

Once bitten, Delhi is cool to Pak restraint

Pak gesture doesn't mean infiltration will stop: officials

By Dinesh Kumar and Seema Guha

The Times of India News Service

NEW DELHI: Pakistan foreign secretary Inamul Haq's statement on Saturday about "maximum restraint" along the Line of Control is the first positive sign from Islamabad after the Kargil episode.

Though Indian officials are tight-lipped about press reports, there is cautious optimism about Mr Haq's comments. However, keeping in mind the lessons of Kargil which followed the Lahore euphoria, New Delhi is watching the situation carefully.

Whether it is international pressure or the fact that militant groups have not explicitly rejected the Indian unilateral ceasefire and have been meeting everyday to discuss developments in Kashmir, this is the first signal from Pakistan that it is willing to respond to India's initiative in Kashmir.

Reactions in New Delhi were muffled. While the external affairs ministry was weighing the statement, the defence ministry pointed out that the Indian armed forces were already exercising maximum restraint both in J&K and along the LoC.

A highly-placed army source told *The Times of India* that there had been "hardly any firing" and exchanges have "reduced considerably in all sectors" along the LoC since India's unilateral ceasefire came into effect last Monday.

"The situation along the LoC has been low key generally. There has been very little artillery or small-arms fire, which again has been confined to localised areas.

STRAINED RESTRAINT

- Pak declares it will exercise restraint along the border, LoC
- New Delhi decides to adopt restraint-and-resilience policy
- Forces report 'very little' firing across the border

Even then, we have not responded," said the source. To that extent, Mr Haq's announcement "only reinforces the ground situation", he added.

During their weekly conversation on the hotline on November 21, the Indian and Pakistani directors general of military operations (DGMOs) had arrived at a tentative agreement to exercise restraint along the LoC. The army HQ has since issued blanket instructions to all army formations

located along the LoC to exercise restraint and resilience, the source stressed.

Defence ministry spokesman P.S. Bhatnagar, when asked for official reaction, remarked that Pakistan had always been saying that it would exercise restraint. "(But) they should stop infiltration of terrorists. Our primary concern is infiltration," he added.

It was pointed out that Mr Haq's announcement has come nearly five days after India's unilateral ceasefire in Kashmir became effective. The Ramadan truce, while barring the security forces from mounting combat operations and asking them to exercise restraint along the LoC, however, does not include prevention of infiltration by militants or the right to retaliate in self defence.

Mr Haq, who asked India to reciprocate their offer of maximum restraint at a news conference in Islamabad, was quoted as saying, "With immediate effect, the Pakistan armed forces deployed along the LoC in J&K will observe maximum restraint. The government of Pakistan expects that the government of India will reciprocate this initiative and cease fire across the LoC," he added.

THE TIMES OF INDIA

- 3 DEC 2003

Indian envoys in West Asia to hold meeting

Jerusalem, December 3

INDIA WILL soon hold a meeting of its ambassadors in the middle-eastern countries to discuss the situation in the region, which has witnessed renewed clashes between Israelis and Palestinians in the last two months.

"India has very serious interests and concerns in the region... We are soon having a meeting of some of our ambassadors in the region to exchange notes and ideas and to get their assessment of the situation," K V Rajan, secretary (east) in the External Affairs Ministry said.

Ambassadors from Israel, Syria, Lebanon, Jordan, Head of Mission in Egypt and India's representative in Gaza would hold talks with senior External Affairs Ministry officials on the situation in the middle-east. Rajan, who is currently leading a delegation to hold annual consultations with Israeli Foreign Ministry officials, told reporters

here. The meetings of the Indian diplomats would follow the delegation's meeting with Israeli and Palestinian officials, he said.

Indian and Israeli officials would discuss bilateral relations and other issues of concern for both sides.

To a question on whether

Israel will concur with inquiry panel

ISRAEL ON Sunday said it would cooperate with an international inquiry into nine weeks of Israeli-Arab violence in which at least 293 people, mostly Palestinians, have been killed. Dropping its initial reluctance, the Israeli Government said it would work with investigators, led by former US Senator George Mitchell, a veteran of the Northern Ireland peace process. His team is due in the middle-east in two weeks.

Reuters, Jerusalem

Palestine has sought India's participation in the proposed UN force to be deployed in West Bank and Gaza, he said the first step was to get both sides to agree on the request.

"As far as we know that the United Nations has itself pointed that without such an agreement it is difficult to come forward but this is an

issue which is on the table and I think it is being discussed," Rajan said.

"As far as we are concerned we would welcome any proposal which brings about any restoration of trust and confidence and brings about revival of peace process," Rajan said. (PTI)

THE HINDUSTAN TIMES

4 DEC 2000

4 DEC 2000

Indian troops to leave for Horn of Africa

Udayan Nambodiri
New Delhi, December 6

INDIAN TROOPS will soon join the United Nations peace-keeping force in the Horn of Africa.

A senior officer in the Ministry of External Affairs told *The Hindustan Times* today that some officials are already in the region to assess the cease-fire between Ethiopia and Eritrea.

External Affairs Minister Jaswant Singh had made a commitment to this effect to UN Secretary General Kofi Annan in September during the Millennium Summit.

Meanwhile, the de-induction of personnel from Sierra Leone,

where 1,300 Indian troops had been deployed, begins tomorrow. "The process of de-induction in Sierra Leone will be completed by February," the official said. India had decided to pull out its troops in September following alleged disagreements between the force commander, V.K. Jaitly, and his Nigerian number two. The decision

to set up a UN Mission in Ethiopia-Eritrea was taken by the Security Council by an unanimous resolution (No.1312) in July. Initially, a 100-member military observer group was to be sent. On September 15, the council

voted to authorise a 4,200-strong peace-keeping force to monitor the ceasefire between the two countries and to oversee the re-deployment of troops on the disputed border.

The Ethiopian-Eritrean war, which started in 1998, has already been over one peace process. Fighting resumed in early this year. According to independent observers, the combined military losses on both the sides have been estimated at over 100,000.

The Netherlands is the biggest contributor to this force with a 1,100-strong detachment under a

major general as force commander. The mission is to be a "classic" peace-keeping operation during which the blue helmets will be stationed at a demilitarised zone between the two countries. Unlike Sierra Leone and Congo, where the UN had been called in to monitor peace deals between government and rebel groups, the Ethiopia-Eritrea assignment is considered simpler.

The United Nations is presently engaged in 16 peace-keeping operations all over the world. Five of them have come up over the past one year alone. Indian troops are also deployed at southern Lebanon and Congo.

Peace-keeping

THE HINDUSTAN TIMES

7 JUNE 2000

DILLI 2000

Story of an appointment

DIPLOMACY
K.P. NAYAR

When Lalit Mansingh, the outgoing foreign secretary, arrives in Washington in a couple of months to present his credentials as India's next ambassador to the United States, he would have reversed history and marked yet another turning point in Indo-US relations. It is now forgotten that Mansingh's predecessor, K. Raghunath, was originally the Atal Behari Vajpayee government's choice to succeed the ambassador, Naresh Chandra, in Washington. It was agreed in the final months of Raghunath's foreign secretaryship that he would move to America's capital once he reached the superannuation age of 60. But his nomination never got off the ground, and it is the untold story of Raghunath's aborted appointment to Washington, which makes Mansingh's planned departure for the US positive in terms of Indo-US relations.

Raghunath was in Washington for bilateral talks with the Americans just four days before the fateful nuclear tests in Pokhran on May 11, 1998. That was roughly a month after the Americans sent a high level reconnaissance mission to New Delhi led by Bill Richardson, now energy secretary in the Bill Clinton administration. He was then America's permanent representative to the United Nations. The purpose of the Richardson mission was to sniff out the possibility of India going nuclear under a Bharatiya Janata Party-led government. It was also Richardson's brief to size up the BJP in New Delhi's driving seat: the official, but unexpressed, opinion in Washington was that it is a Hindu nationalist party.

Richardson was chosen to head the reconnaissance mission after considerable thought in the White House. What finally went in his favour was his proximity to L.K. Advani, whom Washington always considered as the party's chief strategist. Richardson had got to know Advani fairly well some years earlier, when the latter was the president of the BJP. Richardson, then a Congressman from New Mexico, had gone to India to look for and rescue, if possible, an American national who had been kidnapped in Kashmir by one of the Pakistani-sponsored terrorist outfits operating in the valley.

Richardson had no success in locating the American or in rescuing him, but the trip brought him into close contact with the BJP leader who has a long and uncompromising record of opposing terrorism and Islamic militancy. There was a meeting of minds between the two men, till then rare in any interaction between Indian and US politicians. They shared not only a will to fight terrorism, but also an expertise in organizing and running their respective political parties. If Advani was president of the BJP, Richardson had just given up vice chairmanship of the Democratic party's national committee.

As Bill Clinton had calculated, Richardson's visit went off very well. He met the prime minister, Advani and anyone else in New Delhi that he wanted to see. Richardson returned to Washington and reported that the BJP-led government was not going to test the bomb, after all.

Just to be on the safe side, like all successful politicians, he added that if at all Vajpayee decided to go nuclear, he would only do so after completing a strategic review of India's defence needs.

Richardson thought this provided an escape route for him in case the National Democratic Alliance pressed home its agenda — and the BJP's — of testing the bomb. He concluded that he was safe in his prediction since the new ruling alliance in New Delhi had listed the review in its manifesto as preceding any nuclear test. Karl Inderfurth, the assis-

is the eyewitness account of one of the participants in the meeting that when Vajpayee was asked point blank about a possible nuclear test, he smiled characteristically and remained silent.

It is well known that the Americans have not been able to live down the fact that a poor country like India, largely illiterate and a mere regional player in international politics, hoodwinked US satellites and intelligence network in successfully carrying out the Pokhran II nuclear tests. The hearings which were scheduled on Capitol Hill about this



tant secretary of state for south Asia, who accompanied Richardson to New Delhi, concurred with this view. So did Frank Wisner, former ambassador in New Delhi, whom Clinton thought of both as his administration's best expert on India and as the most influential American in New Delhi.

All these three men suffered a severe setback to their credibility within the administration when India declared itself a nuclear weapons state on May 11, 1998. Of the three, Richardson was comparatively unfazed: after all, he owes his position in America's political life only to himself. He is the first Hispanic to become a member of the US cabinet and had won impressively eight times to the house of representatives from his home state of New Mexico. Indeed, three months after the Indian fiasco, Richardson went on to become energy secretary in the Clinton administration.

All the same, these three men decided to lay the collective blame for their wrong judgement on the Indian prime minister. Vajpayee, they chorused in private, had told their delegation that India would not test. A check of the minutes of the Vajpayee-Richardson meeting shows that the prime minister never told them any such thing. Indeed, buttressing this

Things have changed between New Delhi and Washington from the days of bitterness and suspicion two years ago

monumental intelligence failure are testimony to this continuing heartburn. But every situation of this kind requires a suitable whipping boy. It goes without saying that even if Vajpayee had misled Richardson and others, they could not possibly use the prime minister of India as their whipping boy.

Under those circumstances, Raghunath quickly became the whipping boy for the Americans in the aftermath of the nuclear tests. Those in the US administration, who felt that their careers and reputation had been compromised by the BJP-led government's action, held Raghunath personally responsible for their discomfiture and worse.

He had been in Washington only days before the nuclear tests. The foreign secretary's spin doctors put out the line that Raghunath was not told about the tests

in advance by the prime minister's office. For a while, the Americans believed this: after all, it is still a popular guessing game in New Delhi as to who exactly knew about Pokhran II and how much in advance.

But this excuse was blown when one of America's allies convinced Washington that Raghunath did, indeed, know about the tests when he was in the US on May 7. Diplomats from this allied country told their US counterparts that high level meetings between this country and India had been scheduled in New Delhi on May 11. Without any apparent reason, but with absolute stubbornness, Raghunath wanted these meetings to be postponed. The cat was soon out of the bag because the foreign secretary did not seek a postponement of a week or even a couple of days. He just did not want the meetings on May 11 — or on May 13 when the second round of tests took place — but on May 12. The Americans rightly concluded that Raghunath knew about the tests when he was having bilateral talks in the US.

Bitter over what they regarded as a betrayal, the Americans never allowed Raghunath to return to Washington. When gossip about Raghunath's appointment as ambassador to the US started circulating in New Delhi, the Americans let it be known to South Block and the PMO through very effective back channels that he would be unwelcome in Washington. The appointment never got to the point where the Americans had to officially express any reservations about New Delhi's choice. South Block got the message; the idea of naming Raghunath as Naresh Chandra's successor was quietly dropped.

Incidentally, Chandra too nearly became a whipping boy in the aftermath of Pokhran II, but he deftly manoeuvred himself out of a situation which could have otherwise made it difficult for the ambassador to deal with the Americans in the two years that followed.

At a meeting in Washington within hours of the May 11 tests, Robert Einhorn, Clinton's arms control czar, pointedly asked Chandra about "a series" of nuclear tests which New Delhi had announced. Einhorn was the only one on the US side to grasp the nuances of the English language in the Indian statement, which, interestingly, was drafted by a journalist who is equally trusted by Vajpayee and Advani. Chandra, who has a remarkable skill for throwing his interlocutors off balance, did not answer: he simply changed the subject. The second in the "series" of tests took place on May 13.

India is not trying to make a point by sending another retiring foreign secretary as ambassador after Raghunath was virtually rejected by the Americans. All the same, it is a reminder of how far things have changed between Washington and New Delhi from the days of bitterness and suspicion two years ago. Mansingh, in any case, is no stranger to the US capital. The years which he spent in Washington as the deputy chief of mission under a succession of ambassadors will stand him in good stead at a time when Indo-US relations are poised to grow further.

MEA panel criticises Jaswant's attitude

'He is always supposed to be busy, what is more important than this meeting?'

BY SEREMA MUSTAFA

New Delhi, Dec. 15: Minister of external affairs Jaswant Singh came under sharp attack at a meeting of the consultative committee of his ministry on Friday. Senior members recorded their protest against the minister's absence from the consultative committee meetings pointing out that this reflected a complete lack of interest and a systematic devaluation of parliamentary committees.

Mr Singh has attended only the first of the four consultative committee meetings held so far. The MPs pointed out that he did not find the time to attend the consulta-

tions even while he was in New Delhi. They refused to be convinced by the excuses provided by minister of state Ajit Panja on behalf of his senior colleague stating that even Parliament was not in session at 9.30 am and there could not be anything more important than a meeting of a parliamentary committee. As one MP later told *The Asian Age*, "He is always supposed to be busy with something or the other, what can be more important than this meeting held even before Parliament met."

Former minister of state for external affairs Eduardo Faleiro, former high commissioner to UK Kuldip Nayar, eminent jurist Fali

S. Nariman were amongst those who reportedly objected to what they described as Mr Singh's continuous absence. He was criticised for treating the consultative committee deliberations as casual and irrelevant. A senior MP pointed out that at a time when Parliament was also being made irrelevant, Mr Jaswant Singh's absence created an impression that all matters of import were being decided upon outside the constitutional fora. And by staying away Mr Singh was bypassing the principle of accountability.

Mr Kuldip Nayar went a step further to suggest that the meetings should be open to the press as part

of an overall decision to be more transparent. The MPs were not particularly happy with the one-hour duration of the consultative committee meetings pointing out that matters of import, such as India-US relations and India-Russia relations on Friday's agenda for instance could not be disposed off in so short a time frame. Mr Faleiro proposed that the deliberations should be held for a day to allow the 30-odd members time for a full discussion.

A short discussion on India-US relations again put the government in the dock. The MPs were appreciative of the improved understanding between the two countries

but shared Mr Roop Chand Pal (CPI-M) observations that India was acting as a junior and submissive partner. This, most present felt, was not in the interests of the nation and the relations should be re-built along more equal lines.

The last word was taken by Akali Dal MP who said that Sikhs were being discriminated against in the granting of visas.

He said that this policy had been started by the Congress and was being pursued by the NDA which should take steps to prevent this. He also suggested that the government should begin a dialogue with Pakistan to resolve the Kashmir issue.

India agrees to Foreign Secy level SAARC meet

HT Correspondent
New Delhi, December 15

official of the MEA maintained. The downturn in New Delhi-Islamabad ties is the well known, but unstated reason, for not holding a summit.

INDIA HAS agreed to have a Foreign Secretary level meeting of the South Asian Association for Regional Co-operation (SAARC) in the near future.

External Affairs Minister Jaswant Singh and Sri Lanka's Foreign Minister Lakshman Kadirgamar, who held a bilateral meeting today, agreed on the "possibility" of such a meeting, but set neither date nor venue for it.

The coup in Islamabad led to the cancellation of the SAARC summit scheduled for Nov 1999. Since then, India has blocked any attempt to set a new date. "There is no consensus on it," a senior

At the insistence of Nepal, Bangladesh and Sri Lanka, India agreed in June to revive the expert-level talks. The first one, concerning river water sharing, was held in Kathmandu in July.

Recently, senior officials of member-nations held a meeting in Colombo and drew up a detailed programme for technical committee meetings.

Significantly, the Foreign Secretary level talks are called "Standing Committee" meetings and are usually held ahead of ministerial level talks.

THE HINDUSTAN TIMES

15 DEC 2000

Sanctions vindicate India's stand

By C. Raja Mohan

9-8-10
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NEW DELHI, DEC. 20. India today welcomed the decision by the United Nations Security Council to impose additional sanctions against the Taliban regime in Afghanistan and hoped Pakistan would "pay heed" to the strong international sentiment behind the move.

The spokesman of the Foreign Office said the U.N. resolution, which demands that the Taliban shut down all terrorist camps within a month and hand over the Saudi exile, Osama bin Laden, is a "vindication" of the recent Indian campaign highlighting the sources of international terrorism in Afghanistan and Pakistan. If the Taliban does not comply with the UN demands, an arms embargo against Afghanistan will come into effect. The new sanctions regime will also put Pakistan in direct confrontation with the international community.

Pakistan, which is the principal source of arms, equipment and other support to the Taliban regime, will now be obliged to end its military intervention in Afghanistan. The resolution has been passed under chapter VII of the UN charter and mandates all nations to implement it.

The Afghan Ambassador to India, Mr. Masood Khalili, who represents the Northern Alliance opposing the Taliban, welcomed the move. He said the international community was now "bringing direct pressure on the Taliban and its mentors" and hoped this would eventually help the Afghan people.

Mr. Khalili expressed skepticism about Pakistan's readiness to observe the UNSC resolution against

20/12

the Taliban. He charged Islamabad with stepping up arms supplies to the Taliban in the recent days and called for an effective mechanism to prevent the arms supplies to the Taliban. If Pakistan can indeed be persuaded to end its intervention, the prospects for a peace process in Afghanistan could brighten, he added.

Pakistan has bitterly opposed the UN move for an arms embargo which targets only the Taliban and not the Northern Alliance. Mr. Khalili said the embargo was one-sided because it was the Taliban which supported international terrorism.

Diplomatic sources here say "Pakistan's isolation on Afghanistan is now complete." Not only did Islamabad facilitate a convergence of interests among Russia, the United States and Iran, but also allowed its arch rival India to gain a role in Afghan diplomacy. India, along with Russia, US, Kyrgyzstan and Tajikistan is a co-sponsor of the sanctions resolution.

In a separate resolution on Tuesday night, the UN General Assembly too passed an annual resolution on Afghanistan, co-sponsored by 85 nations. The GA resolution too calls for an end to Pakistan's intervention in Afghanistan. Pakistan had to dissociate itself from the resolution, which was adopted without a vote.

Mr. Khalili regretted the fact that the UN humanitarian agencies had withdrawn from Afghanistan. He said the Afghan people badly needed the assistance and the UN resolution explicitly permitted it.

While supporting the UN sanctions move, India said "it wishes well" for the Afghan people and had nothing against any ethnic group in Afghanistan.

THE HINDU

21 DEC 2000

Chokila Iyer is next Foreign Secretary

By C. Raja Mohan

NEW DELHI, DEC. 23. Mrs. Chokila Iyer, Ambassador to Ireland, will be the next Foreign Secretary, it was formally announced here today.

Mrs. Iyer, who hails from Sikkim, will be the first woman to head the Foreign Office. Although the IFS has seen many bright women officers before, none of them could get the top job.

Until now, no woman officer has been appointed even Secretary in the Ministry of External Affairs. The Government's decision to break the glass ceiling against women in the diplomatic corps comes as a surprise.

A former Indian woman Ambassador welcoming the decision hoped that this was not a "token gesture" and that the political establishment would repose "full faith" in Mrs. Iyer.

Mrs. Iyer an IFS officer of the 1964 batch, earlier served as Ambassador to Mexico.

The announcement ends speculation over the past few weeks

about the choice of the Foreign Secretary. In choosing Mrs. Iyer, the Government has kept up the principle of seniority.

The senior-most in the service, Mr. Dev Mukherjee, is currently the envoy to Nepal. But he has only a few months to go before retirement. Mrs. Iyer's term will run up to mid-2002.

Mr. Lalit Mansingh, Foreign Secretary, who will retire early next year, has been appointed Ambassador to Washington. Mr. Mansingh will replace Mr. Naresh Chandra, who has been heading India's mission in Washington over the past few years.

The announcement today, while confirming Mr. Mansingh's name for Washington, is silent on the choice for the much-coveted mission in London. Mr. Ronnen Sen, Indian Ambassador to Germany, was widely tipped to get the job. Now it is believed that Mr. Nareshwar Dayal, High Commissioner in London, whose tenure was to end early next year, has got a few months extension.

THE HINDU

24 DEC 2000

Maiden choice in foreign office

FROM PRANAY SHARMA

New Delhi, Dec. 23: Backtracking on an earlier choice, South Block today named Chokila Iyer the first woman foreign secretary of the country.

Iyer, a 1964 batch officer from Sikkim, is India's ambassador to Ireland now. The brief foreign ministry statement announcing Iyer's appointment said: "She will have the distinction of being the first woman foreign secretary."

She will also be the first tribal and the first official from the Northeast to become the foreign secretary.

With specialisation in Spanish affairs, she has served in Mexico City and held positions such as joint secretary of coordination, consular-passport-visa divisions and additional secretary in the ministry. Iyer has also worked in Berne and Mahe. She was earlier slated to go the Hague as ambassador.

Iyer will replace Lalit Mansingh, who is due to retire on April 30, next year. Mansingh will go to Washington as India's ambassador, replacing Naresh Chandra.

Mansingh took over as foreign secretary in December last year after a 14-month tenure in Britain as high commissioner.

He is scheduled to retire on March 31 but may leave early next year for his new assignment in the US.

If that happens, Iyer will head the foreign office for at least one-and-a-half years as she will retire only in June 2002.

A host of hopefuls, including Deb Mukherjee, R.S. Kalha, Satish Chandra, Siddharta Singh and Dilip Mehta, is now out of the running for the highest post in the service as her tenure outlasts their's.

Foreign minister Jaswant Singh, South Block insiders say, was keen on bringing in Kanwal Sibal, India's ambassador to France, as foreign secretary. National security adviser and Prime Minister's principal secretary Brajesh Mishra also backed Singh in a rare display of consensus.

But this would have meant that after Mansingh, a 1963 batch officer, Sibal would have jumped two batches — 1964 and 1965 — to head the Indian Foreign Service. Sibal is a 1966 batch officer.

The proposal was risk-prone as it could have triggered a wave of resentment in the elite service and prompted some of the bypassed officers to move court against the government's choice.

The South Block decision to bring in Chokila may have caused some disappointment but it has averted disgruntlement among the officers.

Sibal will be coming to South Block anyway to replace K.V. Rajen as secretary (east), who retires on March 31. Sibal will now have to wait till Iyer's retirement to occupy the foreign secretary's chair.

GRAPH

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Vajpayee urges Koirala to end anti-India riots

Kumarakom (Kerala)

28 DECEMBER

CONVEYING SERIOUS concern over riots engineered by anti-India elements, Prime Minister Atal Behari Vajpayee on Thursday called his Nepalese counterpart G P Koirala on telephone and urged him to take firm steps to put an end to them.

Mr Vajpayee, who is on a holiday here, expressed serious concern over the outbreak of violence directed especially at Indians and establishments owned by them in Nepal, a bulletin issued by the Prime Minister's Office said here.

Mr Koirala told Mr Vajpayee

that these incidents appeared to be a part of a conspiracy aimed at harming the traditionally close bonds of friendship between the two neighbours.

"We have set up a commission to inquire into its origins and find out if it has any external dimensions," the bulletin quoted the Nepalese Prime Minister as saying.

Mr Koirala told Mr Vajpayee that no Indian was killed in the violence and that no untoward incidents took place on Thursday.

Mr Vajpayee conveyed his condolences over the death of four Nepali citizens in the riots engineered by anti-India ele-

ments in Nepal.

In New Delhi, foreign secretary Lalit Mansingh called his Nepalese counterpart Shamsheer Narayan Thapa to convey concern over the anti-India turn to the riots.

The Nepalese envoy informed that the situation "is still tense, but under control".

The MEA spokesman said Nepalese newspapers had on Thursday quoted deputy Prime Minister and home minister Ramchandra Poudel as saying that a high-level committee would investigate the violent incidents.

The spokesman said the entire campaign was based on an

"entirely fabricated story". The incidents of violence were sparked by rumours that Roshan had made certain disparaging remarks against Nepal and its people.

