice, many NAM

members were virtually members of one or the other camp. By the late 1960s, for example, Indonesia and Egypt were close strategic allies of the US; Vietnam and Cuba, on the other hand, were firmly in the Soviet fold. However, preserving the basic structure of NAM was considered more important than being too particular about the criterion for membership. After all, apart from political neutrality, NAM was also about forging a new international economic order.

Misguided Diplomacy

With the end of the Cold War, NAM has become an organisation desperately in search of a *raison d'être*. The world is now unipolar and much of the economic nationalism that underpinned the grouping has been consciously diluted by member countries themselves. Since it is not apparent what the movement must do or what interest it should articulate, NAM has been drifting along without an agenda for several years now. Last year, when one of its founding members — Yugoslavia — was subjected to unprovoked military aggression by the US and other NATO countries, NAM was unable to take a unified stand, let alone prevail upon Washington to respect the UN Charter.

Rather than seeking to address this directional drift, External Affairs minister Jaswant Singh made a strong plea at Cartagena for not allowing military rulers and dictators to be part of the grouping. His insistence that such a rule was not aimed specifically at Pakistan was, of course, strictly for the birds. Myanmar has been directly ruled by the army for more than two decades but New Delhi has never raised the matter at a NAM meeting or let that fact come in the way of normal bilateral relations. As for Cote d'Ivoire, West Africa is too far away to be of any great concern.

India's championing of democracy should be seen in two contexts. First, it is a continuation of the Vajpayee government's misguided — and in the long-run, counterproductive — efforts to isolate the Musharraf regime. Second, the US, which once supported military dictatorships around the world and which still tolerates authoritarian rule when convenient, wants India to join it in setting up what is being called the 'Concert of Democracies'. By demanding that NAM exert pressure on countries that are not democratic, New Delhi is signalling its enthusiasm for the pro-

1974 11/12
motion of US-defined norms of democracy and governance on a world scale.

The NAM declaration may suit the Vajpayee government's short-term aim of increasing international pressure on Pakistan's military rulers. However, the raising of issues like democracy runs the risk of diverting attention from the task of pushing NAM to fight for the economic and political interests of developing countries in a world that is rapidly becoming more complex and unequal. The Vajpayee government must also realise that the promotion of democracy and human rights lies at the heart of the doctrine of humanitarian intervention that Secretary General Kofi Annan unveiled at the UN General Assembly last year to the applause of the US and other big powers.

There is, in addition, a practical problem of definition which will not be easy to resolve. Although few countries today are ruled directly by their militaries, there is no agreement on the precise institutional form that democracy must take. Some NAM members have multi-party systems, others are ruled by a single party, some are monarchical states. If army rule is being objected to — presumably because democratic representation is denied to the concerned population — what about the various sheikhdoms and cosmetic democracies which abound in the membership list of NAM? These are questions which will have to be debated and sorted out before the Dhaka summit. If there is no consensus in Dhaka and the clause is not ratified, India will end up with egg on its face.

Isolating China

Finally, India must be extremely wary of the US-sponsored 'Concert of Democracies' idea. The proposed grouping has no purpose other than the isolation of China at the international level; certainly, the promotion of genuine political and economic plurality is not its aim. Whatever New Delhi's differences with Beijing, these must be sorted out at the bilateral level without the intrusion of extraneous ideological issues and without the involvement of other big powers. The same is true for our relations with Pakistan. Its all very well complaining to the whole world about how badly Islamabad has been behaving. However, the national interest will be served only by the resumption of dialogue.



THE TELEGRAPH

15 APR 2001

India claims 'major gains' at G-77 summit

By Hasan Suroor

HAVANA, APRIL 14. The five-day G-77 summit ended here today with India claiming several major diplomatic "gains", the most "significant" being the inclusion of its formulation on democracy in the final key document — the Havana Declaration the main theme of which is combating international terrorism and removing inequities in north-south trade. The formulation commits all G-77 countries to "promoting democracy and strengthening the rule of law" sending out a strong message to those G-77 member countries where democratic institutions are under siege.

Officials stressed that it was not related to developments in Pakistan, which is facing international pressure to restore democracy, and was simply a way of re-emphasising the third world's commitment to democracy. In reply to a question, the Secretary (Economic Relations) in the Ministry of External Affairs, Mr. Sudhir K. Devare, said there was no opposition to the paragraph from any country, and even Pakistan went along with it. "They did not oppose it."

India also succeeded in pushing through its proposal that the summit recognise the significance of information technology and urge member countries to make full use of it for development. The final version included in the Declaration describes information technology as "one of the pillars of technological revolution... and a powerful development tool of our time."

Pak. keeps low profile

There was a degree of barely concealed satisfaction in Indian diplomatic circles that in comparison Pakistan took a back seat and virtually made no significant contribution to the Declaration. "Well, we didn't notice any," senior officials noted drily. Despite the presence

of the Chief Executive, Gen. Pervez Musharraf, Pakistan apparently not only kept a low profile but according to the leader of the Indian delegation Dr. Murli Manohar Joshi, it even seemed isolated. In fact, this was one reason, he suggested, why Pakistan did not raise the Kashmir issue. "After what they experienced at NAM (non-aligned Foreign Ministers' conference in Colombia) they realised that raising the issue here would not help," he said.

Dr. Joshi claimed "widespread support" for India on bilateral issues and said most of the countries whose representatives he met here during the summit recognised New Delhi as a "world leader." "Yasser Arafat (Palestinian leader) hugged me and kissed me twice," he chuckled. And added that India "certainly enjoys greater respect and support than Pakistan does."

The Cuban President, Mr. Fidel Castro, whom he met briefly to deliver a message from the Prime Minister, MR. Atal Behari Vajpayee, was "very happy and warm" though he regretted that the Prime Minister himself did not make it to the summit.

The Indian camp was particularly excited over Cambodia's public support for India's claim to a permanent seat at the United Nations Security Council. The mood was one of celebration as the word spread that the Cambodian Prime Minister, Mr. Hun Sen, had stood up for India — redeeming the promise he had made during his visit to India recently.

Officials said India's perceptions on several issues were reflected both in the Havana Declaration and the Programme of Action adopted at the summit. These included the Indian position that G-77 should focus entirely on development issues and not allow political differences to come in the way of south-south cooperation. In fact there was a sense in some Indian circles that Mr. Castro somewhat spoilt his brilliant speech with his political attack on

the U.S. and other developed countries.

Dr. Joshi said while Mr. Castro's "facts were clear" India believed that the emphasis in G-77 should be on development and south-south cooperation rather than on political differences.

In his speech, the Minister focussed on sustainable development which, he said, was possible if there was "sustainable consumption and sustainable production". He called for curbs on "excessive" consumption saying that conspicuous consumption in affluent societies put an intolerable strain on the earth's resources and environment. He also reiterated India's strong opposition to attempts to link trade with social issues such as core labour standards and environment.

This is reflected in the final declaration which among other things calls for a more equitable and participative world economic order. It expresses concern that liberalisation of international trade has not benefitted most of the developing countries, and says there is need to restore confidence in multilateral trading system. "We stress the universality of the World Trade Organisation through acceleration of the accession process without political conditionalities", the declaration says.

The declaration sharply asserts the "right" of developing countries to choose their own models of development in accordance with their national priorities "without any interference in their internal affairs."

Envoy to Nepal named

NEW DELHI, APRIL 14. Dr. Deb Mukharji, currently Indian High Commissioner in Bangladesh, has been appointed Ambassador to Nepal, in succession to Mr. K. V. Rajan. He is expected to take up his assignment shortly, an official release said today. — UNI

THE HINDU

THE HINDU

15 April 1994

Consider talks with Pak. at right time: MPs

By Our Special Correspondent

NEW DELHI, APRIL 17. While backing the Government's campaign to counter international terrorism, several parliamentarians today said India should consider a dialogue with Pakistan at an "appropriate time."

Participating in a discussion at the meeting of the Parliamentary consultative committee on External Affairs, many lawmakers called for fine-tuning the country's efforts at mobilising international opinion against terrorism. The Government should examine the nexus between the terrorism in Jammu and Kashmir and the North-East. The connection of international terrorism with drug trafficking and terrorism should also not be missed. Besides, India should make a special effort to

make the Islamic world aware of Pakistan's terrorist activities.

The External Affairs Minister, Mr. Jaswant Singh, said the issue of international terrorism was of high security concern to India after the Kargil war. Terrorism was globally linked to illicit trade in drugs, arms and money laundering. "Certain states" have emerged as a source of international terrorism and destabilisation.

India followed the principle of "extradite or prosecute" in its approach to international terrorism. It also proposed an international convention against the menace in the United Nations General Assembly with the objective of forming an umbrella instrument to cover all aspects of international terrorism.

THE HINDU

18 April 2001

9 Review A seat for India ^{XF 13}

COMPARED TO the post-Pokhran II period, when India was supposed to have botched its chances of becoming a permanent member of the UN Security Council by testing nuclear devices, New Delhi seems suddenly to have acquired a number of influential backers. France has taken the opportunity of President K.R. Narayanan's visit to that country to let it be known that it supports India's case, and so has Britain via Robin Cook. Earlier, the US ambassador in India, Richard Celeste, had spoken about his country being prepared to give "serious consideration" to India's membership. All this is a far cry from what the situation was in the summer of 1998. If France's latest stand is typical of a country which likes to demonstrate that its foreign policy is uninfluenced by what the Americans may do or say, the same is not true of Britain which tends to take its cue from across the Atlantic. Yet it now thinks that India is a "natural contender" for the honour.

What explains this change? Although no definite assertions are possible, several pointers are there. First, even if the West is unhappy about Pokhran II, it seems to have decided to treat it as an unpleasant fact of life which cannot be undone and, therefore, has to be regarded as a closed chapter. Secondly, the West may have become a lot more aware than before, especially after Kargil, about India's maturity and growing status as a major country in its region. Related to this perception is India's high potential as an economic power and a possible counterweight to China, both in military and economic terms. But, thirdly and perhaps most importantly, the West appears to have suddenly been impressed by India's democratic credentials. True, Indian democracy is not yesterday's phenomenon, but what may have drawn renewed attention to it is the orderly manner in which three elections were held in three years between 1996 and 1999 as the country searched for stable governance.

What is more, the boisterous and yet smooth exercise in popular choice was in striking contrast to China's continued totalitarianism and Pakistan's retreat to military rule. If anything, the elections underlined India's maturity as a nation despite its immense political and cultural variety, which was specifically noted by Mr Clinton during his recent visit. At a time when West Asia and Pakistan retain their feudal and authoritarian structures, Sri Lanka is embroiled in an endless civil war, Myanmar is closed to the world and the ASEAN countries are virtual one-party states, the vibrant democracy in India stands out in solitary splendour. Hence, perhaps, the growing belief that it can no longer be denied its legitimate place in the Security Council.

THE HINDUSTAN TIMES

20 April 2000

France hails Narayanan's 'historically significant' visit

Ethirajan Anbarasan and
Sri Krishna

PARIS 21 APRIL

FRANCE ON Friday hailed President K.R. Narayanan's visit, the first ever by an Indian head of the state to the country, as "historically significant" and said a strong relationship between the two nations is an essential aspect of the multi-polar world.

Describing the meetings between Mr Narayanan and French leaders earlier this week as "friendly and productive", a foreign ministry statement said, "the visit confirms the resolve on both sides to develop a close partnership."

Mr Narayanan held talks on multi-faceted ties involving France and India with President Jacques Chirac and Prime Minister Lionel Jospin before winding up his five-day state visit.

"The meetings enabled us to address the respective concerns, especially with regard to non-proliferation. France sees this as one of the core conditions of international security, and we believe India has the most important role to play in this

area," the statement said.

Indian diplomats said the "unusual gesture" from the French side reflected the "extraordinary warmth in bilateral ties".

However, the presidential visit proved to be a nightmare for Indian diplomats following French press reports terming the event as "an untouchable in Paris".

A daily also raked up the Lalita Oraon case, relating to charges against an Indian diplomat for sexually abusing the maid servant.

Though one of the French dailies later tendered an apology to the President, Mr Narayanan is believed to have expressed his displeasure over the incident.

Meanwhile, it was announced on Friday that French defence minister Alain Richard will visit India next month to hold talks with senior Indian officials on defence deals.

The two-day visit by Mr Richard from May 18 will be preceded by the trip by French joint chief of armed forces General Jean-Pierre Kelche,

who is expected to begin his four-day tour from April 23, they said.

India and France are holding crucial negotiations over the purchase of 10 additional Mirage-2000 fighter jets for the Indian Air Force (IAF) and Dassault Aviation's Alpha Jet is a key contender for the IAF's search for an advanced jet trainer (AJT).

The visit of the French defence minister assumes significance as the Indian government Thursday approved the purchase of 66-AJTs worth \$1.6 billion. A French defence delegation was recently in India to sell the Alpha Jet by lowering the jet's price and offering complete technology transfer.

The French delegation's leader Gerard La Rosa, director of the Armament Studies College, met Indian defence secretary T.R. Prasad and defence production secretary Prabir Sengupta during the visit, which was extended to clinch a deal. However, both sides have maintained strict secrecy over the developments.

— PTI

~~The Economic Times~~

The Economic Times

21 April

India warned of Rumtek 'illegal entry'

STATESMAN NEWS SERVICE

NEW DELHI, March 3. — An emissary of Thaye Dorje, the rival claimant to the Karmapa throne, today warned India that an attempt may be made to forcibly enter the Rumtek monastery in Sikkim.

A makeshift helipad had also been constructed near the monastery to facilitate "illegal entry", Lama Sonam Rinchin. The reference was obviously to reports that the 17th Karmapa, Urgyen Trinley Dorje, had expressed a desire to visit Sikkim.

The Lama, at his first public appearance since his arrival here, said the government could face serious law and order problems if Urgyen Trinley Dorje prolonged his stay in the country.

The government would have

to be alert to the dangers which had wider political implications, he said.

Lama Rinchin accused "powerful forces backed by power and money" for carrying on a campaign of misinformation. He hinted the Dalai Lama could be behind these campaigns, when he clarified that the forces were not Chinese but "who fight for Tibet against China".

Even though they respected



Urgyen Thinley Dorje

the Dalai Lama as a political leader, the Karma Kagyu sect was not ready to accept his spiritual leadership, the Lama said.

He, however, insisted that no demands were being made of the Indian government. "We are not in a position to advise the Indian government".

At today's press conference, Lama Rinchin released a book, The Siege of the Karmapa, which details the historical back-

ground and the "conspiracy" leading to the 1993 violence at Rumtek monastery.

Documents distributed to journalists quoted the demand of a non-government organisation, the Sikkim Buddhist Culture Protection Organisation, for installation of Thaye Dorje at Rumtek. The organisation reportedly submitted a memorandum to the Prime Minister and had sought steps for the preservation, protection and safe custody of the monastery.

The NGO criticised Urgyen Dorje saying the "Chinese Lama" was misusing Indian hospitality by making political statements.

It expressed concern that India would be used as a platform for raising political issues which would disturb Sino-Indian relations.

Curbs won't cloud India's N-plan: PM

'Strategy needs will dictate arms control'

KAIGA: Prime Minister Atal Behari Vajpayee reiterated India's commitment to a time-bound and comprehensive global disarmament but asserted that this would be guided by "strategic autonomy and the need to maintain a credible minimum nuclear deterrent".

Dedicating the second unit of the Kaiga atomic power station to the nation, Mr Vajpayee said, "Till all weapons of mass destruction are dismantled we continue to be guided by the imperative of India's strategic autonomy and the need to maintain a credible minimum nuclear deterrent."

The PM's statement assumes significance in the light of U.S. President Bill Clinton's forthcoming visit to India. Mr Vajpayee asserted that India's self-reliance in the nuclear sector will not be compromised and said "every Indian is proud of the fact that despite sanctions being imposed, the capacity factors of our nuclear power plants have gone up considerably."

He said that over the years India had followed a policy of restraint in the area of nuclear weapons. "Finally, in May 1998 we were compelled to exercise the nuclear option due to deterioration of the regional security environment," he said.

The prime minister said the nuclear energy sector was close to his heart and he would ensure that it played a very important role in the country's development and security.

The prime minister announced a new programme to encourage young scientific talent. He said the government was preparing a plan to assure a guaranteed career profile for young boys and girls highly talented in science, right from the ten plus two stage, provided they opt for a career in research.

Mr Vajpayee said government was committed to increase funding for research and development from one per cent of the GDP to two per cent in five years to encourage a career in science among the youth.

Recalling that after the nuclear tests in 1998 he had declared that India had become a nuclear weapons state, he said the country would follow a no-first-use policy. "This shows our confidence in our

nuclear strength. It also shows our desire that weapons of mass destruction should not be used by anybody," he said.

He urged scientists to work with renewed vigour to master the emerging frontiers of technology to defeat today's neo-colonialism through technology control.

Congratulating the Nuclear Power Corporation Limited (NPCL) for its achievements, Mr Vajpayee said the 220-mw pressurised heavy water reactor was indigenously designed to meet the latest safety standards and had state-of-the-art technology including computerised controls.

Underscoring the importance of nuclear energy, Mr Vajpayee said over the last three decades, nuclear power had proved to be a viable, clean and safe energy resource and called for efforts to increase per capita energy consumption. He said nuclear power would become increasingly important, contributing substantially to the energy sector of the country as conventional sources of fossil fuel like coal and oil were fast depleting.

Mr Vajpayee noted that the nuclear sector which had slowed down in the industrialised countries in the recent past was now beginning to pick up in Asia.

He said the centre had already sanctioned Rs 2 crore to help villagers displaced from the vicinity of the Kaiga atomic power project. Another Rs 2 crore would be given from the central treasury, he assured. (PTI)



A.B. Vajpayee

India rebuffs bid to link UN seat with the Kashmir issue

HT Correspondent
New Delhi, March 7

INDIA TODAY rebuffed any attempt to connect its search for a permanent seat in an expanded United Nations Security Council (UNSC) with the question of the implementation of the UN resolutions on the Kashmir issue.

Days before US President Bill Clinton's visit, it also reiterated its uncompromising opposition to any third party mediation on the issue that, in Washington's perception, renders the region the most dangerous one in the world.

The latest provocation was a Washington-dated report quoting a Press release by the Indian American Political Foundation which in turn quoted President Clinton as saying, "India should be

a permanent member of the SC along with Brazil and Japan but how to overcome the UN resolutions regarding Kashmir is the main obstacle to such action."

Noting the unofficial nature of the news item, the official spokesman for the External Affairs Ministry said, "We see absolutely no connection between the two issues. Our legitimate claim to a permanent membership of the UNSC is predicated on very strong objective criteria. As far as the Jammu and Kashmir issue is concerned, we see no role for a third party including the US."

The chasm between the Indian and US positions was in evidence yesterday with an eminent US South Asia hand mentioning a "contributory" role that Washington could play in ensuring

that peaceful talks between India and Pakistan could be resumed.

More strikingly, however, his colleagues from the Brookings Institute, advocating at a panel discussion yesterday a resumption of the India-Pakistan dialogue without pre-conditions, also indicated how the informed US opinion was no respecter of the Indian perception about Musharraf.

While New Delhi is stuck in its unyielding stance of no dialogue with the usurper Gen. Musharraf unless Pakistan stops patronising cross-border terrorism, Richard N. Haass and Stephen P. Cohen advocated a resumption of the India-Pakistan dialogue without pre-conditions so that a further slide in Pakistan's fortunes with dire consequences for the region could be checked.

THE HINDUSTAN TIMES

- 8 MAR 2000

India's nukes pose no threat to US, asserts Gujral

HT Correspondent
Washington, March 8

INDIA'S UNIQUE internal compulsions have affected its foreign and security policies in special ways, according to former Prime Minister Inder Kumar Gujral.

Speaking as a special guest at the World Affairs Council in Wilmington, Delaware, yesterday, Mr Gujral pointed out that the significant challenges India faces in areas of development, demography, energy, security concerns, justice and problems related to assertion of regional identities, have an effect on the country's policies in various spheres.

"With rising incomes and population, India's energy requirements are growing rapidly," Mr Gujral said. "With the resources of the Bombay High being depleted, and in the absence of significant indigenous oil or gas reserves, India

will become even more dependent on external energy supplies. This implies a degree of congruence with all the powers seeking security of the sea-lanes and stability in the Gulf and Central Asia."

Mr Gujral asserted that the intensity of any bilateral relationship was based on whether the two sides posed a threat to each other or whether they presented opportunities. India and its nuclear weapons did not endanger the US. They were like the nuclear weapons of the UK, France or Israel.

At the same time, India's steady economic growth despite frequent changes in the Government was bound to result in closer and multi-faceted India-US relations. "I endorse an international relations theory popular in many American campuses that democracies are more likely to be stable partners, less likely to interfere in each other's affairs, and less likely to make war on each other," Mr Gujral said. "This will

perhaps be even more relevant in the post-Cold War era. Overall, therefore, we are dealing with a situation of difficult legacies but positive trends."

Speaking of India's relationships with its immediate neighbours, the former Prime Minister referred to what had been described as the "Gujral Doctrine" --- an asymmetrical policy in which India was willing to do more for its neighbours than they could do for India. The policy had paid rich dividends in an increased atmosphere of trust and cooperation in the region. The vision was to weave together mutual relationships "within a cooperative framework where democracy and pluralism become the warp and weft of the South Asian fabric."

The one unfortunate exception to the above heartening scenario was Pakistan, which violated every principle of good faith and trust.

THE HINDUSTAN TIMES

9 MAR 2001

New Delhi regrets Clinton's decision

HT Correspondent
New Delhi, March 8

INDIA TODAY reiterated its unhappiness with US President Bill Clinton's decision to visit Pakistan while Islamabad was quick to reinforce the argument that the visit would indeed signal US support to the military regime.

The decision had clearly dismayed India because it demolished at one stroke the carefully built Indian strategy for isolating the military regime in Pakistan in the international community. Pakistan's military ruler Gen. Musharraf was quick to grasp this particular implication. "It (the trip) vindicates the legitimacy of my government's stand," he said.