She said Roshan had categorically denied having made any such remark. Check-ups with different channels also proved that he had not made comments attributed to him, the spokesman said.

"It is clear that the campaign has been orchestrated by some elements" keen on spoiling close ties between the two neighbours.

Asked whether the bilateral ties were so fragile to be influenced by such incidents, the

spokesman said the relations were close and traditional with the two sides having enhanced cooperation in several diversified areas.

He said as part of the orchestrated campaign, Indian channels being beamed in Nepal were blocked for sometime. The Nepalese print and electronic media have now carried Roshan's categorical denial, he said.

Roshan had spoken to a number of television networks and print media yesterday saying he was baffled at the controversy and went on to add that he loved Nepal.

--PTI

A year India was on the boil and Pakistan on ice

HERE'S INDIAN foreign policy 2000, freeze dried. First goal: engage major powers and friendly neighbours. Second goal: put unfriendly neighbour into the doghouse. Add hot water, and that's most of the story.

In February the national security advisor, Brajesh Mishra, spelt out the rationale for the first bit. "Regional and global security," he argued, walked on two legs. One was relations between "the rising Asian world powers" of China, Japan and India. The other leg was how these rising powers interacted "with existing major powers that have a key stake in Asia." These major powers were the United States, the European Union and Russia.

The year 2000 kicked off with the end of the IC814 hostage drama. This only hardened New Delhi's post-Kargil resolve to cold shoulder Pakistan until it showed a genuine interest in peace.

Atal Bihari Vajpayee made anti-terrorism the high point of his New Year address: "India shall join hands across nations to rid the world of this crime against humanity." It was a clear call: India would work to persuade the world to join in cold shouldering Islamabad.

Looking back at the past 365 days, New Delhi has reason to be pleased.

India's great power waltzing has dominated headlines all year. There were double summits with US President Bill Clinton. As South Block likes to note, India is the only country which has a vision statement with the US. New Delhi has successfully inscribed "India" in indelible ink along the Washington Beltway. Foreign Minister Jaswant Singh explained that "predictability, stability and continuity" is what New Delhi

sought in Indo-US relations. India may have succeeded: George W. Bush's main criticism of Clinton's India policy is that Clinton didn't go far enough.

Vladimir Putin's visit marked the resurrection of the link with Moscow that had dissolved into woolly nostalgia. The Indo-Russia bond is a shadow of what existed under the red star, but the two sides found common interests in arms and Afghanistan. Sobriety has returned to the Kremlin - and India is in a position to benefit.

The post-Pokhran freeze imposed by Japan, Australia and China melted this year. This followed to some degree automatically from the US summits. Also, the first Indo-EU summit was held and a strategic dialogue was launched with Beijing.

The year's diplomatic struggle was the isolation of Pakistan. India sold two arguments to the world. One, if South Asia is a flashpoint it's because of the blood-minded generals in Islamabad who diverted the bus to Lahore to Kargil and Kandahar.

Foreign Relations 2000

By Pramit Pal Chaudhuri



Atal Bihari Vajpayee



Bill Clinton

Pakistan was so tarred and feathered by Jaswant Singh's charge that Islamabad was "compulsively hostile" to India, that in August, when

New Delhi blamed Islamabad for sabotaging the first Kashmir ceasefire, the world accepted India's charge without a murmur.

Two, New Delhi kept telling the world that Pakistan's *jihadi* weapon is a weapon aimed at all of you. The anti-Taliban alliance, in tatters at the start of the year, found a new

lease of life. India formed a web of counterterrorism working groups with the US, Russia and Iran.

The golden cap on this pyramid was the recent United Nations resolution imposing sanctions against Afghanistan - sanctions which successfully skewered Pakistan.

India was helped by circumstances. The US was brought into line following the *USS Cole* bombing. Putin saw Afghanistan as the fount of his Chechen problems. Even China lost patience with Pakistan's inability to stop the jihad from spreading into western

China.

But the fact remains that Pakistan began 2000 on a Kandahar high. It has ended it as the pariah of the world, scared its proxy will soon be the target of a joint US-Russia military attack. This month India announced its willingness to once more talk with Pakistan, ending its cold shoulder policy. But the cards are now so stacked that New Delhi will come out a winner whether the talks succeed or not.

It reads like a diplomat's fairy tale. However, while the photo ops and the UN resolutions look good, summitry is the easy part.

India has opened many doors, but has only put one foot across the threshold. A failure to start even a debate on the CTBT has meant the new US relationship has no security facet. Terrorism has proven a useful opening line, but it will evaporate the day the Taliban are tamed. India rightly rejects talk of joining vague multipolarity alliances or ententes designed to counter China.

So how does India convert this year's summitry into next year's geopolitical sustainability? To make all this long-lasting India needs to have an economic selling point: its domestic market, its infotech miracle and so on. Unfortunately, the reforms process is spluttering and foreign investment is stagnant.

New Delhi's unseemly squabbling over its Sri Lankan and Nepalese trade agreements this year is a warning. When it came to playing economic diplomacy, India proved this year to still be in diapers. It's been a good year for Indian foreign policy. The real challenge is in 2001, making visions and handshakes into tangible relationships which have a longer shelf life.

H9-12

'India unlikely to ratify CTBT'

By Garimella Subramaniam 28/12

PANCHGANI, DEC. 30. After the scrutiny into the legitimacy of the Constitution Review Committee and the repressive laws that disregard respect for human dignity, the disastrous human rights implications of the nuclear arms race was an important theme addressed at the conference on human rights, social movements, globalisation and the law here.

Sri Achin Vanaik, freelance journalist and anti-nuclear activist, said that the prospects of India conducting further tests were very real as the ratification of the Comprehensive Test Ban Treaty was not likely following the election of the Republican, Mr. George Bush Jr., as the next U.S. President. Those who want India to build up a sophisticated weapons system knew that India has to go in for more tests, especially after failure of the hydrogen bomb test.

On the emergence of a National Network of resistance against nuclearisation of India and Pakistan, he referred to the national convention held in New Delhi in November 2000 where over 125 organisations had come together to oppose the May 1998 nuclear tests.

He said that groups working on separate issues, such as the Narmada Bachao Andolan, the National Alliance of Peoples Movements, civil liberties movements, women's organisations and trade unions had come together to oppose the nuclear race. They recognised the necessary links between their own struggles for social justice, development and human rights and nuclearisation.

The most obvious interconnection, he said, was the question of morality. As nuclear weapons are weapons of mass destruction, they are

very different from other weapons. They could be used for more desirable purposes, such as national liberation struggles and so on. The nature of the evil did not reside in the nature of the weapons themselves, as much as on the people who used them. But there could be no good use of nuclear weapons and the nature of the evil resided entirely in the weapons themselves.

Noting that even those who until recently advocated nuclear weapons claimed that they were a necessary evil, Sri Vanaik wondered how anyone could take pride over something that they regarded an evil! He said that the fact that not one person in the public discourse could admit to the inevitability of having to go nuclear was an indication of how degenerate the Indian elite had become, at least with respect to nuclear weapons.

Sri Vanaik said that countries go nuclear either due to changes in elite self-perception or changes in threat-perception. The first nuclear power in the world, the U.S., went nuclear to establish itself as the greatest super power and the Soviet Union and China did so on account of their threat-perception of the United States or each other. In the case of Britain and France, the reason was connected to the self-perceptions of a declining colonial power to join the elite club of nuclear nations.

For India, the decision was statist-driven than threat-driven, by notions of grandeur and self-importance. It was the BJP and the Jan Sangh, much before China had acquired the bomb, which had from the 1950s declared its intention to make nuclear weapons. The justification for the bomb depended on what sold with the Indian public; the threat from Pakistan most of the time and China at others.

On the contrary, Pakistan's nuclear diplomacy had been essentially reactive.

Sri Vanaik said that nuclear and non-nuclear deterrence was fundamentally different. Nuclear deterrence engendered hatred and hostility as the logic behind acquiring these weapons was one of buying ones security by increasing the others insecurity. Whereas in the case of the breakdown of this logic in the context of conventional military war, the guns and the tanks could be used to restore some security, the question would not arise as you would have been destroyed in a nuclear context.

Nuclear command

Far from claims to the contrary, the possession of the bomb had, in fact, worsened the security situation, he referred to the Government's plan to set up a nuclear command and safety shelter in New Delhi at a cost of Rs. 1,100 crores. He referred to an international initiative from civil society organisations called the World Court Project, which moved the International Court of Justice in 1996 on the legality of nuclear weapons. A 13-member Bench that heard the appeal ruled unanimously that the use or the threat of use of nuclear weapons was against humanity and the law. This must be deemed illegitimate, except in case of extreme self-defence when the very existence of a country was under threat, not the extreme case of self-defence. The Indian Government had submitted a memorandum in 1995 to the World Court which said that the use of nuclear weapons, the threat of use of nuclear weapons and even preparations for making nuclear weapons must be considered illegitimate, unacceptable and immoral under any and all circumstances.

THE HINDU

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India, U.S. agree to step up cooperation in peacekeeping

By C. Raja Mohan

NEW DELHI, NOV. 2. Adding another element to their emerging political partnership, India and the United States today agreed to expand their cooperation in peacekeeping and other areas of United Nations activity.

At the first meeting of the Indo-U.S. Joint Working Group on United Nations Peacekeeping Operations, which concluded here today, the two sides hoped that the dialogue would help "deepen mutual understanding and cooperation" and help make UN military interventions in various crisis zones more effective. Senior officials from the defence and foreign policy establishments of the two nations met here over the last two days and discussed the various problems and challenges facing the United Nations in its dramatically expanded activity of peacekeeping.

A joint statement issued at the end of the talks said the two sides 'reviewed' some of the recent experiences of UN peacekeeping and exchanged views on various functional as-

pects such as "command structures, logistical support, training and preparation for effective UN peacekeeping operations."

The two sides also "agreed to explore ways to increase the role of troop-contributing countries in helping to craft the mandates and operations of peacekeeping forces." As India deploys its troops to deal with crises stretching from Haiti to Cambodia, the Government has been demanding a greater say in defining the UN peacekeeping missions and their implementation.

For long India has contributed significantly to the international peacekeeping operations under the United Nations flag in a number of global trouble spots. Since the end of the Cold War, the United States has strongly promoted the peacekeeping operations of the United Nations.

However, there has been very little direct dialogue between the two capitals on the growing UN peacekeeping activity. The Joint Working Group now is expected to plug that gap. Both sides are pleased with the results

from the first round of bilateral talks on UN peacekeeping.

The United States has bilateral dialogue on peacekeeping with a select few nations. India too discusses UN-related issues with other major powers. The Indo-U.S. JWG on peacekeeping marks India's first institutionalised bilateral dialogue on peacekeeping. The next round of the JWG will be held in Washington next spring, by which time the new American Administration should have settled down.

The establishment of the JWG follows the vision statement on bilateral cooperation issued by U.S. President Mr. Bill Clinton and the Prime Minister Mr. Atal Behari Vajpayee in New Delhi last March and their consultations in Washington in September.

India and the U.S. hope to draw the lessons from the recent experiences and find ways to address the many difficulties that have confronted the UN peacekeepers world wide. In the process, the two military and diplomatic establishments are expected to intensify their international security cooperation.

THE HINDU

NOV 2 000

New envoys for Egypt, Ireland

NEW DELHI, NOV. 1. Mr. Shiv Shankar Mukherjee, India's ambassador to Egypt, has been appointed as the country's high commissioner to South Africa, it was announced here today. Mr. Mukherjee is expected to take up the assignment shortly. He takes over from Mr. Harsh Kumar Bhasin, who is pursuing his academic interests for two years.

India's ambassador to the Netherlands, Mr. Prabhakar Mehon, has been appointed as the country's envoy to Ireland, succeeding Ms. Chokila Iyer.

Mr. Subrahmanyam Jaishankar, deputy chief of mission at the Indian Embassy in Tokyo, has been appointed as India's ambassador to the Czech republic, succeeding Mr. Girish Dhume who is due to retire shortly. — PTI

I don't know how many nukes we have: Musharraf

By Vladimir Radyuhin

MOSCOW, NOV. 1. Pakistan's military ruler, Gen. Pervez Musharraf, does not know how many nuclear warheads his country has and is not sure whether the Saudi billionaire dissident, Osama Bin Laden, is a terrorist.

To a straight question about the number of atomic weapons, he said: I personally do not know how many nuclear warheads we have. I must check on it.

In an interview to a Russian newspaper, Gen. Musharraf also could not say how many missiles Pakistan needed for minimal deterrence, but claimed that Islamabad had both nuclear warheads and means of their delivery.

"We do have nuclear weapons. We are a nuclear state. We have missiles, we have nuclear war-

heads, I can assure you we have everything we need (for deterrence)," he told *Vremya Novosti*.

To another blunt question, whether he believed Osama was a terrorist, he said: Honestly, I don't know, I have no evidence and therefore cannot comment on the issue. Gen. Musharraf said Pakistan was in no position to pressure the ruling Taliban in Afghanistan into surrendering Osama to the hands of justice. "Bin Laden is in Afghanistan. Afghanistan is a sovereign country. What can Pakistan do?"

India-Israel ties a concern

Gen. Musharraf said he was not worried about India's closer ties with the United States, but was concerned over New Delhi's growing interaction with Tel Aviv. "We know that ranking Israeli

military and security officials visit India and offer advice on the problem of Kashmir and the way of handling Kashmiri fighters for independence. We are also aware of Israel's considerable technical assistance to India." The Pakistani leader called for building a new basis for improved relations with Russia. "There was a lot of misunderstanding between our countries in the past. We must remove this misunderstanding.

We want to cooperate and have better relations with Russia." Surprisingly, the General denied he had already extended an invitation to the President, Mr. Vladimir Putin, to visit Pakistan, as reported during a trip to Islamabad by Mr. Putin's special envoy, Mr. Sergei Yastrzhembsky, in September.

2 NOV 2 00

Gulf countries 'aware' of Pak terrorism

STATESMAN NEWS SERVICE

NEW DELHI, Nov. 6. — The Gulf countries are now more "aware" of the problem of Pakistan-sponsored terrorism in Jammu and Kashmir, with recent diplomatic discussions with them having some effect.

According to the external affairs ministry, there is now a more "realistic appreciation" by these countries of the problem of terrorism in Kashmir, sponsored by Pakistan even though the resolutions by the Organisation of Islamic Countries are still one-sided and biased in favour of Pakistan.

Despite such problems, India continues to have very good relations with the OIC members and the process of engagement and discussion on international issues, especially ter-

rorism, is on.

The external affairs ministry has also noted that the stand on India and Pakistan by the Gulf Cooperation Council, that includes Saudi Arabia, Kuwait, Oman and the UAE, has been fair. The recent GCC resolution on India and Pakistan adopted during the meeting of the GCC foreign ministers at Jeddah took a balanced stand on J&K — a positive sign for India.

This is despite the growing ties between India and Israel in recent years, especially in military affairs and counter-terrorist activities, something Gulf countries have taken note of.

The home minister visited Israel this year to discuss national security issues. Senior officials have also visited Tel-Aviv in the past, includ-

ing Air Chief Marshal SK Sareen, then air chief, and Dr APJ Abdul Kalam, then scientific advisor to the defence minister. As part of the balancing operation, the external affairs minister, Mr Jaswant Singh, wanted to visit Saudi Arabia recently (though that was postponed) and the minister of state for external affairs, Mr Ajit Panja, visited Iraq.

There are three important reasons for strong Indo-Gulf ties. India has just signed a deal for the supply of 7.5 million tonne of liquefied natural gas for 25 years starting from 2003, making India the largest buyer of LNG from Qatar.

Imports from GCC countries in 1998-99 were Rs 238.20 billion, and mostly fuel. Though imports fell in comparison to the previous year, exports are rising.

The Gulf countries are becoming India's important economic partners in trade and investment. India is now exporting technology and the value of India's bilateral trade is about \$10 billion. In fact, that can only go up as joint commissions or their equivalent with Iraq, Bahrain, Qatar and Yemen have been revived in recent years.

There are about 3 million members of the Indian community in the Gulf countries and they remit about \$4 billion every year.

This includes 1.2 million in Saudi Arabia alone and nearly a million in the UAE. Indians comprise 31 per cent of the foreign population in the GCC countries while the percentage of Pakistanis is only 16 and Bangladeshis about 10 per cent.

THE STATESMAN

NOV 2000

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S/11

Courting animosities

CUTTING CORNERS
ASHOK MITRA

The feeling of enchantment has soared to ecstasy. We have entered into a very special relationship with the United States administration; President Bill Clinton's Happy Diwali greetings are resounding proof of that. The heartbeat of the US is our heartbeat; our heartbeat, goes the assumption, is theirs too.

With such as the credo and belief of our current rulers, certain things become easy to understand. France has raised its banner of revolt against the continued US policy of imposing severe trade restrictions on Iraq and the *diktat* that those who want to curry American favour must follow suit. The people of Iraq have been victims of indescribable suffering for one full decade. Now resentment is accumulating against this unfair regimen.

Apart from France's prime minister, the Venezuelan president has also cocked a snook at the US administration; with tremendous flourish, he flew into Baghdad to participate in a ticker-tape reception and announce his solidarity with the cause of the Iraqis. India, the proud sponsor and main inspiration of the non-aligned movement some decades ago, has, in contrast, kept mum. The erstwhile United Front government risked American ire to show at least a gesture of camaraderie toward Iraq. That is distant history. The Bharatiya Janata Party-led government obviously considers outrageous a repetition of that kind of folly. Out, out, brief candle. Since the ongoing motto is to do as the Americans do, this change of stance was only to be expected.

Is there, though, something a bit more in what constitutes current Indian foreign policy? Please take into account the latest episode of gruesome aggression by Israel against Palestinians along the entire stretch of West Bank and the Gaza Strip. Public opinion in Asia, Africa and Latin America has been incensed no end by reports on the nature of atrocities that are being perpetrated, so much so that the United Nations human rights commission has been forced to have a discussion on the issue. Even more significantly, the UN general assembly has passed a resolution condemning Israel and drawing the attention of the world to the barbarity unleashed against the people of Palestine.

Most of our neighbouring countries have been forthright in their support of the Palestinians. Sympathy has flowed in generous proportion for the afflicted people. The government of India has however been extraordinarily mute in the matter; silence is golden, or so it has been concluded. Even that stooge of stooges, the government of Saudi Arabia, has issued a *communiqué* not only lambasting Israel for its attacks but also severely criticizing the US administration itself for its covert support to Tel Aviv. That too has not shamed us into committing indiscretion. We have continued to be demure.



No disapproval of Israel has been voiced by New Delhi; admonishing the US is of course an undreamt-of proposition.

This is where a doubt sneaks in. Is it merely an endeavour to establish ourselves as the loyalest of American lackeys, or is there a more basic consideration at work? Can it be that the *Hindutva* psychosis has infiltrated into the arena of foreign policy too? We will in any circumstances be on the right side of the Americans, but perhaps the demonstration of subservience to American policy is also being further invigorated by a decision to combine it with hatred of believers in Islamic tenets, which are regarded as a sworn adversary of *Hindutva*. We will not in any case lift even a little finger in sympathy with the Iraqi cause; for that nation is infested by Muslims.

A similar point of view on the Israel-Palestine imbroglio: forget the valour of the struggling Palestinian people, spanning more than half a century, in defence of their right to stay as sovereign entities in their own land. They deserve to be despatched to their fate, for they are heathens *par excellence*, and never mind whether the instrumentality for their execution be Israel or the US. Not that either the Christians or the Jews are our particular friends; we will deal with them in due course. But, for the present, the strategy of *Hindutva*, as it guides our external affairs, is to treat the

‘ If India’s foreign policy is built in the image of the BJP’s domestic policy, it is going to be darkness at noon ’

enemy of our enemy as our chum; team up with the Americans and the Israelis to give a bloody nose to wherever those owing allegiance to Islam are concentrated. There are umpteen other reasons for loving the Americans, this is however a very special one.

The US is a superpower, in fact, the only superpower left on earth. The Americans will therefore be able to take care of themselves even if, for argument's sake, the rest of the world turns against them! Should we, however, not be prepared to calculate where our long-term interests lie? *Hindutva* may be by axiom *über alles*; does that automatically imply that we must court the animosity of certain countries? Such an attitude, and practice based on this attitude, can have awesome consequences. Just look across our borders.

Even apart from Pakistan we have, within the South Asian Association for Regional Cooperation combine, such Muslim-dominated nations as Bangladesh and Maldivian islands. Along

the southeast Asia region, Malaysia and Indonesia too are predominately Muslim nations. And how can we ignore west Asia and north Africa, that vast continuous stretch of one Arab country after another, not only oil-rich but equally proud of their Islamic heritage.

A species of insanity is seemingly abroad, with some fundamentalists assuming that revolutionizing domestic policy is not enough, the *imprimatur* of *Hindutva* must be impressed on India's foreign policy as well. We are not well disposed towards China. If, on top of that, we actively cultivate unfriendliness with most of the countries that either surround us or are reasonably proximate to us, there could be a grave question mark over our ability to survive in a globalized economic system.

True, much of what has just been stated above may not yet have permeated into the corpus of the country's overall policy. In some sphere, though, image matters as much as substance. If the impression spreads that *Hindutva* is the motive force driving the New Delhi regime's urges and activities, India would increasingly be alienated from a significant number of countries. To cite an instance, the excessive complaints by BJP camp-followers about alleged infiltration from Bangladesh have been mainly responsible for stoking the indignation of large sections in that country against India. This was altogether avoidable.

Perhaps the BJP has still a few sensible elements left in its fold who perceive the enormity of the danger the country faces from its more sectarian agenda and would do something about it. The party received less than 25 per cent of the votes cast in the last Lok Sabha elections. It does not by any means have the mandate from the Indian electorate to do a drastic re-ordering of the country's foreign policy, effecting a permanent damage to long range national interests. The party has to rein itself in.

If this does not happen soon, the rest of the political parties owe it to the nation to come together on the issue. The protestations of the newly installed president of the BJP have a hollow ring; the party's cohorts are behaving in a manner which belies his supposedly filial ardour for the minority communities. To repeat, if foreign policy is to be built in the image of the party's domestic policy, it is going to be darkness at noon.

The *Hindutva* enthusiasts have not only alienated quite a few Islamic nations; they have gone some way to mess up our relations with the country described as the only Hindu kingdom in the world as well. Nepal has a Hindu king, but the *Viswa Hindu Parishad's* zeal to regard the people of that country as part of the *vishal* Hindu fraternity has caused widespread anger there. The BJP has to, or has to be made to, pipe down, as much for the sake of the nation as for its own sake.

Jaswant dispels doubts on Ganga-Mekong project

Shishir Gupta
Hanoi, November 9

ON THE eve of the inauguration of the Ganga-Mekong Swarnabhoomi project, India today sought to dispel any notion that the move was directed to check China's growing sphere of influence in the region.

Replying to question on whether the historical project was directed against China, Indian Foreign Minister Jaswant Singh said the Ganga-Mekong programme was "not directed against anyone and does not aim to replace anyone in any grouping."

Talking to media after the conclusion of 10th Joint Commission meeting with Vietnam, Mr Singh said the project involved countries that lay between Ganga and Mekong deltas and envisages enhanced co-operation in the field of education, culture and development on infrastructure in the Mekong region.

While maintaining that the project was "no challenge" to any country in particular, the Foreign Minister said that India is already committed to participate in the development of Indo-China ties under the ASEAN umbrella.

The Foreign Minister reiterated that the project was an affirmation of ancient historical and culture ties between the partner countries including Vietnam.

While Mr Jaswant Singh addressed to the sensitivities of Ganga-Mekong partners over China, Vietnam President Tran Duc Luong called the relationship between New Delhi and Hanoi as that of "strategic importance".

Vietnam Foreign Minister Nguyen Dzy Nein and Mr Singh signed the agreed minutes of the two-day Joint Commission this afternoon. The Indian minister had also called on President Luong and Prime Minister Phan Van Khai.

Mr Singh described the political content of his visit as of "firm and assured quality" and put emphasis on imparting new dynamics to traditional ties between India and Vietnam. The visit, according to him, served the dual purpose of holding Joint Commission meeting as well as preparing the stage for the Mr Atal Behari Vajpayee's forthcoming visit to Vietnam.

It appears that India wants to "modernise" the relationship that is fuelled by trade in hydrocarbon, information technology and science and technology sectors.

This was quite evident when Mr Singh expressed happiness over US President Bill Clinton's Vietnam visit next week. He called it a "befitting gesture" and said: "This is a worldwide phenomenon. Countries are forgetting histories and moving towards tomorrow". India has announced that it would extend a credit of \$ 5 million to set up information technology centres and software parks in Vietnam.

During the Joint Commission meeting, the two sides agreed to take concrete steps to correct the imbalance in trade. One area that is expected to give a major boost to bilateral trade is the oil and gas sector. India sees an opportunity in refining exported crude oil from Vietnam as there are few facilities here for processing hydrocarbons.

While Mr Singh could not meet the Vietnamese Defence Minister, it is believed that the Minister exchanged notes on the military relationship between the two sides during his talks with Prime Minister Khai. The defence agenda was outlined during the visit of Defence Minister George Fernandes to Ho Chin Minh City in last March and the two sides have done homework on identifying the niches of military co-operation.