Driving the point home, Pakistan also linked President Clinton's decision to his desire "to resolve the Kashmir problem and bring peace to our region."

The US however clarified that the stop-over would mean neither an approval of the military regime nor a desire to play a mediatory role in the Kashmir issue.

The official spokesman for the External Affairs Ministry said Prime Minister Atal Behari Vajpayee's remark to President

Clinton during last evening's telephone conversation that the visit would signal support for the military regime "means precisely that."

"There is support to terrorism from Pakistan," he said. "There is complete freedom for terrorists to operate from bases in Pakistan, which is a cause for concern to both India and the US. The US has expressed on many occasions its concern over terrorism."

The India-US Working group said on Feb. 8 that both India and the US unequivocally condemned terrorism of all sorts irrespective of "the considerations of a political, philosophical, ideological, racial, ethnic, religious or any other nature that may be invoked to justify them."

Secretary of State Madeleine Albright said on Feb. 16, while testifying before the House International Relations Committee that Pakistan had become a "transit point" for terrorists. "We have been concerned about the fact", she said, "that groups like Harkat-ul-Mujahideen, which we believe was involved in the recent hijacking of an Indian Airlines plane, is operating from Pakistan."

Related report on Page 24

THE HINDUSTAN TIMES

- 9 MAR 2000

War of words at Sino-Indian talks

STATESMAN NEWS SERVICE

NEW DELHI, March 8. — Sharp differences between India and China were evident at the first round of Sino-Indian security dialogue, with China urging India to implement the post-Pokhran UN Security Council resolution 1172 calling for a roll-back of India's nuclear programme, and India expressing concern over China's help to Pakistan's missile and nuclear programme.

While the two countries have agreed to continue the dialogue, saying it is the only way to resolve differences, the recently-concluded joint secretary-level talks in Beijing make it clear that China remains the strongest opponent of India's nuclear programme among the P-5 countries.

India minced no words in conveying its

51-5 913
concerns about China's assistance to Pakistan's nuclear and missile programme, saying it had an adverse impact on regional stability to which India had been obliged to respond in a responsible and restrained manner.

India also drew attention to the responsibility of major countries to work to address new threats to regional security and stability, including that of terrorism and transnational crime.

China's call for implementation of the UN Security Council resolution cut little ice with India, which emphasised the need for sensitivity to each other's security concerns.

India informed China of its overall security objectives, including its nuclear policy, and emphasised the importance of the principles of Panchsheel, which requires sensitivity to each other's sovereignty

including the sovereign right of a country to determine its own security needs and to take necessary measures for its national security requirements, said an external affairs spokesman.

Areas of consonance were spelt out in broad and general terms, with both countries agreeing that sovereignty was indivisible and that the principles of Panchsheel should guide relations between the major countries to bring about a multipolar world order.

The two countries agreed that they bore a responsibility for maintenance of peace and stability.

Their dialogue would be one conducive to enhancing mutual understanding, expanding consensus and promoting cooperation and it was the only means for the resolution of their differences, the spokesman said.

THE STATESMAN

- 9 MAR 2 000

Indo. 63
16-15

India will not bow to pressure on CTBT: Jaswant

16/3

NEW DELHI, MARCH 15. The External Affairs Minister, Mr. Jaswant Singh, today asserted that India would not "buckle under pressure" on the Comprehensive Test Ban Treaty and said New Delhi did not share the U.S. President, Mr. Bill Clinton's perception that the situation in Jammu and Kashmir was explosive.

The Government would not have conducted nuclear tests in 1998 if it had "buckled under pressure", Mr. Singh said while responding to a special mention in the Rajya Sabha raised by Mr. Eduardo Faleiro of the Congress(I) on Mr. Clinton's visit.

On Mr. Clinton's reported statement that the situation along the Line of Control in Jammu and Kashmir was dangerous, the Minister said, "we do not share the same perception".

Accusing the Government of buckling under pressure on the CTBT issue, Mr. Faleiro said national interests had been given a go-by by agreeing to dismantle quantitative restrictions at the initiative of the U.S.

On Mr. Faleiro's query on QRs, Mr. Singh said the QRs had not been dismantled at the instance of Washington but to fulfil a World Trade Organisation obligation.

Earlier, in another special mention, Mr. Ram Gopal Yadav (Samajwadi Party) alleged that the U.S. Secretary of State, Ms. Madeleine Albright, had made statements of "indirect threat" to New Delhi on In-

dia's nuclear programme and said the U.S. should stop interfering in the country's internal matters. He was supported by the CPI member, Mr. Gurudas Das Gupta.

In the Lok Sabha, Mr. Singh said the military rule in Pakistan was not coming in the way of resumption of a dialogue with it and that New Delhi's insistence on creation of a suitable climate for dialogue by Islamabad was "not a pre-condition" but "an essential ingredient".

India had initiated the dialogue and was "wedded and committed" to a dialogue with Pakistan. However, for the resumption of dialogue, "a suitable climate, which is not a pre-condition but an essential ingredient, has to be created," he said.

He said Pakistan must check cross-border terrorism, abjure violence and stop hostile propaganda against India to create a suitable atmosphere for resuming talks.

India was committed to resolving all outstanding issues with Pakistan including those related to Jammu and Kashmir bilaterally in accordance with the Shimla agreement and the Lahore declaration, Mr. Singh pointed out. The international community now openly recognised Pakistan's state-sponsorship of terrorism and the impact this had on the security of the country and the region. — PTI

THE HINDU
16 MAR 2000

Veiled warning against legitimising Musharraf

Atal deals democracy ace to US

FROM PRANAY SHARMA

New Delhi, March 15: Atal Behari Vajpayee today fell back on the Commonwealth to tell the US that India cannot return to the talks table unless democracy is restored in Pakistan, and cautioned President Bill Clinton against legitimising the Pervez Musharraf regime during his visit to that country.

Simultaneously, the foreign ministry made it clear that India was not prepared to accept a role for Clinton in resolving the Kashmir dispute nor to resume talks with Pakistan, both of which are on the US President's wishlist.

In a message on Commonwealth Day, the Prime Minister said: "The commonwealth heads of government, in the meeting held in Durban in November 1999, reiterated their shared commitment to the principles of democracy... This commitment will, we hope, be continued to be reflected in every action taken by our association."

After Musharraf's coup, the Commonwealth suspended Pakistan from all its councils. Vajpayee had played a key role in this, and had then said Delhi would not accept Islamabad's request for talks till it stopped abetting cross-border terror.

Vajpayee's remarks today appear to have twin objectives. One, he is affirming that India will not betray its belief in democracy by legitimising the Pakistani junta with a reopening of talks. Two, he is trying to convey to the US that it should pressure Musharraf to restore democracy and stop export of terror.

In Washington, secretary of state Madeleine Albright was al-

laying India's fears about Clinton's Pakistan trip. She said: "In no way is this a decision to endorse the military coup or the government led by Musharraf."

Although Delhi has reluctantly come to terms with the Pakistan visit, it is now hardening its stand by telling the US it should keep its hands off Kashmir and reiterating that it is in no hurry to resume talks.

"The US has no role to play in the India-Pakistan dispute. Not as a mediator, neither as a facilitator nor by using its good office to make the two sides resume the dialogue," an official said.

India's stand stems from the feeling that after Clinton's visit the government will be forced to resume talks with Pakistan.

A senior South Block official said Indian and US perceptions on Kashmir differed sharply. "We don't agree with the US view that South Asia is a flashpoint. We are not willing to resume dialogue with Pakistan unless it creates the right atmosphere - which is stopping cross-border terrorism."

With barely a week to go for Clinton's touchdown, India is laying the parameters for talks during the visit: no compromise on either Kashmir or the nuclear issue. Washington does not expect it either, not at least on the nuclear issue. It will concede Delhi has the sovereign right to decide what is necessary for its security, but will add the sting of a condemnation of the nuclear tests.

Pak bans meetings

Pakistan has banned political meetings in public, strikes and processions to avoid any unpleasant incident during Clinton's visit.

■ More reports on Page 6

THE TELEGRAPH

16 MAR 2000

'US accepts India's stand on sanctity of LoC'

JYOTI MALHOTRA
NEW DELHI, MARCH 17

THE bitterness and anger of the Pokharan tests between India and the US have been greatly reduced, resulting in Washington's acceptance of India's nuclear deterrent as well as a recognition of the fact that "map-making in the sub-continent" must come to an end.

In an exclusive interview with The Indian Express on the eve of the visit of US President Bill Clinton to India, External Affairs minister Jaswant Singh today said the US acceptance of the sanctity of the Line of Control was "both a reaffirmation of India's position and a reiteration of what President Clinton and former Pakistani prime

minister agreed upon on July 4 last year...that territory must not be violated."

Singh added, "What I had said many months ago, that map-making in the sub-continent must cease, is now being said by a number of people in a number of ways."

The foreign minister stressed that New Delhi continued to be "profoundly disturbed" by Pakistan's stated intention to continue a 'jehad' against India, adding that "one can scarcely expect jehad as an instrument of foreign policy or as acceptable behaviour between nations."

Singh was, however, not willing to say whether the recent comments made by US Secretary of State Madeleine Albright on

freezing the borders between India and Pakistan along the LoC implied, finally, the US acceptance of Kashmir as a part of India.

But highly placed sources in the Ministry of External Affairs pointed out that Albright's statement at the Asia Society in Washington two days ago was a far cry from May 1988, when she had taunted India with the following words: "India has dug itself into a hole."

The ministry sources said the relationship with the US "had come a long way since then", indicated not only by Albright's remarks about a strategic partnership between the two countries, but also the fact that China had become "increasingly perturbed" about Washington's acceptance of India's minimum nuclear deter-

rent. Singh confirmed that the US, indeed, had accepted that India "would keep" a minimum nuclear deterrent, despite the fact that this went against a resolution (No. 1172) put together by the permanent members of the Security Council after the Pokharan tests two years ago.

The implication of the US programme is here to stay. This is the first time since the Indo-US dialogue began nearly two years ago in the aftermath of the bitter criticism of India's nuclear tests that a senior Indian minister has gone on record about the US view.

Asked if the Clinton visit had real meat in it or was merely a grand tamasha, Singh emphasised that the visit must not be seen in terms of a "destination" but rather a "direction" to the future relationship.

"On account of the statements made by US officials at different times and at different fora, and most lately by US Deputy Secretary of State Strobe Talbott, I do say that Washington has accepted India's minimum nuclear deterrent." The significance of Singh's statement is that the US, after much prevarication around the truth, has finally accepted that India's nuclear programme is here to stay.

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Jaswant Singh

recognition is clearly far-reaching in nature. It means that the sanctity and exclusivity of the nuclear club — only five powers who are also the only countries to have permanent membership of the UN Security Council — may be finally over.

"All the consequences of the Pokharan tests as well as the differences in perception between India and the US have been greatly reduced. Certainly, there is much greater understanding of each other's positions... India's nuclear weapon status is a fact and facts can neither be undone or done away with," Singh said.

Asked if the Clinton visit had real meat in it or was merely a grand tamasha, Singh emphasised that the visit must not be seen in terms of a "destination" but rather a "direction" to the future relationship.

MEA announces high points of Clinton visit

SF10
19/3
STATESMAN NEWS SERVICE

NEW DELHI, March 18. — Kashmir, Indo-Pak tensions, nuclear proliferation and the CTBT seem to be the issues that will dominate interests and attention during the US President's visit — a tour whose feel-good factor is rapidly eroding because of excessive sanitisation and lack of substance.

The external affairs ministry today spelt out some high points of the visit, perhaps, to divert the overwhelming focus on contentious issues. But it was a case of too little too late and there were few takers for the niceties.

Earlier today, Mr Jaswant Singh's appeal not to view the visit through the prism of Indo-Pak relations fell on deaf ears with all media questions focussing on the differences between the two countries.

A vision statement paving the future direction of Indo-US relations, an agreement to establish a science and technology forum and a joint statement on cooperation in energy and environment are, according to the MEA, some of the highpoints of Mr Bill Clinton's five-day visit to India.

The MEA was perhaps trying to counter the excessive focus on negative aspects that have arisen out of the vacuum in the visit's substantive content, either real or created by excessive official secrecy.

The agreement to set up the science and technology forum would implement a 1997 decision. It envisages transfer of technology research and development, a comprehensive electronic reference source and electronic exchange and dissemination of information, studies and assistance of joint collaborations as well as interaction with other scientific societies.

The forum will be monitored by a governing body comprising seven eminent people from each side and function as a non-profit organisation with the department of science and technology acting as the nodal agency for governmental interface.

The joint statement on cooperation in energy and environment would focus on promotion of energy cooperation, protection of environment, role of energy in economic development as well as health and environmental risks associated with unsustainable development, MEA officials said.

Mr Clinton will visit Nayla village in Rajasthan to gain a better understanding of issues related to self-government like the panchayat system and women's empowerment, the officials said.

The US President would be able to see samples of Indian handicrafts when he visits the Amer fort.

While in Hyderabad, Mr Clinton is scheduled to inspect a health project on tuberculosis eradication. He will also meet IT professionals at Cyberabad.

The selective disclosure of substantive parts of the US President's visit, however, failed to counter the perception that it is turning into a hands-off, out-of-bounds tele-encounter.

Most sites on the Presidential itinerary have been declared out of bounds for the print media and the President's interaction with India is now limited to selective themes and groups with no opportunity for an interface with the public.

Not only will he not be seen except on television but Mr Clinton will also not be heard. If prior announcements are anything to go by, the normally loquacious US President will remain unusually quiet during his visit here.

He will answer no questions at all except perhaps on one occasion in Hyderabad House and make no comments except in his scheduled speeches.

Adding to the red tape are the large "private" areas that are out of bounds for the media. Even his meeting with generation next, officials said, may not be open to the media.

THE STATESMAN
19 MAR 2000

No decision under duress: PM

HT Correspondent
New Delhi, March 19

PRIME MINISTER Atal Behari Vajpayee today made it clear that India would not take any decision concerning its security under pressure and that Indo-US relations should be based on "equal terms."

Hours before US President Bill Clinton arrived in the Capital, Mr Vajpayee said: "We will not take any decision under pressure so far as our security is concerned. We will take our own decisions."

Mr Vajpayee, who was addressing a gathering at his residence on the eve of Holi, expressed confidence that the US Presidential visit, taking place after a gap of 22 years, would help improve bilateral ties a good deal.

The Prime Minister recalled that

Washington had resented the 1998 Pokhran nuclear tests and imposed economic and technological sanctions against India. Mr Vajpayee recalled his own statement at the time that Indians would be prepared to face all difficulties for the sake of the country's security and honour.

The US has still not lifted the sanctions, Mr Vajpayee said but, at the same time, expressed hope that the current Indo-US talks would bring about a considerable improvement in relations between the two countries.

Meanwhile, National Security Adviser Brajesh Mishra said today that India would raise the sanctions issue during the talks with Mr Clinton. Speaking to a private TV channel, he said India considered the sanctions to be an impediment

in the development of long-term ties between the two countries.

Mr Mishra said India would welcome US pressure on Islamabad to halt Pak-backed terrorist activities in India. He made it clear that India would not accept the Line of Control (LoC) as the international border between India and Pakistan and would continue to seek the return of Indian territory occupied by Pakistan, as laid down by a 1994 resolution of Parliament.

For a dialogue to begin with Pakistan, he said, it was necessary that not only Islamabad should restore the sanctity of the LoC, it should stop cross-border terrorism also. He said India was keen on long-term relationship with the US that "has to be based on common perceptions of a new world order--political, strategic and economic."

THE HINDUSTAN TIMES
20 MAR 2000

CPI-M smells deviation from non-alignment

STATESMAN NEWS SERVICE

NEW DELHI, March 22. — In a clear departure from its non-alignment policy, India has accepted the dominant role of the USA in regional, strategic and economic spheres, said the CPI-M Politburo today.

The Politburo criticised the joint statement issued after talks between Mr Bill Clinton and Mr AB Vajpayee. CPI-M MPs stayed away from the US President's address to Parliament today.

The party noted with concern the continuing US sanctions against India in technological and economic spheres. "The talk of bilateral cooperation in scientific and technological fields is hollow with such an inequitable system in place."

Scathing in its criticism of the Indo-US joint statement, the CPI-M pointed out that "though in the past, India consistently advocated the cause of universal nuclear disarmament, in this statement, it is stated that India and USA are prepared to work together to prevent the proliferation of nuclear weapons and means of delivery". This, says the party, is an oblique reference to India's acceptance of the need to sign the CTBT.

The CPI-M said the declaration that the two countries would not engage in nuclear and missile arms race was hypocritical as the USA was developing a new theatre missile defence system in East Asia and conducting a joint programme with Israel for developing an anti-ballistic missile defence system.

The party accused the BJP government of accommodating US concerns to the extent of recognising that America had a significant role in regional security. "This is a major shift from the policy of non-alignment."

Protests in Bhopal

Leading social organisations today took to the streets and staged a day-long demonstration in central Bhopal to protest against US President Mr Bill Clinton's visit to India. They feel the implications of the trip would spell disaster for millions of farmers, labourers, the poor, and Dalits and tribals across the country.

THE STATESMAN
23 MAR 2000

President's speech: Peace, says Centre

No differences, says PMO: Clinton announces aid

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA
NEW DELHI/HYDERABAD, MARCH 24

IN a move to prevent President Narayanan remarks in the context of President Bill Clinton's visit from snowballing into a controversy, the Prime Minister's Office has issued a stern warning to the media to desist from publicising controversies where none exist.

The Prime Minister's Office today came out with a strong denial of any policy difference between the Government and the President on foreign policy in context of the visit and described newspaper reports in this regard as "unwarranted and indeed, tendentious".

Referring to reports in some newspapers stating that the Government was cut up with President K R Narayanan for his "bitter" remarks about the US in his banquet speech, a statement issued by H K Dua, Press Advisor to Prime Minis-

ter, said, "The reports have drawn the unwarranted, indeed, tendentious conclusion that there are differences of policy between the Government and the President," the statement said, adding, "While the articulation may vary, the substance of the statements made by the President and the Prime Minister is the same."

The statement said the Prime Minister had seen several news reports criticising the President's speech at his banquet in honour of Clinton on March 21.

On non-alignment, a reference to which was made in Narayanan's speech, Dua said the Government's policy had been clearly enunciated in the President's address to the joint session of Parliament on February 23.

"India's foreign policy of non-alignment and peaceful co-existence is relevant to the multi-polar world today. This is based on the principle of pro-

tecting our vital interests and promoting our national ideals," Narayanan had said in his address to the Parliament.

Meanwhile, in Hyderabad today, President Clinton announced an aid package of ten million dollars to fight infectious diseases and for penetration of Information Technology into rural areas in India.

Clinton, who arrived in the morning and was here for over five hours, visited the Mahavir Hospital where he administered the last dose of medicine to declare three patients cured from tuberculosis and declared an aid of five million dollars to fight the twin diseases of AIDS and TB.

He also announced a five million dollar aid for the promotion of Information Technology in rural areas while addressing software entrepreneurs at the HITEC city, where he described India

CONTINUED ON PAGE 2

from the front page

Narayanan's speech

as having the potential to become world's largest economy by using internet power in education.

"India and United States can together take the infotech business to new heights and a lot of our future depends on the right kind of partnership," Clinton told a gathering of IT professionals and industrialists that included it gurus N R Narayana Murthy of Infosys, Azim Premji of Wipro, industrialists C K Birla, Anji Reddy, NASSCOM president Dewang Mehta, MPs, MLAs and others.

achievements in high technology areas, Clinton said, "Your country has moved from brain drain to brain gain now", and made a specific mention of the success stories scripted by Infosys, Wipro and Satyam Computers.

Describing the US President's visit to the city as a recognition to the IT development programmes being pursued by Andhra Pradesh government, the Chief Minister said Clinton was impressed with the women welfare programme — Development of

INDIAN EXPRESS

25 MAR 2000

The President & foreign policy

By K. K. Katyal

SOME TIME in the late Fifties, an agitated Opposition, upset by the choices for important diplomatic slots, asked Jawaharlal Nehru in the Lok Sabha: "We want to know how these decisions are taken." Pat came the reply: "The Prime Minister consults the External Affairs Minister." In the ensuing peals of laughter was lost the essential reality that decision-taking on external relations was concentrated in one individual, highly distinguished though. The situation changed after Nehru. Lal Bahadur Shastri — with no great involvement in the handling of foreign policy — appointed a separate Minister to take charge of the foreign office. Swaran Singh. Simultaneously, the President, Dr. S. Radhakrishnan, was thought of for trips abroad, beginning with a major mission to Moscow for crucial talks with the top boss of the Soviet Union, Nikita Khrushchev. A rare blend of diplomat and philosopher, Dr. Radhakrishnan proved a consummate interlocutor. With that began the tradition of involving the heads of state in the conduct of foreign relations, especially through state visits abroad.

The heads of state might have differed with the Governments on domestic matters and expressed themselves, both in private and public, invoking their informal advisory role, but there has been no case of divergence in the conduct of external relations. Even otherwise, foreign policy has been the product of national consensus.

It was natural, therefore, that attempts to distort a recent episode and project it as a case of foreign policy-related divergence between the President, Mr. K. R. Narayanan, and the Government should have caused concern. Happily, a categorical statement by the Prime Minister's Office, forcefully rejecting the talk of differences, saved the situation.

It all began with Mr. Narayanan's address at his banquet for the U.S. President, Mr. Bill Clinton. While hailing the U.S. partnership in trade and investment and commending its support to the advancement of developing nations, Mr. Narayanan referred to political issues which had acquired a peculiar sensitivity in America. Among these were the continuing cold war mindset and the result-

ing relevance of non-alignment, a plea for U.S. backing to moves to strengthen the U.N., the need for ending unipolarity and the rejection of the theory describing the Indian subcontinent as the most dangerous place in the world. American sources saw it as a case of "lecturing" by Mr. Narayanan, and the U.S. press reports went a step further describing it as a rebuke to Mr. Clinton. The rejection of the U.S. characterisation of the subcontinent was seen as a "minor venting of frustration". This interpretation overshadowed Mr. Narayanan's many positive references to the U.S. and Mr. Clinton.