THE HINDUSTAN TIMES

10 NOV 2000

Opposition slams foreign policy

HT Correspondent
New Delhi, November 23

OPPOSITION MEMBERS in the Rajya Sabha today urged the Government not to become the "lackey" of any superpower but follow an independent foreign policy.

Participating in a debate on the current international situation, Mr Eduardo Faleiro (Congress), referring to the US, said India was "crawling" when asked to bend, and becoming a "satellite of the US". Seeking a White Paper on the foreign policy, he asked the Government to "restore national consensus" on the policy that had undergone radical changes.

External Affairs Minister Jaswant Singh, moving the motion, said that the challenge in the post-Cold War era was how to meet the reality of "uni-polarity" and mould it to India's advantage. As

"uni-polarity" could not be the basis of future international relations, the question was how to move into a multi-polar world and put it to India's advantage, he added.

Dr Karan Singh (Congress) did not agree that the world was "uni-polar". He pointed out that there were other powers like the European Union, ASEAN, China, West Asia. He said that India should put more energy into the SAARC.

Mr Pranab Mukherjee (Congress) said that the Government trying to get a "good-conduct certificate" from a "very powerful nation" does not speak well of its responsibility.

Ms Jayanthi Natarajan, (TMC-Moopanar) said that the Prime Minister's statement that India and US are "natural allies" had "thrown overboard" years and years of work to establish India's non-aligned and independent status.

Ms Natarajan asked whether India's foreign policy is decided in South Block or at Foggy Bottom.

Mr Biplab Dasgupta (CPM) said that India's foreign policy has "changed beyond recognition" during the last few years. We are following "American diktat", he said.

He said that India should cultivate China, Russia and take up the leadership of the Third World countries. He said that India should not be obsessed with the idea of securing a permanent seat in the Security Council.

While the opposition asked the Government to give up its rigid stand and resume the dialogue process with Pakistan, Dr L M Singhvi (BJP) said one should not be sentimental on the issue. He backed the Government stand that talks will not be held till cross-border terrorism comes to an end.

THE HINDUSTAN TIMES

24 NOV 2000

India must know global trends, says Mayo old boy

HT Correspondent
New Delhi, November 24



"TO SHAPE policy and to practice diplomacy so as to reach the outer limits of possibility". That is how External Affairs Minister Jaswant Singh encapsulated the challenges faced by Indian foreign policy while delivering the Mayo Heritage Society's inaugural lecture here today.

The Mayo Heritage Society is an initiative of the alumni of Mayo College, Ajmer, one of the premier public schools of India.

Mr Singh is an old boy of the institution and was awarded the "Viceroy's Medal" (now known as 'President of India's medal') by the school's authorities in 1953 for excellent all-round performance. He went on to join the Army, before taking the plunge into politics. Mr Singh, who spoke without direct references to the immediate (he admitted he wanted to avoid invoking the wrath of Parliament), said he believed India had to achieve its destiny which is in the ultimate national interest. This can

only be touched if India came to understand global trends and use them to its advantage.

"The challenge in essence is to catch the terrific changes that are occurring by the forelocks, not get awed by them. If India is to meet its destiny it should not simply be a passenger on the train of time but must be able to alter reality to its advantage", he said.

The only direct reference he made to the present geopolitical reality was when he touched on the subject of nations' pre-eminence in world matters through the course of history. The US, he said, is today virtually unchallenged. Ancient Rome and colonial Great Britain were constantly facing challenges, but the US today is not. "We have to address ourselves to the management of the possible fallout from this", he said. "This is a period of transition".

On his alma mater, he reflected that Mayo College was essentially a very Indian institution unlike other public schools of the colonial era. "The essential Indian-ness that was imparted was unique".

While continuously enhancing India's strategic space, the challenge to Indian foreign policy is how to preserve the essential Indian civilisation in today's globalised environment.

THE HINDUSTAN TIMES

25 NOV 2000

Missions on merit

DIPLOMACY

K.P. NAYAR

9 Feb 14
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Amidst the tears and the pathos that dominated President Bill Clinton's historic reconciliation visit to Vietnam this month, there was one unlikely figure who stood out wherever the president's itinerary took him.

He was Douglas Peterson, a United States Air Force F-4 phantom fighter pilot who flew 66 bombing missions in 1966 over what was then North Vietnam and was shot down and captured just outside Hanoi on his 67th mission. Peterson, who was held as a prisoner of war for six and a half years in a jail — on whose location now stands the Hanoi Hilton — still has scars from rope burns he suffered during interrogation in Hanoi. His right hand goes numb from damaged nerves. Peterson's family did not know if he was alive for three and a half years. His wife was expecting a baby when he left for Vietnam, but Peterson did not see the baby until he was six years old.

Peterson's is the story of many American POWs who wasted their best years in a senseless war, but what makes him unique is that he is now the US ambassador to Vietnam. Clinton, who opposed the war in Vietnam and avoided being drafted into fighting there, made one of the most thoughtful decisions in his effort to establish friendship with this erstwhile enemy when he asked Peterson three years ago to go as America's first ambassador to unified Vietnam. Peterson, who has personified the values of courage and forgiveness in his new diplomatic incarnation in Hanoi, is today the central figure in bringing together America and Vietnam, bitter enemies whose reconciliation defied all possibilities for almost a quarter century after US troops pulled out of Indo-China.

At a time when South Block is going through its biggest overhaul in years, with scores of diplomatic jobs being filled on account of a spate of retirements and tenure completions, Peterson's experience is illuminating. In three years in Hanoi, Peterson has become a role model for any ambassador anywhere: he typifies what foreign offices could achieve by picking the right envoy for the right job. Many years ago, in an Arab country which this columnist used to visit frequently, the Indian ambassador used to surprise his visitors with a trolley-full of the choicest spirits, wines and liqueurs, all displayed next to his work table. Few Indians or expatriates in that country were offended by the ambassador's taste in alcohol even if they were teetotalers.

But even those Arabs who liked to imbibe were unpleasantly surprised by the envoy's habit of generously offering drinks to his visitors, notwithstanding the fact that he was doing so within the embassy, which is Indian territory. It was not that the ambassador, an otherwise erudite and polished diplomat, drank at all hours, if at all. It was his way of protesting against his posting to that Arab country. What is more, this ambassador used to openly tell his Indian visitors that he was a misfit on posting, that his expertise lay elsewhere and that his presence in that Arab capital was testimony to how South Block frequently erred in choosing people for crucial diplomatic jobs.

Over the years, as standards of probity declined in public life, overseas postings became a vehicle for patronage, and cases like that of the ambassador in question became more of a rule rather than the rare exception. It is, therefore, refreshing to find that under the Atal Behari Vajpayee dispensation in South Block, considerable thought is going into postings abroad, especially to those missions which will have a crucial role in fashioning India's destiny as a nuclear power and as an emerging global power in the 21st century.

For observers of the Indian diplomat-

their regional bodies to turn to for support.

Of course, it could be argued that India belongs to the South Asian Association for Regional Cooperation, but anyone who knows SAARC also knows that, for New Delhi, this regional organization is more of a liability than an asset. More often than not, SAARC countries use the organization as a platform for treating India as a whipping boy.

Israel, at least, has the unerring support of the US, but India has to stand alone in the UN whenever it has to defend itself. It can only count on what is



The Vajpayee government is determined to claim India's rightful place in the UN

ic scene, who are used to some of the horrors of India's official representation abroad over the years, the most comforting of recent appointments have been to a string of United Nations-related posts. These careful choices point to a long-term strategy in dealing with the UN and its agencies, where the Vajpayee government is determined to claim India's rightful place.

This is easier said than done because India's position in the UN is unique — regrettably so. Most Indians who want to see India as a permanent member of the UN security council do not realize that, next to Israel, India is institutionally the most isolated country among the UN's vast membership.

In the world body, the Muslim countries have the Organization of Islamic Conference: each of the 53 Islamic countries have one another of the OIC's membership to lean on. The Europeans have the European Union as a single bloc, the southeast Asians have the Association of Southeast Asian Nations and the African states belong to the Organization of African Unity. Even the Latin Americans and the Caribbeans have

right from its point of view, a factor which often gives way to expediency where other countries are concerned. In its quest for its rightful place in the UN, India has to rely on a high calibre team of diplomats who can be relied upon to deliver: which is what makes the recent appointments made by South Block extremely significant.

Take, for instance, T.P. Sreenivasan, India's new permanent representative to the UN organizations in Vienna, who will also be ambassador to Austria with concurrent accreditation to Slovenia, has been chosen for this job because of his extensive experience in multilateral diplomacy. He has served twice at India's UN mission in New York and once as joint secretary dealing with the UN in South Block.

Sreenivasan, who is to present his credentials to the Austrian president next month, will have the landmark responsibility of refashioning India's relations with the International Atomic Energy Agency, the organization which was set up originally with the aim of promoting the peaceful uses of atomic energy. Just as the five nuclear monopolists hijacked nonproliferation and disarmament to suit their narrow interests, they also commandeered the IAEA. Over the years, this international organization was reduced to being a mere secretariat for the nuclear weapon states to ensure compliance of others with the nuclear nonproliferation treaty.

Because India was not a *de facto* nuclear weapon state until its Pokhran-II nuclear tests, India was in a state of confrontation with the IAEA on account of the role imposed on it by the nuclear powers. But this is no longer so. It will, therefore, be Sreenivasan's task to refashion India's ties with the IAEA of which he will also be alternate governor. It will be his effort to get the IAEA to accept Indian formulations on nuclear safety, dangers arising from nuclear bombs being on hair trigger alert and so on — all of which will have a bearing on the Vajpayee government's long term objective of gaining recognition for India as a nuclear weapon state.

Sreenivasan will also liaise with the Vienna-based Nuclear Suppliers Group which has kept India at arms length, but whose eventual membership is vital for New Delhi to have access to nuclear technology. The Comprehensive Test Ban Treaty Organization is also in Vienna, although, as of now, India is not its member. A move is also afoot to shift the fissile material cut-off treaty talks to Vienna. Sreenivasan's appointment to Vienna lends credibility to New Delhi's current efforts both to regain its leadership role in the disarmament movement and to push ahead with its claim to be recognized as a nuclear weapon state.

It comes close on the heels of another judicious selection — the choice of Rakesh Sood as India's first ambassador for disarmament based in Geneva. Sood is to Indian disarmament what Homi J. Bhabha has been to the country's nuclear programme or A.P.J. Abdul Kalam to its missile development. In appointing Sood to Geneva, India broke new ground. Only the five nuclear powers have so far had disarmament ambassadors in Geneva. By taking their cue and appointing one, the Vajpayee government is leaving no one in doubt that India intends to gain recognition as a nuclear weapon state.

These appointments will be shortly followed by the choice of a new deputy permanent representative at India's UN mission in New York. As in the case of Sreenivasan and Sood, the new DPR will bring with him several years of experience of having been the point man in South Block for UN matters. He also has the experience of having served in the mission in New York once earlier. These appointments based solely on merit have absolved South Block of charges, repeated often, of using plum postings as a way of dispensing patronage.

Jaswant warns Pak against bid to derail peace move

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA
NEW DELHI, NOV 29

INDIA has resolved to defeat all attempts by Pakistan to damage prospects of peace in Jammu & Kashmir, External Affairs Minister Jaswant Singh asserted in the Lok Sabha on Wednesday. The Government is aware that Pakistan is continuing with its efforts to scuttle the peace process, the minister said during question hour.

"Government is resolved to defeat such attempts," he said. He said the government has been continuing with its efforts to normalise the situation in J&K, and to hold talks with all those who are prepared for dialogue "in keeping with the strong desire of the people of J&K for peace".

As part of these efforts, the government had announced a unilateral ceasefire and the security forces instructed not to initiate combat operations against militants in the state during the holy month of Ramzan.

Singh said India had effectively brought to the attention of the international community Pakistan's support to cross-border terrorism and its continued attempts to interfere in the internal affairs of this country.

Facts regarding Pakistan's state sponsorship of terrorism have been highlighted in several international fora, he said, adding this issue had also been raised at high level bilateral discussions with world leaders.

The international community in large measure now recognises

Pakistan's state sponsorship of terrorism in J&K and elsewhere in India, and the impact this has on the security of India and the region.

Meanwhile, visiting US Assistant Secretary of State Karl Inderfurth today conveyed to India Washington's

support for New Delhi's unilateral ceasefire offer in Jammu and Kashmir.

Inderfurth, US President Bill Clinton's pointman for South Asia, who is on a farewell visit to the sub-continent, had a 40-minute meeting with Jaswant Singh besides exchanging notes with senior MEA officials.

During the meetings, Inderfurth reaffirmed US backing for New Delhi's move set in motion during the holy month of Ramzan.

Inderfurth, who arrived here from Sri Lanka, will also visit Nepal and Bhutan. Washington has said India's peace offer was well in line with the



INDIAN EXPRESS

INDIAN EXPRESS

30 NOV 2001

Iraq seeks 'strategic ties' with India

By Our Special Correspondent

NEW DELHI, NOV. 29. India has struck a counter-trade oil deal with Iraq as part of an effort to build a strategic relationship with Baghdad. Iraq, suffering under U.N. sanctions, has also promised to give "priority" to countries like India after the sanctions are lifted.

Iraq, according to the Foreign Office spokesman, has agreed in principle on a "bilateral arrangement" which is outside the U.N.'s oil for food programme. India, in return for Iraqi oil, will send wheat to Baghdad. The spokesman, however, clarified that India would consult the U.N. sanctions

committee which oversees Iraq's restricted trade as prescribed by the Security Council resolutions. This decision was taken during the visit of Iraq's Vice-President, Mr. Taha Yassin Ramadhan.

Mr. Ramadhan said at a press conference that the purpose of his visit was to lay a framework for a "strategic and long-term" relationship with India. These ties were not "commodity specific," but revolved around building a multifaceted relationship. In response to a question, he said the evolving relationship with India did not preclude defence cooperation. He pointed out that Iraq had worked out a special relationship with China.

Describing his visit as a "turning point," Mr. Ramadhan said Iraq's prime foreign policy objective was to get the post-cold war U.N. sanctions imposed on it lifted. He lauded the statement by the External Affairs Minister, Mr. Jaswant Singh, in the Rajya Sabha advocating the revocation of the U.N. sanctions on Iraq.

Dispelling fears about Iraq's widely perceived belligerency, Mr. Ramadhan pointed out that Indo-Iraq ties would become a factor in promoting regional stability. India's decision to engage Iraq was taken during a meeting with the Prime Minister, Mr. Atal Behari Vajpayee, on the sidelines of the 1998 NAM summit in Durban, Mr. Ramadhan said.

See also Page 13

THE HINDU

30 NOV 2000

Jaswant's Saudi visit cancelled at the last minute

STATESMAN NEWS SERVICE

NEW DELHI, Oct. 14. — The flurry of diplomatic activity in West Asia to try and lower the heat in the Israeli-Palestinian conflict has necessitated a "rescheduling" of Mr Jaswant Singh's visit to Saudi Arabia. The external affairs minister was due to be in Riyadh from 17 to 20 October.

Mr Singh was, however, not aware of cancellation of his Saudi Arabia tour when he took off from Mumbai for New Delhi today. Mr Singh set off for Delhi to undertake the tour

and had got the Prime Minister's good-wishes, a source in PMO from Mumbai.

Mr external affairs minister said the visit had been postponed at the request of Saudi Arabia's foreign affairs ministry.

Mr Singh's visit will be rescheduled in the "very near future" keeping in view the developments in the region and mutual convenience of the two foreign ministers.

The spokesman said the postponement of the visit was owing to the involvement of the Saudi Arabian foreign min-

ister in the diplomatic efforts to defuse the tension in West Asia.

The date of the external affairs minister's visit was also clashing with that of a summit in Riyadh on 16 October. Leaders of Syria, Saudi Arabia and Egypt are to meet in Riyadh before a full-fledged Arab summit in Cairo later in the month.

The pace of developments in West Asia, which necessitated the summits, impacted on the timing of Mr Singh's Saudi Arabia visit to which both sides attached high importance and

for which meticulous preparations had been done, the spokesman said.

The external affairs ministry appeared keen to dispel misconceptions about postponement of Mr Singh's visit. It was "understandable" in the prevailing circumstances. The ministry firmly rejected some speculation that other factors had come into play.

Diplomatic observers do not entirely agree.

They felt an opportunity might have been lost for India to exercise some influence on the developments in West

Asia. The "mini-summit" in Riyadh was scheduled a day before Mr Singh was due to arrive there, so there was no direct clash of dates, it was pointed out. Mr Singh's presence in Riyadh might have helped India reassure Arab states that despite its recent warm relations with Israel, New Delhi had not diluted its commitment to the cause of a Palestinian homeland and its support to Mr Yasser Arafat.

The experts admit that problems of protocol and administrative arrangements had to be

taken into consideration and the Saudi authorities would have indeed found it difficult to deal with them at the same time.

Others observers opined that it was best that Mr Singh's visit be deferred until West Asia went off the boil so that bilateral issues could be focussed.

The near-conflict situation would have dominated the deliberations in the present situation.

Apparently the decision to postpone the minister's visit was taken suddenly. In fact, the Saudi Arabian ambassador

in New Delhi was en route to Riyadh, and now he is returning from Dubai.

CPM stand

The CPI-M Politburo has asked the Vajpayee government to stand by the Palestinian people at "this moment of crisis." The Politburo has charged the BJP-led government with diluting India's "traditional sympathy for Palestinians" by tilting towards Israel. It said the government should come out openly against the Israeli "aggression" against Palestine.

THE STATESMAN

15 OCT 2000

MEA refuses to confirm China intrusion

Our Political Bureau

NEW DELHI 16 OCTOBER

THE MINISTRY of external affairs (MEA), on Monday, refused to confirm whether the Chinese transgression into Arunachal Pradesh had indeed taken place, or whether India had spoken to China on the matter. The spokesman said there were established agreements between the two nations to maintain "peace and tranquillity" on the border, but was "not aware" of any recent diplomatic exchanges.

Arunachal Pradesh chief minister Mukul Mithi had alleged that China had built transportation trails in Arunachal Pradesh, signifying that they had strayed into Indian territory across the line of actual control (LAC). Mr Mithi, on Sunday, said the Indian army and intelligence agencies had discovered a Chinese-built mule trail in Kaila pass in Dibang valley district proving the Chinese army has made "repeated" incursions along the LAC in the state.

Although the Indian government has remained strictly non-committal about the chief minister's allegations, the Chinese government, on Monday, strongly defended its position, categorically denying any transgression.

The Chinese foreign office spokesman, Zhu Bangzao, said in

Beijing on Monday: "The Chinese side has always been strictly observing the LAC... And has been making constant efforts in maintaining peace and tranquillity along the border area."

The accusation made by Arunachal Pradesh chief minister was, he said, "incompatible with the facts," Mr Zhu said.

According to agency reports, a Chinese government white paper on national defence was silent on the boundary issue between India and China,

although it said China favoured settling pending and unresolved border demarcation issues through negotiations.

India says China illegally occupies 43,180 square km of Jammu and Kashmir, including 5,180 square km illegally ceded to Beijing by Pakistan under the Sino-Pakistan boundary agreement in 1963. On the other hand, China claims that India has occupied about 90,000 square km of Chinese territory.

The confidence building measures agreed to between India and China in 1993 and 1996 mention several methods of verifying actual positions and redressing complaints between the two sides, including flag meetings between officers on either side etc. The 1993 agreement agreed to reduce military presence on either side.

BOILING POINT

The Economic Times

17 OCT 2000

The MEA should not paper over the failure of a foreign policy initiative

Gates of bedouin land

It is a telling comment on the state of the foreign policy debate in India that the postponement of the visit of the external affairs minister, Jaswant Singh, to Saudi Arabia has been accepted by all concerned without any questions. The spokesman of the ministry of external affairs announced a day before the minister was to leave for Riyadh that the visit had been postponed — sorry, er, deferred — because a mini-Arab summit of the presidents of Egypt and Syria with the king of Saudi Arabia was to open in the kingdom on Monday. But Monday came and went and there was no sign of the mini-summit in Saudi Arabia. Syria's new president, Bashar al Assad, did arrive in Riyadh, but he reached there on Tuesday evening, but even then — on Tuesday evening — Egypt's president, Hosni Mubarak, was still in Cairo.

The mini-summit may yet take place in Riyadh later in the week, given the volatility of the situation in west Asia, but if the Saudis told Singh that they could not meet him in the early part of this week — and the spokesman agrees that they did — it was not because King Fahd had to be with Mubarak and Assad on Monday and Tuesday while the crown prince, Abdullah, and the foreign minister, Saud al Faisal, had to be around all the time to assist these three leaders. The truth lies elsewhere.

The last time any country similarly asked the Indian foreign minister not to come was a decade ago. As in the case of Saudi Arabia now, Iran then asked I.K. Gujral at the eleventh hour to put off his flight to Teheran. But Saudi Arabia and Iran are as different as chalk and cheese and the way they handle their foreign affairs is typical of the two societies. Iran's revolutionary regime is used to kicking those they are angry with in the teeth. When they told Gujral that he was not welcome in Teheran, they plainly told him so. To add insult to injury, as the cliché goes, they issued a statement that India was murdering Kashmiris and that in protest, they were calling off Gujral's trip.

The Saudis will never dream of doing anything that could even remotely be compared to the Iranian action. When the kingdom settles its dispute, say, with Qatar over offshore oil fields with the use of force, it is done with a smile. When the Saudis systematically encroach and occupy territory held by neighbouring Abu Dhabi, they do it by sending in their bedouin by using one hand and extending the other hand in friendship to the ruler of Abu Dhabi.

Unlike the Iranians who will knock you down from the front and can be trusted from behind, the Saudis will hug you with a smile and then drive a knife into your back. In unquestioningly accepting the spokesman's explanation for the postponement of Singh's trip to Riyadh, all those concerned appear to have ignored these hard realities of *realpolitik* in the west Asia. Of course, a few months ago, Israel too asked Singh to put off his much-publicized and high profile visit to Tel Aviv. But it was clearly a case of black and white.

The prime minister, Ehud Barak, whom the Indian foreign minister was to

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DIPLOMACY

K.P. NAYAR

meet, was leaving for the Israeli-Palestinian summit arranged by the American president, Bill Clinton, in Washington. There was no ambiguity about the presence of either Barak or Yasser Arafat in the United States. Unlike the mini-Arab summit now offered by South Block as the excuse for "rescheduling" Singh's visit to Riyadh.

MEA's sensitivity about the choice of

Muammar Gaddafi, were in Saudi Arabia: just as the presidents of Syria and Egypt were to have been in Riyadh on Monday, as the MEA spokesman would have us believe. But the presence of the Jordanian monarch and the Libyan leader did not prevent King Fahd and others in the Saudi royal court from receiving other guests from abroad.

Indeed, it is interesting to look at the



words in announcing the postponement of Singh's Saudi trip, though, is understandable. When Singh's Israel trip was reworked jointly by New Delhi and Tel Aviv, some MEA officials were severely pulled up by the powers-that-be for the way it was made. Public civil servants, after all, cannot be blamed for following the adage, "Once bitten, twice shy".

But let us get back to the explanation that Riyadh offered New Delhi for seeking a unilateral postponement of Singh's visit. Even a cursory analysis of the comings and goings in official Riyadh immediately before and during the days the Indian minister was to visit Saudi Arabia would show that the excuse the kingdom offered does not stand scrutiny. It was not as if the Saudis had suspended all official activity unrelated to the west Asia crisis as they would have the Indians believe.

If that was the case, what was Lamin Sidaimi, the prime minister of Guinea, of all people, doing in Riyadh at about the same time that Singh was to call on King Fahd and the crown prince, Abdullah, and parley with the foreign minister Saud al Faisal? The Saudi royals, who had no time for the Indian minister, were not too busy to spend time with Sidaimi.

In the week prior to Singh's aborted trip to Riyadh, both Jordan's new king, Abdullah II, and the Libyan strongman,

**┌ The postponement of
Jaswant Singh's visit to
Saudi Arabia has been ac-
cepted unquestioningly ┐**

calendar of events in the Saudi foreign ministry on the day Singh was to have had substantive discussions in Riyadh with his Saudi counterpart. On that day, the Saudis cleared an agreement with Manila on security cooperation: King Fahd designated his interior ministry as the nodal point for such cooperation, but the foreign ministry was heavily involved in the preparations. Also on that day, Saudi Arabia and Syria extended an economic cooperation agreement which was only expiring on October 23 and could have been deferred — as in the case of Singh's visit — if the Saudis were neck deep in dealing with Palestine.

But the worst is yet to come. The Saudis even had time to discuss with visitors from New Zealand — and finalize — an agreement for cooperation between the two countries. The agreement was not on foreign affairs or strategic cooperation, but — hold your breath — on sports, culture and youth. Although

other ministries were involved, it was the Saudi foreign ministry which negotiated the agreement.

There were other events, a delegation from Romania held talks with a host of Saudi officials from various ministries. There was a meeting of ministers of higher education and scientific research from Islamic countries which had nothing to do with Palestine. Also, the defence ministers of Gulf Cooperation Council countries began their 19th meeting in Riyadh on Tuesday. Let anyone should have any doubt, this meeting too had nothing to do with the west Asia crisis and was planned much in advance. Its agenda was wholly made up of items about ongoing GCC defence cooperation.

It should be clear even to those uninitiated in foreign policy that given this scenario, the Saudis were merely using the crisis in Palestine as an excuse to put off Singh's visit. It is beyond the realm of logic and reason that South Block should have bent over backwards to cover up Riyadh's action instead of taking the media and the entire political spectrum in the country and the people into confidence. It is, after all, not imperative that every foreign policy initiative by the government has to succeed. Moreover, when innovative efforts are made to change external affairs and chart a new course for the nation, it is inevitable that there will be setbacks. South Block could contribute to a healthier political role in the conduct of foreign policy by admitting these setbacks instead of papering them over with a verbal circus.

When it comes to Saudi Arabia, in particular, any admission of failure would be without any popular or political backlash. South Block knows — and the people should have been told — that there were only two countries in the whole wide world which chose to raise the Kashmir issue both at the millennium summit at the United Nations last month and at the ongoing 55th session of the UN general assembly.

One of these countries, predictably, was Pakistan. The other was Saudi Arabia. Partly the reason why South Block is unable to put relations with countries like Saudi Arabia in a correct perspective for the public is that it has exaggerated India's role in the west Asia. True, Barak spoke to the prime minister, Atal Behari Vajpayee, twice since Palestine flared up, but India is central to the current west Asia crisis only as much as, say, South Africa, Malaysia or Ukraine.

One visitor to Saudi Arabia this week, who was in Riyadh precisely on the same days originally fixed for Singh's trip, would bear this out. He is Tunisia's foreign minister, Al-Habib Bin Yahya. Tunisia is one country which has a clear grasp of its weaknesses and strengths in dealing with international affairs. Despite being a part of the Arab world, it has no illusions — unlike India — that it is central to the current crisis in west Asia. That the Saudis asked Bin Yahya to go ahead with his visit and asked the Indian foreign minister to postpone his trip speaks for itself. It should give South Block a lot to think about, if only there is a willingness to do so.

Modesty and grand strategy

By C. Raja Mohan

An excessive obsession with geopolitics could lead India away from the basic problems that dog the national security strategy.

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AS INDIA basks in the successful consolidation of a new liaison with the United States and hopes to rekindle old romance with Russia, there will be a strong temptation in New Delhi to play with grand strategic themes. Instead of dreaming up outlandish geopolitical scenarios to boost India's global standing, India must remain focussed on the core challenges before the nation. Indian diplomacy, surely, cannot and should not ignore the broad strategic trends that are shaping the world and its own neighbourhood. But an excessive obsession with geopolitics could lead India away from the basic problems that dog its national security strategy.

The Prime Minister, Mr. Atal Behari Vajpayee's visit to the U.S. has brought about a new stress on "natural alliances", "balance of power", and speculation on the nature of the U.S. tilt in the subcontinent. When the Russian President, Mr. Vladimir Putin, visits India next week, we can expect strong references to "strategic triangles" and a "multipolar world". The occasional emphasis on the big picture should not make New Delhi lose sight of the main foreign policy objectives — facilitating rapid economic development at home and the creation of a peaceful and stable external environment.

India would be well advised to remember the foreign policy dictum which the late Chinese leader Deng Xiaoping laid down as he launched his country on the path of a dramatic economic modernisation in at the end of the 1970s: "Maintain a low profile, keep a cool head, and never take the lead". Two decades later, China might often tend to ignore Deng's advice. But India should not forget for a moment the importance of setting itself limited and modest objectives on the foreign policy front. India's ambitions must be reflected in the domestic agenda of economic, political and social reform that it sets for itself. Global power play is an extravagance that India can well afford to do without for quite a while.

After the nuclear tests that shocked the world two years ago, it was inevitable that India's diplomatic energies would be devoted to atomic diplomacy and relations

with the major powers. The decision to declare itself has indeed facilitated a successful recasting of relations with the key power centres of the world. India's sustained post-Pokhran engagement with the U.S. has created the framework for a qualitatively new relationship with a country which will remain the pre-eminent power of the world for a long time to come. The U.S. President, Mr. Bill Clinton's visit to India and the return visit by Mr. Vajpayee have helped in removing much of the poison that had infected Indo-U.S. relations over the last five decades.

Mr. Putin's visit to India, the first by a Russian President in nearly seven years, comes amid expectations of a renewed vigour in bilateral relations which had drifted over the last decade. A warm Indian welcome to Mr. Putin will signal the enduring importance of the Russian connection.

Sino-Indian relations have moved out of the deep political chill that followed the nuclear tests. The President, Mr. K. R. Narayanan's visit to China a few months ago had restored political dialogue at the highest level. The nuclear tests had also deeply disturbed the ties between New Delhi and Tokyo. India and Japan have now put that difficult phase behind them, and when he came to India, the Japanese Prime Minister, Mr. Yoshiro Mori, proclaimed a new strategic partnership between the countries. Meanwhile, India's engagement with the European Union has deepened.

India now has expanding ties with all the major power centres of the international system. There is little merit in India thinking about alignments with one set of powers against another. India needs to dismiss any notions of ganging up with the West against China or balancing the U.S. with an alliance of second-tier powers. The focus must remain riveted to a multi-directional engagement of all the

major powers. If there is a weak link in India's engagement with the great powers, it is the relationship with China. Although a measure of normality has been restored, India and China continue to be wary of each other. New Delhi is deeply concerned about the strategic cooperation between China and Pakistan, while Beijing is worried by the talk of a China threat in India and the prospects of India joining the U.S. in an alliance against it.

The Government needs to initiate a special diplomatic effort to reassure Beijing that India has no desire to join a containment ring against China and impress upon it the futility of trying to balance India within the subcontinent by propping up Pakistan. Instead of trying to balance each other, New Delhi and Beijing need to build on their many common interests.

India and China have a shared interest in preserving the unity and integrity of multi-ethnic states and countering the forces of religious extremism and international terrorism that are radiating out of Pakistan and Afghanistan. China remains hesitant to join India in this battle, and is unwilling to give any offence to Islamabad on this score. The leadership in Beijing might believe it could use its clout in Islamabad to rein in the forces of extremism. It has simultaneously sought to engage the Taliban in Afghanistan and support the counter-terrorism efforts among its neighbours in Central Asia. Beijing might feel confident with the assurance it has received from the Taliban that no anti-Chirya activities will be allowed on Afghan soil. But China, like the U.S. which was initially enamoured by the Taliban, would eventually be disappointed. For, there is no real chance of lasting deals with the Taliban's radical ideologues.

Sceptics will insist that there can be no real reconciliation of interests between the two Asian giants. But that is no pre-

scription for any serious foreign policy. Both India and China must recognise that there is no alternative to a serious and sustained political engagement between them. Having normalised relations with most major powers, the time has come for India to devote renewed energies towards resolving long-standing problems with its neighbours. Here again China must be at the top of the regional diplomatic agenda. An agreement to delineate the Line of Actual Control between the two nations and find a solution to the boundary dispute must be the Indian priority in engaging China. India which has hinted at this in recent talks with China must pursue the objective vigorously.

Within the subcontinent itself, the prospects for finding a *modus vivendi* Pakistan do not look too bright at the moment. But that should not preclude it from some serious internal thinking strategy to secure lasting outcomes in ties with Pakistan. As India tries to contain the forces of regression that have begun to grip Pakistani society, it should not ignore the rest of South Asia. India needs to continuously tend the complex relationships it has with Bhutan, Nepal, Bangladesh and Sri Lanka. Many of these nations are concerned that New Delhi's recent diplomatic preoccupations with the major powers and Pakistan and perceive a neglect of the smaller neighbours. With the South Asian Association of Regional Cooperation (SAARC) on hold as a result of Indo-Pakistan tensions, the smaller neighbours find that their political space has been constricted. New Delhi needs to step up the political engagement of the neighbours and effectively pursue bilateral, sub-regional and trans-regional alternatives to economic integration with the smaller neighbours.

EM An enhanced global position for India will not come from geopolitical power play but from rapid economic advancement and leading the region towards greater cooperation. Somewhat counter-intuitively, then, a modest but positive foreign policy is likely to do more for India than an aggressive pursuit of grand strategic objectives.

WORLD VIEW

A MATTER OF TRUST

THE GRADUAL EMERGENCE of Iran as a possible new interlocutor for easing India's difficult dealings with the Organisation of Islamic Conference (OIC) is a welcome development. However, New Delhi requires no clairvoyance to recognise the current indications regarding the long-term durability of an existential hiatus between it and this international grouping which, despite a certain degree of exclusiveness as its positive feature, is little more than a disparate bloc rooted in the politics of religion. This need not necessarily close India's options for a better equation with the OIC as long as the forum can manage to sustain itself as a pressure group with a fluctuating margin of clout on the global stage. There is, of course, no definitive sign of India actually wanting to join the OIC as a member, despite a sudden burst of speculation traceable to New Delhi's present proactive mood of redefining its ties with several prominent Islamic countries. The context is the growing bonhomie between India and Israel as a distinctive aspect of the former's foreign policy in the unfolding post-Cold War era. It is more than a mere diplomatic nicety, therefore, that the Iranian Deputy Foreign Minister, Mr. Mohsen Aminzadeh, has now offered Teheran's good offices for sprucing up India's rusty ties with the OIC.

Whether or not the blame for India's diplomatic misadventure of the 1960s could be laid at Pakistan's doorstep, the advantages of staying out of the OIC continue to outweigh the opportunities of engaging Islamabad within its portals. It is no doubt true that the OIC, without India in its fold, is at present a playground for Pakistan, especially on Kashmir, given also the general inclination of several influential members not to quiz Islamabad closely. For the most part, these big members do not reckon that Kashmir, as discussed within the OIC, acquires a *realpolitik* value on the larger international stage. While

this nuanced aspect has usually suited Indian diplomacy, the creation of a separate Contact Group on Kashmir under the OIC's auspices in 1994 and the panel's activism as inspired by Islamabad are factors that could only fuel a vacuous India-Pakistan row in the event of New Delhi being considered for membership of that organisation. India's consistency in recent decades in refraining from seeking the OIC membership is commendable and it must be sustained. Yet, India will stand to gain if it can capitalise on Iran's new facilitatory role for better ties with the OIC.

Iran is seeking closer political ties with India in order to create a conducive environment for addressing the challenges of a tangled economic diplomacy of being able to sell natural gas to New Delhi at a low cost and high profit in the future. This is not to belittle the imaginative scope for new bilateral linkages within a constantly coalescing global order now. The U.S.-dictated international debate over "States of concern" and Iran's inclusion among them are not quite germane to New Delhi's interaction with Teheran at this time, if the two can advance the stability of Central and South West Asia, inclusive of Afghanistan. So, the fault lines within the OIC, involving Iran and Pakistan as neighbours, are relevant to New Delhi, but the viability of an Indo-Iranian gas deal will hinge on the credibility of Islamabad's security guarantees for a safe passage of prospective supplies through its territory. This being a matter of unprecedented political trust, India must tread carefully. While the Indo-Iranian Joint Working Group should thrash out this puzzle, the choice before New Delhi is between allowing Pakistan a chance to be a trustworthy partner in economic diplomacy and raising the Islamic and political stakes for Iran.

THE HINDU

- 2 AUG 2000

Koirala wants to reconnect relationship's missing links

HT Correspondent
New Delhi, August 1

INDIA AND Nepal have agreed to remove irritants in the way of mutually beneficial relations by reinforcing existing agreements on technical and economic co-operation.

The thorny issue of ISI operations based in Nepalese territory featured in the talks between visiting Nepalese Prime Minister Girija Prasad Koirala and Indian Prime Minister A.B. Vajpayee.

The Nepalese Prime Minister, who said he was on a "goodwill and confidence building mission", held talks with Mr Vajpayee for more than two hours.

Earlier he conferred with External Affairs Minister Jaswant Singh, Home Minister L.K.

Advani, Human Resource Development Minister Murli Manohar Joshi and the deputy chairman of the Planning Commission, Mr K.C. Pant.

He also called on President K.R. Narayanan, laid a wreath on the samadhi of Mahatma Gandhi and

Indo-Nepal talks

met former prime ministers P.V. Narasimha Rao, I.K. Gujral and Chandrashekhar. Mrs Sonia Gandhi, the Congress president, called on him.

"I am on the last leg of my political career and want to connect the missing links in the relationship," Mr Koirala told reporters at Rashtrapati Bhavan, shortly after he inspected a guard of honour.

He said he was keen to lay the ground for the younger generation to continue the friendly neighbourly relations".

Official sources said the question of Pakistan's ISI using Nepal for carrying out anti-India operations figured in the talks between Mr Koirala and Mr Advani.

The Nepalese Prime Minister reiterated that all preventive steps would be taken to remove this "irritant" to friendly relations.

A spokesman of the Nepalese foreign ministry said all matters of bilateral interest including updating of the 1950 Treaty of Friendship, the trade and transit agreement and techno-economic co-operation figured in the talks between the two prime ministers.

"New Delhi's concerns about ISI activities will be settled," he added.

Kargil diplomacy

By C. Raja Mohan

4/8

The restoration of the LoC through use of force and diplomacy has given strong international legitimacy to the notion that this line must be respected at all costs.

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LAST WEEK, when India marked the first anniversary of the victory in Kargil, there was hardly any reference to diplomatic efforts that so successfully aided the military campaign to vacate Pakistan's aggression across the Line of Control. There is no question that the determination and bravery of the Indian armed forces were at the heart of the success in Kargil; but it is also beyond doubt that diplomacy created a favourable international context in which powerful pressure was brought to bear on Pakistan to return to *status quo ante*. India's Kargil victory rested on its successful effort at combining diplomacy with the use of force.

Fundamental to Indian strategy were the difficult decision to limit its response to the Kargil sector and a conscious choice not to cross the LoC and escalate the conflict. At the same time, India mobilised itself for a broader military confrontation with Pakistan and told the international community not to take its self-imposed restraint for granted. India's demonstration of military restraint won universal approbation, given the widespread international fears that the Indo-Pakistan confrontation in Kargil could become a wider conventional war and move quickly into the much-feared nuclear exchange.

At the same, India's signals that it cannot stay restrained forever opened space for diplomatic efforts by New Delhi to suggest that if the U.S. and the world feared a nuclear conflagration in the subcontinent, it was entirely up to them to lean on Pakistan to pull back its forces from across the Line of Control. This, precisely, is what the Clinton Administration did. It argued that the rules of the game in the subcontinent have changed after the nuclear tests and that Pakistan's military adventure in Kargil was a dangerous and irresponsible act. Washington stepped up the pressure on Pakistan, starting with private messages, and later public calls, to withdraw from across the LoC. It sent Gen. Anthony Zinni of the U.S. Central Command to directly engage the Pakistani military leadership and impress upon Rawalpindi the need to withdraw.

Finally, the U.S. President, Mr. Bill Clinton, hosted the then Pakistan Prime

constituency. But Pakistan found the going tough even in the Organisation of Islamic Conference (OIC) which in an unusual move watered down the Pakistani resolutions against India during the Kargil crisis. In a very significant development, Saudi Arabia played a very quiet but important role in encouraging Pakistan to see reason and accept the inevitable step of retracing its steps back to the LoC. A top member of the Saudi Royal family accompanied Mr. Nawaz Sharif on his way back home from Washington where he had signed a document of surrender of sorts.

On the other fronts, India had little expectation of either the Non-aligned Movement or its own immediate neighbours criticising Pakistan's military misadventure. The diplomatic keys were with U.S., China and the Islamic world. India gained support from the U.S. and successfully neutralised the other two. Indian diplomacy during Kargil provided a productive and powerful foil to the brave efforts of the Indian armed forces to push back Pakistani aggression. In effect, isolating Pakistan in the international arena, Indian diplomatic efforts helped hasten the decision in Islamabad to return to *status quo ante*.

The Kargil crisis has also helped India achieve some long-term gains on its Kashmir dispute with Pakistan. The restoration of the LoC through use of force and diplomacy has given strong international legitimacy to the notion that this line must be respected at all costs and cannot be violated. More fundamentally, the Kargil crisis destroyed the deeply-held faith in Pakistan and among the militants in Kashmir that the U.S. and the international community are backing Islamabad in its efforts to sever the Valley from India. They hoped it was only a matter of time before India caved into these pressures. By proving the reverse, that military aggression and adventure by Pakistan will no longer be tolerated by the international community, the Kargil conflict has opened an unprecedented opportunity for India to reach out and address the grievances of its own citizens in Kashmir. That India has already begun to seize that opportunity is evident from the recent declaration of ceasefire by the Hizbut Mujahideen.

Minister, Mr. Jaswant Singh, and the U.S. Deputy Secretary of State, Mr. Strobe Talbott, had generated a new comfort level between the two countries as well as a better appreciation of India's concerns in the Clinton Administration.

Throughout the Kargil crisis, there was continuous communication between the top political leadership in New Delhi and Washington that created considerable trust about each other's intentions. The meeting between Mr. Brajesh Mishra, National Security Adviser to the Prime Minister, and Mr. Sandy Berger, National Security Assistant to the U.S. President, in Geneva during the peak of the Kargil crisis helped accelerate U.S. pressure on Pakistan. The definitive American position that Pakistan should restore the sanctity of the LoC set the tone for the rest of the reaction from the Western world, barring perhaps Japan which took some time to come around. India retained its traditional support, expressed in strong terms by Moscow.

WORLD VIEW

While the new U.S. line dramatically altered the international setting in India's favour, New Delhi still had to address the uncertain but crucial China factor. After Pokhran-II, Sino-Indian relations had gone into a deep chill; and Pakistani leaders were making a bee-line to Beijing to draw Chinese support in its Kargil war against India. It was in this context that Mr. Jaswant Singh set out to travel to Beijing right in the middle of the crisis. His visit helped not only normalise bilateral relations but also succeeded in gaining Chinese neutrality during the Kargil crisis. As international opinion rallied around the notion of restoring the LoC, Beijing too, declared the importance of respecting it.

Pakistan had expected support not only from China but also the Islamic world that it has nurtured as an ideological

Minister, Mr. Nawaz Sharif, on the July 4 weekend last year to make him swallow the bitter pill of retreat and acknowledge the "sanctity" of the LoC. During the crisis the Clinton Administration gave no room to Pakistan to fudge on the question of its aggression. It rejected Islamabad's claims on the lack of clarity about the LoC by pointing to the Indo-Pakistan military agreement delineating the line.

The U.S. also dismissed efforts by Pakistan to link its withdrawal from Kargil to simultaneous talks with India on the Kashmir dispute. Washington insisted on an immediate, unconditional and unambiguous withdrawal of Pakistani troops from across the LoC. Any talks between New Delhi and Islamabad, Washington said, can only follow this. This was the first time ever in the history of the Indo-Pakistan conflicts that the U.S. so strongly supported New Delhi. In all previous wars between the two regional rivals, the U.S. was either neutral or had tilted towards Pakistan. The changed geopolitical setting of South Asia after the Cold War has something to do with the transformed American approach. So did the American concerns about a nuclear flashpoint in the subcontinent.

Equally important was the fact that Mr. Atal Behari Vajpayee took the initiative to travel to Lahore just a few weeks before Kargil and unveil a peace process that the U.S. wanted to see so urgently in the subcontinent. That the Pakistani military so wantonly undermined the Indian peace initiative was not lost on the U.S. and the international community. This provided an extraordinarily positive setting for India to make its case on Kargil.

While the objective factors favoured India, Indian diplomacy successfully worked the subjective aspects throughout the crisis. The extended security dialogue between the External Affairs

India takes first steps to closer contact with Asean members

STATESMAN NEWS SERVICE

NEW DELHI, Aug. 7. — India has taken the first steps towards closer cooperation with five South-east Asean countries in the fields of education, tourism and culture.

The Ganga-Mekong Swarnabhoomi project links India with Thailand, Myanmar, Laos, Cambodia and Vietnam, all countries with whom India has a "civilisational" identity.

The countries have "commonalities" and the first meeting is likely to be held in October in Vientiane, Laos, if all goes well during Diwali in India and a similar, but smaller festival in Indo-China.

The external affairs ministry officials said this was a "kernel for a much bigger arena for cooperation". Initially, Buddhism could be a binding factor as all the countries have Buddhist pilgrimage sites.

There could later be road and railway links between these countries as well as cooperation in the field of energy.

Officials ruled out the Ganga-Mekong initiative becoming a grand strategic initiative in the near

future but there could be such a possibility as both Vietnam and Cambodia have a history of conflict with China.

Mahendra Chaudhry

India will treat, albeit subtly, Mr Mahendra Chaudhry as the Prime Minister of Fiji during his upcoming visit to India.

Officials have called him an "honoured" guest and he will meet the Prime Minister and other dignitaries during his week-long visit. Officials referred to him as "Prime Minister Mahendra Chowdhury", a clear indication of his status in the Centre's eyes.

Bangla foreign secretary

The Bangladesh foreign secretary, Mr Shafi Saami, today met senior foreign ministry officials here.

India and Bangladesh have to discuss certain issues including the Ganga water-sharing formula, energy and law and order that include the bases of the ULFA in areas adjoining Assam.

THE STATESMAN

- 8 AUG 2000

Centre looking into Nanur visit by U.S Consulate staff

CALCUTTA, AUG. 8. The Centre today said it was looking into the visit of two representatives of the U.S. Consulate here to Nanur in Birbhum district, which was recently a scene of political violence, but brushed aside the CPI(M)'s demand for the expulsion of the U.S. Consul and his wife.

"We have asked for details and are awaiting a report anytime now," the Minister of State for External Affairs, Mr. Ajit Kumar Panja told PTI here. Stating that the Centre had received information on the visit of the two employees to Nanur, Mr. Panja said they had gone there to gather information. "They (Consulates) have the authority to visit any area under their jurisdiction and West Bengal falls under the

jurisdiction of the Calcutta Consulate," Mr. Panja said, but added that this should not be "misused".

Mr. Panja said one of the employees who visited the spot was a woman journalist. "Both (employees) are Indian passport holders."

Mr. Panja, however, rapped the CPI-M State secretary, Mr. Anil Biswas for demanding the "expulsion" of the U.S. Consul and his wife, saying Mr. Biswas had no "authority" to voice such a demand.

"We deprecate such statements and the so called demand for expulsion. He (Mr. Biswas) has no authority whatsoever to make such a demand," Mr. Panja said. — PTI

THE HINDU

- 9 AUG 200

MEA clean chit to US Consulate

STATESMAN NEWS SERVICE

CONSUL GENERAL MEETS BASU

NEW DELHI, Aug. 9. — The external affairs ministry today gave a clean chit to the US Consulate in the controversy surrounding two consulate officials' visit to Naoor, saying American diplomats were free to move around anywhere they liked except in restricted places.

In Calcutta, the US Consul General, Mr Christopher Sandrolini, met Mr Jyoti Basu at Writers' Buildings to discuss the matter. He will meet the chief minister's deputy, Mr Buddhadev Bhattacharya, tomorrow at 12 noon. Mr Bhattacharya told reporters that Mr Basu would write to the Prime Minister seeking his intervention.

The foreign office spokesman here said that the American government decides where a diplomat should be posted and the state government cannot interfere in their movements. "The chief minister of West Bengal can complain to the Centre but it is the prerogative of the US government to call him back. The Centre can only put forward a case to the US government."

He also said that the US Consulate's "jurisdiction" included the North-east and Orissa. Diplomats, he said "are free to move around the area unless there are specific restrictions and in this case, I

am not aware there are any."

CPI-M MP, Mr Brotin Mukherjee, alleged the US Consulate was trying to meddle in the state's law and order. "Of course, a diplomat can move around but this was deliberate interference in the law and order situation in the state. Law and order is a state subject and even the Centre has no authority on the issue. This is a case of espionage and the diplomats should be prosecuted for breaking rules."

The foreign office spokesman appeared to dismiss the charge, saying the CPI-M made similar charges against US diplomats in the eighties.

The CPI-M took its objections to the Rajya Sabha, with Mr Nilotpal Basu contending that an "internal development" did not fall within the ambit of the US Consul General in Calcutta. He disagreed with Mr Ajit Panja, minister of state for external affairs, who had said there was nothing irregular about the US officials' action.

Mr Pranab Mukherjee supported Mr Basu's demand that the external affairs ministry clear the picture. The Deputy Chairman said that the government should examine the provisions of the Geneva Convention and make a statement in the House.

■ Photograph, another report on page 4

THE STATESMAN

10 AUG 2000

Basu protests Sandrolini 'meddling'

HT Correspondent
Calcutta, August 10

CHIEF MINISTER Jyoti Basu today wrote to the Prime Minister registering "the State Government's protest in the strongest possible terms against the action of the US consulate-general" in connection with the Nanor killings.

Basu expressed "extreme surprise" over the visit of two US consulate officials to Nanor "for the purpose of making inquiries into the incident". The officials called on the block development officer, Nanor, and sought an official version of the episode, he wrote.

Even while being hard-hitting, the Chief Minister, who has been wooing foreign investors, including US multinationals, took care to assure consul-general Christopher

Richard Sandrolini of his Government's desire for better economic relations.

Sandrolini had met Basu yesterday to explain the consulate's position. "Our Government, I reminded him, is for promoting trade and business between West Bengal and the USA on mutually beneficial terms," Basu's letter to Vajpayee said.

Sandrolini tried to explain that consulate officials were well within their rights to visit any place. He cited the Vienna Convention on Diplomatic Relations and said that as per the convention's Article 26, all members of the mission had the freedom of movement and travel, Basu has written.