This was a case of misperception of India in the U.S., which, hopefully, may be set right. But its echo in India was a matter of worry. A factual remark by a top official that Mr. Narayanan's address had not been cleared by the Government was construed as a case of divergence between the two. The PMO's statement, dispelling such conclusions, therefore, did not come too soon.

None of the President's formulations was at variance with the Government's stated policies, be that in regard to non-alignment, importance of a multipolar world or the assessment of the situation in South Asia. Mr. Narayanan's view, that the "alarmist descriptions (like Kashmir being a flash-point and the subcontinent the most dangerous place) will encourage those who want to break the peace and indulge in terrorism and violence", was no different from what the Prime Minister said earlier that day.

Mr. Narayanan's support for a multipolar world (as against the current unipolarity), too, reflected the stand of the Indian Government as also of several other countries including close friends of the U.S. As a matter of fact, Mr. Narayanan borrowed the words of the Nigerian President, during his recent visit to India, when he disapproved of the idea of a global village having one headman. The Government makes no secret of its preference for new poles, a concept often

Mr. K. R. Narayanan, given his foreign service background, is a major asset particularly because of the respect and credibility his words carry.

commended jointly in the talks with major countries — France and China, to cite two cases. Non-alignment continued to be the sheet anchor of the official policy. The reservations among sizeable sections in the country about its relevance notwithstanding. Unlike the first non-Congress Government in 1977-79, the present coalition has not coined any phrase like "genuine non-alignment" to demarcate itself from the line of the Congress regimes. As for the persisting cold-war mindset, there is no difference in the country.

A close examination of the President's address reveals a total, unequivocal affirmation of the Government's foreign policy. That is certain to be recognised by all. However, opinions differ on the total impact created by the President's words, with some sections maintaining that there was a case for his moderating the articulation so as to be in tune with the spirit of the occasion, in the wake of the delicate talks between the two countries. In the next two months, Mr. Narayanan is due to undertake two important state visits to France and China. Given his foreign service background, he is a major asset particularly because of the respect and credibility his words carry. It is all the more necessary, hence, to avoid the jarring note of the type heard recently.

Mr. Narayanan's has been a significant role in India's bid to ward off pressures which developed in the wake of Pökhra. This has been in refreshing contrast with petty dealings between Presidents and Governments in the past. Two cases — of the eighties — are worth mentioning. N. Sanjeeva Reddy got involved in connivities with Prime Minister Indira Gandhi. In his book of reminiscences and reflections, Reddy mentioned these cases — one relating to an invitation to London for the marriage of Prince Charles in July 1981, and the other about the planned state visit to Sri Lanka the following month. As for the U.K. visit, Reddy accepted the invitation "as it was from the

Queen of England, the head of State, to attend the wedding of her son, who was their apparent to the throne". Reddy, however, learnt from informal reports that Indira Gandhi had started preparing for the trip to the U.K., to which the President, it was stated, had "also" been invited. At that stage, according to Reddy's account, "the Minister for External Affairs, P. V. Narasimha Rao, came to meet me, his mission being to dissuade me from going to London. When he told me that the Prime Minister had decided to go and suggested that I drop the idea of attending the wedding, I told him quite plainly that, as the head of State in India, it would be proper for me to respond to the invitation of another head of State". Reddy had his way but, on his return, saw a "tendentious report in a section of the Press with a view to presenting my trip in an unfavourable light" — that the visit cost the exchequer Rs. 50 lakhs and that he had received scant attention from the authorities and the media in the U.K. Because of the background, Reddy "wondered whether it was an inspired report".

Describing the cancellation of the visit to Colombo, Reddy said: "In June 1981, while I was in Hyderabad, the Prime Minister spoke to me on telephone and advised me to postpone my visit to Sri Lanka. She explained that she had decided to go to Nairobi for an international conference on 'alternative sources of energy' during the same time as my proposed Sri Lanka visit and that she had been advised that, by convention, the President and the Prime Minister could not be out of the country at the same time. I told her that I was not aware of the convention, that it was not proper for us to cancel or postpone a visit that had been fixed long before in consultation with the host country, that I could fly back to India from Sri Lanka in less than an hour's time, should there be any developments, warranting my urgent attention." The Prime Minister then took the plea that it would be better not to pay the state visit at that juncture because of anti-Tamil riots. Reddy did not accept that reason but "the Prime Minister appeared to be adamant and I, therefore, gave in". Mercifully, such pettiness is a thing of the past.

X9-12

India snubs Musharraf talks offer

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA & DEUTSCHE PRESS AGENTUR

NEW DELHI, March 30. — India has brushed aside Gen Pervez Musharraf's renewed offer to resume dialogue. On the third leg of a South-east Asian tour, Pakistan's military ruler had said today that he was ready for direct talks with India on Kashmir.

An Indian foreign office spokesman said: "There is no change in our position, in our substance or nuance." Questioning Pakistan's desire for dialogue, he asserted that continuous calls for *jihad* by Islamabad against it "can hardly be interpreted as messages for dialogue and peace".

New Delhi has maintained that the high-pitch propaganda against India, instances of which are rife in the daily life of Pakistan, do not inspire confidence in Pakistan's interest in dialogue.

At Jakarta today, Gen Musharraf said the Kashmir conflict was holding back South Asia in grinding poverty and indicated his government would forgo requests for outside mediation and deal directly with India.

"I and my government are for peace for the sake of the region's economic upliftment," the General said at a joint news conference with Indonesian President, Mr Abdurrahman Wahid. "I am prepared to meet anybody at any level at any time to address this core issue of Kashmir."

During a speech in Singapore earlier in the day, he said Kashmir "cries out for a just and fair solution".

Sharif mercy: Saying that he is not a "vindictive man", Gen Musharraf indicated that he might spare the life of Mr Nawaz Sharif. The deposed Prime Minister's verdict and sentence are expected on 6 April, adds AP.

THE STATESMAN

31 MAR 2000

Pakistani Connection

President Bill Clinton's five-day visit to India from March 20 to 25 is the first by a US president in 22 years, the last one being President Jimmy Carter's on New Year's eve in 1978. Earlier, Eisenhower visited in 1959 and Nixon in 1969. Coincidentally enough, every time an American president comes to India, Pakistan happens to be under military rule. Mr Clinton's visit presents him with some major challenges on his commitment to democratic rule. Nixon had no compunctions about being the guest of a military dictator who, encouraged by Washington's support, committed one of the worst genocides in post-World War II history and followed that by the largest ethnic cleansing known so far. On the other hand, Carter, was discreet enough not to subject himself to such embarrassment, though his fraternising with the autocratic Shah of Iran had its consequences. Those were days of the cold war, and Washington placed a higher premium on anti-communist dictators than on genuine non-aligned democracies. Today Islamabad has a military dictator who has contemptuously dismissed the public warning by the White House not to disrupt democracy, thus demonstrating clearly the limitations of US influence over Pakistan. General Musharraf is not the first Pakistani military ruler to give short shrift to Washington. In 1979, General Zia ul Haq held back his security forces long enough to permit the US embassy in Islamabad to be set on fire, American women to be molested, and a US marine to be killed in the wake of rumours that the Kaaba mosque in Mecca had been stormed by Western forces.

Ayub Khan similarly went ahead and used against India the weapons made in the arsenal of democracy, as the US was proud of calling itself during World War II. Islamabad's US-aided belligerence was in flagrant violation of the solemn assurances given to New Delhi by Eisenhower. In the 1980s the US was blackmailed by Pakistan to be indulgent towards its nuclear proliferation and narcotics trade in exchange for Islamabad's support in fighting the Soviet forces in Afghanistan through the mujahideen proxy war. All this raises the question as to why the "only indispensable nation in the world", as the US perceives itself, permits dictators in Islamabad to take it for granted. The close links between the military establishments of the two countries may partly explain it. Pakistan has also been smart enough to hire lobbyists close to the White House, just as China has done, to canvass support for its interests. New Delhi's reluctance to write official history and to release historical documents after the customary 30-year period also helps to perpetuate the myth that Pakistan has been a loyal ally of the US. Mr Clinton is undertaking a passage to India in the last year of his presidency; while that might add to his laurels as a president who supported democracy, let him not blot his copy book by shaking hands with a general who did not even give a decent burial to Pakistani soldiers who died in a war started by Islamabad.

THE TIMES OF INDIA

- 3 FEB 2000

India wary of Clinton's Pakistan visit reports

STATESMAN NEWS SERVICE

NEW DELHI, Feb. 4. — India responded with a studied silence today to reports from Washington that President Bill Clinton might include Pakistan in his South Asia tour.

When Miss Benazir Bhutto asked Mr Clinton during a meeting whether he would be visiting Islamabad, the President reportedly said: "Well, I might."

That comment would confirm indications that the USA is looking for signs of good behaviour from Pakistan to pave the way for a presidential visit — a matter over which South Block is clearly on tenterhooks.

The official stand is that it's not for India to comment on such an issue. This was iterated this evening, but it was in vain that the MEA waited for an authoritative statement from Washington to scotch speculations on the matter.

The reports from Washington indicate that the USA is assessing the level of dismay displayed in Islamabad at being excluded from the trip, observers feel.

Having taken a fairly strong stand on the military takeover, and raising the terrorism issue, the USA wishes Pakistan show some initiative to restore democracy and progress on terrorism.

USA for talks: President Clinton has said that the USA is ready to "work intensively" to restart talks between India and Pakistan but pointed out that before that happens, "the cycle of mistrust and violence must be broken".

Reacting to this statement, the MEA spokesman said he hadn't yet received an official version of it.

India's Neighbourhood

Economic and Cultural, Not Physical

By SANJAYA BARU

11-10 92

A neighbourhood, in the cyber-age, is no longer defined in terms of physical proximity. It is a network of regular interaction. Indeed, even the dictionary definition of neighbourhood has two elements to it; people living next door is only one of them, the other being the locality, community, village in which you live. So what constitutes India's neighbourhood?

Geographically speaking, it is our immediate physically contiguous countries, which includes members of SAARC plus China and Myanmar. However, a more comprehensive definition of our neighbourhood should include all such countries in reasonable proximity with whom Indians interact both economically and culturally on a regular basis and have done so for a reasonably long period of historical time. Admittedly, there is a history to this geography, and the geography itself changes as we go back in history from the British Empire to the Mughal empires and further back to the many seafaring empires of the peninsula.

India's neighbours have always lived not just across its land frontiers but also its maritime frontiers. It is not just with Sri Lanka and the Maldives that India shares a maritime boundary, as those who have come to see India as a south Asian nation may imagine. India's neighbourhood has extended all the way from East Africa, West Asia and the Persian Gulf to the rim of the Bay of Bengal, the Malacca Straits and the outer reaches of the Indian Ocean. No wonder the ocean around us was so named.

Cultural Bonds

When political leaders from the Gulf states or from Singapore or Indonesia come calling on us we are engaged in good-neighbourliness. The time has come for Indians to get out of their so-called south Asian ghetto mindset and be more expansive in their thinking, more historical in their perspective, giving more attention to enduring cultural bonds and renewed economic ties.

If Singaporeans recall every day that their city-state was originally called Simhapura, Indonesia's founding father, President Sukarno once recalled, "In the veins of every one of my people flows the blood of the Indian ancestors and the culture we possess is steeped through and through with Indian influences. Two thousand years ago, people from your country came to Jawadvipa and Suvarnadvipa in the spirit of

brotherly love. They gave the initiative to found powerful kingdoms such as those of Sri Vijaya, Mataram and Majapahit. We then learned to worship the very Gods that you now worship still and we fashioned a culture that even today is largely identical with your own. Later we turned to Islam; but that religion too was brought to us by people coming from both sides of the Indus."

Look East Policy

The French scholar, Fernand Braudel, has written copiously of India's relations with her Indian Ocean neighbourhood. Pre-industrial Asia, says Braudel, comprised of three gigantic world-economies: the Islamic west Asia, the Chinese east Asia and India, whose influence extended throughout the Indian Ocean, both east and west of Cape Comorin. (Fernand Braudel, *Civilisation and Capitalism, 15th-18th Century*, Volume 3, 1984). The relationship between these areas, says Braudel, was the result of a series of pendulum movements of greater or lesser strength, either side of the centrally positioned Indian subcontinent. The swing might benefit first the East and then the West, redistributing functions, power and political or economic advance. Through all these vicissitudes, however, India maintained its central position: its merchants in Gujarat and on the Malabar and Coromandel coasts prevailed for centuries on end against their many competitors — the Arab traders of the Red Sea, the Persian merchants of the Gulf, or the Chinese merchants familiar with the Indonesian seas to which their junks were now regular visitors.

These regions constitute India's civilisational neighbourhood. When India now seeks participation in such regional economic groups as the Indian Ocean Rim Association for Regional Cooperation (IORARC), the South Asian Association for Regional Cooperation (SAARC), the Bangladesh, India, Myanmar, Sri Lanka and Thailand Economic Cooperation (BIM-STEAC), and when it seeks membership of ASEAN and APEC, it is merely reaching out to its historical neighbourhood in a new economic context.

Post-Independence India, coming out of British rule and its obsession with the north-western land borders, joined other Asian powers to break out of the European colonial mould established over Asia which disrupted many of these historical links with our wider maritime neighbourhood. Nehru tried

to reach out to this neighbourhood, but Cold War politics and India's inward-looking economic strategy of the 1960s and 1970s prevented the full blossoming of a wider neighbourhood community.

It is only more recently, ever since India's Look East policy was launched by the Narasimha Rao government in the early 1990s, in tandem with external economic liberalisation, that India has once again rediscovered and reconnected with this wider southern Asian neighbourhood. What is important about this new relationship is that it is increasingly being shaped by forward-looking economic factors rather than just backward-looking cultural ones. Indeed, many of our east Asian neighbours are not too excited about recalling the cultural past, some even see in it a touch of Indian racism and arrogance, as they are in exploring the economic future.

While appreciating the kind of sentiments expressed in the late Sukarno's statement, forward-looking Indian diplomacy must recognise the partial reversal of roles. It is Asia to our East which is now showing us the way to the future. ASEAN's recent economic prowess holds many lessons for India. ASEAN has emerged as a major economic partner for India, with Singapore, Thailand and Indonesia being particularly important partners.

Historically Myopic

India does more trade with Indonesia than Pakistan and with Singapore than Bangladesh. While Bangladesh, Nepal and Sri Lanka are important trade partners and potential destinations for Indian investment, India's major economic partners, next to the US and European Union, are the countries of the ASEAN region and the Persian Gulf, an important source of energy, foreign exchange earnings and job opportunities for skilled Indians.

It is not clear who chose to define India's neighbourhood as south Asia, but this view is historically myopic. Indeed, the notion of a south Asia is itself a dubious geo-political construct of recent origin. India's neighbourhood, defined in economic and cultural terms, spans a region better described as southern Asia. It's a thought worth keeping in mind when we welcome the new President of Indonesia on his visit to New Delhi later this month.



Vajpayee urged to help instal rival Karmapa

UNITED NEWS OF INDIA

GANGTOK, Feb. 5. — A Buddhist apolitical organisation, Denzong Nang-ten Sung-kyob Tsongpa, has urged Mr Atal Behari Vajpayee to instal Trinley Thaye Dorji as the 17th Karmapa of the Karma Kagyu sect at Rumtek Monastery in Sikkim.

Trinley Thaye Dorji is rival of the 14-year-old Ugyen Trinley Dorji, who is now awaiting asylum at Dharamsala, for the Gyalwa Karmapa title. The Dharma Chakra Centre at Rumtek is the Karma Kagyu sect's seat-in-exile.

The DNST, a pro-Shamar Rimpoche organisation opposed to Ugyen Trinley Dorji, has faxed a memorandum to the Prime Minister on 28 January, requesting him to provide necessary aid and security for Trinley Thaye Dorji's safe passage to the DCC.

The DNST, a pro-Shamar Rimpoche organisation opposed to Ugyen Trinley Dorji, has faxed a memorandum to the Prime Minister on 28 January, requesting him to provide necessary aid and security for Trinley Thaye Dorji's safe passage to the DCC.

The memorandum said the DCC has been the Kagyu sect's international headquarters since 1959 when the 16th Karmapa established the centre after his flight from Tibet following Chinese aggression. The centre is without a spiritual head ever since the 16th Karmapa passed away in 1981.

The memorandum was signed among others by the DNST chairman, Mr Sonam Yongda, president of the Sikkim Tribal Women Welfare Association, Mrs Khando Cingapa, general secretary of All Sikkim Gurung Buddhist Association, Mr Praveen Gurung.

Tkumzing Shamar Rimpoche, one of the four Rumtek regents, had recognised Trinley Thaye Dorji (17) as the reincarnation of the 16th Gyalwa Karmapa, Runjung Rigpae Dorji. Thaye Dorji lives alternately in New Delhi and Kalimpong. The Centre has been providing security to him. The DNST has stated devotees and followers were eagerly awaiting the arrival of Thaye Dorji.

The group of Rumtek monks headed by Regent Galtasab Rimpoche has recognised Ugyen Trinley Dorji as the 17th Karmapa, while the faction headed by Regent Shamar Rimpoche has recognised Thaye Dorji. Both Shamar Rimpoche and Tai-Situ, another regent, were banned from entering Sikkim following clashes between warring factions at the DCC in 1993.

Meanwhile, the Jamgon Kongtrul Labrang or the supreme administrative body of the Jamgon Kuntrul Rimpoche's monastery in Kalimpong, has refuted media reports that Jamgon Kongtrul Rimpoche along with Shamar Rimpoche had "questioned" the "letter of prediction" on the Karmapa's 17th reincarnation left behind by the 16th Gyalwa Karmapa. The Jamgon Kongtrul Labrang general-secretary, Mr Tenzing Dorji said media reports about the third Jamgon Kongtrul Rimpoche recognising "a Sikkimese boy as the 17th reincarnation of the Karmapa was baseless."

THE STATESMAN

6 FEB 2000

MEA brushes off Musharraf contentions

STATESMAN NEWS SERVICE

NEW DELHI, Feb 8. — Clearly unimpressed by what the military ruler of Pakistan, Gen Pervez Musharraf, had told his Doordarshan interviewer, the Ministry of External Affairs today said India's position on various aspects of the strained bilateral relations remained unchanged.

There was "nothing new" in what Gen. Musharraf had said, asserted the MEA spokesman — "we have already made our position clear on all the points he raised, we have said what we had to say."

Regarding the General's contention that the tape of his telephonic conversation with another high military official, Lt Gen. Mohammed Aziz, had been "doctored," the spokesman recalled that they had been replayed in public in New Delhi — no doubts were raised about their authenticity.

Russia pulls up Pak: Voice of Russia has hit out at the junta for brandishing nuclear weapons and trying to "blackmail" India, says UNI from Moscow.

Pakistan was the only country which kept threatening N-strikes, forgetting that it is no match militarily to India.

The radio said Pakistan's army and ISI was carrying on a massive narcotics business, and promoting international terrorism.

THE STATESMAN

- 9 FEB 2000

NAM no longer a *mantra*: Brajesh

HT Correspondent
New Delhi, February 8

INDIA TAKES decisions on the basis of national interest and no longer accepts unquestioningly the doctrines of non-violence and non-alignment, India's National Security Adviser and Principal Secretary to the Prime Minister Brajesh Mishra told the 36th Munich Conference on Security Policy on Feb. 6.

Describing both doctrines as "shibboleths," Mr Mishra said, "The new India today is ready to question these shibboleths and take decisions on the basis of national interest. India recognises the strengths of its secular democracy and is ready to defend it."

Pointing out that South Asia always had been an inadequate framework for the Indian security paradigm, he said that as India rediscovered its extended neighbourhood - Central Asia,

Persian Gulf, Indian Ocean and South East Asia - through greater economic, commercial and defence engagements, "the role of a secular and democratic India as a factor of stability on the Asian continent becomes increasingly apparent."

Mr Mishra said that following Jawaharlal Nehru's death, non-alignment became a "mantra," just as Mahatma Gandhi's non-violent struggle had become the "moral" path. "The fact that these policies were grounded in strict rationality and realpolitik was lost sight of," he said.

"Escapism was often couched as being principled and I can safely state that neither Gandhi nor Nehru would have appreciated being made into icons to propagate dogma."

Mr Mishra also sought to dispel the perception that Russia, China and India were attempting to form a strategic alliance mainly to

counter the growing unipolarism being practised by the sole superpower US in the post-Cold War period.

Noting that at present, all four major Asian countries, China, Japan, Russia and India, enjoyed "important" bilateral relationships with the US, he said. "Yet, the importance that each of these countries attaches to its bilateral relations with the US should not be overlooked."

Pointing out that during the Cold War bipolarity had introduced a degree of symmetry in threat perception, facilitating both the US and USSR to tackle threats in terms of generating material resources and political will.

He said that with the end of Cold War threat perceptions had become asymmetrical. Elaborating, he said that exploiting its economic and technological pre-eminence, "as the US has shown itself prone to be", could not be the chosen path for most democratic societies.

THE HINDUSTAN TIMES

- 9 FEB 2000

Stricken by terror

A foreign policy focussed only on terrorism has made India dependent on the United States

■ The Vajpayee government ruined its credibility at Kandahar and is looking to the US to salvage its foreign policy centred around terrorism ■

It must be seen to be believed, the changes that one hijacking can bring about in South Block. Nowhere is it as much in evidence as in the actions and the brief of the Indian delegation now in the United States for talks on terrorism.

Notwithstanding the brave front that its members are putting on, the delegation is in Washington as a supplicant. Washington has so much power that it is necessary to recall Josef Stalin's famous remark about Josip Broz Tito that if the Russian dictator so much as moved his little finger, the Croat who united Yugoslavia would no longer be there.

The story of how the administration of Bill Clinton has come to acquire make or break powers over an Indian team, which is for all practical purposes led by none other than the foreign secretary, Lalit Mansingh, is curiously the story of South Block's flawed policy on Afghanistan in recent years.