The Chief Minister said he made it clear to Sandrolini that while in a

democratic country such as India, representatives of foreign missions had the liberty to go anywhere, "the nature of activity indulged in by these two officials amounted to interference in our internal affairs".

"I am of the view that the visit of the consulate personnel was in gross violation of Article 41 of the Vienna Convention which prohibits such interference in the internal affairs of any country," Basu said in the letter.

Calling such a visit by officials of any consulate or embassy on "fact-finding missions in such an open manner totally unprecedented" in the last 53 years, he urged the Prime Minister to "look into the matter in all its aspects".

The matter should be dealt with

in the "most appropriate manner to prevent such interference by foreign countries in our internal affairs," the letter said.

But, Basu's plea to the Prime Minister to deal with the matter in the "most appropriate manner" appeared to be a climb-down on his part. For, Basu had himself in a statement on August 8, fully endorsed the demand of the CPI(M) State unit secretary, Anil Biswas, for immediate expulsion of the US consul-general for meddling in the country's internal affairs.

Deputy Chief Minister Buddhadeb Bhattacharjee, who received Sandrolini at his Writers' Buildings office today, refused to say anything to reporters about the talks he had "for diplomatic reasons".

Another report on Page 3

CM Writes To Vajpayee

THE HINDUSTAN TIMES

11 AUG 2000

Vajpayee clears Pak-bashing Panja's goof-up

STATESMAN NEWS SERVICE

NEW DELHI, Aug. 10. — Mr. Ajit Kumar Panja put himself in a rather uncomfortable situation in the Rajya Sabha today after he went onboard with Pak-bashing. The Prime Minister had to intervene and rectify a major foreign policy goof-up by his minister of state for external affairs.

While India does advocate the cause of democracy the world over, it would not make a democratically-elected government in Pakistan a pre-condition

tion for reviving bilateral talks, Mr Atal Behari Vajpayee clarified during Question Hour. A few moments earlier Mr Panja had cited the military dictatorship in Pakistan as one of the factors impeding dialogue.

Responding to a query on the country's Pakistan policy, Mr Panja towed the standard line that India is willing to discuss all issues with Pakistan but it is for the latter to create a conducive atmosphere by putting an end to its sponsorship of cross-border terrorism.

Does that not amount to a policy shift, asked Mr Ghulam Nabi Azad of the Congress. After all, terrorism continued unabated even during Mr Vajpayee's Lahore tour.

But Mr Panja said the Prime Minister's trip was intended to stress India's willingness to talk, and at the time an elected

government was in power in Pakistan.

The Opposition was quick to ask if a new element was being added to the equation but Mr Panja carried on about conditions for peace talks, Lahore and Kargil. "We can't shake hands with a person whose hands are stained with blood," he said.

The BJP members grinned and the Opposition moved in for the kill.

Recalling that India had held talks with military rulers in Pakistan in the past, Mr Pranab Mukherjee (Congress) asked if an elected government in Islamabad has been made a pre-condition for dialogue.

He wondered what the country would achieve by adopting a "high rhetoric posture". Does the government expect Pakistan to suddenly declare that it no longer abets terrorism, Mr Mukherjee asked.

India is capable of making its own assessment on aid to terrorism, Mr Panja argued. An elected government would be responsible to the people of Pakistan and hence, India wanted a democratic Pakistan.

Mr Vajpayee, who till now had been observing the proceedings with a wry smile, said India wants democracy the world over, more so in the region. When Gen Musharraf overthrew the elected government, it did become a cause to express concern, he said. "But it is not a pre-condition for talks."



Mr Ajit Kumar Panja

Fiji & Indo-Australian ties

By P. R. Chari

IN AN inadequately noticed way, the crisis in Fiji has patched up relations between India and Australia, strained after India's nuclear tests, in May 1998. Australia had over-reacted then by castigating India in unnecessarily harsh language, recalling its Ambassador, terminating the tenures of Indian armed forces' officers taking courses in its military training institutions and similar extravagances. In truth, Australia has traditionally sought to balance its foreign policy postures between allegiance to the Western alliance and its geopolitical compulsions to establish closer ties with Asia; that must obviously include India in appreciation of its significance as an economic and naval power on the northern Indian Ocean littoral. Still, Australia's policy articulations have strongly supported positions taken by G-8 countries, which explains its postures after Pokhran-II.

The sequential visits of the Australian Foreign Minister and Prime Minister to New Delhi have restored bilateral relations to an even keel. The cementing force was indubitably the constitutional crisis in Fiji, which occupied most of their discussions. Some 43 per cent of Fiji's population, against whom Mr. George Speight's ire was directed, are of Indian origin. Like the Indian diaspora elsewhere they have been diligent and thrifty, and have been instrumental in building the Fijian economy. But local "nationalists" have targeted them as exploiters of the country to gain the sympathy and support of the ethnic population.

India's difficulties in protecting their interests are many. First, settled policy dictates that emigrant populations, being lawful citizens of the countries of their choice, must accept local realities, including the liabilities they might impose. This is easy to enunciate as policy, but difficult to implement in practice. Familial linkages remain strong for generations between emigrant populations and their relatives in India; business ties, as obtains between the Fiji Indians and Gujarat, consolidate these linkages. Second, Fiji is separated from India by vast distances and

the two have no special economic or political relations that could provide the leverage to influence situations such as the present crisis. Neither can India directly influence the efforts to gain for these emigrants their legitimate rights in the political processes of that country; nor can it acquiesce to their becoming permanent second class citizens.

How India should deal with the Fiji crisis has revealed sharp differences within the establishment. According to press re-

had a symbolic, but hardly any practical, effect. Second, the major Australian exports to Fiji in 1999 were of refined petroleum products and major imports were clothing and textiles. This pattern of trade places Australia in the driver's seat to control the Fijian economy and influence its aberrant leaders: India does not have this power. Third, the measures taken by Australia against Fiji's leadership for establishing an unconstitutional and undemocratic rule in that country have

Australia, unlike India, possesses the economic and political leverage to affect the conduct of Fiji's leaders... Proceeding in tandem makes eminent sense.

ports, the National Security Adviser and the Foreign Minister held divergent views. The former favoured a proactive approach by imposing economic sanctions and recalling India's Ambassador to Suva. A moderate approach by applying indirect pressure on Fiji through countries such as Australia and New Zealand, that poses the necessary leverage to influence its actions, was preferred by the Foreign Minister. The proactive school believes that imposition of sanctions would register India's protest; besides the U.S. and the U.K. having withdrawn their Ambassadors, India could do no less. At present, however, the moderate Foreign Ministry view seems to have prevailed.

Some facts regarding the leverage available to India and Australia would not be amiss here. Fiji's principal export destinations in 1998 were Australia (33.3 per cent), the U.S. (16 per cent) and the U.K. (15.5 per cent). Japan and New Zealand accounted for another 9 per cent. Coming to Fiji's major import sources in 1998, Australia's share was 44.7 per cent and New Zealand 15 per cent. Singapore, Japan and the U.S. provided another 16 per cent. India's share in Fiji's trade does not merit mention. Three conclusions now emerge: first, India's share in Fiji's trade, comprising both exports and imports, is miniscule; hence the imposition of sanctions by India would undoubtedly have

Proceeding further, the two material factors that could propel Indo-Australian relations into closer alignment are trade, which is growing, and Australia's demand for Indian professionals across the board, which is also growing. Two-way trade between India and Australia rose from A\$1,734 million to A\$2,524 million between 1994-95 and 1998-99, and is likely to double by 2003. Figures regarding Indian citizens settling in Australia and being granted citizenship are equally revealing, they increased from 2,326 to 3,953 between 1997-98 and 1999-00 (July-June periods). This maybe negligible in terms of India's vast population, but in Australian terms these are significant numbers. It should be remembered that the Indian migrants belong to groups such as doctors, engineers and computer and software engineers; these emigrants, too, would acquire political influence in the coming years such as in the U.S.

There is a third strategic factor that commends a deepening of Indo-Australian relations. India has ambitions to inscribe a larger role in the Indian Ocean region, partly to checkmate China's influence. For India to further those ambitions the need to strengthen relations with the two other major naval powers in the Indian Ocean region — South Africa and Australia — seems imperative. They are, in a geostrategic sense, the two sentinels of the Indian Ocean.

The imbrogio in Fiji is by no means over. And this should stimulate thinking on how such general situations, where India's migrant citizens are subject to ill-treatment or placed at risk, should be dealt with in future, assuming that India cannot shun all responsibility for them after they demit Indian citizenship. Should India then seek their security in the U.N.? Or, more advisedly and effectively, via bilateral relations with the regional influencers? In that perspective, too, Indo-Australian relations acquire greater relevance.

(The writer is Director, Institute of Peace and Conflict Studies, New Delhi.)

THE HINDU
19 AUG 2001

We want India to stay neutral in W. Asia: Peres

Our Political Bureau
NEW DELHI 25 AUGUST

INDIA SHOULD be "on the side of peace," Mr Shimon Peres said on Friday, refuting a suggestion that he had come here to seek Indian support in the wake of Palestine leader Yasser Arafat's visit last week. Talking to newsmen on Friday morning, he said he did not ask India for "one-sided support." He said: "We don't want India to support us against the Palestinians". Mr Vajpayee, in his talks with Mr Peres on Friday night, had supported the process, Mr Peres said.

The deadline of September 13, when Mr Arafat has threatened to declare independence unilaterally, is apparently not as "holy" as it sounds. Mr Peres believes the Palestinians are unlikely to go ahead with the plan, knowing that retaliatory Israeli action could sound the death knell for the peace initiative. This, he said, had been articulated by Mr Arafat's spokesman and even hinted at by Mr Arafat himself.

India's welcome to Mr Arafat last week was along the same lines — that it was not taking sides and, instead, extending support for the entire process. This message was conveyed by foreign minister Jaswant Singh to Mr Peres, who



LOOK, WHOSE TALKING! Israeli minister for regional co-operation Shimon Peres with home minister L.K. Advani in New Delhi on Friday. — PTI

called on him later.

The Palestinian declaration of independence will make little difference to the prevalent situation. Both India and China, which have been on the itinerary of both Mr Arafat and Mr Peres, have already recognised the state of Palestine. Therefore, a further declaration really means very little. Mr Peres

observed this but left unsaid the fact that it would run counter to the trilateral statement at the end of the Camp David summit.

Israel has also supported India's candidature for membership to a reformed UN Security Council, Mr Peres said on Friday morning.

Israel did not believe the sale multiplier effect which was

of the Phalcon radar planes to India could be categorised as their sale to China, which was prevented by the US. The US has said it would review Israeli defence sales to countries like India because some of the key components were of US origin and they would have a force multiplier effect which was

unacceptable to the US.

The West Asia peace process, Mr Peres said, was "in the middle of difficulties". But the difficulties were more acceptable because in their absence there is only "killings". But a renewal of violence now would, he said, imply that "Mr Arafat is no longer master of his home".

Both sides, he said, wanted the peace process to conclude during the presidency of Bill Clinton who had involved himself tremendously to securing peace in the region. "Time is very short and we want to conclude while Clinton is in office. We have great respect for Clinton and his role in the talks."

Although the Camp David talks had stuck on the thorny issue of Jerusalem, Mr Peres perceived that differences had narrowed from "miles to meters". "The gap between definitions is greater than the gap between the solutions", but since "wisdom ends where religion begins", the solutions will not come overnight.

But he was not willing to venture possibilities of solutions to the issue, saying that if they were out in the open, there were bound to be problems. Solutions, he said, had to be "creative", taking into account the imperatives on both sides.

India to hold border talks with Nepal, China

KATHMANDU, AUG. 27. Nepal, China and India will hold high-level talks here to settle a border dispute at Kalapani between the three countries, a Nepalese official said today.

The Nepalese Foreign Minister, Mr. Chakra Prasad Bastola, who returned today from a week-long visit to China marking the 45th anniversary of diplomatic relations between China and Nepal,

said a date for the meeting has yet to be fixed. Kalapani, which falls under Nepalese territory, lies northwest of Kathmandu linking the territories of Nepal, India and Tibet.

Nepal's major Opposition parties are demanding the Government put pressure on India to remove its armed forces stationed at Kalapani.

While Nepal and China signed

a treaty in 1988 over some of their common border, the area bordering the three nations in the far north has never been officially demarcated because of strained relations between China and India. Mr. Bastola said the Nepal-Chinese issues at the Kalapani border would be reviewed in the "near future," adding that officials had to review the issue every ten years in accordance with the treaty signed in 1988. — AFP

7/11/88

28 AUG 2000

Indian peacekeepers take position along Lebanon border

JERUSALEM, JULY 30. After showing valour in Sierra Leone, 50 Indian peacekeepers today took positions along the Lebanese-Israeli border in a zone formerly occupied by Israel.

On the Al-Labboune Hill close to Nagoura on the Lebanese border, the soldiers hoisted the U.N. flag and set up four tents after the Lebanese Government gave the green signal for deploying more of the international force.

The Indian soldiers, who form part of peacekeepers of the United Nations Interim Force in Lebanon (UNIFIL), erected road blockades to keep a cattleherder and his flock from following them.

"This is an historic moment for UNIFIL, which after 22 years in the field in south Lebanon is now finally beginning to fulfill its original mandate," the force's spokesman, Mr. Daljeet Bagga, was quoted as saying.

About 5,000 UNIFIL peacekeepers are stationed in areas further north from the border in southern Lebanon since the 1978 Israeli invasion.

They have been waiting to move to the border region in line with U.N. resolutions after Israeli troops ended their occupation of a buffer zone in southern Lebanon in May.— PTI

THE HINDU

Talks with Albright, Talbott fruitful: Jaswant Singh

By Amit Baruah

H.O. 1
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BANGKOK, JULY 29. A song figured in the bilateral meeting between the U.S. Secretary of State, Ms. Madeleine Albright, and her Indian counterpart, Mr. Jaswant Singh, today. A song that Ms. Albright sang last night for Mr. Singh to sign the CTBT (Comprehensive Test Ban Treaty) at an informal cultural interaction between delegations representing the ASEAN (Association of South East Asian Nations) and its 10 dialogue partners.

Ms. Albright, who took off on nearly all assembled Foreign Ministers, said tonefully that if Mr. Singh wanted to please her, he could sign the CTBT. When the song came up for discussion at the meeting, the External Affairs Minister told her: "I have heard your song."

Describing his meetings with Ms. Albright and the U.S. Deputy Secretary of State, Mr. Strobe Talbott, as "very fruitful", Mr. Singh told reporters that he discussed U.N. peace-keeping operations in Sierra Leone and the status of the West Asia peace process with Ms. Albright.

The meeting with Ms. Albright, which was reportedly more in the nature of a "courtesy call", also saw satisfaction being expressed on both sides about the successful March 2000 visit of the U.S. President, Mr.

Bill Clinton, to India. On the U.S. plans for a National Missile Defence programme, Mr. Singh said India had always opposed the militarisation of outer space. The issue, he said, came up on a number of occasions and even some European Union (E.U.) members, *sotto voce*, had reservations on the American venture. In their view, it disturbed and destabilised the existing disarmament regime.

Referring to the ASEAN Regional Forum (ARF) and the Post-Ministerial Conference, Mr. Singh said he was going back satisfied with these consultations. India-ASEAN relations, he felt, had been placed on a very stable footing.

There was a recognition that India provided a completeness and balance to the whole ASEAN endeavour, he said. The ARF, too, had stabilised greatly in the last seven years of its existence.

Mr. Singh was at pains to emphasise that India was not preoccupied with Pakistan when asked if Islamabad's bid to enter the ARF was a closed chapter. "We are not opposing anyone," he said, adding that the Pakistani application for entering the ARF had been shot down at the ASEAN stage itself. The issue, in his view, was a "red herring".

'India will not be overlooked': Page 11

THE HINDU

30 JUL 2000

Jitters over China link with Nepal

FROM PRANAY SHARMA

New Delhi, July 26: India is worried about China's growing commercial activities in Nepal, particularly its attempt to establish an East-West optical fibre highway in the Terai region along the open Indo-Nepal border.

Coupled with the presence of Pakistani companies, which are suspected to be front organisations of the ISI, this has caused serious concern in South Block.

These issues will come up for discussion during Nepal Prime Minister G.P. Koirala's five-day official visit beginning on Monday. Koirala will hold talks with Prime Minister A.B. Vajpayee,

foreign minister Jaswant Singh, finance minister Yashwant Sinha and defence minister George Fernandes.

Over the past few years, attempts by Chinese companies to set up operations in Terai, close to the Indo-Nepal border, have come to Delhi's notice. China is planning a textile factory at Bhadarpur in Jhapa district and, through its participation in Nepal's sixth telecommunication project, is trying to establish the optical fibre highway.

Several Pakistani companies have bagged orders in Nepal for developing its infrastructure. Indian officials suspect that these companies are front organisa-

tions for the ISI and want to warn the Nepal leadership to stop the activities which, they feel, will ultimately be used against Delhi.

Koirala's visit is significant as he will be the first Nepal Prime Minister to visit the country in over four years. Sher Bahadur Deuba had visited India in February 1996. Though a four-year gap is not unusual for other countries, it is rather long for India and Nepal.

This will also be the first high-level visit from Nepal since the Christmas-eve hijack of an Indian Airlines flight from Kathmandu. The Centre was forced to free three Kashmiri militants in exchange for the release of the hostages and the incident severe-

ly affected bilateral relations.

Koirala's five-day official tour of the country, which is being described as a "goodwill" visit, will give the Nepal Prime Minister the opportunity to get acquainted with the BJP leadership.

That Delhi has given the green signal to this visit, which has been pending for months, indicates that serious attempts are being made by both sides to bring bilateral relations back on track.

Issues relating to India's security, particularly Pakistan's attempts to use Nepal as its base for furthering hostility against Delhi, and the growing Chinese commercial activities will be the main focus of discussions.

THE TELEGRAPH

27 JUL 2000

A Give & Give Policy

India is Fair Game for All

By M D NALAPAT

IT was Napoleon who held luck to be the most desired attribute of his generals. By this criterion, External Affairs Minister Jaswant Singh would certainly have qualified. First came Pokhran II, which indicated that India's passivity is no longer a given. Next the resilience of the Rao-Manmohan boom, which defeated efforts by the US, the EU, Japan and China to retard the growth of the Indian economy as a punishment for the temerity shown on May 11-13, 1998. Finally, the coming of age of India as a software giant.

It is these prongs of the *trishul* that have made New Delhi a much-wooded capital since the Vajpayee government took office. However, it is Mr Jaswant Singh who is walking away with the credit for the transformation in India's global positioning, not the atomic and missile scientists nor the software engineers of Bangalore and Hyderabad. This despite the reality that the 'diplomacy' being pursued by the MEA since 1998 appears designed to reduce India to the role of a regional non-entity rather than an aspiring superpower. Under the new dispensation, the MEA stood by approvingly as Australia asserted its primacy in the South Pacific, Pakistan armed both the LTTE as well as the Sri Lankan Army (SLA), and Norway intruded into India's backyard as an interlocutor.

The Vajpayee doctrine of maximum restraint, unsurprisingly, has its admirers in the very capitals that have sought since Bangladesh in 1971 and Pokhran I in 1974 to contain India. Very soon, these capitals may gain the confidence needed to once more attempt to prise themselves into the Kashmir conflict. Ms Madeleine Albright is itching for a Camp David that would link Gen Musharraf with Mr Vajpayee and hopefully begin the process of delinking Kashmir from the sphere of democracy into the archipelago of fundamentalism supported by Riyadh and Islamabad.

The NATO powers, in particular the US and the UK, have kept up a continuous cacophony claiming that defence spending is "non-productive". This while they themselves use bombs to batter sovereign countries such as Yugoslavia or Iraq into submission to their dictates. The fact is that a properly matrixed defence industry networked into private industry in general can

serve as an engine of growth rather than a drag on progress. India, in particular, can earn between US \$5 to US \$10 billion annually by the sale of non-critical items and knowhow to friendly countries, such as the Gulf and ASEAN powers. For example, the huge pool of retired naval officers can be utilised to set up maritime training institutes along the coastline, just as air force officers can help set up flying institutes. Export orders can be canvassed for public sector defence units, and the private sector can be given incentives to enter the field more aggressively.

The country needs an extra US \$10 billion a year for creating an adequate armed force. This needs to be paid for not out of taxation but through defence exports. Unfortunately, rather than build facilities that can compete with current arms exporters, New Delhi appears

IN BRIEF

- MEA's diplomacy is designed to reduce India to a regional non-entity
- Western powers are itching to involve themselves in the Kashmir issue
- India's defence industry could be networked into private industry
- The West is offloading obsolete military equipment on India
- India had a powerful case to intervene in Fiji; it would have deterred attacks on the diaspora elsewhere

resigned to spending huge sums on foreign equipment for political reasons. Thus the UK — which has invariably taken a hostile stance on Indian security interests especially in relation to Pakistan — is now pressing us to purchase the outdated Hawk trainer, just as France is for Mirage fighters.

For those aware of the way in which the western arms industry functions, it is no surprise to see a spate of articles against Russian-made items, for example, just when files relating to the purchase of western equipment are being speeded up through the bureaucracy. The Su-35, for example, has been routinely attacked in the

Indian press as a lemon, and quotes from that noted expert on military aircraft, the CAG, have been used to support such criticism of an aircraft type that NATO is itself envious of. However, India has always been a happy hunting ground for its enemies; witness the spate of PILs that get filed whenever a worthwhile project (such as a highway or a port) is in danger of actually materialising.

The NATO countries go to extreme lengths to checkmate perceived threats to their own security, but are willing to relax such standards whenever the interests of a 'lesser' country are concerned, especially if such indefensible compromises can rescue a few of their own citizens. Clearly, there was pressure on the MEA and the PMO to ensure a 'peaceful' solution to Kandahar, in order to protect the lives of the western nationals on board the Indian Airlines flight. Sadly, the MEA appears to have succumbed to such pressures, leading to the compromise at Kandahar. If the agencies under Mr L K Advani and Mr George Fernandes are finding the going rougher in theatres of conflict, they should "thank" the PMO and the MEA for ensuring this through the compromises of Lahore, Kargil and Kandahar. Only a firm policy can deter Pakistan from its proxy war.

There are millions of people of Indian descent who are scattered across the globe in countries such as Kenya, Guyana and Mauritius. The Fijian coup leaders who held an elected prime minister hostage for the crime of having the same genetic code as those in the sub-continent may have set a trend that could impact on that element of the Indian diaspora that is not resident in mature democracies. There was, therefore, a powerful case for intervention in Fiji. There is a need to explore with Colombo the possibility of the use of Trincomalee by the Indian navy, in exchange for a guarantee that the island's unity will be maintained.

The Vajpayee government must live up to its manifesto commitments. Its continuing failure to do so may before long negate the positive diplomatic effects of the economic boom created by the Congress government from 1991-96, and the achievements of the country's underfunded nuclear and missile scientists.

THE TIMES OF INDIA

26 JUL 1998

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**Concern at
Chinese missile
knowhow for Pak.**

NEW DELHI, JULY 21. India will convey its concern to China over the transfer of missile technology to Pakistan during the Chinese Foreign Minister, Mr. Tang Jiaxuan's official level talks with the External Affairs Minister, Mr. Jaswant Singh, here tomorrow.

The transfer of missile technology is a matter which has been discussed with the Chinese Government in the past. "But our concerns remain on this issue and is expected to come up for discussion with Mr. Tang," a spokesman of the Ministry of External Affairs (MEA) said.

Arab fears allayed 10-14

In a bid to allay Arab fears over India's ties with Israel, New Delhi today assured Arab nations that its relations with Tel Aviv or any other country would never be developed at the cost of its traditional relations with them.

New Delhi's position was conveyed to Arab Ambassadors here during a meeting with Mr. K.V. Rajan, Secretary (East) in the MEA. The hour-long meeting, attended by 18 Arab envoys, comes in the wake of reports of Arab disquiet over New Delhi's growing bonds with Israel and certain misperceptions generated by the recent visits to Tel Aviv by Mr. Jaswant Singh and the Home Minister, Mr. L.K. Advani. — UNI, PTI

THE HINDU

Cong to demand discussion on foreign policy

HT Correspondent
New Delhi, July 24

HT-14

THE CONGRESS today listed out the issues it would focus on in the Parliament's Monsoon Session that opened here today.

In the Lok Sabha, the party has already given notices under rules 184 and 193 for discussions on atrocities on religious minorities and the J&K autonomy question.

Speaking to reporters, Congress spokesperson Margaret Alva said her party would insist on full discussions of foreign policy and dis-

investment.

As for the Rashtriya Janata Dal's stand linking its demand for a compensation package for Bihar with the creation of Jharkhand, she said the Congress had done its bit by getting a resolution passed in the State Assembly for the creation of Jharkhand.

"It is for the Central Government to have the Bill passed in Parliament even if some members oppose it. We support the creation of Jharkhand. Let the Government come up with a compensation package. We are willing to discuss

it," Ms Alva said.

She asked anyone who wanted a discussion on Maharashtra to come forward. It did not require the Law Minister (Mr Ram Jethmalani who has since resigned) to be an advisor to somebody (read Mr Bal Thackeray) who is under investigation.