For the record, the delegation which is in Washington for talks on terrorism is led by Alok Prasad, joint secretary in charge of the Americas in the ministry of external affairs. But anyone who believes this would also believe that the then foreign minister, P.V. Narasimha Rao, who went to New York City to forge the signature of V.P. Singh's son for the St Kitt's conspiracy, was Rajiv Gandhi's hatchetman in the plot, and not Chandraswami who was directing the St Kitt's operation from a hotel room adjacent to Rao's in the Big Apple.

The delegation's stakes are higher than New York City's skyscrapers simply because during and after the hijacking of the Indian Airlines plane in December, the *taliban* succeeded in puncturing the hot air balloon of the Bharatiya Janata Party led government's anti-terrorist platform.

Since Atal Behari Vajpayee became prime minister, the fight against terror has become the bulwark of his government's foreign policy. Most countries took this policy at its face value, if only because they believed that, as in the case of the Pokhran II nuclear tests, uncompromising opposition to terror was an article of faith with the BJP. And the way L.K. Advani straightened out the home ministry only added credibility to this perception.

But then came the hijacking and the

bottom simply dropped out of this policy. Governments across the world were no longer willing to take the protestations of the external affairs minister, Jaswant Singh, about the Vajpayee government's commitment to fight terrorism at face value.

What is worse, after the compromise made in Kandahar, Indian ambassadors in major world capitals are no longer ready to put their best foot forward in lobbying support for the BJP led government's campaign for a global front against terrorism. Foreign governments may continue to pay lip service to the Indian cause, but these ambassadors only know too well they do not any more carry credibility with their host governments on the issue of fighting terrorism.

Which is why South Block's current engagement of the US is crucial to the very survival of Vajpayee's foreign policy, of which the fight against terror has become the central theme.

Never before has this country been placed in such a position *vis a vis* the US, where the Americans have so much leverage with India while New Delhi has

none with the US.

Contrast this with the leverage that Islamabad has over Washington and it becomes crystal clear the Vajpayee government's desire to play a pro-active role in Afghanistan has come a cropper even before the idea has actually been put into practice.

For the Vajpayee government, it must seem like a cruel irony that the agenda on Afghanistan for the international community is being dictated by Pakistan. It is Pakistan's chief executive, Pervez Musharraf, who is offering to go to Kabul to sort out the problem of Osama bin Laden.

It is to Islamabad that the taliban sends a delegation to address international concerns about terrorism coming out of Afghanistan. Already, some Western countries have created special interest sections in their embassies in Islamabad to deal exclusively with what they call the taliban "administration". Only a few weeks ago, for almost everyone in the world, it was merely the taliban "militia".

If Musharraf is able at some stage to work out a deal with Kabul, as a result of which bin Laden leaves Afghanistan, he will get international legitimacy much the same way as General Zia ul-Haq got his acceptance from the world community after the Soviet invasion of Afghanistan.

Even if Musharraf persuades the taliban to scale down and eventually put an end to the export of terror from Afghanistan, he will be a winner. South

Block may not countenance it, but this is indeed a distinct possibility.

After all, only a decade ago, the Syrian president, Hafez Al Assad, was a key sponsor of terrorism in Washington's eyes. Today, Assad's ministers and envoys are honoured guests in the White House.

Or for that matter, consider Libya. Colonel Muammar Gaddafi has made his compromises with the Americans and *vice versa*. Similarly Lebanon, which was a no go area for US citizens until a few years ago. It is no longer so, notwithstanding the continued presence of the Hizbullah, which the West has been conditioned to hate.

Contrast this with India's predicament, despite New Delhi's desire to pursue a pro-active role in Afghanistan. India has no leverage in Afghanistan, not with the taliban, not any longer with the Northern Alliance.

Even more galling for the Vajpayee government than Islamabad's potentially creative role in Afghanistan is the realization that the first tentative steps to give respectability to the taliban were taken by the BJP led administration.

The negotiations which New Delhi misguidedly entered into with the hijackers in Kandahar gave the taliban an opportunity to grow from an assortment of warlords into the nucleus of a potential state. At the time of writing, the taliban — unlike the Vajpayee government — remains categorically refused to entertain the idea of any talks with those who hijacked an Ariana flight from Kabul on Sunday.

If the taliban is able to secure the surrender of the Ariana hijackers without negotiating with them, it will further enhance the taliban's standing in the eyes of the world. Even if the Afghan airlines hijacking ends in a tragedy, there will still be grudging admiration for the taliban for what the world will then describe as Kabul's steadfastness.

In the aftermath of the Kandahar hijacking, a leading Israeli said in New Delhi, albeit privately, that Tel Aviv rued the settlement made by India because "a victory for terror in one part of the world will encourage terrorists to strike elsewhere and try the same tactics".

What the Indian delegation now talking to the Americans must realize is that Israel is one of the few countries which will not only make such a statement, but also stand by it. For the record, the US will make such declarations, but history tells us that the Americans are not averse to using outfits such as the taliban and the Kosovo Liberation Army, which are outside the pale of international law, for their own ends.

The Indians must realize that the Americans will fight terror solely and only if the terrorists pose a threat to US interests, not to anyone else's interests.

PM rules out bowing to 'any power'

Three die
in blast
on train
to city

Atal snubs
US with
Pak punch

FROM MUKHTAR AHMAD

Srinagar, Feb. 10: At least three persons were killed when a bomb ripped through a coach of the Jammu Tawi-Sealdah Express at Vijaypur, 30 km from Jammu, late this evening.

The blast, set off by explosives planted on the tracks according to a PTI report, took place as the train neared the bridge on the Devak river in the Jammu-Pathankot section. A Jammu police officer said the bomb blew up an AC coach. It derailed three bogies, including the AC coach and two three-tier coaches.

A special enquiry counter has been set up at the Sealdah station. The numbers are: 350-3535, 350-3537

Panicky passengers jumped out of the coaches and ran for cover, but had to return as heavy rain lashed the area.

A woman was among those killed and four persons, including a child, were wounded.

Jammu range police chief R.V. Rajeev rushed to the site. He was accompanied by inspector-general of police (crime and railway) Kuldeep Khuda, officials and medical teams.

Inclement weather hampered relief, but a medical train has been rushed from Pathankot while a special relief train is on its way to transport the stranded passengers, sources said.

Sources said railway minister Mamata Banerjee will visit the site tomorrow morning. She will discuss measures to tighten security along the tracks as militants have been targeting trains on this route. Railway officials said all Delhi-bound trains were stranded at Jammu.

OUR BUREAU AND AGENCIES

New Delhi, Feb. 10: Stung by the US' sudden burst of enthusiasm to mediate on the Kashmir issue, Prime Minister A.B. Vajpayee today led a concerted effort to send a message that Delhi was not yet ready to resume talks with Pakistan.

"Under no circumstances would India bow down before any power as far as its security is concerned," he said at an election meeting in western Orissa. His government had managed the economy well despite world sanctions following the nuclear tests, Vajpayee added.

He made it clear that there would be no talks until Pakistan stopped fostering terrorism.

The Prime Minister's aggressive stand on national security and reference to the sanctions are being viewed as a response to President Bill Clinton.

The US President had said in Washington yesterday that he was "profoundly concerned" about the nuclear twins' dispute over Kashmir and hoped to do something about it. Clinton had made a similar statement a week ago, prompting an US official chorus echoing him.

While secretary of state Madeleine Albright described Kashmir as a "tinder box", defence secretary William Cohen added that the US could nudge the two sides to resume the dialogue and ensure regional stability.

Ironically, though Clinton and Vajpayee are pulling at opposite directions, both are being driven by domestic compulsions.

Clinton's regular comments on Kashmir are being seen as an attempt to prepare the American people for including Pakistan in his tour schedule.

For Vajpayee, an uncompromising posture is essential to keep in check the hardliners in his party and outside, especially after the hijack humiliation.

Picking up from where the Prime Minister left off, the external affairs ministry this evening said that in spite of the US' views, there was no change in Delhi's position on Kashmir "either in nuance or substance".

The ministry also refused to attach any significance to the "protective custody" of Masood Azhar, one of the militants exchanged by India for the hijack hostages, in Pakistan.

Islamabad's move to detain him was interpreted as an olive branch to Washington, which had told Pakistan to rein in the militant. But a report said today Pakistan might free Masood if he agreed to suspend the activities of his new outfit and stopped touring the country.

India brushed aside Masood's detention, saying its "larger concern" over cross-border terrorism remained unchanged. "We do not wish to comment on how an individual terrorist is handled by the Pakistan government," spokesman R.S. Jassal said.

Adding another twist, defence sources in Delhi claimed a sudden increase in troop deployment by Pakistan along the Line of Control. However, an Indian Army spokesman later denied the build-up.

THE TELEGRAPH

11 FEB 2000

J.N. DIXIT

Terms of agreement

India need not be too concerned about the US's engagement of Pakistan

India's stance is that bilateral relations with the United States should not be hostage to US-Pakistani ties

Scepticism and disappointment permeate Indian public opinion regarding the most recent developments in relations between the United States and Pakistan. This sentiment is not necessarily shared by the Indian foreign policy and strategic community which has a greater sense of *realpolitik*.

The Indian public has heard US interlocutors say they are committed to democracy, firmly opposed to terrorism, aware of the involvement of Pakistani government agencies in cross border terrorism and subversion in India and would be pressuring Pakistan to give up confronting India. They were understandably disappointed when the US president, Mr Bill Clinton, said in the last week of January that he and his government do not have hard evidence about any direct involvement by Pakistan in the hijacking of IC 814. Clinton also refused to take note of the sanctuary given by Pakistan to the hijackers and the help given to them to carry out militant anti-Indian propaganda.

The uncertainty that surrounded Clinton's presidential visit to India and whether it would be preceded by a stopover in Pakistan, have further made Indians feel that in the ultimate analysis the US still cannot allow its relationship with India to develop independent of its equations with Pakistan.

The abiding complaint of India against the US is that since partition, the US has equated India with Pakistan despite disparities in size, demography and political makeup. India has accepted that in the context of the cold war the US would have better relations with Pakistan. But the perception the US is still close to Pakistan in the post-Cold War period bothers Indian.

The US forced Pakistan to pull back from the line of control during the Kargil conflict because Washington was convinced of India's determination to push back Pakistani forces at all costs. The Americans judged this would mean an expansion of military operations which could result in a nuclear confrontation.

Pakistan had openly threatened to use missiles and nuclear weapons in May and June last year. The irony lay in the difference in Pakistani motivations

The author is a former foreign secretary of India

and the consequent US response. Islamabad hoped the US would intervene directly because of Pakistan's nuclear threats, call for an immediate ceasefire and pressure India to stop its military campaign. Instead, Washington forced Pakistan to undo its mischief. There was much appreciation in India of US action during Kargil. However, Indians over-optimistically interpreted this to mean a change in the US stance regarding Kashmir, which was not and is not the case.

General Pervez Musharraf's coup was the next watershed for US involvement in south Asia. Once Musharraf consolidated his position, the US set aside its tentative reservations about the general and decided to constructively engage with him. Washington felt this was a means to ensure Pakistan's eventual return to democracy. This engagement process is a drawn out, incremental process.

After initial signals that it would maintain a distance from Musharraf, Washington subsequently gave up that policy. There has been a stream of high level US officials and visitors to Pakistan, including congressmen, represen-

tatives from prominent thinktanks, and top ranking military men from the US and the United Kingdom.

The US assistant secretary of state for south Asia, Karl Inderfurth, and the state department's counter-terrorism head, Michael Sheehan, visited Islamabad immediately after the Jaswant Singh-Strobe Talbott talks in London in mid-January.

When Indian officials queried the rationale for these goings on, the response was that the US visits were to convey warnings to the Musharraf regime about Pakistan's involvement in terrorism. Also, the discussions aimed at pointing out the urgency and desirability of restoring democracy in Pakistan. After Clinton's exoneration of Pakistan's involvement in the hijack, it is reasonable to conclude these US warnings to desist from terrorism must have lost some of their vigour and effectiveness.

Musharraf's own public pronouncements indicate he is in no hurry to revive democracy. He declared in an interview last month, "We will bring back democracy and this will take time. We would like to examine what kind of a political structure best suits interests of the people of Pakistan." Musharraf clearly plans to decide when and in what form democracy will be restored.

It was during this period of US-Pakistani interaction, that reports appeared that segments of his government were advising Clinton that his not visiting Islamabad would be detrimental

to US interests. There were suggestions Clinton could make a day's visit in Karachi, avoiding the capital. These internal US cogitations may have led to the dates for a subcontinental visit being shifted from February to March. If reports about pressure on Clinton to visit Pakistan are correct, it is likely the various US visitors also told Pakistan to make some commitments that would pave the way for a US presidential visit to Islamabad.

What could Pakistan have offered? Musharraf could say he would try his best to "persuade" the so called *mujahideen* operating in Kashmir to turn down their activities. He could say he would take more definite actions against acts of terrorism directed against the West and persuade the *taliban* to cooperate. He might give categorical assurances Pakistan would sign the comprehensive test ban treaty if India does.

In recent weeks, Musharraf and his foreign minister, Abdul Sattar, have sent such signals. More importantly, Musharraf might have indicated some sort of timeframe for restoring democracy with a promise to increase the civilian role in his government in the interim. If he provides such assurances, the US establishment could find a basis for a brief Clinton visit to Islamabad.

India should not let its blood pressure rise over US interactions with Pakistan. The US deputy secretary of state, Strobe Talbott, in a recent interview, made two points. First, the dynamics between India and Pakistan impinge on US policies. Second, the US sees the two countries as each having differing stances and differing concerns, that the US will treat each country's positions on its own merits.

In other words, the US sees Pakistan important to US interests in south and central Asia, and the Persian Gulf. The US is not going to ostracize Pakistan. At the level of regional and global equations, India should not predicate policies towards the US with objections to the US's remaining involved with Pakistan. India should structure relations with the US separately within the framework of national interests and the extent of US responsiveness to them. This will reaffirm India's stance that bilateral relations with the US should not be hostage to US-Pakistani ties.

Washington needs to recognize that if it fails to make Pakistan give up its confrontational and subversive stance towards India, this will inevitably affect Indo-US relations. If Clinton visits Pakistan on his way to India, there can be doubt his trip will be diminished in Indian eyes. But it should be remembered that Indo-US relations and Indo-Pakistani relations are more important and more profound than the transcendental meetings between and statements of chief executive officers, prime ministers and presidents.

THE TELEGRAPH

11 FEB 2000

Delhi flashes friendly alert to US over Pak

FROM OUR SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT & AGENCIES

New Delhi, Feb. 11: Anticipating criticism at home, a cautious Centre has officially told Washington about the possibility of a negative impact if President Bill Clinton visits Pakistan.

However, New Delhi has also taken care to see that the message is not interpreted as a condition.

"It is for America to decide whether the President visits any other country. However, we thought, as friends, we should bring to their notice that there might be a public reaction," foreign secretary Lalit Mansingh was quoted by agencies as saying in Washington after his two-day talks.

Though Mansingh's mission was consultation with his US counterpart Thomas Pickering, he met other senior leaders, including national security adviser Sandy Berger, deputy secretary of state Strobe Talbott and influential Congressmen.

To ensure that US statements on Kashmir and the nuclear issue did not send wrong signals in India, Mansingh said "no condition was attached" to Clinton's visit.

"We are not looking for any favour. There is going to be a partnership and we will discuss matters of mutual interest," he said.

But the US continued to hammer its role of peacemaker with secretary of state Madeleine Albright seeking Russia's help in bringing India and Pakistan "back from the nuclear precipice" and making them sign the test ban pact.

In a speech to the diplomatic academy in Moscow, she said: "We both have an interest in bringing the CTBT into force, and in maintaining our respective moratoria on testing."

"Russia and the US have a host of powerful reasons to work to-

gether to prevent the spread of weapons of mass destruction and missiles that carry them."

Pickering, too, expressed hope that the visit "will be able to give us the opportunity to ratify something that is breathtaking". When *Washington Post* asked if he was talking about an end to the nuclear race in the region, the US official said: "One can have hopes."

South Block maintained that India's positions on Kashmir and disarmament were well known. "While we don't have any problems with talking about these issues even during the presidential visit, no one should assume that this would mean a shift from our stated position," said an official.

India realises that Clinton will have to keep talking about both issues to justify a visit to Pakistan. But, instead of shying away, Delhi wants "a free and frank" dialogue in which it will bring up Pakistan's terrorism and the active help it has been receiving from China and North Korea in developing its nuclear programme. "We are looking forward to this visit," Mansingh said.

"Our focus will not be on the transient issues. We expect it to reflect the new friendship, the new situation," he said.

Mansingh told the *Post* that Indo-US relations "have never been better" and that the President's visit would be a "path-breaking" one. Pickering added that Clinton would see something of "historic India" as well as "modern India".

"We have been taking a lot of time discussing how to make the best out of the opportunity after 22 years," said Mansingh. Jimmy Carter was the last US head of state to visit India.

While the agenda for Clinton's talks with Prime Minister Atal Behari Vajpayee has not been set, Mansingh clarified that the focus would not be on Kashmir.

THE TELEGRAPH

12 FEB 2000

No chance of mediation, asserts Jaswant

HT Correspondent
New Delhi, February 13

FOR THE second time since yesterday, India firmly ruled out third party mediation on the Kashmir issue and asserted that there was no linkage between the forthcoming US presidential visit and non-proliferation issues.

Following Prime Minister Atal Behari Vajpayee's categorical statement yesterday ruling out any US role in a mediation or facilitation effort, External Affairs

Minister Jaswant Singh told the audience, Conference on Contributions by Persons of Indian Origin (CIPRO) today that there is no possibility of mediation, intermediation or facilitation when it comes to the Indian issue of Jammu and Kashmir.

The repeated forceful assertion, since yesterday, came in the wake of a state of statements by President Bill Clinton, Secretary of State Madeleine Albright and

Defence Secretary William Cohen to the effect that India-Pakistan relations, centred on the Kashmir issue, called for external mediation due to their nuclear weapons capabilities. The US statements made

liberal references to the Kashmir issue and the nuclearised

South Asia as "the most dangerous place", "a tinder-box" and "a fuse."

Even though the US Senate defeated a Clinton Administration effort to get the CTBT ratified late

last year, Secretary of State Albright earlier this week revived the need to persuade India to sign the treaty, implying that the issue could be taken up during the presidential visit.

Mr Singh, responding to a query, said that President Clinton's visit scheduled next month "has no linkage with non-proliferation issues."

He added that a decision on signing the CTBT would be taken only after achieving the "widest possible" consensus and after a full-fledged parliamentary debate.

J&K Issue

THE HINDUSTAN TIMES

14 FEB 2000

USA likely to keep options on Pak visit open, feels MEA

STATESMAN NEWS SERVICE

NEW DELHI, Feb. 14. — There was no official reaction today to reports from Islamabad indicating that President Bill Clinton would fly to Lahore from India before going on to Bangladesh. South Block maintained that the Indian position had already been made clear by the Foreign Secretary, Mr Lalit Mansingh.

External Affairs Ministry officials, however, indicate that the USA is likely to keep its options open and that the Foreign Secretary's remarks had laid the ground for either eventuality. The Foreign Secretary had said last week that a visit to Pakistan by the US President would provoke a reaction in India.

If Pakistan is ruled out of the itinerary of President Clinton, it would be a win win situation for the government since the decision could

be projected as a victory for Indian diplomacy and projected as cognisance of Indian sensitivities and a triumph of Indo-US bilateral relations.

If President Clinton does, however, fly to Pakistan, the remarks of the Foreign Secretary have already laid the ground for expression of Indian disapproval, a fact that is likely to score brownie points with the domestic audience. The Foreign Secretary's calculated remarks are based on the premise that it would be better for India to pre-empt an adverse US decision rather than react to it.

The perception of South Block seems to be that rather than risk facing an adverse US decision on the eve of the visit, it would be better for the government to approach it from a position of diplomatic strength, having proven that it had no qualms about talking straight to the superpower.

THE STATESMAN
15 FEB 2000

India, China sign trade pact

BEIJING: India and China, on Tuesday signed a key bilateral trade agreement which would facilitate Beijing's early entry into the World Trade Organisation (WTO) and provide greater access for Indian exports to the vast but restricted Chinese market.

"It is a significant step in India-China relations, especially in bilateral trade relations," commerce and industry minister Murasoli Maran said after the signing ceremony at the Chinese ministry of foreign trade and economic cooperation (MOFTEC).

Mr Maran, who is leading a high-powered Indian delegation, said that New Delhi fully supported Beijing's entry into the WTO and expressed confidence that both countries would work in tandem to push for the rights of developing countries.

"After China enters the WTO, we will cooperate on issues of mutual interest. China's entry would strengthen the world trading system and also world trade," he said.

An Indian diplomat said that China had agreed to a series of tariff reductions on Indian goods. "China has agreed to

lower general tariff rates for a range of agricultural, industrial and marine products from about 20 per cent to 10 per cent," he said.

With Tuesday's agreement, China has just one major hurdle — its largest trading partner, the European Union, with whom it must sign a similar trade agreement to pave the way for its entry into the world body.

China has to sign bilateral trade pacts with all 135 WTO members before its 14-year bid to enter the world body comes through.

Chinese and EU negotiators continued their new round of market-opening negotiations to try to hammer out a similar trade pact.

Mr Maran welcomed the trade pact and noted that negotiations between the two neighbouring countries went off without a hitch, unlike a similar agreement between the US and China last year, which was a long-drawn process. MOFTEC minister Shi Guangsheng said that China appreciated India's support on Beijing's entry into WTO. The agreement would provide further impetus to Sino-Indian trade ties, Shi said. (PTI)

THE TIMES OF INDIA

23 FEB 2000

Clinton is coming to talk about IT, not CTBT

By Our Political Editor

NEW DELHI: Though billed as the biggest event in the troubled political relations between India and the U.S. in recent years, Bill Clinton's visit next month is likely to have more hype than substance.



Bill Clinton

Well in advance of the visit, Indian officials say their U.S. counterparts have told them that the visit will be "about India" and not contentious issues like Kashmir and the Comprehensive Test Ban Treaty (CTBT). According to a senior official, "there is no doubt that they will raise these issues, but they will be in the subtext, not the banner headlines."

Then what will the visit be about? "Convergence in science and technology issues, U.S. interests in Indian information technology, health, environment and energy," says the official.

At the end of the visit, there will be a "vision statement" by both leaders address-

ing the future rather than the contentious past.

Officials say that while they neither have Mr Clinton's complete itinerary nor information of the composition of his party, they have a clear idea that the visit will begin March 19 evening when the presidential party checks into New Delhi. Next morning, while Delhi will be overtaken by Holi's bacchanalia, the U.S. president leaves for an official visit to Bangladesh and returns the same evening.

The official visit to India then begins on the morning of March 21. After two days in New Delhi, Mr Clinton is expected to go to Agra, Mumbai and Hyderabad, though not necessarily in that order. It is still not clear whether he will visit Pakistan. Indian officials say they do not want to make an issue of it.

During his recent consultations in Washington, foreign secretary Lalit Mansingh did reportedly tell the U.S. that while it was their sovereign right to decide, he could not rule out a certain negative public reaction in India.

Washington's agonising over the Pakistan visit has been made known to Indian officials

and overall, the U.S. point is that the situation in Pakistan is very delicate and that if they did not engage Pakistan at this juncture, the situation could get worse. U.S. officials are still negotiating with the Pakistanis and presumably, seeking assurances on a return to democracy as well as control of terrorism as a means of sweetening the pill.

While non-proliferation is not expected to be a major focus of the visit, Indian officials are hoping that it will add to the improved atmosphere between New Delhi and Washington. This in turn could lead to a steady dilution of the post-Pokhran II economic coercive measures taken by the U.S.

"But we are not expecting any favours," says the senior official. New Delhi says it is happy that a large number of sanctions have been removed, but it is aware that most of the restrictions on technology remain in place with little chance of action until there is a fundamental shift in the U.S. towards India. In this context, officials note, that the U.S. consulted China before undertaking the India visit, but did not extend the same courtesy to India before Mr Clinton visited Beijing.

THE TIMES OF INDIA

24 FEB 2000

China, India sign WTO pact, talks with EU on

DEUTSCHE PRESS AGENTUR
BEIJING, FEB 23

CHINA and India on Tuesday signed an agreement on China's entry into the World Trade Organisation (WTO) amid China's ongoing WTO talks with the European Union, the Chinese side confirmed.

China and India signed the WTO pact on Tuesday afternoon, an official with the Ministry of Foreign Trade and Economic Cooperation (MOFTEC) said.

China's Foreign Trade Minister Shi Guangsheng and India's Minister of Commerce and Industry Murasoli Maran signed the documents on behalf of their respective governments, the official Xinhua news agency said.

Maran, leading a high-powered Indian delegation, said that New Delhi fully supports Beijing's entry into WTO and expressed

confidence that both the countries could work in tandem to push for the rights of developing countries.

"After China enters the WTO, we will cooperate on issues of mutual interest. China's entry into WTO would strengthen the world trading system and also world trade," he said.

Maran said the negotiations went off without a hitch, unlike a similar agreement between the US and China last year, which was a long-drawn process.

An Indian diplomat said on condition of anonymity China has agreed to a series of tariff reductions on Indian goods.

"China has agreed to lower general tariff rates for a range of agricultural, industrial and marine products from about 20 per cent to 10 per cent," he said. Shi also noted that the two sides reached the agreement after "friendly consultations." China appreciates India's

support on Beijing's entry into WTO, he said, adding the agreement would provide further impetus to Sino-Indian trade ties.

Shi said the two countries would be able to substantially increase bilateral trade from the present figure of two billion dollars per annum.

With today's agreement, China has just one major hurdle - its largest trading partner European union with whom it must sign similar trade agreement to pave the way for its entry into the world body. China has to sign bilateral trade pacts with all 135 WTO members before its 14-year bid to enter the world body comes through.

MOFTEC officials were tight-lipped on the negotiations with the delegation from 15-member EU.

A foreign ministry spokesman, while confirming that technical-level talks were on, refused to divulge any details.

INDIAN EXPRESS

24 FEB 2000

MEA slams civil aviation

STATESMAN NEWS SERVICE

NEW DELHI, Dec. 31. — The external affairs ministry has been strongly critical of the arrangements made by the civil aviation ministry for the passengers who returned from Dubai on Christmas Day.

According to the Prime Minister's Office, the Minister of State for External Affairs, Mr Ajit Panja, has complained about the chaotic situation at the Indira Gandhi International airport here when the hostages returned, and recommended immediate action to make the civil aviation ministry more disciplined to deal with emergencies.

The report assumes significance in light of the criticism from relatives and friends of the hostages as well as certain officials that the government machinery was just not geared to cope with such a situation.

The failure of the civil aviation ministry, said the report to the PMO, and the mishandling led to further suffering of the hostages.

According to the despatch, the arrangements for the passengers and their relatives at the airport was very poor. When they landed, the medical team sat idle as they did not know what to do. Neither did they have anybody to guide them. The hostages were not separat-

ed from the other passengers, adding to the confusion.

The report said Civil Aviation Minister Mr Sharad Yadav's address could not be heard. There was also no microphone to address the Press and inform the anxious relatives. Worse, the senior police officers left as soon as Delhi Lt Governor Mr Vijai Kapoor and Chief Minister Mrs Sheila Dixit left the airport.

The confusion was compounded as there weren't enough cars to take the hostages home and no one had a clue what to do with them. Even an hour after the flight landed, hostages were roaming around the airport.

Relatives and friends of the hostages had earlier charged the government with failing to do enough.

On 27 December, angry relatives even marched to the Prime Minister's residence after storming Rajiv Gandhi Bhawan, headquarters of the civil aviation ministry, where the crisis management group was monitoring situation.

Two days ago, it was reportedly decided that information on the hijack crisis would be channeled through the PMO, the external affairs ministry and the Press Information Bureau.

Airport security: The hijack crisis has forced the civil aviation ministry to accept in prin-

ciple the proposal for an independent agency to look after security at all airports and deal with similar exigencies.

The ministry has asked the Bureau of Civil Aviation Security to prepare a comprehensive proposal on the training.

Since 1996, said one official, there have been several proposals to the ministry to launch an agency for airport security, but could not make headway because of its financial implications. The recurring expenditure, according to one proposal, was to be about Rs 2 crore annually. There are 128 airports in India, of which 66 are functional.

An official said the latest proposal for airport security was prepared after lapses were found during the mock hijacking conducted last year. The police at IGI airport didn't know what to do when the hijack call was made.

It was felt that the state police could not look into security aspects of the airport as it is different from normal duties, with frequent transfers of airport policemen a hindrance to a foolproof security system.

Studies show that policemen are not sufficiently trained to tackle hijacks, lack motivation, do not have requisite power of observation and are not sufficiently informed about civil aviation laws.

THE STATESMAN

- 1 JAN 2000

Indian diplomacy faces many posers

Apratim Mukarji
New Delhi, December 31

DESPITE THE sigh of relief being heard around the world at the near-bloodless termination of the Kandahar hijack, Indian diplomacy once again faces uncomfortable questions about its sagacity, far-sightedness and efficacy in a crisis situation.

Apart from reinforcing the sense of instability in nuclearised South Asia, the hijack and the manner of its termination, with all their attendant ramifications, have only accentuated India's image of a soft State. Many problems our diplomats might face in the aftermath of Kandahar might arise out of this international perception.

The international reaction since December 24, when the plane was commandeered from Kathmandu, has at best been correct in condemning the act.

But India's case that the hijack was yet another manifestation of the proxy war that its pathologically hostile neighbour wages, is yet to

be taken note of.

Indian diplomacy would score if the hijackers' Pak-links are recognized by the international community. However, with the hijackers managing a safe passage, the prospects of such an eventuality appear bleak.

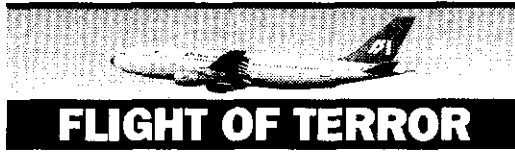
The patently unacceptable aspect of the IC 814 hijack was India's total helplessness in dealing with the Taliban, the fundamentalist

ed charge that the Taliban and Pakistan together are at the core of the burgeoning campaign of international terrorism spreading fast across Russia, Central Asia and South Asia. At the outset, there was an impression that New Delhi would-- once the crisis was resolved-- have little choice but to recognise the Taliban regime. Indian diplomacy does not, however, immediately face such a daunting prospect.

While the Taliban have ostensibly done a good deed, they have clearly outmanoeuvred India by forcing it into a deal which should prove to be a boon to international

terrorism on the one hand and to themselves on the other. At the same time, New Delhi might be required sooner than later, to get in touch with the Taliban and drawing itself into another indeterminate phase of ad hocism.

There is even a brave talk of engineering divorce between Pakistan and the Taliban. The danger of going over-board is omnipresent.



FLIGHT OF TERROR

militia that have ruled the major part of Afghanistan for over three years. Other than adopting a stiff anti-Taliban policy, which is logical both historically and strategically, New Delhi has over the last three years, done precious little to defend its interests in the war-torn country.

As India beseeched the Taliban's help in the hijack crisis, the world remembered its constantly repeat-

THE HINDUSTAN TIMES

- 1 JAN 2000

Third force directed hijack drama: Jaswant

■ Minister hints at Pak role, says hijackers had RDX

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA
NEW DELHI, JAN 1

PUTTING an end to speculations, External Affairs Minister Jaswant Singh on Saturday, finally accused Pakistan for its role in the hijacking of the Airbus, which the terrorists, armed with RDX and other explosives, had threatened to blow up in mid-air.

A day after the release of the hostages, the minister told a press conference here that all the five hijackers had left for Quetta in Pakistan on Friday night after participating in an *iftar* in Kandahar.

He said initial inquiries have revealed that all the hijackers were Pakistani nationals and were constantly consulting "people outside the aircraft as if a third force was telling them what to do."

Giving credence to reports that messages from the Indian negotiating team to Delhi through satellite phones, the only mode of communication, were being intercepted, he said "we were well aware of the security implications of the porousness of this communication system."

"It has come to light that there was a qualitative and quantitative change in the arms displayed by the hijackers," Singh said adding besides RDX, they were in possession of AK-47 rifles, pistols and grenades.

He said there was real apprehension that the plane had been readied for being exploded in

mid-air if the hijackers' demands were not conceded.

Describing the hijacking as not an "ordinary" one, he said "it is clear that there were many strands to it. As our inquiry into the entire episode progresses, I am confident that more will be revealed."

He said that a majority of the 36 terrorists whose release was demanded by the hijackers were from Pakistan.

Asked who constituted the third force operating at Kandahar during the negotiations, Singh said "I will let you know at the appropriate time."

Singh listed these instances suggesting Pakistan's complicity in the hijack when specifically asked whether the government suspected Islamabad's hand in it.

The Minister also explained that his visit to Kandahar had been undertaken to ensure that the agreement with the hijackers was implemented "without any last minute hitches".

Asked whether the government would seek the extradition of the hijackers from Pakistan, he said "we will be taking it up with Islamabad in an appropriate fashion and at the appropriate time".

Singh said the government had discussed with the Taliban the option of storming the aircraft. "The government considered this option in totality. The best option was the one adopted."

On the role of the Taliban in the hijack crisis, he said they had extended constructive cooperation and had assured India that the hijackers and terrorists would not be given asylum or allowed to stay in Afghanistan for more than ten hours after the release of the hostages. Asked whether India was now ready to recognise the Taliban regime, he said "the fundamentals of our Afghan policy remain unchanged and diplomatic recognition is not any conferment of any distinction or based on such episodes."

Meanwhile, the IC-814 Kathmandu-Delhi Indian Airlines plane, which endured the eight day-long hijack drama, finally

CONTINUED ON PAGE 2

I knew I could do it:
Capt Sharan



NEW DELHI: "I told myself I could do it though we were fearing death every day," the gallant Captain D Sharan of IC 814 said with tears in his eyes as he came out of the terminal on Friday night to an overwhelming and emotional welcome and a cheering public.

Third force in hijack

reached its destination, the Indira Gandhi International Airport in New Delhi at 12:20 noon on Saturday.

The Airbus could not come on Friday along with the other two aircraft as it had developed a snag in its Auxiliary Power Unit (APU) in the wee hours of Friday.

"The repair work was completed on Friday night," official sources said here.

"The hijacked craft could not start last night (Friday) as heavy fog had enveloped Delhi and it had to wait till the morning for it to clear," they added.

The aviation engineers, who ar-

rived in Kandahar on December 27 along with the Indian negotiation team, did the repair job and certified late last night that the aircraft was airworthy. According to some IA officials, who came on board the flight, the aircraft was "worse than a pig sty with the cockpit full of empty cans of juice," indicating it was occupied most of the time by the hijackers at Kandahar.

Only when necessary, Capt D Sharan, the commander of the flight, or other flight crew members were called in by them. Otherwise, the crew was confined to J class only, they said.

INDIAN EXPRESS

- 2 JAN 2000

Declare Pak a rogue State, says Vajpayee

Pune, January 3

PRIME MINISTER Atal Behari Vajpayee today urged major nations of the world to declare Pakistan a terrorist state.

All the information with the government about the hijacking of the Indian Airlines aircraft and the subsequent developments made it clear that the hijacking was an integral part of a Pakistan-backed campaign of terrorism, Mr Vajpayee told reporters here.

The Prime Minister said that apart from their stated demands, the hijackers and their sponsors had planned to internationalise the Kashmir issue and isolate India diplomatically.

However, "they failed miserably in their diabolic designs" and "if anything was internationalised by the hijacking, it was the brazen manner in which terrorism was resorted to by those seeking to break India's unity and integrity".

Mr Vajpayee said governments and people around the world have universally condemned the hijacking. Thus, rather than India being isolated, anti-Indian forces behind the act of terrorism have been isolated in the eyes of the world community, he added.

The hijacking episode, the PM observed, "has strengthened the legitimacy of India's traditional stand on Kashmir". Simultaneously, it has shown to the world community that "Pakistan's Kashmir agenda is not only baseless but is being pursued through terrorism", which constitutes a potent threat to global security.

Centre's directive

THE CENTRE has instructed all state governments to take immediate steps to deport Pakistani nationals staying in the country after the expiry of their visa, Union Minister of State for Home C.H. Vidyasagar Rao told reporters on Monday. Rao said that there were about 11,000 Pakistani nationals staying illegally in various parts of the country.

PTI, Hyderabad

"Pakistan's active and sustained role in fomenting terrorism in India is now too obvious to be overlooked by the international community. India, therefore, strongly urges major nations of the world to declare Pakistan a terrorist state. Our government will work

systematically towards this objective," the PM added.

Asked whether he believed that the US would agree, he said: "We would expect America to agree in the larger interest (of the world). We will try our best to convince America."

On the role of the Taliban in the hijack drama, he said: "In Kandahar, their attitude seemed helpful. We have to deeply study the exact role the Taliban played."

Mr Vajpayee said it also needs to be studied how the hijackers managed to get new weapons inside the plane when it was in Kandahar.

To a query on the release of the three terrorists, he said: "We did not buckle under pressure to save any relative of any minister."

Mr Vajpayee said right at the beginning the government had set before itself two objectives in its effort to bring about a speedy end to the hijack crisis: the safe return of all the passengers and crew on the plane and protection of the nation's long-term interests.

"Belying the fiendish hopes of those behind the hijack plan, our people maintained complete communal peace and harmony during the crisis," Prime Minister Vajpayee said. (PTI)

THE HINDUSTAN TIMES

- 4 JAN 2000

PM calls out for global help to declare Pak a terrorist state

Our Correspondent
PUNE 3 JANUARY

PAKISTAN SHOULD be declared a terrorist state by the international community, since its role in fomenting terrorism in India is now all too obvious, Prime Minister Atal Behari Vajpayee said on Monday.

Adopting a tough stand, the Prime Minister said: "The hijack and the subsequent developments make it clear that it was an integral part of the Pakistan-backed campaign of terrorism."

He added that it was part of the hijacker's and their mentors' plan to internationalise the Kashmir issue, "in which they have failed miserably." Moreover, the universal condemnation of the hijack has vastly furthered India's long term interests, he said.

He admitted that a price had to be paid for the partial acceptance of the hijackers' demands for the safe release of all the hostages, but this does not mean any slackening of the government's resolve in its protracted battle against terrorism.

Pakistan's active and sustained role in fomenting terrorism in India is now too obvious to be any longer overlooked by the international community. "India, therefore, strongly urges major nations of the world to declare Pakistan a terrorist state," he said.

Mr Vajpayee, who spoke to reporters after inaugurating the 87th Indian Science Congress



Atal: Speaking out loud AP

2000 (ISC 2000) here on Monday, said the government will launch a major diplomatic effort on this front and will try to ensure that the US takes the initiative.

Stressing that the battle against terrorism is a protracted one, in a printed statement released at his first press conference after the hijack drama ended, Mr Vajpayee said: "The government will take all the necessary measures to strengthen the various aspects of internal security."

However, he admitted that there was a considerable delay in informing him about the hijack on December 24. "I was airborne and people on the ground thought they could handle the situation," he explained.

He declined to comment on newspaper reports that Britain

will allow entry to one of three terrorists released in exchange for the hostages. Describing the Taliban's attitude during the hijacking episode as "helpful and cooperative," he said there was no move to recognise the Taliban and establish formal diplomatic ties with that country.

The government is still to ascertain Taliban's "precise role" in the hijacking of the Indian Airlines aircraft, as it is still waiting for more information," the Prime Minister said.

While the Taliban appeared to have sympathy with the hijackers it was difficult to say whether the latter got additional arms for outside or they were already hidden in the aircraft, Mr Vajpayee said.

He declined to elaborate on lapses by the Indian security agencies in anticipating such an attempt in Nepal, saying, "Nepal has to tighten its security. This morning, too, an incident has occurred in Kathmandu in which the ISI is supposed to be involved."

He emphatically dismissed the charge of the Congress party that the government had compromised national interests by releasing Islamic militants in exchange for the hostages. The central government will consult the government of Jammu and Kashmir to expedite the trials of the 35 terrorists whose release had been demanded by the hijackers.

The Economic Times

- 4 JAN 2000

Post-hijack, India finds global community a silent valley

Our Political Bureau

NEW DELHI 3 JANUARY

THREE DAYS after the harrowing hijack drama, the government finds itself constrained to initiate a quick diplomatic exercise to defend its moves on the issue and harness international opinion against Pakistan's role in the hijacking.

Monday's call by Prime Minister A B Vajpayee to the international community to declare Pakistan a terrorist state is a part of the larger exercise to win their support in the post-hijack diplomatic offensive and counter the Musharraf regime's efforts to successfully project a sober face to the world.

After the Kargil conflict, India has been seeking to convince the international community of the imperative need, from its own security viewpoint as well as that of the region, to blackball the neighbour based on its continuous 'proxy war' on Kashmir.

That the exercise to pin the blame firmly down on Pakistan in the recent hijack crisis was patently evident when National Security Advisor Brajesh Mishra claimed that India had ample evidence of the neighbour's com-

plicity. Mr Mishra chose to support his submission and that of the government already battling with its back to the wall on the domestic front over the issue by pointing to the fact that a majority of the 36 militants sought to be freed by the hijackers were of Pakistani origin.

He also disclosed that the government had relevant intercepts between two terrorist outfits in the Kashmir Valley suggesting Pakistan's complicity.

Notwithstanding the government's frenzied accusations, the world community has thus far remained by and large unimpressed and failed to react as India would have wished it to.

The silence from the UN on the crisis is one such indicator that while the hijacking may be viewed and stringently condemned as a terrorist act, the world has yet to be convinced fully of the involvement of Pakistan.

The latter, however, is an imperative perspective which is fundamental to Prime Minister Vajpayee's appeal to the world to declare Pakistan a terrorist state. Post-hijacking, there have been virtually only voices in the

wilderness, such as those of US Congressman from the India Caucus Gary Ackerman, and the Canadian government commending India's strategy and asking for a probe into Pakistan's role.

What appears to have made the task for India, struggling to overcome the last lingering visual image of Mr Singh accompanying the three hardcore militants to Kandahar, doubly difficult is the fact that, notwithstanding Mr Mishra's claims, the government is yet to furnish concrete evidence over Pakistan's role.

Further, the identity of the hijackers largely remains a mystery. Foreign minister Jaswant Singh, in fact, had in the initial stages of the hijacking hinted at their being Pakistanis but later had to concede that their identity had yet to be established conclusively. Making matters worse, the Taliban on Sunday retracted assertion that the hijackers were on their way to Quetta in Pakistan.

Pakistan, on the other hand, has proved quicker off the mark in countering the Indian allegations at the international level and even in projecting a sober anti-terrorist image.

The Economic Times

- 4 JAN 2000

'We will ask US to declare Pak a terrorist state'

The Times of India News Service

PUNE: In a hard-hitting speech here on Monday, Prime Minister Atal Behari Vajpayee said India would soon appeal to the United States and other leading nations to



A.B. Vajpayee

declare Pakistan a terrorist state.

The government would soon launch a major diplomatic effort on this front and also try to ensure "that the U.S. takes an initiative in this matter," Mr Vajpayee said addressing a press conference. He said Pakistan's active and sustained role in fomenting terrorism in India was obvious and could no longer be overlooked by the international community.

Saying India would "intensify" its war against terrorism, Mr Vajpayee said the government was convinced of Pakistan's complicity in the hijack of Indian Airlines Flight 814. He said the latest incident once again demonstrated Pakistan's recourse to terrorism to advance its Kashmir agenda and the threat it poses to global security.

"India, therefore, urges major nations of the world to declare Pakistan a terrorist state. Our government will work systematically towards this objective," he said in a statement released at a news conference.

The Prime Minister, who was in Pune to inaugurate the 87th session of the Indian Science Congress, declined to react to newspaper reports that Britain would allow entry to one of the three militants released in exchange for the hostages aboard the hijacked plane.

Mr Vajpayee described the Afghan government's attitude during the hijacking episode as "helpful and cooperative". There was, however, no move to recognise the Taliban government and establish formal diplomatic ties, he said.