"There should be a discussion in Parliament on whether or not any individual can be above the law," the Congress leader remarked.

Congress panel polls: Elections to the Executive Committee of the Congress Parliamentary Party

would be held on August 10, Ms Alva announced here today. She said the three-day nomination process will start on August 1 and the list of candidates would be published on August 3 upon scrutiny.

Senior party leader Ram Niwas Mirdha, who also heads the Congress' Central Election Authority, will be the returning officer for the elections.

Ms Alva said that elections would take place on August 10 after the withdrawal of candidatures, if any, on August 4 and 7.

FOREIGN POLICY

Compulsions Of Democracy

By AG NOORANI

THE minister for external affairs, Jaswant Singh, must have enlightened the elite crowd at the Israeli Council of Foreign Relations, in Jerusalem on 2 July considerably with his erudition and penetrating analyses, enriched by his distinctive turn of phrase ("tectonic shift of consciousness"). He, however, did a grave disservice to India, the office he holds, and his audience by an excursion into history which was unnecessary, undignified and factually untrue. India owes no explanation or apology to Israel for taking its own time for diplomatic representation. It is unbecoming of a minister in government to distance it from a predecessor; especially when he is on foreign soil and the predecessor is Jawaharlal Nehru. The specific case apart, the issue of domestic compulsions behind a country's foreign policy merits study.

Jaswant Singh attributed the decades of estrangement between India and Israel to a "very strong urge among politicians" to continue in office. The Muslim vote could not be ignored, he said. "India's Israel policy became a captive to domestic policy that came to be unwittingly an unstated veto to (sic) India's larger West Asian policy." Some writers blamed Maulana Azad as the prime culprit.

PRIZED TURF

Archival disclosures have demolished these myths sedulously fostered by the Jan Sangh and the BJP over the decades. It is the documents which record the truth. A Nehru who could rudely snub Maulana Azad on Urdu, on 12 March 1954, would not have brooked any poaching on his prized turf, foreign affairs. He had invited the Jewish agency to the Asian Relations Conference in 1947. It is well known that he was all for inviting Israel to the Bandung Conference in 1955. A threat of boycott by the entire Arab bloc defeated Nehru's intentions. This is a matter of record. Why did he not cite the real reason — Kashmir?

In a letter to a close friend, Frances Gunther, on 26 June 1948, Nehru explained: "There is no doubt that in India there has been in the past a very strong feeling in favour of the Arabs in Palestine. This was not confined to the Muslims but extended to others also. The basis of that feeling was a certain Asian sentiment plus the belief that the Jews were being used and exploited by British imperialism. It is also true that this feeling has undergone a considerable change recently." The change was "in favour of the general Jewish attitude in Palestine". But "some kind of stabilisation, some permanence" was a prerequisite to recognition. Israel was born on 4 May 1948. It signed Armistice agreements with Arab states in 1949. India recognised it on 17 September 1950.

Nehru amplified his views in an interview to Earnest K Lindley of *Newsweek* in September 1948. "Generally speaking, the Indian people have shown sympathy for Arabs. But they are not anti-Jew. They have sympathy for the Jews as victims of persecution

in Europe. However, they have a feeling for the Arabs as Asiatics. They think nothing should be done to injure the Arabs. Personally I have long felt Palestine should be a federation."

Gandhi's writings were as pro-Arab as Nehru's. It was a national sentiment. The minutes of the SE Asian Premier's conference in Colombo, on 30 April 1954 record Nehru's strong opposition to Pakistan's resolution against Israel: "While he felt great sympathy at the plight of Arab refugees and other victims of oppression in Palestine, it would be difficult for India ... to be a party to a resolution which stated that

Vajpayee also bound by the Muslim "veto"? Or, by the Arab monolith?

Jaswant Singh might do some introspection on the outlook that shaped his party's policy on Israel. It would be unfair to throw at the doorstep of this refined gentleman the communal filth poured out over the years in parivar journals like *Organiser*. Was it love for Israel or antipathy towards Muslims that inspired them? Significantly, some noted Muslim-baiters have been the loudest fans of Israel. As a Persian saying goes, *Na be hubi Imam, valey be zidd yazid* (Not for the love of Iman Husain; but out of hatred for his opponent, Yazid).

The minister's re-proach on the score of domestic compulsions is particularly unfair. His government turned its back on pleas by Sri Lanka, a small, friendly neighbour and a vibrant democracy, for help to crush a revolt by the fascist LTTE which India had armed to the teeth. The 1999 elections to the Lok Sabha yielded 12 seats for the DMK, 5 for Ramadoss' PMK, and 4 for Vaiko's MDMK. The BJP and its allies have 299 members in a

House of 543. Sonia's Congress and its allies (134) are in disarray. The Left has 42 seats. The DMK leader M Karunanidhi gave the government a *carte blanche* and even attacked the LTTE in mid-May.

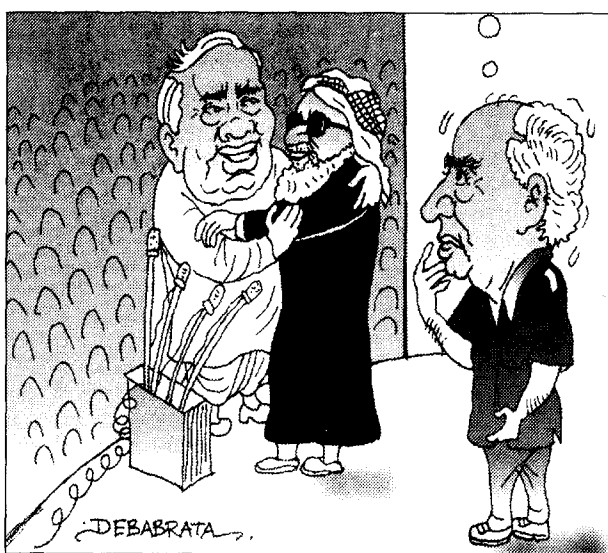
FREEDOM TO ACT

It is Vaiko who has been doing the running mostly. His sights are set on the assembly polls due next year. What earthly compulsions of domestic politics moved the Vajpayee government to behave as it has? Why does the PM accord such importance to Vaiko? He had other options but ignored them.

True, no government can ignore Tamil sentiment in India. India's intercession on behalf of Sri Lanka's Tamils could very well have gone hand in hand with help to Colombo. The Prime Minister, Atal Behari Vajpayee, could have picked up the gauntlet and done what a leader should — educate the people and mould public opinion. He could have been both "the initiator of policy and the awakener of public opinion" as Hans J Morgenthau put it. However, "subservience to public opinion has enfeebled the will to govern and has bred deception and secrecy as instruments of policy".

Indira Gandhi would hurl earth-shaking challenges at the great powers from obscure places, heedless of reactions abroad. Demagogic exploitation of foreign policy issues, especially on disputes with other states, destroys options. Politicians cite "public opinion" as a constraining factor after having inflamed it themselves for long. Of late, a bad practice has grown up of getting Parliament to pass resolutions on foreign policy, in the American manner, which serve only to impose fetters when freedom of action is required in the national interest.

Leaders in power tend to use foreign policy to mobilise domestic support, instead of forging domestic consensus to sustain sound policies. Opinion polls become oracles. The leader follows faithfully, debasing the democratic process and perverting foreign policy to suit the needs of domestic politics.



the creation of Israel was a violation of international law".

In a very polite letter to Israel's foreign minister Moshe Sharett ("My dear Mr Sharett") on 5 June 1954, Nehru reported what had happened at Colombo. India had "no basic objection" to diplomatic representation. But, the Arab-Israeli conflict "can only be resolved by some settlement between them. It is possible that at an appropriate moment, we might be of some service in this matter ... If we established diplomatic relations with Israel at the present juncture, this would not facilitate our task." That was his aspiration.

STAUNCH SUPPORT

Works of solid research, some by Israeli scholars, have appeared on Israel's forcible expulsion of Arabs from Palestine shocking many in India and elsewhere. In 1956 came the Suez War launched by Israel in complicity with Britain and France. Still, exchange of ambassadors need not have been delayed till 1992. Strangely another factor is conveniently overlooked.

Nehru's policy paid handsome dividends in terms of realpolitik. Nehru was very conscious of it. From 1948 till 1957, Kashmir was a live issue internationally. Pakistan could not even contemplate taking it out of the Security Council, stalled by the Soviet veto, to the General Assembly. Nasser would not have supported it. Nor would have some other Arab friends of India. Among the Colombo powers who mediated between India and China in 1963, Egypt was India's staunchest supporter.

Conceived in "the national interest", this policy was exploited by the Congress to seek Muslim votes on this, as on other equally false grounds. The Muslim vote was not a "veto", as Jaswant Singh misrepresents it. No sooner he became foreign minister in March 1977, Atal Behari Vajpayee demanded restoration of lands to the Arabs at a mammoth public meeting at the Ram Lila grounds in New Delhi. A companion on the dais was the Shahi Imam of Delhi, Syed Abdullah Bukhari. Was

The author is a lawyer and commentator on current affairs.

India and Sino-Russian summit

By C. Raja Mohan

THE RELATIONSHIP between China and Russia has always been among the critical factors shaping India's security environment. Sino-Russian cooperation or confrontation continues to have an impact on the global balance of power as well as on international relations in Asia.

The emergence of what appears a more assertive Russia under Mr. Vladimir Putin and the rising Chinese nationalism under Mr. Jiang Zemin give an edge to the renewed proclamation of a strategic partnership between the two giants in India's neighbourhood.

For India, the Putin-Jiang summit in Beijing this week comes amidst the continuing flux in New Delhi's relations with Washington, Moscow and Beijing, India's own diplomatic engagement with these three great powers is at a delicate stage.

Preparations have begun for the Prime Minister, Mr. Atal Behari Vajpayee's visit to the United States in early September. The government will hope to build on the successful visit to India by the President, Mr. Bill Clinton, in March and to consolidate the new phase in bilateral relations. New Delhi is also gearing up for Mr. Putin's trip to India in early October and the declaration of a strategic partnership. It has responded enthusiastically to his election and expects an early return to traditional and intensive Indo-Russian cooperation.

Sino-Indian relations appear to have come out of the post-Pokhran chill. The extended travel of the President, Mr. K. R. Narayanan, to China a few weeks ago has laid the basis for a renewed high level political engagement. As part of this process, the Chinese Foreign Minister, Mr. Tang Jiaxuan, will be arriving in New Delhi this weekend.

As they assess the outcomes of the Sino-Russian summit, two broad lines of reasoning could tempt Indian policy-makers. One is to jump on the bandwagon of a "common front" against the U.S. which Mr. Putin and Mr. Jiang appeared to have called for. The other will be a profound concern at the expanding Sino-Russian strategic relationship, and the search for a countervailing political alliance with the U.S. India should resist both the temptations.

Instead of dreaming about grand strategic and exclusive alliances, India needs to intensify its efforts to improve relations with all the three great powers.

Instead of dreaming about grand strategic and exclusive alliances, India needs to intensify its current efforts to improve relations with all the three great powers. For the foreseeable future at least, problem-solving and expanding cooperation must dominate its approach to Washington, Moscow and Beijing. In short, engagement without being sucked into entangling alliances must be India's grand strategy.

The ringing call "to defy hegemonism, power politics and group politics" made by Mr. Putin and Mr. Jiang in Tuesday's "Beijing Declaration" will indeed appeal to many in New Delhi. Although they did not name Washington, there was no mistaking the target. The idea of a triangular bloc among India, China and Russia against the U.S. has enjoyed some currency in India over the recent years.

India has also been drifting towards an alignment with the Russian and Chinese criticism of American efforts to build missile defences, and may be tempted to endorse the Beijing Declaration's furious attack on Washington. New Delhi would, however, be well advised to proceed with circumspection on the issue of missile defences. It needs to carefully assess the long-term strategic implications of the technologies for defence against nuclear weapons that the U.S. is developing, before rushing into a judgment.

New Delhi also needs to note that despite the strong joint criticism by Russia and China of the U.S. plans for missile defence, there are fascinating nuances in the positions adopted by Moscow and Beijing. If they believe that the defensive technologies will inevitably shape the nature of nuclear deterrence in future, Russia and China will inevitably adjust their positions to this reality.

Whatever their short-term diplomatic and political compulsions in opposing missile defences, Moscow and Beijing will

soon begin to invest in the same technologies and keep pace with Washington.

It is also noteworthy that while the Chinese opposition to missile defences appears almost visceral, the Russians are already negotiating with the Americans and have come up with their own alternative proposals on how to proceed forward on defences. There has been a discussion between Russia and the U.S. on sharing defensive technologies. In this context, India will be smart to hedge its bets on how the game on missile defences evolves in the coming years.

On the broader issue of a "multipolar world", India has much interest in seeking a world that is less vulnerable to American unilateralism and in which all major powers will have a considerable say in the management of international relations.

But there is little incentive for India joining forces in a gang-up against the U.S. For all their rhetoric against Washington, both Moscow and Beijing set store by a cooperative engagement with the U.S.

In fact at this stage, both Russia and China have relationships with the U.S. that are deeper and wider than those between India and America. Russia and China are seeking each other out to expand their own room for political manoeuvre, but have no desire for a long-term confrontation with the U.S.

On the economic and commercial front, Sino-U.S. relations are way ahead of any other set of bilateral ties among India, China, Russia and the U.S. The task before India is to expand the cooperative engagement with the U.S., which remains the principal source of capital and technology. Washington will also remain a key player in resolving some of India's security problems in its neighbourhood.

India's ties with the U.S. are improving; but from a very low base, thanks to the prolonged estrangement during the Cold War. India would be foolish to jeopardise

this relationship in the name of grandiose global slogans now.

It is equally important, however, for India not to fall into the other trap of joining forces with the U.S. against China. There is a big danger of New Delhi getting carried away by cheap rhetoric from certain quarters on the so-called China threat and joining a potential American containment ring against Beijing.

There is no doubt that India has many serious problems in its relations with China. And some of these might indeed get accentuated in the context of a rapidly expanding Sino-Russian partnership. New Delhi would certainly note that Mr. Putin has chosen to visit China ahead of India.

The sustained growth in Sino-Russian military, nuclear and advanced technology cooperation will be continuously monitored by New Delhi for potential adverse implications. There will also be some concern at the possible leakage of these technologies from China to Pakistan.

But it is unlikely that India will be able to address its difficulties with China through an alliance with the U.S. An Indo-U.S. gang-up against China, neither necessary nor entirely feasible, could only worsen Sino-Indian relations.

Instead of seeking exclusivist alliances, New Delhi must strive for a substantive expansion of bilateral cooperation simultaneously with Washington, Beijing and Moscow. To advance its own interests on the global front, India needs to build issue-based coalitions with the other major powers. On some issues India would be closer to China and Russia; on others it will be drawn towards the U.S.

The challenge before India is to manage in a sophisticated manner the emerging complexity of great power relations, and insulate itself from the possible negative impact of their changing direction. India must be guided by a "bottom-up" approach of defining interests and building relationships on that basis.

In the past, New Delhi tended to go by a "top-down" strategy of first identifying broad principles to shape its ties with major powers. That line proved utterly disastrous and must be avoided at all costs.

WORLD VIEW

India, China sign IT MoU

157 Anil K. Joseph 615

BEIJING 17 JULY

INDIA AND China, on Monday, signed the first-ever memorandum of understanding (MoU) to strengthen bilateral co-operation in the critical area of information technology (IT) and boost strategic business partnerships.

The MoU was signed by visiting information technology minister Pramod Mahajan and his Chinese counterpart, Mr Wu Jichuan, here.

"Under the MoU, the two ministries will exchange policies and strategies on IT industry, encourage mutual investment, establish joint ventures and transfer technologies," Mr Mahajan said.

He said the two sides have identified a number of areas for future co-operation, including enterprise network, micro-electronic technology and integrated circuit, software and its application and products.

Valid for five years, the MoU will enhance Sino-Indian co-operation in IT and encourage economic and technical co-operation between enterprises, research institutes and economic entities, he said.

Mr Mahajan, who is here on a five-day official visit as Mr Wu's guest, described the MoU as a breakthrough in Sino-Indian co-operation, hoping that it would lead to enhanced science and technology co-operation between the two neighbours in the new millennium.

Earlier in the morning, Mr Mahajan held detailed talks with Mr Wu on India-China collaboration in IT and issues of common concern.

He also held wide-ranging discussions with Chinese government officials on strengthening bilateral co-operation, human resource development, research and development and institutional linkages for boosting ties between emerging new knowledge-based economies.

— PTI

The Economic Times

18 JUL 2000

THE FIGHT AGAINST TERRORISM

IN WHAT IS certainly a significant step, Foreign Ministers of the Group of Eight (G-8) industrialised countries have reportedly agreed to back India's draft convention against international terrorism. This has to graduate to a formal endorsement or expression of support at the political level — during the G-8 summit later this month in Japan. But it will be wrong to conclude that a mere endorsement or adoption at the U.N. of any convention against terrorism will rid the world of this deadly menace. There are already a dozen international conventions against terrorism, but the world has not become any the safer after they were adopted or ratified. Similarly, mere backing from the West or the G-8 may not mean much to India and its fight against cross-border terrorism. It needs much more than the ratification of such international instruments for the world to take on this challenge and defeat all forms of terrorism.

Post-Kargil and Kandahar, New Delhi has stepped up its efforts and diplomacy to mobilise international opinion against terrorism, especially the trans-national variety, which has hurt India badly. There can be no two opinions on defining or identifying terrorism and terrorist outfits. But that is only a beginning. It may also be easy to label and ban militant and secessionist groups as terrorist organisations. The world seems to be full of them — from community-oriented hate groups to the outfits of Osama bin Laden, the pan-Islamic groups, the mujahideen, the Laskar-e-Toiba, the Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam or even the Maro groups in southern Philippines. They have all indulged in acts of terrorism, allegedly for a cause. To counter a particular edition of terrorism in their region, many countries have come up with different conventions. That accounts for the nearly dozen conventions already in place and now India's new draft, for which it has been drumming up support.

While it may be easy for a country or Government to identify a terrorist group — domestic or international — the problem will acquire a regional or even global colour when such outfits get trained or operate from another country. The U.S. has launched a hunt for Osama bin Laden, but cannot lay its hands on him. He has enough places of shelter in Afghanistan or Central Asia, for instance. India has been shouting from the rooftops about cross-border terrorism and Pakistan's hand in training and inducting terrorists into Kashmir. A militant outfit from southern Philippines kidnapped more than 20 tourists from a Malaysian resort in April and has so far released only two of them. Though the groups and their demands are now well known, the affected countries have not been able to accomplish much because these terrorists seek refuge elsewhere. The focus of attention has now to shift to states and Governments which protect, harbour or encourage terrorism.

G. F. P. ...

A stage has come when there are obviously no differences over principle but only on the most effective means of combating international terrorism. While all international rules and human rights apply to Governments and their armies, the terrorist groups strike at will and massacre innocent civilians in their war against a state. Since it is clear that many of these groups cannot be fought alone or through bilateral and regional agreements, the international community has to come up with an integrated multilateral framework to combat terrorism in all its forms. It must become embarrassing, even impossible for any country not to be a party to such an international convention and once it becomes a party, the U.N. or any multilateral arrangement to be set up should be able to make that state comply with all commitments and obligations under the convention. Only that can make it succeed.

THE HINDU

18 JUL 2000

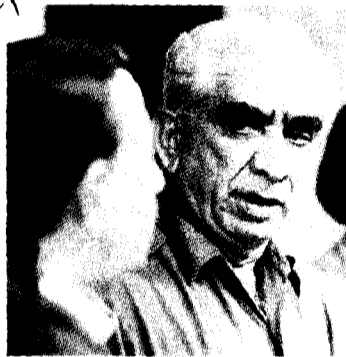
Peace mission in Sierra Leone to continue

By Atul Aneja

NEW DELHI, JULY 16. India will continue to take part in peacekeeping in Sierra Leone, despite being drawn in a military duel with rebel forces to free the encircled Indian peacekeepers in the strife-torn west African State.

Addressing a press conference on the successful U.N. military operations to break the cordon imposed by Sierra Leone's rebel forces, the External Affairs Minister, Mr. Jaswant Singh, pointed out that New Delhi was not seeking a change in the peacekeeping mandate of the U.N. Assistance Mission in Sierra Leone (UNAMSIL). Indian forces, however, had the right to self-defence if resisted by the Sierra Leone's rebel forces. India did not have any larger "strategic objectives" in Sierra Leone and its involvement in the peacekeeping there was an expression of its solidarity with Africa, he observed.

Mr. Singh said the operation to



The External Affairs Minister, Mr. Jaswant Singh, addressing the press in New Delhi on Sunday. — AP

extricate the 221 mainly Indian U.N. peacekeepers who had been encircled by the breakaway Revolutionary United Front (RUF) had concluded. Most of these troops were on their way to U.N. military base of Daru in eastern Sierra Leone. As many as 40 U.N. peacekeepers including 11 U.N. observers were airlifted on Satur-

day. The airlift was carried out by a single flight of two British Chinook helicopters with extensive air support provided by Mi-8 helicopters of the Indian Air Force. Permission for the operation was personally given by the U.N. Secretary-General, Mr. Kofi Annan.

The military strike, codenamed "Operation Khukri", revolved round smashing the RUF stronghold of Pendembu through a coordinated pincer assault. Pendembu, where around 1,000 RUF rebels were entrenched, was attacked by road from the base area of Daru in the South. Mechanised columns including armoured troops carriers were widely used so that the 72 km distance to Pendembu could be speedily covered. Pendembu was also hit from the rear from the area around Kailahun in the northeast where the 221 peacekeepers had been trapped.

Around 300 Indian troops including an element of para-com-

mandos were dropped by the IAF Mi-8 helicopters at three locations. These forces, having secured the release of the peacekeepers at Kailahun, sought to establish a link-up with the advancing ground troops. They succeeded in teaming up at Pendembu at 4 p.m. Sierra Leone time yesterday. The IAF's attack helicopters were also prominently used to prevent reinforcements from reaching the rebels who had been isolated at Pendembu.

Military operations to free the peacekeepers were intricately planned before they were launched at 6 a.m. local time on Saturday. An air and logistics base was set up at Kenema, southwest of Daru. Reserves of troops belonging to the 18 grenadiers were also built up at Daru to ensure speedy reinforcements, if required. Operation Khukri was personally supervised by the U.N. force commander, Major General V.K. Jetly.

Peacekeepers airlifted: Page 13

THE HINDU

17 JUL 2000

Jaswant, Advani's remarks vis-a-vis Israel upset Arabs

JYOTI MALHOTRA
NEW DELHI, JULY 16

9-8 PM
96-7

THE Arab ambassadors in the Capital are believed to be quite upset over the remarks made by Union Home Minister L K Advani as well as Minister for External Affairs Jaswant Singh during their respective visits to Israel recently in which they talked about a budding nuclear relationship between New Delhi and Jerusalem and attributed the lack of ties earlier to the Muslim votebank at home.

Reacting to Advani's statements about the nuclear relationship between India and Israel, the Arab ambassadors here had held a meeting in the third week of June where they resolved to ask for clarifications from Foreign Secretary Lalit Mansingh. No meeting with Mansingh has, however, been held so far.

The Arab diplomats are equally shocked by comments made by Jaswant Singh in

Jerusalem earlier in the month. He is reported to have said that in the early years after Partition "it was felt that injustice must not be done to Muslims... India's Israel policy became captive to domestic policy and therefore an unstated veto."

Interestingly, sections of the foreign office have also been somewhat taken aback by Singh's comments; they have argued that the Muslim vote explanation is far too "simplistic".

India's opposition to Israel in the early years, these diplomats say, was based on the anti-colonial and anti-imperial argument as well as the fact that New Delhi was beginning to already, informally, lean towards the former Soviet Union.

An emerging, though private view in the foreign office is that the statements by Advani and Jaswant Singh "may be the view of the BJP". The implication here is that New Delhi's line on the Arab world as well as on Israel remains what it has been earlier: That In-

dia's relations with both these parties are strong and independent and certainly not at the cost of the other.

The evidence of Arab perception of an "anti-Islamic" undercurrent in the BJP's foreign and domestic policies can be seen in the fact that the Assistant Secretary-General for Political Affairs in the Arab League had recently summoned India's Ambassador to Egypt, Shiv Mukherjee, asking for an explanation of Advani's comments on India's nuclear ties with Israel.

Agency reports on Saturday quoting Arab League officials said they complained about Advani's alleged remarks seeking to develop a nuclear relationship with Israel as well as joint action by New Delhi and Jerusalem against "Islamic terrorism".

The League officials are said to have warned against the consequences of such a relationship in the Arab world.

INDIAN EXPRESS

17 JUL 2000

UN-friendly India mulls economic sanctions against Fiji

STATESMAN NEWS SERVICE

NEW DELHI, July 14.— India is contemplating economic sanctions against Fiji, Mr Jaswant Singh told Opposition leaders today, but added that a final decision will be made only after all aspects of the issue are considered.

The external affairs minister also clarified that New Delhi was as committed to the UN as ever and would continue to take part in the world body's peacekeeping missions. This, though 221 Indian soldiers of UNAMSIL are in rebel custody in Sierra Leone from 2 May.

The Prime Minister attended today's all-party meeting, though he did not speak. Mrs

Sonia Gandhi and Mr Manmohan Singh from the Congress, Mr Biplab Dasgupta of the CPI-M, Mr Chittaranjan the BSP and Mr Amar Singh of Samajwadi Party were present.