THE TIMES OF INDIA

- 4 JAN 2003

Pak sponsorship of terrorism has acquired a pattern: MEA

Our Political Bureau
NEW DELHI 4 JANUARY

INDIA ON Tuesday said though the declaration of Pakistan as a terrorist state rests on the internal processes of US law, "it does not require too much convincing" that Pakistan has been sponsoring cross-border terrorism for years.

This was clarified by a spokesman of the ministry of external affairs, who was responding to questions regarding the Prime Minister's statement in Pune on Monday. India said Pakistan's sponsorship of terrorism had acquired a pattern of sorts which became evident during Kargil. The laying of a wreath by the chief of the Pakistan army on the body of a militant, Pakistan officials attending meetings of terrorist organisations and even the Lashkar-e-Toi-

ba convention in Muridke were examples of a terrorist state.

However, it is unlikely the US will snap to attention and do the needful. Iran and Libya, two of the countries who, according to US law, sponsor terrorism, have had trade and travel embargoes slapped on them. Pakistan is already under so many sanctions that further US action may not have the required effect.

India has also read out the rule book to Pakistan by insisting that according to international law, they would have to try the hijackers even if they go into PoK. But Pakistan seems to have already found a way to circumvent this problem. In a statement on Tuesday in Islamabad, foreign office spokesman Tariq Altaf said no persons answering the general de-

scriptions of the hijackers had entered Pakistan. He said since the negotiations between the Indian government and the hijackers were held on secure telecommunication lines, Pakistan had no idea of the specific identities of the hijackers.

Rejecting assumptions that they had already entered Pakistan, Altaf said: "The Indian government has so far given no details as to the profiles of the hijackers. In the absence of such details, it would be difficult to apprehend the culprits if they enter Pakistan by an unauthorised route."

He said Pakistani authorities on the border had been asked to maintain vigil and had been asked to arrest persons bearing the names of hijackers given by the Indian government.

The Economic Times

- 5 JAN 2000

India says no to Clinton mediation

USA blind to Pak terrorism: Fernandes

STATESMAN NEWS SERVICE

NEW DELHI, Jan. 5. — India today lashed out at the USA for its refusal to declare Pakistan a terrorist state.

The defence minister accused the Clinton administration of turning a "blind eye" to cross-border terrorism in the region, while the external affairs ministry rebuffed the US President's new year agenda of "easing tension between India and Pakistan" in 2000.

The Prime Minister, however, refused to comment. "No comments. I have read the reports," Mr Atal Behari Vajpayee said at an *iftar* party hosted by Mr HD Deve Gowda.

But his defence minister did not mince words in his attack against the USA. "When it comes to (Osama) Bin Laden, the US fires not one but scores of missiles with high-precision technology that it possesses."

"What the USA and the world need to realise is that terrorism understands no borders. Therefore, to aim at Bin Laden and overlook what is happening across the borders in India at the hands of Pakistan, is not addressing the question," Mr George Fernandes declared.

He was speaking to reporters after inaugurating a seminar on "The Challenges of Limited

Wars: Parameters and Options".

The minister accused Pakistan of holding a nuclear threat to India in its continued assertion that it could wrest Kashmir without facing any challenge. "They (Pakistan) held out a nuclear threat to us on 31 May

1999, and did it again yesterday without absorbing the real meaning of nuclearisation — that it can deter only the use of nuclear weapons, but not conventional war."

Mr Clinton's new year agenda of easing tension between the neighbours left

the external affairs ministry similarly unimpressed.

"As far as Indo-Pak relations are concerned, we have said time and again that both countries under the Shimla Agreement are committed to addressing issues bilaterally. We do not see the role for a third party," a spokesman asserted.

While Mr Fernandes iterated the Prime Minister's remarks about attempts to have Pakistan declared a terrorist state, the spokesman refused to be drawn out on any specific steps that might be taken.

UK toes US line: Britain, too, has ruled out declaring Pakistan a terrorist state, adds PTI.

PAK CLERK EXPELLED

KATHMANDU, Jan. 5. — The Nepal government has ordered expulsion of a clerk in Pakistan Embassy at Kathmandu for his involvement in an Indian currency racket. Asim Saboor was caught with fake Indian bank notes worth Rs 50,000 on Sunday. He was handed back to the Pakistan Embassy along with the order to leave Nepal within 72 hours. — AFP

No role for U.S. in Indo-Pak. row

24 Jan
NEW DELHI, JAN. 5. India today ruled out any role for the United States in resolution of Indo-Pak problems but said it has a convergence of interest with Washington in combating terrorism and wanted Pakistan declared a terrorist state.

This was stated by an External Affairs Ministry spokesman when asked to comment on the U.S. annual National Strategy Report presented to Congress by the President, Mr. Bill Clinton, declaring that easing of tensions between India and Pakistan would top his agenda this year.

"We do not see any role for a third party" in the resolution of bilateral issues between India and Pakistan, he said.

On the issue of Pakistan being declared a terrorist state especially in the wake of evidence estab-

17-13
lishing Islamabad's "connection and complicity" in the hijacking of the Indian Airlines flight, he said, "The U.S. is aware of our concerns" since various terrorist groups such as Harkat-ul-Ansar and Lashkar-e-Taiba were based in Pakistan.

6/1
Asked about steps being taken by Nepal to combat activities of Pakistan's ISI in that country, he said "there is scope for much greater cooperation with India on the preventive side".

To a question if India was considering giving recognition to the Taliban militia, he said, "The fundamentals of our foreign policy on Afghanistan remain unchanged and we continue to recognise the government of Prof. Burhanuddin Rabbani as the legitimate government." — PTI

Our diplomacy has been hijacked: Gujral

Sharad didn't have a passport until the night he went to Dubai and you send him for talks: Former PM

ARATI R JERATH
NEW DELHI, JAN 7

THE rejection by the United States and the United Kingdom of Prime Minister Atal Behari Vajpayee's call to declare Pakistan a terrorist state is a "very big rebuff" to India, feels former Prime Minister I.K. Gujral.

Criticising the Government's handling of the hijack crisis and its aftermath, Gujral said the demand should not have come from the Prime Minister himself. "Someone else, like George Fernandes, could have made the demand. And the Government should have done some background work before raising it," he told *The Indian Express* on Thursday.

He came down heavily on the decision to send Foreign Minister Jaswant Singh to Kandahar with the three released prisoners and jeered at the decision to fly Civil Aviation Minister Sharad Yadav to Dubai to bring back the first batch of hostages. "He (Sharad Yadav) didn't have a passport before this trip. And this is the man who is your civil aviation minister and who you sent for delicate and sensitive negotiations in a foreign country," he mocked.

The entire episode starkly revealed this Government's lack of personal contacts internationally, the former Prime Minister pointed out. "We just don't have personal relationships with anyone any

more. Of course, there are plenty of people in this country who do but this Government doesn't want to use anyone," he grumbled. Given the grave implications of the hijacking episode for India externally, Gujral felt there was an urgent need to rebuild the consensus that has always existed on foreign policy issues. "This Government destroyed that consensus which saw us through many critical periods. It must be built up again. The unfortunate part of their policy is that they don't take anybody into confidence. They are obsessed with taking all the credit all the time," he said. As an example of the Government's reluctance to share information, he referred to the decision to send Jaswant Singh

to Kandahar. Although the Prime Minister rung up to say that Singh was going, he did not breathe a word of the deal that had already been struck with the hijackers, according to Gujral. "He told us half-truths. We were not fully in the picture. I thought a hitch had arisen and Jaswant Singh was being sent to sort it out," Gujral said.

The most unfortunate aspect of the hijacking, he felt, was that Pakistan had succeeded in achieving its main objective - which was to get international acceptability for the Taliban. "And we facilitated this by getting the whole world to talk to the Taliban in our anxiety to get the hostages released. Through that one week of television images

from the Kandahar airport, the picture of a bloody-minded regime has gone. The Taliban is in business today and this gives a fillip to Pakistan's much-coveted ambition to acquire strategic depth in the region," he lamented.

At the same time, he was in agreement with the Government's policy of postponing the broken dialogue with Pakistan. "What will we talk to them about? Musharraf said Pakistan will only talk about Kashmir. So where will a dialogue at this point lead us?" he asked.

He felt it was more important to revive SAARC. "The SAARC Summit must not be put off any longer. Musharraf's presence at the Summit will not harm us."

Govt. to inquire into Lama's arrival

By Harish Khare

NEW DELHI, JAN. 8. While the authorities in Dharmasala (in Himachal Pradesh) have been able to confirm the arrival on January 5 of the Tibetan spiritual leader, Karmapa Lama Ugyen Trinley Dorje, a central team, consisting of officials of the Ministry of External Affairs and the Home Ministry, is likely to visit Dharmasala to try to understand the background and reasons for the "escape" from Lhasa.

The sudden arrival of the spiritual leader, regarded as the third highest ranking Tibetan, in Dharmasala has taken the authorities by surprise; and, there is a scramble to try and understand the significance of the development.

All that a spokesman of the Ministry of External Affairs would say was: "We are inquiring into the circumstances attendant upon the sudden arrival in

India of the Lama as also into the consequences of it." This was the first and only official reaction.

It is also learnt that the Union Government has advised the Himachal Pradesh Government to beef up security around the Chinar Guest House, which even otherwise is a protected area and houses the Tibetan government in exile.

Meanwhile, the Tibetan government-in-exile was reported to have observed in Dharmasala that when the 14-year-old Lama reached its headquarters, he was accompanied by his 25-year-old sister and five others. However, the government-in-exile denied any involvement in the escape of the Lama.

According to preliminary information available, the Lama left Lhasa on December 28 last year on his trip.

'Karmapa escape a ploy': Page 10

THE HINDU
- 9 JAN 2000

of P. P. P.

As welcome as ever *of 8*

India lives up to its image by sheltering the boy Lama

UNDER what circumstances and in what manner the boy Lama fled his monastery home in Tibet and reached Dharamsala — a distance of 900 km over mountainous terrain — remain a mystery but the import of the development cannot be overlooked. It denotes a body blow to China's religious policy in that Communist China has been projecting the 14-year-old Lama, believed to be a reincarnation of the 16th Karmapa, as a counter to the Dalai Lama. The young Karmapa heads a powerful sect, which was one of the first to attract Western devotees in large numbers. Ever since his installation, which was shrouded in controversy, in 1992, China has been claiming that it had established complete control over Tibet. How facetious that claim was has been proved by the defection of the Lama, whose religious authority is accepted almost across the Buddhist spectrum. That it happened almost immediately after China's state-backed Catholic Church consecrated five bishops in defiance of the Pope's authority lends it greater importance. China is yet to control the fast-growing Falung Gong sect despite all the repressive measures used against its adherents. All this indicates that the Chinese religious policy is in a shambles.

The young Lama was important to the Chinese not because they respected the religious sentiments of the Tibetans but because they wanted to counter the growing international influence of the Dalai Lama. His defection shows that the Chinese have no clue to the minds of the tradition-bound Tibetans for whom a life without religion is unthinkable.

The integration of Tibet as a part of China may have been complete according to the Chinese but their moral rights over Tibet will now come under increasing scrutiny. In the end, all this may add up to nothing as long as the monolithic Communist Party holds the state in its grip and China enjoys international clout commensurate with the giant technological, industrial and military strides it has made in the recent past.

The arrival of the Karmapa poses a diplomatic challenge to the country. Questions will certainly be raised about India's relations with China. In granting him sanctuary — if that indeed is the right word — India has only lived up to its image built over the millennia as a refuge for the persecuted. The sentiment that weighed with India was much the same when in the first century or thereabouts the Jews were given shelter and in 1959 the Dalai Lama was allowed to come and set up camp with his followers at Dharamsala. The hospitality rendered to the Tibetan Buddhists all these 40 years has not been at the cost of the abiding and good neighbourly relations India has with China. Many Chinese leaders, including the head of state, have visited India during this period. India has been steadfast in its belief that Tibet is an internal affair of China and that what kind of autonomy should be granted to Tibet is a matter to be sorted out between the Tibetans and the Chinese. The arrival of Karmapa does not, therefore, signify any change in India's time-tested policy. He is as welcome as the senior Lama was 40 years ago.

INDIAN EXPRESS
10 JAN 2000

India keeps mum over Karmapa's 'escape'

Apratim Mukarji
New Delhi, January 10

AS BEIJING continued its inscrutable reticence over the sensational escape of the 17th Karmapa Ugyen Trinley Dorje (14) into India, New Delhi too maintained silence over the development.

The options for the Indian Government, however, appear to be eminently limited. Since the 17th Karmapa is already in Indian territory, without a valid visa, he can either be deported to China or be granted refugee status so that he can continue staying.

India is quite unlikely to extend to him political asylum, which would be construed as an overtly unfriendly act by China with immediate ramifications for the not-so-stable bilateral relations.

While a deportation order appears unlikely too, the most likely choice would be granting him the status of a refugee on the grounds that he is the highest priest of the Karma Kagyu sect of Tibetan Buddhism and has a

world-wide following, including a large number of followers in India. In any case, China's reaction to any Indian decision that falls short of the Lama's deportation can only unfold itself in the coming days.

Meanwhile, US Special Coordinator on Tibet Julia Taft began her four-day visit to India today with a courtesy call on Foreign Secretary Lalit Mansingh. Many speculate that her visit is possibly linked with her visit to the Karmapa's escape from Tibet.

Denying any connection between the US official's visit and the sudden arrival of the Lama, official spokesman for the External Affairs Ministry said that Ms Taft would be visiting centres of Tibetan refugees at Dharamsala as part of her job, involving US assistance for rehabilitation programmes for refugees. The spokesman also denied reports that the Dalai Lama had requested India to extend political asylum to Karmapa. "No formal request for asylum has been received," he said. As for any informal request made, he pleaded ignorance.

THE HINDUSTAN TIMES

11 JAN 2000

No asylum to Karmapa for now

By Our Special Correspondent

NEW DELHI, JAN. 11. After discussing the wider implications of the defection from Tibet of the 17th Karmapa, Ugyen Trinley Dorje, at the highest level, India, for the moment, is said to have decided against granting political asylum to the boy monk. At the same time, New Delhi, is opposed to his deportation. Consequently, New Delhi may accept the Karmapa's de facto refugee status.

Upholding the principle of non-involvement in religious affairs, the Government is likely to steer clear of any internal dispute triggered by his arrival. The Kagyu school of Buddhism, of which the Karmapa is a spiritual leader, has a following of five million people, spread over 300 monasteries around the world.

The identity of the 17th Karmapa is in dispute within the Kagyu school. The Rumtek monastery in Sikkim, which is the headquarters of the Kagyu school, does not recognise Ugyen Trinley Dorje as the 17th Karmapa.

The Chinese have so far avoided formally communicating to India on the escape of the Karmapa from Lhasa. India, on its part, has also apparently not informed the Chinese authorities about his arrival.

Not surprisingly, the Foreign Office spokesman today declined to comment on the reported



The 17th Karmapa, Ugyen Trinley Dorje — AP

veiled warning by China against granting political asylum to the Karmapa.

The Foreign Office spokesman here, however, said the Government of India was "not aware" of any such communication from Beijing. He also rejected media reports which sought to portray that the Western nations were exerting pressure on India to grant asylum to the Karmapa. He reiterated that India was yet to take a decision.

In response to questions, he said the Government had not received any formal request for granting asylum to the boy monk. He also refused to spell out a time-frame for taking a decision

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on the Karmapa's political status. "I don't know how long it will take", he said.

The spokesman declined to compare the defection of the Karmapa to that of the Dalai Lama who was immediately granted asylum by India in 1959.

The Home Ministry team, which had visited Dharamsala, to take stock of the situation has returned to the capital.

U.S. official meets Dalai Lama's aides

PTI reports from Dharmasala:

The visiting U.S. Special Coordinator for Tibet, Ms. Julie Taft, had an unscheduled meeting with the aides of the Tibetan spiritual leader, Dalai Lama, here today. After the meeting, she was ready to part with information about it to presspersons but was repeatedly restrained by the officials of the Tibetan-government-in-exile.

Ms. Taft, however, said she appreciated India's act in giving shelter to Tibetan refugees. She also commended the 'judicious' use of funds for the welfare of the refugees.

Meanwhile, the spokesman for the Tibetan-government-in-exile, Mr. Tashi Wangdi, declined to comment on China's veiled warning against India's possible granting of political asylum to the 17th Karmapa.

Asylum not yet sought: Page 13

India agrees to lift import curbs on 1,400 US products

CHIDANAND RAJGHATTA
WASHINGTON, JAN 12

AMERICA Online will not be the only US enterprise making its presence felt in India. While the world was partying towards the end of the millennium last fortnight, Washington and New Delhi quietly concluded an agreement under which India will lift what is called quantitative restrictions on imports of 1400 American products into the country.

That means American agriculture products, textiles, and more consumer goods in Indian markets. Under the agreement, signed on December 28 but disclosed only on Monday by the US Trade Representative's office, India has committed to lift half of the restrictions within three months; the remaining half of the restrictions will be

lifted by April 1, 2001.

The deal brings to a closure a longstanding dispute between the two sides that had beleaguered trade ties and resulted in a prolonged spat before the WTO tribunal. The agreement was struck apparently by the Deputy USTR Susan Esserman during her visit to New Delhi in November last year. Although a similar Indian deal with European Union and Japan lifts the QRs by 2003, the US has extracted a better deal advancing the deadline by two years.

"Eliminating these restrictions will provide—for the first time in fifty years for some products—market access opportunities for U.S. producers in key sectors such as textiles, agriculture, consumer goods and a wide variety of manufactured products, and at the same time will stimulate investment,

competition, and economic activity in India," US Trade Representative Charlene Barshefsky crowed in a statement.

The agreement still leaves more than 1600 items in the restricted list. India was forced into the deal after the WTO Appellate Body last August rejected New Delhi's plea that its balance-of-payments situation justified import restrictions. The US argued India's BOP had improved and the restrictions were not warranted anymore. It also prompted the IMF to testify before the WTO that India no longer had a balance-of-payments problem that justified these restrictions. India countered that it would lift QR only after its BOP position improved on a "sound and lasting" basis and began its international trade battle by initially

CONTINUED ON PAGE 2

Lifting of import curbs

offering to remove QRs in nine years and later reduced it to seven years. But the US did not bite even that offer. Although some Indian experts feel the lifting of QRs would endanger India's economic security, Barshefsky maintained that "with respect to India's domestic economic situation, the elimination of this regime of import restrictions will permit the growth and competition that will raise economic welfare levels and

stimulate entrepreneurial activity in the Indian private sector that began with the reforms earlier this decade." While the lifting of QRs may be a body blow to the swadeshi lobby in India, it signals the way of international trade in the new era. India has also won disputes before the WTO tribunal—and against the United States at that. New Delhi has successfully contested US restriction on import of shrimps, textiles, and garments.

INDIAN EXPRESS

13 JAN 2000

Karmapa keen on staying in India

By Jagdish Bhatt
The Times of India News Service

McLEODGANJ (H.P.): The 14-year-old Karmapa Rimpoche has expressed a desire to stay in India, preferably at any of the Tibetan monasteries in the Dharamshala region. Talking to a delegation of the Bharat-Tibet Sahyog Manch and Indo-Tibetan Friendship Association on Wednesday, the Karmapa said India is a great country with a rich culture and deep-rooted traditions besides being home to many religions. "As far as possible, it will be my endeavour to stay within the region of Dharamshala," he added.

The delegation members were asked to speak their mind and then listen to the Karmapa. They were told by the Tibetan security personnel that no questions were to be put to the Karmapa. The Karmapa, looking completely relaxed, appeared far more mature in his mannerisms than his age would suggest. Though he was speaking through an interpreter, his eyes shone brightly and his face lit every time he spoke.

The meeting, fixed through the office of the Tibetan Welfare Association and its head Dawa Tsering, took place at the Gyuto Ramoche Temple where the Karmapa has been staying along with his entourage after he was shifted from the Chonoor Guest House in McLeodganj.

Although the meeting was scheduled for 12 noon, the seven members of the delegation had to wait for nearly two hours as the Karmapa was in deep meditation. They were taken to the basement of the centre where they were frisked by Indian and Tibetan security personnel. Their cameras were impounded and

they were asked to take off their shoes.

The delegation was taken up a flight of stairs to the fifth (top) floor where the Karmapa was seated on a sofa with a brass idol of Padmasambhava on a table before him. He said he was happy there were Indo-Tibetan friendship associations in India that were working for the cause of Tibetans.

"I am happy that these two associations have come through their delegations to meet me and have welcomed me to stay in India, preferably at Dharamshala," he added.



Karmapa

Welcoming the Karmapa to Dharamshala and India, Sunil Manocha, general secretary of the Bharat-Tibet Sahyog Manch, said it was a matter of pride for India that the Karmapa had come here. Similar sentiments were expressed by Ajay Singh Mankotia of the Indo-Tibetan Friendship Association.

The Karmapa presented red knotted ribbons to all members of the delegation. The knot in the ribbon signified a prayer for good health, happiness and prosperity to whom it was given.

Meanwhile, an emergency meeting of the Kashag ('parliament of the Tibetan government-in-exile') was convened on Wednesday evening. All eight members of the Kashag were called for the meeting.

Sources said the meeting had been convened in view of the veiled threat given by China to India asking it not to give political asylum to the Karmapa. They said the Chinese statement was being taken seriously by the Tibetan government-in-exile, especially as the Karmapa had yet to be granted political asylum in India.

China to anoint Tibetan as 'Living Buddha'

BEIJING: China's atheist rulers plan to ordain the reincarnation of a Tibetan "Living Buddha" this month, government officials said on Wednesday, a week after one of the Himalayan region's top Lamas fled to India.

The cabinet's state ethnic affairs commission had on Tuesday approved the selection of a two-year-old boy as the reincarnation of the sixth Rezheng, who died in February 1997, an official of the Lhasa city government said over telephone.

An official announcement was expected this week or next. (Reuters)

THE TIMES OF INDIA

13 JAN 2000

Delhi awaits Karmapa first move

FROM PRANAY SHARMA IN
NEW DELHI AND SUJAY GUPTA
IN MUMBAI

Jan. 22. Eager to break the deadlock over the teenage Buddhist leader, India is considering letting him go to Rumtek, the headquarters of the Karmapa's Kagyu sect.

The Karmapa, Urgyen Trinley Dorje, is being treated as a Tibetan refugee though a decision on political asylum will be taken only after he makes a formal request.

Even the Dalai Lama is a refugee. But being the head of the religious community, he has been given a diplomatic passport by the government with a rank equivalent to that of Cabinet minister. Sources in the Dalai Lama's administration indicated that the Tibetan leadership could ask the government to grant the

Karmapa "special status".

"He is a religious leader and the Dalai Lama and most of the other monks have recognised him as the Karmapa. Therefore, we should not have a problem in allowing him to go to Rumtek and settling down," a senior Indian official said.

The 14-year-old Karmapa will, however, wait till he is 21 before claiming the Black Crown — the symbol of leadership at Rumtek.

India would prefer to treat the Karmapa as a refugee than grant him political asylum keeping in mind its fragile relations with China. Beijing yesterday had warned that if Delhi grants him asylum, it would violate "the five principles of peaceful co-existence".

Once asylum is granted, the person concerned is recognised as an Indian citizen. But refugee status means that the

person is in India temporarily and will return to his homeland.

Foreign ministry spokesman R.S. Jas-sal said whatever decision India takes will be guided by the "panchsheel principles".

In Dharamshala, the Dalai Lama's administration hoped that Delhi would not surrender before Beijing's threat. "We are confident that the Indian government will not be pressured by any power in the world and will take decisions in its own wisdom," religious affairs minister Tashi Wangdi said.

He denied that US coordinator for Tibet Jill Taft's visit to Dharamshala was linked to the Karmapa's flight. The minister said her tour had been planned in advance.

However, administration sources confirmed that Wangdi as well as home min-

ister Tenzin Tsering had spoken to her on alleged human rights violations in Tibet.

The sources said that reports from Tibet suggested that Tsurphu monastery, from where the Karmapa had fled, had been sealed and two senior Lamas arrested.

"We hope the reports are not true but we have conveyed the news to the international community," a source said.

The US today said it was disturbed over the human rights situation in Tibet and restrictions on Tibetan Buddhism.

"We call on China to enter into a dialogue with the Dalai Lama to preserve Tibet's unique religious, cultural and ethnic heritage," agency reports from Washington quoted state department spokesman James Rubin as saying.

Though the Dalai Lama's administration continues to maintain that it will

wait for the Karmapa to speak his mind before the asylum issue is discussed, sources indicated that both sides are waiting for the media glare to subside.

India is also waiting for the Karmapa to make a statement as it would like to gauge the Chinese reaction before making any move. If he cites religious persecution by Beijing as one of the main reasons for his escape from Tibet, the Chinese could become more acerbic.

A section in the government feels that India should not interfere in whatever the Karmapa has to say against China. "We do not interfere in religious matters. The Karmapa is a revered religious head of the Tibetan Buddhists and we should not play a role in either tempering or sharpening the remarks he wants to make against Beijing by way of explaining why he escaped to India," an official said.

40-17
15/11

Security implications of Karmapa's stay in India

By Atul Aneja

NEW DELHI, JAN. 14. As the Government brainstorms the fallout of the defection into India of the 14-year old Karmapa, Ugyen Trinley Dorje, three possible options stand out. According to highly-placed Government sources, decision-makers are studying the implications of either granting asylum to the teen-aged monk or accepting his *de facto* refugee status. His deportation to China so far has not found favour with.

But a powerful section in the official establishment, while agreeing that the Karmapa's deportation to China may have negative domestic consequences, insists that Dorje's stay in India may jeopardise the national security interests. In fact, shifting him to any of the strongholds of the Kagyu school of Buddhism, which he heads, suits India best, they say. The Kagyu school has an estimated global following of five million Buddhists and a spread of about 300 monasteries all over the world.

The Karmapa's presence may have a negative fallout on India's ties with China. Already grappling with Pakistan to counter terrorism, India can ill-afford to open another channel of politico-military tensions with China, defence sources say.

As it is, the Karmapa's defection is shrouded in mystery, though a larger international connivance is not being ruled out. A section of the Government feels that the Karmapa could not have crossed Tibet without China's knowledge. Sources say the Karmapa escaped from the third or fourth floor of the Tsurphu monastery, near Lhasa, late last month. He supposedly travelled by jeep along the single pothole-ridden road which leads out of Lhasa. The road then runs along a river bed. Curiously, the vehicle carrying him and six of his colleagues crossed seven bridges which are said to be manned by the Chinese round-the-clock before entering Nepal.

The defectors are said to have crossed the Indian border somewhere near Gorakhpur in eastern Uttar

Pradesh. Sources here find it highly improbable that the Karmapa evaded the Chinese vigilance net throughout his journey to Dharamsala.

In case there is a Chinese hand in this episode, it can have larger security implications for India, Government sources on conditions of anonymity said.

The presence of the Karmapa in India can generate pressures for his transfer to the sensitive border State of Sikkim. The Kagyu sect, headed by the Karmapa, is headquartered in the Rumtek monastery in Sikkim.

Rumtek is not an ordinary monastery and houses the treasures brought into India by the 16th Karmapa, who escaped with the Dalai Lama in 1959. Besides its riches, the wealthy monastery houses the black hat, symbol of the final authority of this sect. With Rumtek having an international following, it has grown in size and influence over the years. Sources say its clout extends beyond the clergy and also rubs on the political and economic elite in the State and beyond. If the teenage monk stays in India, pressures to take him to Rumtek will mount. Already, there are reports that key leaders of the sect want him to be shifted to the monastery in the eastern Himalayas. According to press reports, the Tai Situ Rimpoche — a U.S.-educated monk who has been one of the four regents involved in the selection of the 17th Karmapa after the death of the 16th — has already stated that the Dorje's ultimate destination will be Rumtek. If this happens, it could help China acquire a lever to influence events in this border State, analysts say.

As it is, India's sensitivity towards Sikkim are heightened on two counts. China has not formally accepted Sikkim's merger with India. Besides, the State is not far from Arunachal Pradesh whose status has also been disputed by China. The possibility of the extension of external influence, however indirect here, can affect security along India's eastern borders.

THE HINDU
15 JAN 2000

MEA volleys Karmapa ball into Chinese court

Our Political Bureau

NEW DELHI 14 JANUARY

INDIA HAS put the Karmapa ball neatly into China's court, by asking China to provide details of the young monk's flight from Lhasa. In the first official meeting between the Chinese and Indian governments on the issue, the Chinese ambassador, Zhou Gang on Friday met joint secretary (East Asia), T.C.A. Rangachari in South Block this afternoon, where "the Chinese side has been asked to share specific details regarding his departure from Tibet, the route taken and other relevant details."

The substance of the message delivered to the Chinese government is designed to put India in the clear regarding suspicions of India's role, if any in the monk's flight.

The Chinese foreign ministry first acknowledging the Karmapa's departure had said, quoting a "letter" left behind that he had travelled to India to secure the "black hat" and other musical instruments which should be possessed by the Karmapa.

Subsequently, however, the Chinese foreign ministry, in an attempt to deflect embarrassing questions about the possible "defection" of the Tibetan spiritual leader, issued a statement reminding India of its commitments regarding Tibet and the status of Tibetans in India, making it vaguely sound like a veiled threat.

With India's statement on Friday, the ministry of external affairs (MEA) wants to publicise that first, India had nothing to do with the young monk's flight, and second, to clarify China's role in it.

If the Chinese government can provide details, then the lama's "flight" will be regarded more in the nature of a 'plant'. On the other hand, the Chinese government's lack of knowledge will bring to the fore the fact that even Beijing-appointed Tibetan lamas can and do defect to less oppressive societies.

However, the government wants to be extremely correct in its relationship with China. India and China are expected to celebrate 50 years of diplomatic relations with the president, travelling to Beijing later this year. The MEA told Mr Zhou that "Urgyen Trinley Dorje, accompanied by six others arrived in Dharamshala on January 5, 2000." He was in "good health" and was being provided "appropriate security cover" as he was staying in a monastery near Dharamshala.

An MEA statement on the 25-minute meeting with the Chinese ambassador declared "India and China noted with satisfaction the sound momentum in bilateral relations and the process of improvement and development of these relations on the basis of Panchsheel by concerted efforts of the two countries."

The Economic Times
15 JAN 2000

India will not grant asylum to Karmapa

THE GOVERNMENT of India will not allow the 17th Karmapa to visit the Rumtek monastery in Sikkim. Nor will it grant him asylum in this country. While the government's policy towards the boy-monk is still evolving, highly-placed sources told *The Hindustan Times* that the decision on Rumtek and asylum had already been arrived at.

Ever since the Karmapa arrived in India, the government has grappled with the mysteries surrounding his flight from Tibet. The Karmapa's seat is Rumtek, where his traditional headgear, the black hat, is located. But the monks at Rumtek do not recognise this Karmapa and have their own candidate. They see this Karmapa as a Chinese protege.

Accordingly, when he first turned up in Dharmasala, several government analysts concluded that the story of his flight from Tibet had been manufactured. He was, they believed, here at the behest of the Chinese who wanted him to take over Rumtek from his rivals and to recover his black hat.

Over the last few days however, the government has also heard a contrary view from experts who believe the boy-monk when he says he fled from the Chinese. These experts point out that the incident has severely embarrassed Beijing and brought Tibet to international attention. Why, they ask, would the Chinese want to stage an episode that strengthens the characterisation of them as oppressors of the Tibetan people?

While the hardliners — who say that the Karmapa is a Chinese plant — still hold sway in the Home Ministry and the security services, there is now some sympathy for the Karmapa's claim that he fled Tibet on his own.

Nevertheless, the government is still too uncertain of the true facts to take any decision. The Prime Minister, who has been briefed on the situation, has advised caution. His view is that to allow the Karmapa to reach Rumtek might be to play into China's hands.

Equally, New Delhi is hopeful of an improvement in relations with Beijing and is concerned that if the Karmapa is really telling the truth, then his presence on Indian soil could become an irritant between India and China. Hence, the decision not to give him asylum.

HTC, New Delhi

THE HINDUSTAN TIMES

16 JAN 2000

MEA reads victory in US officials Pak visit

Our Political Bureau
NEW DELHI 17 JANUARY

EVEN THOUGH the US is unlikely to declare Pakistan a terrorist state, the forthcoming visit of US assistant secretary of state Karl Inderfurth to Pakistan is significant. For, accompanying him is the inter-agency coordinator for counter-terrorism, Michael Sheehan, whose presence India regards as a vindication of its decade-long complaint.

The spokesman of the ministry of external affairs (MEA) on Monday, in a rare comment on visits of officials of other countries to Pakistan, said: "We trust that Pakistan's support for terrorism and the fact that there is international terrorist activity emanating from Pakistan has something to do with ambassador Sheehan's presence."

A spate of international visitors to Pakistan from the UK and the US is an indicator that though the world is willing to read out

the riot Act to Pakistan it will continue to attempt to pull Pakistan back from the brink.

Chief of defence staff of the UK, Sir Charles Guthrie, was the first to get there last week, his visit overlapping with a congressional delegation from the US. Pakistan has been asked to ban terrorist organisations operating

in its soil, though not officially.

However, terrorism and Pakistan's role in it will form the bulk of the talks between Jaswant Singh and Strobe Talbott in London. Significantly, Michael Sheehan (US coordinator on terrorism) and Vivek Katiya (head of Pakistan division in MEA) will join the talks for the first time.

The problem, as Indian sources see it, is that the pressure on the Indian government now to "punish" Pakistan has increased exponentially after the hijacking of IC-814. The US has been expecting India to come to a "favourable" decision regarding CTBT before President Clinton visits this spring. But the Indian government, already under fire from a large domestic lobby about capitulating to hijackers, feels signing CTBT would be interpreted as a further example of India as a "soft state".

MEA sources feel that for India to move forward on any non-proliferation initiative would receive adverse public opinion in the current atmosphere.

It is clear that the US cannot be pushed to branding Pakistan a terrorist state. In the past couple of weeks, Pakistan has made statements condemning terrorism, but India believes Pakistan is harbouring the hijackers of IC-814.

Jaswant's Israel visit deferred

Our Political Bureau
NEW DELHI 17 JANUARY

INDIA HAS rescheduled the visit of foreign minister Jaswant Singh to Israel, expected to start on January 20. This is because of the "fast-paced" developments in the West Asia peace process in Shepherdstown and the forthcoming summit-level meeting in Washington.

The spokesman of external affairs ministry R.S. Jassal on Monday said India had "rescheduled the visit, and future dates will be decided on through diplomatic channels". Singh's visit would be the first ever visit to Israel by an Indian foreign minister.



GREAT REFUGE

The Indian government put a cautious foot forward about the *karmapa* with the defence minister, Mr George Fernandes, announcing that the leader of Tibet's third largest Buddhist sect could stay in India for the time being. Given that most Tibetan refugees in India live in a kind of immigrant limbo, and even the *dalai lama* does not have fullfledged political asylum, this temporary stay can be expected to eventually metamorphose into permanent residency. Indian officials have quietly indicated that the karmapa will not be returned to China against his will. Though it may seem to be a product of indecision, New Delhi's minimalism is merely a manifestation of caution.

India has reasons to move slowly. First, there remains some uncertainty over the karmapa's motives in leaving China and coming to India. There are the additional problems of two rival claimants to the black hat crown and the sect's influence in the border state of Sikkim. This is little helped by the arcane and opaque manner in which Tibetan spiritual leaders communicate with the temporal world. And unlike the older dalai lama who is experienced in the ways of the world, the karmapa is a 14 year old who has rarely been separated from his Chinese handlers. Second, India has been carefully repairing the diplomatic bridges it burnt in 1998 when it declared the Pokhran nuclear tests were aimed at China. New Delhi will undo this damage control if it shortsightedly tries to use the karmapa's arrival to embarrass Beijing. If, as seems likely, the karmapa is a genuine refugee, China will suffer a great loss of face irrespective of what India does. After all, the Tibetan leader was handpicked by Beijing and showcased as the shining success of their minority policy. By letting the karmapa stay, but delaying his recognition as Tibetan Buddhism's number three, New Delhi maximizes its policy options.

A low key response would be in line with India's general policy on Tibet. Though New Delhi officially recognizes Chinese suzerainty over Tibet and has a ban on anti-Chinese actions by Tibetan refugees on its soil, it has been extraordinarily generous in providing sanctuary and assistance to Tibetan refugees. This has allowed it to have the best of both worlds. The Tibetan presence helps confirm India's liberal credentials and its status as the world's largest democracy. The refugees also provide India a potential public relations weapon in case relations with China ever sour. On the other hand, by ensuring Tibetan denunciations against China are made outside the subcontinent, Beijing is reassured that India is interested in constructive relations with its northern neighbour. It should always be remembered that while the Tibetans deserve moral sympathy, they are too weak to win back their homeland through their own efforts. If there is a "Tibet card" it is lost in the China deck. If Tibet is granted independence or autonomy, it will be because of major internal changes inside China. Such an upheaval is not impossible, but it is more crystal gazing than certainty. Such an assumption cannot be the basis of India's Tibet policy. New Delhi's overall goal should be to help Tibetans and Chinese to arrive at a mutual settlement that will stabilize India's northern border and staunch the refugee flow. New Delhi can position itself as being the facilitator of such an agreement. Playing host to the karmapa only strengthens India's ability to accomplish this goal.

THE TELEGRAPH
18 JAN 2000

Fernandes lobbying for Karmapa: Tibetan guru

ARATI R JERATH
NEW DELHI, JAN 18

THE Karmapa Lama controversy has taken a new turn with the mentor of the India-based claimant to the religious title, Shamar Rinpoche, accusing Union Ministers George Fernandes and Ram Jethmalani of lobbying within the Government to get the China-backed Karmapa installed at the Rumtek monastery in Sikkim.

Disputing the claim of 14-year-old Orgyen Trinley Dorji, who arrived mysteriously from China on January 5, Shamar pledged to send his candidate, 16-year-old Thaye Dorji, to Rumtek to take over the legacy of heading the wealthy Kagyu sect. Thaye Dorji is at present in France

and is due back next month. He lives in a monastery in Kalimpong.

"I want the Karmapa in India to get the Rumtek monastery and the Rumtek crown because they are in India. Let the Chinese Karmapa keep the Tshurpu monastery which is in China. There is no problem in having two Karmapas of the Karma Kagyu sect," he told *The Indian Express* in an exclusive interview today.

Shamar is said to be first in the hierarchy of the sect's spiritual leaders who were appointed as regents till the 17th Karmapa Lama came of age. The sect was split when Shamar refused to recognise the Chinese-supported Karmapa who was "discovered" by the second regent, Tai Situ Rinpoche. Interestingly, this

China cautions

■ PUNE: CHINESE ambassador in India Zhou Gang on Monday asked India to ensure that the 17th Karmapa Ugyen Trinley Dorji did not use Indian soil to do any political activity against China and damage Sino-Indian relationship. At a time when the relations between India and China were improving and both the sides contemplating to initiate security dialogue at high level, it was imperative on the part of India to see that the relationship between the two countries was not damaged, Gang told mediapersons here.

CONTD ON
PAGE 2

Fernandes lobbying

Karmapa was accepted by the Dalai Lama as well, adding another angle to the faction fight.

The controversy lay dormant for several years after the bloody clashes at Rumtek in 1993 only to resurface now with the appearance of China's Karmapa candidate in India.

Shamar traced this development to the revocation of the externment order against Tai Situ in August 1998, which he claims was done under pressure from Jethmalani and George. Tai Situ was externed in 1994 for suspected anti-India activities.

"Jethmalani was Situ Rinpoche's lawyer and Fernandes is a close friend of his main administrator in India. They are daring to do all kinds of things and are putting all effort to get the Chinese Karmapa to Rumtek," Shamar charged. He warned that it would be "very embarrassing" for everyone concerned if the Karmapa Lama anointed by him was stopped from going to Rumtek. "He has valid travel documents (a diplomatic passport courtesy the King of Bhutan), not like the Chinese Karmapa, and can move freely in India. He has also applied for political asylum here but because of pressure from Fernandes and Jethmalani, his application is stuck," Shamar alleged.

Disputing George's remark yesterday that the Chinese visitor was welcome to stay for a while if he so wanted, Shamar said, "The boy and his attendants, all of whom are Chinese citizens, came to India without a visa. Does this mean that any spiritual leader, even the Mahayana monks from Beijing, can come to India without a visa?" He also questioned the claim that the Karmapa had fled religious persecution by the Chinese authorities. "He is a VIP in China. All his expenses are being taken care of by the Chinese Government. He is in a very comfortable position. So there is no question of violation of human rights," he insisted.

He accused Tai Situ of "using" the boy to gain control of the Rumtek monastery. "People in western countries are very naive about human rights. Situ Rinpoche type of people take advantage of this and bully India on this issue," Shamar declared.

At the same time, Shamar maintained that he was sanguine that the China-backed Karmapa would not be allowed by the Indian Government to reach Rumtek. "The logic is very clear. If China has sent him, how can India keep him here? If the Situ Rinpoche group in India has stolen the boy, how can China keep quiet? So he will have to go back to China or go somewhere else. Or he can stay here as a guest of Fernandes and Jethmalani," he said.

INDIAN EXPRESS

19 JAN 2000

India, US resume CTBT talks in run-up to Clinton visit

H.S. Rao

LONDON 18 JANUARY

INDIA AND the United States, on Wednesday, resumed talks to narrow their differences on the Comprehensive Test Ban Treaty (CTBT), disarmament and non-proliferation in the run-up to US President Bill Clinton's likely visit to New Delhi in March.

External affairs minister Jaswant Singh and US deputy secretary of state Strobe Talbott began their two-day 10th round of parleys here in a veil of secrecy with officials from both sides unwilling to disclose the venue of the talks.

The two leaders had met in November 1999 in London during which New Delhi and Washington had agreed to intensify contacts at all levels and to lay the foundation of a broad-based forward looking



Jaswant Talbott

relationship between the two countries.

The issues discussed by them were disarmament and non-proliferation with emphasis on CTBT, the Fissile Material Cut Off Treaty (FMCT), control over exports of sensitive products and technologies and defence strategies.

The discussions coincide with the visit to New Delhi of US treasury secretary Lawrence Summers, who handed over a letter from President Clinton to Prime Minister Atal Behari Vajpayee.

Last month's hijacking of the

Indian Airlines plane and Pakistan's involvement in it might also figure in the two-day dialogue.

The two leaders also may concentrate on reducing tension between India and Pakistan and other issues of mutual concern, official sources said.

Mr Talbott had recently said in an interview to an Indian daily that the previous rounds of talks had established the foundation for a far better understanding between the two countries on these issues, but it did not mean that they had reached an agreement.

India has made it clear that while it is working on a broad-based consensus on CTBT, it hoped Washington would lift sanctions against New Delhi to create a conducive environment.

— PTI

Clinton for stronger ties with India, looks forward to visit

New Delhi

18 JANUARY

SENDING CLEAR signals that the US was keen to step up investment in India, President Bill Clinton has conveyed to Prime Minister Atal Behari Vajpayee that he wanted to "look forward rather than backwards".

"I carry a letter from the President, making clear how much he's looking forward to visiting India, and also making clear that the set of issues around economic potential was one of the issues important to him," the visiting US treasury secretary Lawrence Summers told reporters after delivering a letter from Clinton to Vajpayee.

This assertion by Clinton assumes significance as the United States had imposed economic sanctions against India after the Pokhran nuclear tests in May 1998. With gradual improvement in Indo-US relations in the last eight to 10 months, the US had eased the sanctions in some of the areas.

Asked whether it was not unusual for the President to visit a country against which the US had imposed sanctions, Summers said, "Washington has friendly relations with India and desired to have a close relationship in the years ahead."

"If the President visits, he will be looking forward rather than backwards," he said. The



TO BE OR NOT TO BE: Atal Behari Vajpayee with Lawrence Summers at his office in South Block on Tuesday

PTI

four-day visit of Summers is to prepare the groundwork for Clinton's visit expected in February or March.