The government said its strategy in Fiji was to ensure that criminals did not take over and to work towards restoring the 1997 Constitution that guaranteed lasting peace in a multi-racial country.

Safe release of the hostages George Speight was holding had been the government's first objective. No statements were therefore issued during the crisis that could have endangered the hostages' lives and property.



(From left) Mr Jaswant Singh, Mr Mahendra Chaudhry, Mrs Sonia Gandhi

If the government was for trading cautiously on Fiji, the Opposition too felt that India should not be seen as playing a pro-active role. Mr Singh was also against calling Indians in Fiji "ethnic Indians", arguing

that this would complicate the situation for them. Mr Singh was confident that the crisis in Sierra Leone would be overcome. He later told reporters that only the UN could take a decision on Indian

Army personnel taking part in the world body's operations. It was for the UN as a global community to ensure similar situations did not arise again. The visit of any Indian minister to Sierra Leone would be unwar-

pressed. Mr Singh clarified that the government was doing its best to secure the release of the soldiers held hostage in Sierra Leone, citing his meeting with the UN secretary general, Kofi Annan. In this context, he said he was heartened by the stand and initiative taken by the Organisation of African Countries resolution, particularly the President of Male.

In Fiji too, India was trying to pressure authorities to restore the multi-racial constitution. He said India had received favourable responses on the matter from Australia and New Zealand, which could influence on developments in Fiji. Questions had been raised in political circles as to whether

India should send its troops to the UN attack. Left leaders said the USA was not interested in the UN because it was more interested in the WTO and the World Bank. It was all the more necessary for India to keep its involvement in the UN, they argued.

Mr Biplab Dasgupta mentioned reports he had read about the CIA's involvement in Fiji and of British intelligence agencies working with mercenaries in Sierra Leone. The government gave a clean chit to CIA but was reportedly silent on whether British spy agencies played any role in Sierra Leone.

■ Editorial: Victory for racism, page 6

THE STATESMAN

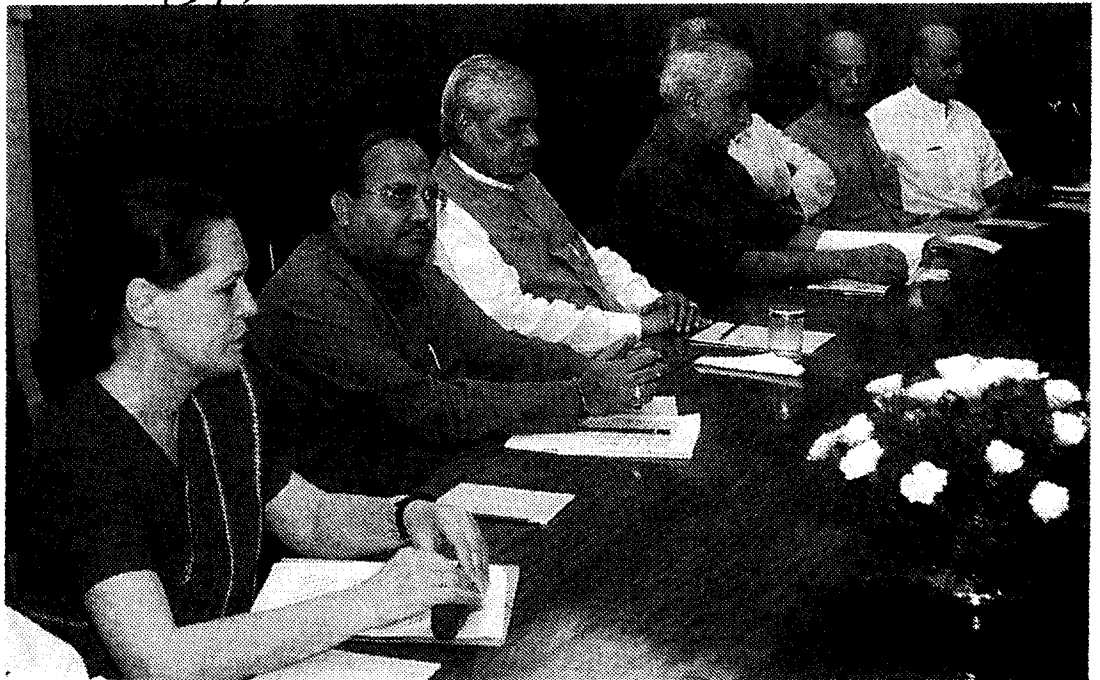
India wants Fiji statute restored

110-15
By Our Special Correspondent

NEW DELHI, JULY 14. India wants a democratically elected government based on multi-racial affinity restored in Fiji, now that the hostages have been released. "We would like the Fijian Constitution to be restored and if that is not possible a Constitution that is similar to it," the External Affairs Minister, Mr. Jaswant Singh, told reporters here today soon after the Government had briefed Opposition leaders on the situation in Sierra Leone and Fiji.

The Minister said the situation in Fiji was still disquieting because many of those who had overthrown the democratically elected government were now a part of the new government. "Securing the release of the hostages was our first priority and now that this had been done we will try to prevent the criminalisation of Fijian polity."

He suggested that India might even consider the possibility of persuading the world community to impose sanctions on Fiji till its multi-racial character is reflected in its government. On Sierra Leone, Mr. Singh said Opposition



The Prime Minister, Mr. A.B. Vajpayee, presiding over a meeting in New Delhi on Friday to brief Opposition leaders on the situation in Fiji and Sierra Leone.

leaders had been told that since the Indian soldiers taken hostage there were part of a U.N. force, it was the responsibility of the U.N.

to secure their release.

Among the Opposition leaders who attended the meeting were Mrs. Sonia Gandhi and Dr. Man-

mohan Singh of the Congress (I), the CPI (M) leader, Dr. Biplab Dasgupta, and the CPI leader, Mr. J. Chittaranjan.

INDIAN

1977

G-8 backs India on terrorism

By C. Raja Mohan

NEW DELHI, JULY 14. In an important gain for Indian diplomacy, the leading Western nations and Russia have agreed to collectively support the Government's efforts at the United Nations to counter international terrorism. At a meeting in Tokyo yesterday, Foreign Ministers from the Group of Eight (G-8) industrialised countries, arrived at a consensus to back the draft Indian convention against international terrorism at the United Nations.

Diplomatic sources here say the G-8 move "reflects deepening mutual understanding" between India and the advanced nations on the question of combating international terrorism. The G-8 comprises the United States, Canada, Great Britain, France, Germany, Italy, Japan and Russia.

For more than a year, gathering support for this first ever comprehensive international treaty against terrorism had been one of the highest foreign policy priorities for the Government. The Indian draft convention is expected to come up for discussion at the annual session of the United Nations General Assembly in September.

The endorsement of the U.S., Russia and other Western countries, it is believed, augurs well for the debate on the Indian convention at the UNGA. The

collective endorsement of the Indian convention from leading Western nations and Russia follows the important turnaround in the U.S. position earlier this year. Washington had initial reservations about supporting the convention. The differences were not about principles but about the most effective means to combat international terrorism. In its battle against international terrorism, the U.S. had traditionally sought to focus narrowly on specific aspects of the issue that could be acted upon by the international community. The Indian proposal, on the other hand, is broadbased in its approach and provides a single framework multilateral cooperation against international terrorism.

Separately, India has also been involved in consultations with other Western nations and Russia on the convention. The G-8 summit in Tokyo at the end of this month is likely to formalise the support at the highest political level.

As a result of the interaction between India and the G-8, New Delhi is also extend its support to various other conventions against international terrorism. The G-8 nations have signed 10 of the 11 conventions on international terrorism. And India has signed seven of these treaties. New Delhi will consider joining the remaining conventions at an early date.

11111111

India's foreign policy needs the self-confidence of the post-Pokhran days

Nation's pride

DIPLOMACY

K.P. NAYAR

In the history of every nation, there are occasions when difficult times are remembered with pride for the way one leader or person in high office stood up for the country or its policies and upheld the nation's self-esteem. Indira Gandhi's years in office were replete with incidents when, faced with the most trying circumstances internationally, she refused to short-change the nation's pride or honour.

The many crises which Indira Gandhi had to cope with during her long years in South Block have been surpassed only by the critical period that Atal Behari Vajpayee's government had to face following the nuclear tests in Pokhran two years ago. Two men in Vajpayee's administration stand out for the way they have helped steer the country out of the diplomatic challenges thrown up by the Pokhran tests. Without Brajesh Mishra, national security adviser and principal secretary to the prime minister, the outcome of India's post-Pokhran diplomacy might have been totally different. But his role as the prime minister's conscience-keeper — not to speak of a lifetime of training as a diplomat — prevents him from speaking out in public about these achievements or even acknowledging them.

Most Indians, for instance, calmly assume that Russia played a very supportive role after the nuclear tests and helped break the unity among the five permanent members of the United Nations security council in their collective opposition to Pokhran II.

Such an assumption is far from the truth. One of Mishra's first visits abroad after the nuclear tests was to Moscow where he was received by Yevgeny Primakov, then foreign minister. Primakov, a KGB stalwart and a product of the Soviet system, had a reputation for being sympathetic to India. If Primakov was expected to receive Mishra with a warm bearhug, what Mishra got instead was a lecture on how wrong the Pokhran II nuclear tests were. It speaks volumes for Mishra's presence of mind and equanimity that he listened to Primakov in silence, but only for five minutes.

The prime minister's principal secretary silently interrupted the Russian foreign minister by standing up and signalling that the meeting was over. As a stunned circle of officials from both sides watched, not knowing what to expect next, Mishra told Primakov that he did not go to Moscow to listen to a lecture of this kind. Had he wanted to be lectured to, he would have gone to Washington and met Madeleine Albright, Primakov's counterpart in the United States. Under the circumstances, Mishra said, there was little point in continuing the meeting.

During all those years of "Hindi-Russi" friendship, no Indian had ever spoken to a foreign minister in Moscow thus. Primakov knew he had reached a dead end and he immediately thawed. From that point onwards, the Russian attitude towards the Indian nuclear tests changed. It is anybody's guess what the Russians may have done along with the rest of the permanent five had not Mishra put his foot down in Moscow on that fateful day.

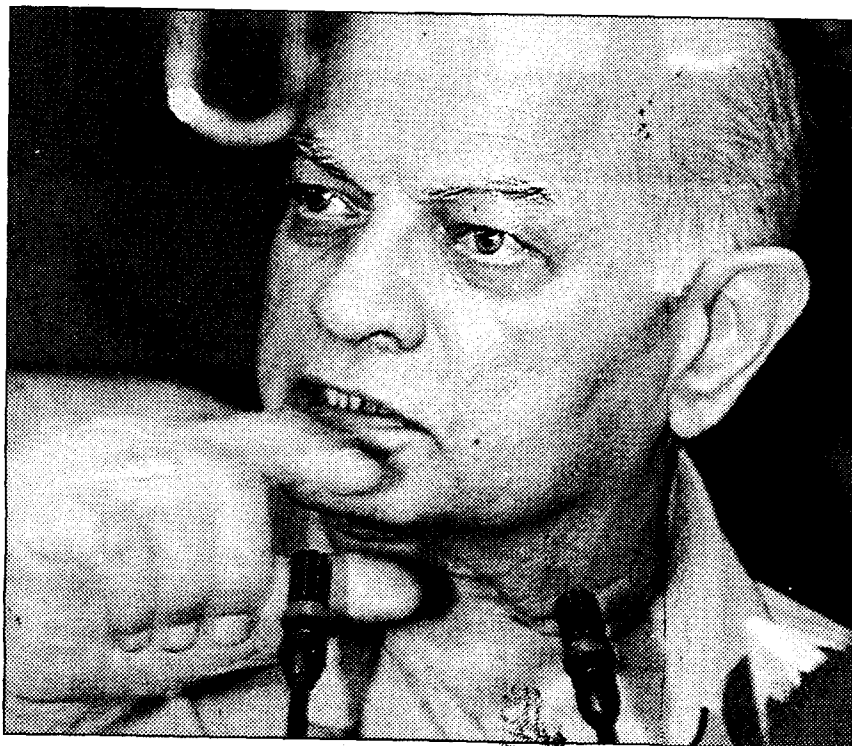
A few months after this incident,

Mishra went to South Africa, which was evangelical in its opposition to Pokhran II. Mishra had to go to South Africa because that country was to soon host the nonaligned summit and take over the chairmanship of the nonaligned movement for three years. A meeting of the Commonwealth heads of government was to follow.

Mishra met an array of South African officials and ministers, most of

South African bullying.

The second person in the Vajpayee administration to have stood up to international bullying on the nuclear issue with creditable results is George Fernandes, the defence minister. Unhonoured and unsung, Fernandes contributed more than anyone else in the government towards stabilizing India's post-Pokhran relations with central Asia. Many of the countries in this



The Mishra-Fernandes kind of responses based on conviction are being abandoned

volatile region were so confused by the Indian tests that while they were willing to go along with sanctions on India as long as it brought them benefits, they also did not want to lose out on the lucrative arms business which India offered.

But more recently, Fernandes outdid himself on a visit to London. One of the programmes on the defence minister's itinerary in London was a meeting with Stephen Byers, chief of the United Kingdom's department of trade and industry, who did to Fernandes what Primakov did to Mishra.

The minister had to listen to a lecture from Byers and Fernandes' reaction was typical. He bluntly told his young British interlocutor that he did not have to be told about British values, policies or compulsions. The minister told the British official that he had made his first visit to London when Byers was just three years old. Having said that, Fernandes turned on his heel and walked

out on Byers without any formal goodbye. If Britain is now in the process of clearing 65 of 70 licences for arms sales to India, some of which have been pending since the May 1998 nuclear tests, it is at least partly because Fernandes refused to be cowed by someone whom he considered an upstart, to put it mildly.

After the two year long successful run of its foreign policy, the Vajpayee government's external relations are being undermined by its desire to be all things to all people. The Mishra-Fernandes kind of responses based on self-confidence and conviction are being given the go-by in favour of a please-all policy, which involves compromises that strike at the root of what Vajpayee and his party have all along stood for. The ministry of external affairs is bending over backwards to prove that there is a quantum jump in India's friendship with the outside world and that leaders from all over the world are falling over each other in offering their hand of friendship to New Delhi.

Such a policy is fraught with serious pitfalls. It is bound to unravel the moment there is a serious crisis or even a challenge nowhere as critical as the one that faced India after the Pokhran II nuclear tests. India cannot be and need not be friends with everybody at all times, an expectation which is wholly unrealistic. Take, for instance, South Block's reaction to the British decision to partially lift arms sales to Pakistan. The real challenge for New Delhi in this case is not the licences being cleared for Pakistan, but the highly successful visit made by General Pervez Musharraf's foreign secretary to London a fortnight ago. After that visit, the Tony Blair government has clearly concluded that Musharraf is a better option in Islamabad than another fundamentalist general — or *mujahid* — and that the only way to avoid such an alternative is to constructively engage

ing it. It is not the arms sales, but the British commitment to the foreign secretary to provide electoral assistance to Musharraf's programme of local elections in Pakistan, which actually cuts at the very root of an Indian campaign that the general needs to be isolated because he dons an olive green uniform instead of a trademark politician's apparel.

Sadly, this is yet another case of South Block missing the woods for the trees. The coming week will similarly show, as Chinese foreign minister, Tang Jiaxuan, begins his talks in New Delhi, that China is another case in point where convictions have given way to expediency. Very little has changed since mid-1998 when Vajpayee wrote to President Bill Clinton citing China as the reason for India's nuclear tests. Nor is there anything to suggest that the defence minister's descriptions of China during that period have altered. If anything, the strategic threats to India from China have only worsened. In pursuing a please-all policy, South Block is only fooling the Indian people who will eventually have to bear the consequences of South Block's failure to stand up the way the Vajpayee government did in the months after the Pokhran tests.

India, Kuwait sign MoU to hold talks on issues of mutual interest

KUWAIT: India and Kuwait have added a new dimension to their relations by signing a memorandum of understanding (MoU) to hold regular foreign office consultations to chalk out common strategies on international issues of mutual interest.



Ajit Kumar Panja

The MoU was signed by visiting minister of state for external affairs Ajit Kumar Panja and Kuwaiti minister of state for foreign affairs Sulaiman Majed Al-Shaheen at a ceremony here on Monday evening.

According to the agreement, the two countries shall hold consultations at official level annually or more frequently alternatively in India or Kuwait on all aspects of bilateral relations as well as regional and international issues. The discussions could also be held between the permanent missions of the two countries in international organisations or at international conferences.

The two ministers described the signing of the MoU, which would remain in force for two years and then get renewed automatically, as "yet another step in the direction of strengthening close bonds of friendship" between the two countries. Later talking to reporters, Mr Panja said there was commonality of views between India and Kuwait on most of the international issues. He said some more major agreements, dealing with economic and trade issues, were being discussed be-

tween the two countries and would be signed soon.

Mr Panja said that during the course of his four-day visit, he had also met Kuwaiti crown prince and Prime Minister Shaikh Sa'ad Al-Abdulah Al-Salem Al-Sabah, speaker of the National Assembly of Kuwait Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah.

During his meeting with the crown prince, he delivered a personal letter from Prime Minister Atal Behari Vajpayee to the Kuwaiti leader dealing with bilateral relations. On the issue of Kuwaiti Prisoners of War (POWs) languishing in Iraqi jails, Mr Panja said India was of the view that they should be dealt with in accordance with relevant resolutions of the United Nations security council. To a question, he made it clear that any economic transactions between India and Iraq were within the framework of the UN security council resolutions.

He also indicated that India would this year lift the ban on its nationals from going to work in Kuwait as domestic staff. "We told Kuwait we are not going to keep the ban for long. It might be lifted before the end of the year", he added. He said a community welfare team, comprising senior officials, would soon visit Kuwait to study the condition of Indian workers and suggest ways to ensure their steady flow into the tiny Arab state.

New Delhi imposed the ban in February because of maltreatment at the hands of unscrupulous agents and after complaints to human rights organisations in India highlighted the difficulties faced by Indian domestic workers in Kuwait. (UNI)

THE TIMES OF INDIA

12 JUL 2000

Move to slash number of missions abroad

Jaswant in drive to downsize

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FROM CHANDAN NANDY

New Delhi, July 9: Finance minister Yashwant Sinha has been talking about downsizing government, Cabinet colleague Jaswant Singh has already taken the first step.

In the largest-ever cost-cutting exercise undertaken in the foreign ministry establishment, the Centre is planning to drastically reduce the number of Indian missions abroad. The ministry has 160-odd establishments abroad.

Security interests are the other reason for the exercise. South Block is in a tizzy over the "disappearance" of nearly 25 diplomats and lower-level officials, who had knowledge of sensitive issues, in the US and in European capitals.

Setting the ball rolling, a committee of retired and serving security and foreign ministry officials have been formed to recommend how the downsizing is to be carried out.

The committee, a brainchild of foreign minister Jaswant Singh and adviser to the ministry Arun Singh, is understood to be following the British model in which a Royal Commission had cut the number of UK missions by as much as 48 per cent after the Cold

War ended. It will submit its report in a month.

Government sources said the reduction will take place in phases after the committee's recommendations come in. "The dismantling process will be done in phases so that existing functions of some of the embassies, high commissions or consulates do not come to a halt abruptly," an official said. Units of the foreign ministry within the country will also come under the committee's microscope.

The exercise is a consequence of the realisation that since India became a republic no study has been undertaken to find out if all these missions are required.

For instance, India maintains a mission in Bahrain, though there are two others — in Riyadh and Qatar — close by. The embassy in Riyadh can handle the functions of the missions in Bahrain and Qatar. Likewise, "unproductive" missions like the one in Peru and other Latin American countries may be closed down.

A tentative move to downsize was taken by the Narasimha Rao regime in 1992, but the exercise ended up in fiasco. Setting out to close 12 missions, the Centre managed to clang the shutters down in five, only to reopen two of them.

The committee will also recommend measures to prevent dip-

lomats from "defecting" or "crossing over" to Western countries, tempted by a more affluent life.

The foreign ministry's main task is to plug the routes a number of "errant" diplomats and officials have taken to stay back in Western capitals even before retirement.

Members of the committee have been visiting these places to learn under what circumstances they "defected". They are also trying to ascertain if any of these diplomats contacted intelligence agencies of the countries where they "disappeared".

It has come to the government's notice that several of them "disappeared" along with the diplomatic passports issued to them. "This in itself was a breach of security and we wonder whether they also handed over secret documents to Western intelligence agencies in exchange for a settled future. There is every possibility that these passports may now have been faked and are being used by intelligence operatives of other countries," an official said.

What has jolted the government out of its deep slumber are reports of the mysterious disappearance of "diplomatic bags" containing private and official letters as well as secret documents.

THE TELEGRAPH

THE TELEGRAPH

10 JUL 20

Indian diplomacy on a roll

By C. Raja Mohan

NEW DELHI, JULY 9. Despite the sweltering July heat in New Delhi, Foreign Ministers and Prime Ministers are tripping over each other in their rush to embrace India.

As New Delhi basks in the international attention being showered on it, there is a quiet satisfaction in the Government that the risky gamble on conducting nuclear tests in May 1998 has paid off. Indian diplomacy is on a roll, but sceptics here caution that this high season in foreign policy may not last too long. Unless the Government gets its act together, it could easily fritter away the rare diplomatic opportunities knocking at its door.

Meanwhile foreign dignitaries are not daunted by the prospect of sweating it out in New Delhi. The Prime Minister of Australia, Mr. John Howard, will be arriving tomorrow for a two-day visit to revive bilateral relations. The Foreign Minister of Thailand is already in town, and will consult the Government on the meetings of the ASEAN Regional Forum being hosted by Bangkok later this month.

Early next week, the Chinese Foreign Minister, Mr. Tang Jiaxuan, will be here to continue high-level political dialogue between the two countries.

The Foreign Ministers of Oman and South Korea will also come to India this month. And early next month, the Nepalese Prime Minister, Mr. Girija Prasad Koirala, will arrive in New Delhi to mark an end to the recent tensions in the

bilateral relations after the hijacking of IC-814 from Kathmandu last Christmas.

India's diplomatic activism will reach a peak when the Prime Minister, Mr. Atal Behari Vajpayee, travels to the United States in early September to join a United Nations summit as well as for a bilateral visit.

The world reacted with shock and anger to India's nuclear tests in May 1998. The international community has learnt to live with the new nuclear reality and recognise the importance of dealing with India. India's ability to withstand sanctions, the improving performance of its economy, and India's unexpected advance to the front ranks of the Information Technology revolution have given a big boost to its diplomatic standing in the world.

India's responsible management of the Kargil confrontation with Pakistan has won applause from international capitals. The misadventure in Kargil followed by the military coup increased Pakistan's isolation in the world.

Far more important they allowed India to put aside the question of engaging Pakistan, and move away from the traditional foreign policy focus on Islamabad. New Delhi's recent diplomatic gains have included normalisation of relations with the U.S. and China that were badly affected by the nuclear tests.

India has pursued a special relationship with France and a new engagement with the European Union has begun.

The prospects for revival of traditional Indo-Russian cooperation have brightened after Mr. Vladimir Putin took charge in Moscow.

India has also begun to craft a special relationship with Israel, even as it seeks to reach out to important Islamic nations in West Asia. New Delhi has also tried to revive its "look east" policy towards the Asia-Pacific region. If the new dynamism in India's diplomacy is indeed real, so are the many pitfalls awaiting it.

While India's ties with the West have dramatically improved, their consolidation remains tied to progress by India on the non-proliferation front, in particular the signing of the Comprehensive Test Ban Treaty. The uneven pace of economic reform, the noisy opposition to globalisation from the ruling party's ideological bosses in the Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh, and the growing attacks on minorities raise serious questions about the credibility of the professed direction of the BJP-led Government.

Although India has chosen to ignore Pakistan for the moment, it will not be easy to wish it away. And the chaos surrounding New Delhi's policy towards Kashmir will add to the complexity of the relations with Islamabad, and the rest of the world. Finally, bureaucratic lethargy continues to undermine the gains on the diplomatic front. While the Foreign Office keeps signing agreements on many issues with many countries, the ability of the rest of the Government to deliver remains suspect.

THE HINDU

10.7.1998

Deluge of foreign visitors keeps Jaswant on his toes

SAURABH SHUKLA
NEW DELHI, JULY 6

OFFICIALS in the Ministry of External Affairs are on their toes, what with a long list of foreign visitors due in the Capital this month. There are about half-a-dozen important visits scheduled, which officials have dubbed an "unexpected summer rush".

MEA officials are still trying hard to juggle the schedule of External Affairs Minister Jaswant Singh, who will be meeting all these leaders, shifting the diplomatic focus from East to West within a span of just a few days.

While the Sri Lankan delegation, led by its Minister of Buddhist Sasana Lakshman Jayakody, has been in Delhi for the past three days and met the External Affairs Minister on Wednesday, South Block has more foreign VIPs to look after in the days ahead. Libyan Foreign Minister, Ab-

dul Rahman Shalgam was in Delhi for two days from July 6 for bilateral consultations. With Libya no longer facing international sanctions, it has acquired new importance thanks to its strategic location and Shalgam's visit is being viewed as an opportunity for Delhi to renew its ties with the Libyan regime.