"We discussed Clinton's visit to India and the meeting was fruitful," Summers said soon after his 30-minute meeting with Vajpayee.

Summers, who arrives in Bangalore on Tuesday night, also met finance minister Yashwant Sinha and senior Congress leader Manmohan Singh. The progress of India's economic reforms fig-

ured prominently in the discussions.

Summers, who is the highest-ranking US official to visit India since the nuclear tests, said he talked about "prospects of co-operation between the world's oldest and the world's largest democracy. It was a very warm meeting" with Vajpayee.

The US treasury secretary said Washington would like to keep economic and security issues in south Asia on "separate tracks."

— PTI

The Economic Times
19 JAN 2000

EXTERNAL POLITICS: INDIA BECOMES CONVERGENCE POINT FOR FOREIGN POWERS



GET, SET, GOH: Singapore Prime Minister Goh Chok Tong with his Indian counterpart in New Delhi on Tuesday AFP

Singapore PM keen on IT, finance tie-ups with India

New Delhi
18 JANUARY

INDIA AND Singapore, on Wednesday, agreed to explore the potential for enhanced cooperation in diversified areas including financial and information technology.

Visiting Singapore Prime Minister Goh Chok Tong, who met Indian leaders, said it was in New Delhi's interest to further open up the IT and banking sectors.

Mr Goh met President K.R. Narayanan and held wide-ranging discussions with Prime Minister Atal Behari Vajpayee and ministers of finance, trade and industry with special attention on giving a fillip to economic ties between the two countries.

Mr Goh, who arrived here on Monday night on a six-day visit, said Singapore was keen on broadbasing its relationship with India. "I want India to look towards Southeast Asia, Asean and Singapore," he said.

He added: "Our relations are very good but unfortunately due to the recent economic crises in Asia our contacts slowed down and I am, therefore, here to strengthen our ties."

Speaking at a banquet hosted in honour of the Singapore premier, Mr Vajpayee spoke on the problem of terrorism which had affected many parts of the region as was witnessed during the recent hijacking crisis.

"We need collectively to face up to this modern day scourge. There are no international boundaries to terrorism," he said.

Mr Vajpayee said small arms and other more deadly weapons were easily available in the arms market for a price.

"Most of these are funded from the drug trade which is an equally deadly scourge of the last century which will continue well into the new millennium if no serious collective action is taken to combat it," he warned.

— PPI

The Economic Times

19 JAN 2000

Clinton's possible Pak visit worries Delhi

STATESMAN NEWS SERVICE

NEW DELHI, Jan 20. — With the "proposed visit" to India of President Clinton having figured at two recent high-level Indo-US interactions, the speculation over whether it would actually take place has somewhat abated — but has thrown up the tricky question of whether Pakistan would be included in the same trip.

India would "not be enthused by that" is the view being taken in South Block, where, officially the President's trip is still deemed a proposal since no dates have been formally announced.

Yet a green signal is discerned in the matter having been discussed in the latest round of talks between the external affairs minister and the US deputy secretary of state, as well as during the interaction between the Prime Minister and the US treasury secretary.

India would welcome the visit as confirmation of the storm over Pokhran-II having decreased in intensity, for which other signs are available too, but would that outweigh the fallout of the US President visiting Pakistan a few days before or after his stay here? That would appear to be the current concern in South Block.

The concerns flow from several factors, and go beyond India's traditional unhappiness at the US equating both nations despite what the external affairs ministry maintains are glaring disparities. More so, because after Kargil, India felt that it had succeeded in cracking that equation and correcting what had often been seen as an American tilt towards Pakistan.

Even while conceding that the US administration has consistently sought to ensure that Pakistan did not fail, and that it does have an agenda in which Pakistan has a role to play in the region, external affairs ministry sources feel that a presidential visit at this time would endorse the current situation in that country.

VISIT: benchmarks to be examined

(Continued from page 1)

What the external affairs ministry will be taking a hard look at are the benchmarks which the Americans would set for the visit. In that context much focus would be given to the outcome of the current visit of two senior US diplomats to Islamabad. The Americans would certainly like Gen Musharraf to create conditions facilitating a visit. The crux, for India at least, would be the precise nature of the conditions.

Should there be no major changes in the situation in Pakistan, India would view a trip by President Clinton as not merely legitimising the military set up there but actually revers-

ing the strong position taken by the Commonwealth in Durban last November. A position forged by strong opposition to the Army take-over spearheaded by countries like Nigeria, Guyana and Bangladesh.

The international community has in several ways expressed disapproval of the manner in which Mr Nawaz Sharif was overthrown, even though the coup may have been bloodless. That officials of Britain and the US may have since visited Pakistan has irritated some quarters, a Presidential visit would aggravate that further.

Pakistan contends that if the US President visited only India it would provoke strong anti-American feelings, and boost

the activities of certain right wing forces there. India would ask what Pakistan has done, both Mr Nawaz Sharif and the General, to curb those forces. And point to the upsurge in terrorist activity since the coup.

With Gen Musharraf almost universally deemed the architect of Kargil — which the international community had widely condemned — India would consider a presidential visit at this stage most inopportune, it would flash all the wrong messages.

Even precedent does not require an American President pay simultaneous visits to both countries. South Block contends — Mr Jimmy Carter visited India alone.

THE STATESMAN
21 JAN 2000

India is not a soft state, says Jaswant Singh

India's time for playing global economic and political role has arrived'

MUSCAT: External affairs minister Jaswant Singh on Sunday strongly denied that India had come to be called a "soft state" in the aftermath of the recent Indian Airlines hijacking crisis and asserted that the nation's fight against terrorism would continue relentlessly.



Jaswant Singh

"India's fight against terrorism has not been diluted and will continue relentlessly. We are not a soft state," he said at a question-answer session with members of the Indian Economic Forum here.

He said during the hijack crisis, saving lives of innocent passengers was the most important for the government. "Hijacking is cruel and a challenging dilemma any government can face because the targets are innocents. It is not a combat like the Kargil operation. Saving the lives of innocent people was uppermost in the mind of the government while dealing with the crisis," he said.

On the issue of India signing the Comprehensive Test Ban Treaty (CTBT), he asserted that New Del-

hi's stand would be decided in Indian Parliament and not in the US Senate. "We will take a decision on the issue after the required degree of political consensus and keeping in mind the national interest," he said.

On Kashmir, Mr Singh said it is an integral part of India. "Pakistan's claim over Kashmir has no locus standi." He said India will relentlessly pursue its case for a permanent membership of the UN Security Council.

He noted that more and more western countries were coming forward in support of India's claim for a permanent membership. "It was now becoming clear to the world community that a country of India's size could not be kept out of the Security Council."

On the Kargil war, he said the restraint exercised by India had come for appreciation from the entire world community. "We exercised utmost restraint and yet defeated the enemy. Even in the hijack crisis, the national interest was not compromised."

He dismissed suggestions that Pakistan's application for membership of the Indian Ocean Rim Association for Regional Co-operation (IOR-ARC) had been rejected because of India's strong opposi-

tion to it. Mr Singh said the criteria for membership of the IOR-ARC was fixed by the total membership. "The criteria is fixed. Whoever fulfils the criteria gets entitled to membership and it is thereafter that IOR-ARC considers the issues."

Though the minister declined to say anything more on the issue, sources said Pakistan was denied the membership in view of India's vehement opposition. New Delhi's contention was that Pakistan had still not accorded the Most Favoured Nation (MFN) status to India and, therefore, not complied with the laid down principles of the IOR-ARC.

Mr Singh said France had not been granted the membership of the association because it did not fulfil the geographical criteria. He did not agree with the view that the IOR-ARC had not made much progress in the past four years of its existence. "It has made a great progress and is bound to grow in the years to come," he added.

Mr Singh described his meeting with Oman's Deputy Prime Minister Sayyid Fahd Bin Mahmoud Al Said as "very warm, positive and productive." He said he had discussed with the Omani leader the

broad framework of the foundations of Indo-Oman relations. He said there were a number of areas of "untapped potential" between India and Oman.

Later in the day, Mr Singh had "fruitful meetings" with Bangladesh foreign minister Abdus Samad Azad, Indonesian foreign minister Alwi Shihab, Iranian foreign minister Kamal Kharazi and Oman's commerce and industry minister Maqbool Bin Ali Sultan.

Meanwhile, commenting on Pakistan's application for membership, Oman's foreign affairs minister Yusuf Bin Alawi Bin Abdallah said "Pakistan was located in the Indian Ocean region and the instrument of acceptance applicable to all members would be binding on it too."

He said the charter specified the obligations to be accepted by new members and if Pakistan accepted these, its application for membership would be considered at the next meeting of the association.

Mr Singh appealed to NRIs in Oman to work for strengthening relations between the two countries in diverse fields. "India's time in global affairs, both in political and economic arena, has come. India missed industrial revolution but it will not miss the revolution of digi-

tal." (ANI)

'INDIA IS NOT A SOFT STATE'

Terrorism will be fought: Jaswant

40-1
29/1

MUSCAT, JAN. 23 The External Affairs Minister, Mr. Jaswant Singh, today refuted criticism that India had become a 'soft state' in the aftermath of the recent Indian Airlines hijacking crisis. He asserted that "India's fight against terrorism has not been diluted and will continue relentlessly. We are not a soft state," at a question-answer session with members of the Indian Economic Forum here.

He said during the hijacking crisis, saving the lives of innocent passengers was the most important concern of the Government. "Hijacking is cruel and a challenging dilemma any Government can face because the targets are innocents. It is not a combat like the Kargil operation. Saving the lives of innocent people was uppermost in the mind of the Government while dealing with the crisis," he said.

On the issue of signing the Comprehensive Test Ban treaty (CTBT), he asserted that New Delhi's stand would be decided in the Indian Parliament and not in the U.S Senate. "We will take a decision on the issue after the required degree of political consensus keeping in mind the national interest," he said.

Jammu and Kashmir, Mr. Singh said, was an integral part of India. "Pakistan's claim over Kashmir has no locus standi."

India will relentlessly pursue its

case for a permanent membership in the United Nations Security Council. He noted that more and more western countries were coming forward in support of India's claim. "It was now becoming clear to the world community that a country of India's size could not be kept out of the Security Council."

On the Kargil war, he said, the restraint exercised by India had come in for appreciation from the entire world community. "We exercised utmost restraint and yet defeated the enemy. Even in the hijacking crisis, the national interest was not compromised."

Mr. Singh appealed to NRIs in Oman to work for strengthening relations between the two countries in diverse fields. "India's time in global affairs, both in political and economic arena, has come," he said.

'Not a political forum'

Meanwhile, the two-day extraordinary ministerial meeting of the Indian Ocean Rim Association for Regional Cooperation (IORARC) concluded this afternoon, endorsing India's suggestion that the Association should keep controversial political issues out of its agenda and concentrate on trade and economic matters.

India has all along held the view that the 19-member grouping should not touch political issues as that would derail it from its

avowed objective of promoting trade among member-countries.

New Delhi reiterated its viewpoint in this regard at the committee of the senior officials meeting, which came in for appreciation from all quarters.

Addressing a press conference at the conclusion of the conference, Oman's Minister for Foreign Affairs, Mr. Yousuf Bin Abdullah, said "There is a desire on the part of every member-country to avoid controversial issues." He said there were many important trade and economic matters on which the IORARC could concentrate instead of wasting its time on political issues.

The Omani Minister's statement assumes significance against the backdrop of Pakistan's frequent attempts to become a member of the grouping.

Many members of the Association feel that if Pakistan were allowed to join the grouping, Islamabad would use the Association's forum to rake up bilateral disputes with India, thus making it an organisation meant only for political speeches.

Mr. Jaswant Singh, who represented India at the conference, said the meeting had demonstrated the will and determination of the member-nations to promote trade amongst themselves. — UNI

THE HINDU
24 JAN 2000

Hug, then repent

BRAHMA CHIELLANEY on India's diplomatic naivete

26/1
KC-13

THE NEW century's first Republic Day calls for reflection. In a fundamentally competitive world marked by aggressive pursuit of relative gains, Indian diplomacy has stood out over the past half-century for not learning from mistakes and continuing to operate on ingenuous premises. Spanish-born US philosopher George Santayana's saying is particularly applicable to India: "Those who cannot remember the past are condemned to repeat it".

While important states have pursued strategies of "balance of power", "balance of threat" or "balance of interest", Indian foreign policy has not been organised around a distinct strategic doctrine, except for a period under Indira Gandhi. It is not uncommon for Indian policy-makers to feed to the nation dreams sold to them by others. The crucial past decade went by with Indian diplomacy subsisting on dreams. The new century has not begun on a less dreamy note. In the absence of realistic, goal-oriented statecraft, the propensity to act in haste and report at leisure runs deep in Indian foreign policy. It has ignored the sound advice of Talleyrand, the famous foreign minister of Napoleon and the Bourbons, "By no means show too much zeal".

India's "hug, then repent" proclivity has not only damaged its interests but turned into a growing source of international embarrassment. The 1990s began flamboyantly with the I.K. Gujral hug of Saddam Hussein and ended spectacularly with Jaswant Singh's hug of the thuggish Taliban. That decade was marked by recurrent wild swings in policy towards neighbours and on disarmament and other international issues.

In less than a year, India went from pledging to build a shared "vision of peace" with Islamabad and describing the Lahore Declaration as "a defining moment" to calling for Pakistan's international isolation as a terrorist state. Even quicker was the change in its thinking on the Taliban: From a foe exporting terrorism to Kashmir, it was overnight projected as an ally against hijackers espousing the Kashmiri militant cause. In the midst of the hostage crisis, Jaswant Singh fed to the media his hallucinations about driving a wedge between the Taliban and its sponsor, Pakistan.

In dealing with Pakistan and the Taliban, India assumed that others do what it does well — jettison

beliefs, perceptions and policies overnight. While Pakistan's animosity towards India is congenital, the Taliban's rabid, export-oriented brand of Islam poses a bigger threat to India's secular fabric and unity than its nexus with Islamabad. Even if their fantasies of wearing away the Taliban from Pakistan come true, do Indian decision-makers intend to befriend the Taliban by wearing beards and *sabwar-kameez* suits in the manner that they don id caps at state-sponsored *iftaars*?

Atal Behari Vajpayee himself exemplified India's shortsighted "hug first, think later" approach when he took Nawaz Sharif by surprise by embracing him at Wagah. Then in the Lahore Declaration he allowed Jammu and Kashmir to be singled out by name as a bilateral issue awaiting resolution. Is it any surprise that since that celebrated hug Kashmir has dominated India's agenda through the Kargil invasion, the continuing suicide attacks on security camps in J&K, and most recently the hijacking saga? That hug proved very dear to India: In the 11 months since then, the Kashmir situation has reversed, with the Army at the receiving end for the first time. By early 1999, most Kashmiri militants had been killed or jailed. Now, extremists come to the hon's lair to take on the Army.

When history is written, will Pakistan be seen as having betrayed India's trust? Or will India be viewed as having betrayed common sense and thrown caution to the wind? India has distinguished itself by reposing trust in adversaries and then crying foul when they deceive it. One such "perfidy" hastened the death of Jawaharlal Nehru, who confessed to the nation the day the Chinese invaded: "Perhaps there are not many instances in history where one country has gone out of her way

to be friendly and cooperative with the government and people of another country and to plead their cause in the councils of the world, and then that country returns evil for good".

India does not give up bad habits easily. Gushy expectations and wishful thinking have blighted Indian foreign policy and condemned the nation to relive history. India has replicated the mistakes of the 1950s. *Hindi-Chini bhai bhai* era by seeking to build rapprochement with Beijing on the basis of vaguely worded agreements. After 19 years of border talks, India does not have even a mutually defined line of control with China. Yet it signed a pact with Beijing in 1993 to maintain "peace and tranquillity" along this undefined line, and followed it up three years later with an agreement prohibiting certain military activities at specific distances from the indeterminate frontier. These accords are showpieces of Indian diplomacy!

Naivete in foreign policy has afflicted almost all Indian governments. In his ghost-written book *Defending India*, Jaswant Singh accuses Nehru's "idealistic romanticism" of leaving a legacy of "ambivalence, ambiguities and an uncertain and apprehension-filled future". However, Jaswant Singh's own US-centred foreign policy comes out as guileless, clueless and fruitless. India's interests over the years have suffered badly due to shifting, personality-driven policy approaches, rooted neither in a strategic vision nor institutionalised planning. The past decade offers an excellent case study.

How is it possible that individuals otherwise savvy in political life formulated such fundamentally naive foreign policies? Is it due to India's mediocre statecraft? Or the poverty of rationality in a society

wedded to the *karma* doctrine of preordained life and world? Or the lack of institutionalised mechanisms that allows individuals to transmit virus-like their idiosyncrasies and prejudices to national policies?

It is a combination of these plus other factors. Until India fully absorbs the fundamentals of international relations, it will continue to get "evil for good". The fundamentals include leverage, reciprocity, and negotiating strategies that do not give away the bottom line. For 46 years, India has put itself on the defensive by publicly articulating its Kashmir bottom line as the starting line — turning LoC into the international border.

Some nations have a built-in craving for revision or hazardous gain, while others want only the status quo. Randall L. Schweller, in his brilliant study *Deadly Imbalances*, labels the revisionist nations "wolves" and "jackals", while the status quo states are either "lamb" or "lions". India certainly qualifies as a "lamb", surrounded by "wolf" China and "jackal" Pakistan. The "lamb" status is in keeping with its intrinsic disposition and meek objectives. Although its borders have shrunk since independence and it is a poor state, India is lamb-like content with the status quo.

Only a "lamb" state will make unilateral concessions. And deal with invaders and hostage-takers on their terms. Again, only a "lamb" will accept the outside portrayal of Kashmir as a bilateral dispute between India and Pakistan, condoning the third-party role of China, in occupation of one-fifth of J&K. A "lamb" state is wary of friends but wishes to cuddle up to elusive new buddies or even enemies. A "lamb" also assumes that others change their beliefs and policies as rapidly as it meanders to a new course.

Whom does this model "lamb" state now wish to hug? The answer is obvious — the very leader who has distinguished himself by coddling dictators and bimbos alike. India is waiting with bated breath to welcome Bill Clinton. Having stomachached many indignities in the past, India has reached a threshold level where it can tolerate a Clinton stop in Pakistan to mollycoddle its military junta. But then only a "lamb" state could have innocently sought to spoil the anticipated Clinton event in Islamabad by asking that Washington add Pakistan to its list of terrorist states.



India should give asylum to Karmapa, says Dalai Lama

The Times of India News Service

BHUBANESWAR: The Dalai Lama feels that the Indian government should give asylum to the Karmapa, who fled Tibet and came to this country in the face of "religious suppression".



Dalai Lama

The Dalai Lama has expressed his views in a recent letter to former Lok Sabha Speaker Rabi Ray, in which he thanked the latter for his stand on granting asylum to the Karmapa.

Mr Ray had earlier urged prime minister Vajpayee to grant asylum to the 14-year-old boy-monk Urgyen Trinley Dorje, the 17th Karmapa, who fled from his Tsurpu monastery in Tibet and surfaced at Dharmasala in Himachal Pradesh earlier this month.

Mr Ray, while referring to India's rich tradition of religious tolerance, stated that the then PM Jawaharlal Nehru had granted asylum to the Dalai Lama in 1959 in similar circumstances.

In his letter the Dalai Lama said he could understand the "cautious stand of the Indian government" on the matter. "But it would be a terrible mistake both for India's image as well as in substance if he (the Karmapa) is not allowed to stay on in India."

He said he was "convinced" that the young Karmapa had escaped Tibet because he did not find it possible to pursue his religious studies and practice satisfactorily. "We have clear evidence that contrary to superficial appearances, there are restrictions and suppressions of religious freedom in Tibet," he alleged.

He said he had already written to the PM highlighting the past conduct of the Karmapa, which, he said, "clearly indicates strong character and a correct stand on issues relating to his religious practice and the welfare of the Tibetan people".

He, however, regretted that there was factionalism among the Karmakagy themselves, thus "complicating" the matter.

"Despite this, I believe if the young Karmapa can remain above these factions and concentrate on his studies, he will definitely be able to make considerable contribution not only to his own traditional lineage, but also to Tibetan Buddhism in general."

THE TIMES OF INDIA

29 JAN 2000

Delhi braces for Clinton Pak visit

FROM PRANAY SHARMA

New Delhi, Jan. 29: Keen on a visit from Bill Clinton, South Block is preparing for a situation where the US President's itinerary may also include a stop-over in Pakistan.

If that does happen, New Delhi may take it in its stride without much of a clamour to ensure that the long-awaited Clinton visit here passes off without a hitch.

"Can you impose conditions on a guest you have invited to your house?" a senior foreign ministry official said in response to a query whether the Indian leg of Clinton's trip would be called off if he were to visit Pakistan as well. "How can you say if you come to my house you can't go to somebody else's house?" the official asked.

Publicly, however, Delhi has not stated any of this. It has not even given its final approval to dates suggested by the US on the presidential visit, since Washington has not indicated officially whether Clinton would also go to Islamabad. But signals from South Block suggest that India is preparing the ground to ward off possible criticism if the US head of state goes to Pakistan.

"How are we to react if the US

says if you come to our country you cannot go to Cuba or Iraq?" an official argued. He said the decision would be Washington's and Delhi had no say in it.

The Vajpayee government is reluctant to make its displeasure known about the Pakistan visit as it may amount to an admission of its failure to deal with the US.

Since foreign minister Jaswant Singh started his talks with US deputy secretary of state Strobe Talbott, South Block gave the impression that bilateral relations were on a new high.

"Paradigm shift" is the coinage the foreign ministry used to describe Indo-US relations under the new dispensation in Delhi. However, after one-and-a-half years and several rounds of talks between Singh and Talbott, the two sides do not have much to show. Though Washington has made the right noises from time to time, not much has been achieved.

Pak ignores US warning

Pakistan today dismissed an apparent warning from the US that it could be branded a sponsor of terrorism if it continued to harbour outfits like the Harkat-ul Mujahideen, saying there is no warrant for any warning, adds AP.

THE TELEGRAPH

30 JAN 2000