Thai Foreign Minister Dr Surin Pitsuwan will be in Delhi before the Libyan foreign minister leaves. Pitsuwan and Singh will hold discussions on security cooperation issues that will come up in the ASEAN regional forum meeting to be held in Thailand later this month.

Thailand is also a member of the Indian Ocean Rim Countries Grouping and the two countries are expected to discuss bilateral trade issues and review the global and regional situa-



External Affairs Minister Jaswant Singh with Sri Lanka's Minister of Buddhist Sasana Cultural Religion Affairs Lakshman Jayakody at his office in New Delhi — Express photo by B B Yadav

tion. Pitsuwan's visit will clash with that of Australian Prime Minister John Howard, who is arriving on July 10 on a two-day tour. Howard's trip is significant considering the developments in Fiji, since Australia is an important player in the region.

The country has been demanding that coup leaders release deposed prime minister Mahendra Chaudhary and democracy be restored. Australia has also been a member of the Commonwealth Ministerial Action Group and has been closely following the situation in Fiji.

Howard's visit is also expected to improve Indo-Australian relations, which were strained after India conducted the Pokh-

ran tests in 1998. Australia had recalled its defence attache from India and suspended aid and defence cooperation. These may be restarted following Howard's visit — the first by an Australian premier in 11 years.

Howard will be followed by Chinese Foreign Minister Tang Jiaxuan, who will be arriving here on July 21, again on a two-day visit. Jiaxuan's visit will take off from the direction given to Sino-Indian relations following the visit of President Narayanan to China in May.

New Delhi may also show its concern about the continued Chinese assistance to a Pakistani defence acquisition and missile programme. The two sides will hold discussions on the contentious border issue.

The Foreign Ministers of Oman and the Republic of Korea are due next, and on July 28, Jaswant Singh will leave for Thailand to participate in an ASEAN meeting.

INDIAN EXPRESS

INDIAN EXPRESS

7 JUL 2000

India, Russia sign pact on N-cooperation

MOSCOW: India and Russia have signed an agreement to expand their cooperation in nuclear sciences.



M.M. Joshi

The three-year protocol signed by the secretary, department of science and technology, Prof V.S. Ramamurthy, and Yevgeny Velikhov, director of Russia's nodal nuclear research centre, Kurchatov Institute, on Tuesday provides for extensive Indo-Russian cooperation in the nuclear field, science and technology and human resources development minister Murli Manohar Joshi told reporters.

Under the agreement India and Russia would exchange visits of nuclear scientists and experts, he said.

Mr Joshi, however, declined to divulge the details of the accord

saying nuclear science does not mean only "bomb". It has medical applications as well.

Briefing reporters on his talks with Russian science and technology minister Dr Alexander Dondukov, Mr Joshi said that India and Russia had agreed to extend their integrated long-term programme on scientific and technological cooperation for another 10 years.

An agreement to his effect would be signed during Russian President Vladimir Putin's India visit in October, Mr Joshi said. Russian education minister Professor Fillipov said his country was willing to offer educational and training facilities to Indian students and scholars.

Mr Joshi arrived here on Sunday on a weeklong official visit. He inaugurated the joint Russian-Indian centre for advanced computing research (RICCR) on Tuesday.

RICCR, setup jointly by the Pune-based Advanced

Computing Centre and Russian Institute for Computer Aided Design, is equipped with the Indian supercomputer 'Param 10,000' and will provide a unique opportunity to the experts and scientists of the two countries to develop new software applications for use in various spheres of human activities, including space research and defence, experts said. Mr Joshi addressed the students and professors of Moscow State University Wednesday.

Rector of the university, Prof Sadovnichy said that Moscow University would train specialists for the Indo-Russian computing centre.

The Indian minister is scheduled to hold talks with the Russian deputy premier Viktor Khristenko and release a book on Hinduism, written by a top Russian Indologist, Dr Irina Glushkova, a scholar of the Oriental Institute of the Russian Academy of Sciences later Wednesday. (PTI)

Panja: We can't shake hands ^{9-10/04} with Musharraf ^{HC-1}

INDIA TODAY ruled out resuming peace talks with Pakistan until democracy was re-established there, reports UNI from Bangalore. Talking to newsmen here, Minister of State for External Affairs Ajit Kumar Panja said, "We can't shake hands with blood-stained hands".

He said Gen Pervez Musharraf, who spoke with "red eyes" whenever he referred to India, should realise that the country could retort with 100 crore "red eyes".

He said the country could not talk to a person who violated all the recent agreements, including the Lahore Declaration. Even if talks were held, enforcing the outcome would depend on the return of an elected government in that country, he added.

**Musharraf for unconditional talks
with India — Page 14**

THE HINDUSTAN TIMES

COMMUNAL FACTOR: CANDID MINISTER INVITES FURORE

Jaswant blames politicians of yore for poor ties with Israel

Our Political Bureau

NEW DELHI 3 JULY

JASWANT SINGH on Sunday crossed the Rubicon when he said that considerations of the Muslim vote bank had prevented India from opening up to Israel in the past.

The minister made the controversial statement at a seminar in Jerusalem, according to a PTI report. The agency quoted him as saying that New Delhi's policy towards Tel Aviv before establishing full diplomatic ties was based on two aspects — "domestic politics because of a Muslim vote bank and unwittingly a kind of unstated veto by New Delhi's larger West Asia policy."

Regretting that politicians' urge to remain in office had prompted them over the years to woo a large Muslim vote bank to the detriment of Indo-Israel relations, he added, "this phase is over."

"India's Israel policy had become captive to domestic politics," he said.

The sentiment may well be shared by others in the government, but it was the first time that an Indian foreign minister has chosen to put it on public record.

By taking on an unstated domestic consensus, Mr Singh might have plunged himself into a political controversy.

Independent foreign policy experts cite numerous instances to back this particular policy reality within the Indian establishment.

From the Arab-Israeli war to other issues of concern to the Muslim-Arab world, India had thrown its weight behind the latter for almost four decades.

"Part of it," foreign policy experts said, "was due to the fact that from Nehru onwards, sup-



FRIENDLY TIES: Jaswant Singh (left) with Israeli Prime Minister Ehud Barak during their meeting in Jerusalem on Sunday AP

porting Arabs against a US-backed Israel seemed like a non-aligned thing to do. Besides, with a large Muslim population, the Congress party in power did not feel necessary to anger the oil-rich Arabs."

Some of the arguments given to support this point of view was the spectre of a pan-Islamic uprising against India if it failed to support the Muslim countries, which might hamper oil supplies. This is belied by reality, they said, which proved that except for the 1973 and 1985 oil embargoes, which were not India-specific, oil-rich Gulf countries have never used energy as an instrument of their foreign policy.

In return for unwavering support to the Arab countries, however, India has had to contend with unfriendly Organisation of Islamic Countries (OIC) resolutions on Kashmir for decades. Although India has swallowed the Arab line that the Kashmir resolutions were not important, sources

maintain that they have been important enough for South Block to scrutinise the resolution with a fine-toothed comb every-time.

Freed from Cold War politics and embarking on a subtly altered domestic political dialectic, India has learnt to play one off against the other within the OIC. Therefore, its derecognition of the SADR angered Algeria, but gladdened the heart of Morocco, which continues to hold the presidency of the OIC.

Until India refrained from having full diplomatic relations with Israel in 1992, it continued its pro-Arab policies, both bilaterally and multilaterally. This meant that in the UN, even on matters like terrorism which India and Israel faced together, India refused to vote with the US to support Israel.

When Mr Vajpayee headed the foreign policy establishment in 1977, he couldn't gather the courage to publicise a secret visit by Israeli leader Moshe Dayan.

The Economic Times

4 JUL 2000

Decision on CTBT may not be linked to hi-tech ban

By Atul Aneja

HAIFA, JULY 3. India is unlikely to link its decision on the Comprehensive Test Ban Treaty (CTBT) to the lifting of the Western technology blockade on New Delhi, the External Affairs Minister, Mr. Jaswant Singh, indicated today.

The whole approach to the CTBT should be as it was in the case of testing. Is testing so inescapably required for the national interest, Mr. Singh said when asked whether India's signatures to the CTBT should be linked to the lifting of the technology restrictions on India. Mr. Singh's observations assume importance in the light of the internal debate in India that New Delhi should sign the CTBT only if the curbs on the transfer of hi-technology imposed on it since its first nuclear test in 1974 were removed.

According to the Minister, the coming session of Parliament is expected to witness a full-fledged debate on the foreign policy which will cover the question of India's possible signatures to the CTBT. "A discussion on foreign policy is not complete unless it includes non-proliferation and disarmament issues," the Minister observed. The Government, he said, was in the process of evolving a national consensus on CTBT which was only possible through the parliamentary route.

While responding to a question, Mr. Singh did not rule out another round of talks with the U.S. Deputy Secretary of State, Mr. Strobe Talbott, prior to the Prime Minister's visit to the Washington for the "millennium summit" with

the President, Mr. Bill Clinton in September. The Minister's visit to Israel resulted in advancing Indo-Israeli relations in three specific directions. First, India, according to the Minister, has been introduced to the "loop" of consultations on the West Asia process. Not surprisingly, the Minister spent considerable time with the Israeli Prime Minister, Mr. Ehud Barak discussing the West Asian peace deal. According to sources, Israel is keen on India's involvement in nudging the peace process forward because of its positive political equations with the Palestine National Authority (PNA) and the Arab world at large.

Indicating India's larger involvement in peace talks, the Minister pointed out that this subject was discussed in considerable detail during his talks with the U.S. Secretary of State, Ms. Madeleine Albright, in Warsaw recently.

According to analysts, the visit also saw the expansion of the institutional base of Indo-Israel relationship. Cooperation in the sphere of computer software between the two countries was emphasised. The two sides also stressed the need for working together to fine tune their cooperation in combating international terrorism. India's engagement of Israel and Palestine will proceed on two separate tracks. The Minister characterised his tour of the Palestinian areas and Israel as "two distinct and separate visits." Mr. Singh's talks with Mr. Barak also covered the regional situation including development in South-East Asia, the Gulf and Central Asia.

THE HINDU

4 JUL 2000

Joshi's Russia visit to boost ties

Fred Weir
Moscow, July 1

INDIAN MINISTER of Science and Technology Mr M. M. Joshi, arrives in Moscow Sunday for a six-day visit that caps the most intensive period in Indo-Russian diplomacy in over a decade.

In the past two weeks, Foreign Minister Jaswant Singh and Defence Minister George Fernandes have both been through Moscow.

In Moscow, the two Indian leaders have met the newly-elected President Vladimir Putin.

They have also interacted with a broad spectrum of Russian officials. One reason for all the activity is to prepare the ground for Mr Putin's upcoming visit to India, now slated for October 2 to 4.

But experts say there is also a

wide-ranging review of all aspects of Indo-Russian relations underway.

"I have never seen such thorough preparations for a summit meeting taking place in the past," says Tatiana Shaumian, deputy director of the Centre for Indian Studies, a thinktank which often acts as advisor to the Russian Government. "The three ministers visiting Moscow represent the three crucial aspects of Indo-Russian relations — foreign policy co-ordination, military supply and co-operation and scientific exchanges. A full-scale assessment is going on."

Mr Joshi oversees the Long Term Programme of co-operation in science and technology, which has been in force since 1987 and is the largest such arrangement between India and any other country.

The Indian Minister of Science

and Technology, Mr M. M. Joshi, will be in Russia from July 2 to 8, and will visit St. Petersburg as well as Moscow.

Under the programme, India and Russia regularly exchange information, run joint research projects and sponsor exchanges between experts in all fields from high technology to social sciences.

During his visit, Mr Joshi will hold extensive meetings with his counterpart, Russian Science and Technology Minister Alexander Dondukov, and meet with other high officials, academics and experts.

The Science and Technology Minister will also inaugurate a joint Indo-Russian Centre for Advanced Computing Research and launch a new Russian-language book about the history and theology of Hinduism.

THE HINDUSTAN TIMES

View from Lisbon ^{g.f.m.}

INDIA, LIKE many other countries, has dealt with the European Union from the time the European bloc acquired self-consciousness as a potentially distinct pole in world affairs in the aftermath of the collapse of Soviet communism. Typically, the relationship has addressed issues pertaining to trade and investment — going back to the period when the EU had not yet transcended its earlier identity as the European Economic Community. In the time since Pokhran II, India's ties with the EU acquired a political edge that worked to this country's disadvantage. Given this background, it is a sign of changing times that the EU has now considered it appropriate to engage India at the summit level.

The India-EU summit, which has just concluded in Lisbon, underlines the acknowledgment of India's potential as a modern economy which can influence global trends. Similar considerations had helped India gain admittance some years ago to the ASEAN, first as a dialogue partner but subsequently also as a member of the influential ASEAN Regional Forum (ARF) which deliberates security-related issues of international import. The summit-level engagement now on with key European states confirms India's standing as a sober and progressive nation, with Portugal joining an increasing number of countries which support India's case for permanent membership of the UN Security Council. Admittedly, differences continue to persist between this country and the powerful nations of the world on the nuclear question, though there appears to be greater awareness now of India's dilemmas in this sphere.

How India handles its new-found status, and whether or not it is able to build on it, will depend, of course, on the policies it pursues at home and abroad. The country must look to enhancing its economic strengths and social cohesiveness in the domestic sphere. In its dealings with the world, it needs to articulate its enlightened self-interests with greater clarity, while continuing to play an enterprising role in favour of large humanitarian causes for which it has always been known.

THE HINDUSTAN TIMES

7 1 JUL 2000

Party pat for PM, Jaswant out in cold

Lisbon pact a milestone: BJP

FROM KAY BENEDICT

New Delhi, June 30: Grappling with a number of domestic irritants, the BJP today played up its areas of success, patting Prime Minister Atal Behari Vajpayee for his achievements on the diplomatic front.

"On the whole, the Lisbon agreement would be a milestone in our international economic relationship with manifold opportunities," senior vice-president Jana Krishnamurthi said.

According to him, the agreement would go a long way in "achieving prosperity", especially in export earnings and infrastructure development, thereby enhancing "employment opportunities".

Vajpayee, who returned here after a week-long foreign trip, was heaped with praise. Though the party also congratulated home minister L.K. Advani and defence minister George Fernandes for their successful trips abroad, there were no accolades for foreign minister Jaswant Singh and finance minister Yashwant Sinha — the two favourite whipping boys of the RSS.

The release of the 21 Indian UN peacekeepers in Sierra Leone was also lauded as yet "another impressive milestone in Indian diplomacy".

In another example of partial applause, a statement issued by Krishnamurthi said: "The visit by the defence minister to Russia was yet another instance of success of Indian diplomacy in providing a major fillip to India's traditionally close relations with Russia." But Singh, who also visited Moscow, got no credit.

The home minister's tri-nation trip to Israel, France and the UK was hailed as a "very timely" answer to international terrorism.

"Advani's visit to Israel, France and England has considerable significance. Not only because it further strengthened India's diplomatic relations with these countries, but also because all the three countries have demonstrated their readiness to join together with India in fighting international terrorism," the statement said.

In their effort to underscore the "economic links" between India and these countries, the Prime Minister's spin doctors stressed that his visit would ensure a strategic role for India in global economics.

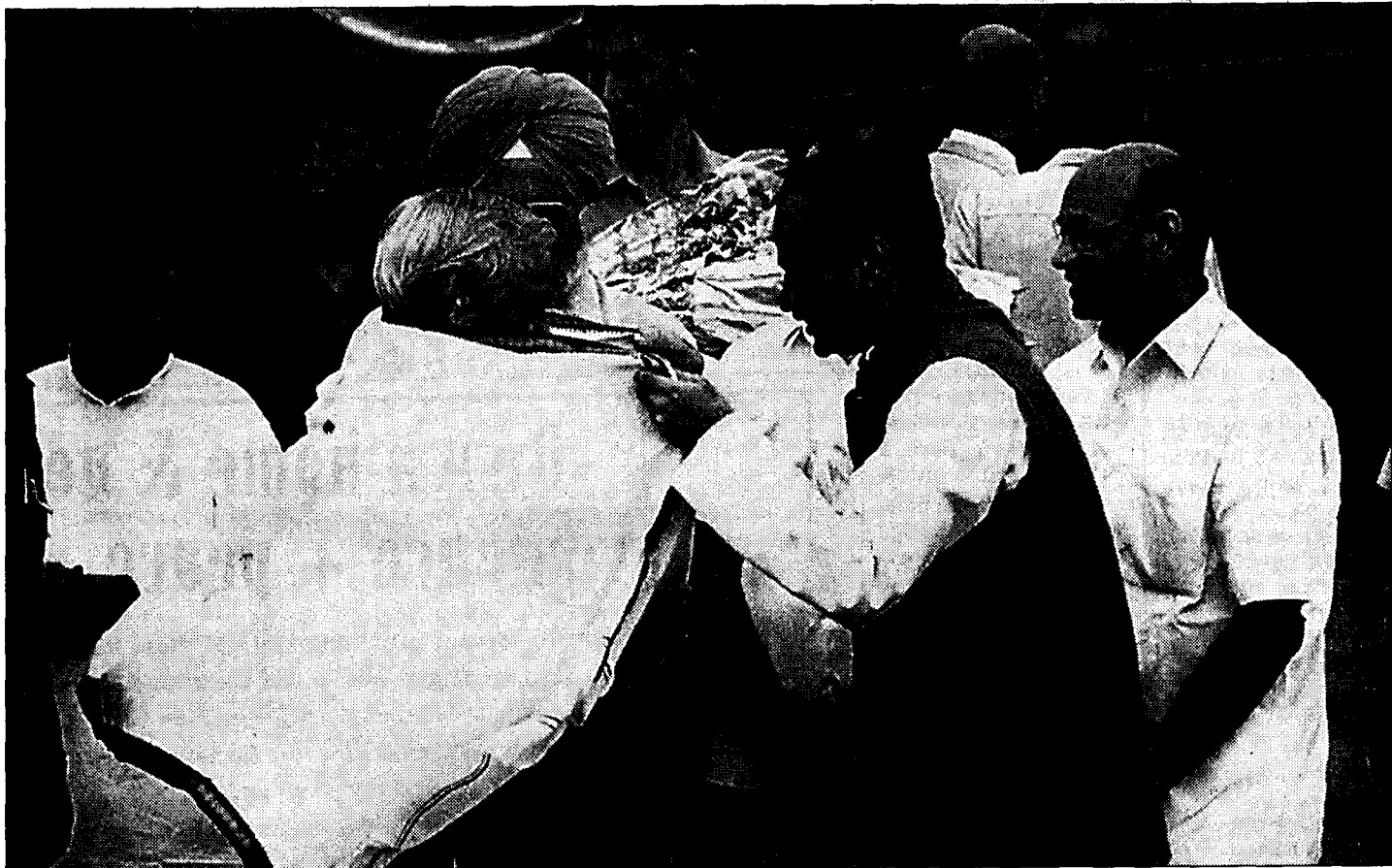
"Enhanced economic cooperation with the European Union is expected to speed up infrastructure development, including telecommunications, energy, transport, roads, airport and ports," the statement said.

It emphasised that globalisation should take into account aspirations of the developing countries and strengthen "our position in future multilateral negotiations". Problems of implementing the "WTO agreement" should also be examined, the statement added.

Krishnamurthi said the high point of Vajpayee's Portugal visit was the country's support to India's quest for a permanent membership to the UN Security Council.

The statement also pointed out the contrast between the sharp tone of the EU declaration of July 8, 1998 and the present declaration which took into account India's sensitivities and welcomed Delhi's voluntary ban on nuclear tests as well as its readiness to engage in discussions on these issues.

The party also praised the Prime Minister's visit to Italy, saying that it had given a substantial boost to Indo-Italian relations.



THE TELEGRAPH
1 JUL 2000

US report speculative, says India

518
PRESS TRUST OF INDIA 9/16

NEW DELHI, June 8. — Brushing aside as “speculative” reports that Pakistan’s nuclear arsenal was superior to that of India, New Delhi today asserted that it was alert to developments that have a bearing on national security.

“India is fully capable and prepared to meet any challenge,” a foreign ministry spokesman told reporters.

He said the nuclear programme was not country specific.

The foreign ministry spokesman was asked about reports from Washington which quoted unnamed US officials as saying that Islamabad’s nuclear arsenal was superior to that of India with Pakistan perhaps having five times more the number of nuclear warheads.

Pakistan also dismissed as “motivated and removed from reality” reports it possesses a better and larger nuclear arsenal than India, adds AFP from Islamabad.

“Pakistan’s nuclear capability is modest and solely aimed at deterring aggression,” a foreign office spokesman said.

“We are opposed to an arms race and will maintain nuclear deterrence at the minimum credible level,” the spokesman said.

Islamabad said it was unaware of any US move to initiate talks between Pakistan and India to settle the Kashmir issue.

'KARUNANIDHI'S STATEMENT BLOWN OUT OF PROPORTION'

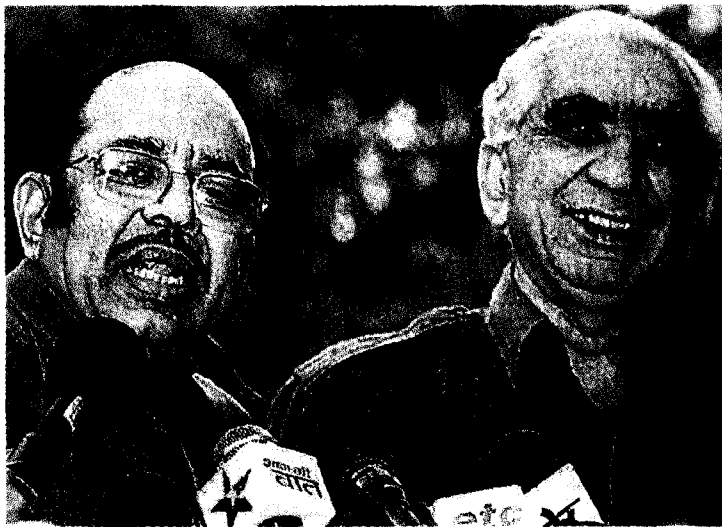
Centre, DMK agree on Sri Lanka policy: Maran

HD-1
9/6

By Harish Khare

NEW DELHI, JUNE 8 The DMK and the Vajpayee establishment claimed today that there were no differences between the Government of India and the Tamil Nadu Chief Minister over the policy towards Sri Lanka. After attending as a special invitee at a meeting of the Cabinet Committee on Security, the Union Minister and DMK leader, Mr. Murasoli Maran, asserted that the DMK was in full agreement with the Centre's policy, even though he defended Mr. Karunanidhi's suggestion that a Czech-Slovak type separation could be one of the viable political options out of the ethnic strife in Sri Lanka.

However, prime ministerial aides preferred to believe that the DMK had "fallen in line" and there was a definite retreat from the stance Mr. Karunanidhi struck last Saturday. The Prime Minister, Mr. A. B. Vajpayee, himself told a Hindi television channel today that the Tamil Nadu Chief Minister's proposal of "separation" was not acceptable, and that "all issues would have to be sorted out within the framework of Sri Lankan territorial integrity. It is for Sri Lanka to decide how far it can go in the direction of devolution of powers; there can only a political solution, not a military solution."



The Union Minister for Industry, Mr. Murasoli Maran, and the External Affairs Minister, Mr. Jaswant Singh, addressing reporters after the meeting of the Cabinet Committee on Security, at the Prime Minister's residence in New Delhi on Thursday.

— Photo: S. Arneja

After the Cabinet Committee on Security met this evening at the prime Minister's residence, the External Affairs Minister, Mr. Jaswant Singh, told newsmen that "policy and position remain what it had been", and that India deplored terrorist activities of the kind that claimed the life of a Sri Lankan Cabinet Minister. Rather shrewdly, Mr. Jaswant Singh let Mr. Maran do the explaining of

compatibility or lack of it, if any, between "New Delhi" and "Chennai".

Mr. Maran claimed that the DMK was a party to the policy on Sri Lanka; "we together created this policy on Sri Lanka." At the same time, he argued that his Chief Minister's proposal had been thoroughly misunderstood and blown out of proportion, and added, a non-sequitur, "He (Mr.

Karunanidhi) is not like Ms. Jayalalitha". The concern of Mr. Karunanidhi, according to Mr. Maran, was that the Tamils should get their space and the way to give them this space could be a federation, quasi-federation, confederation, or a partition. What the DMK wanted, Mr. Maran insisted, was that it should be peaceful and lasting solution; also, added "we do not want bloodshed at our doorstep."

For good measure, Mr. Maran insisted that the National Democratic Alliance was "not fragile" and was in fact solid like "the rock of Gibraltar". Mr. Karunanidhi's statement last Saturday had created the impression of first major shadow over the Vajpayee Government; the Congress accused the Government of allowing regional compulsions to dictate its foreign policy. By the end of the day, Mr. Maran had behaved like a good team-player under difficult circumstances; he managed to argue for his leader, the Chief Minister of Tamil Nadu, without disputing the correctness of the Prime Minister's Sri Lanka policy.

Besides Mr. Jaswant Singh and Mr. Maran, the Cabinet Committee on Security was attended by the Finance Minister, Mr. Yashwant Sinha, Mr. K.C. Pant and Mr. Brajesh Mishra and others officials.

Jaswant's Sri Lanka visit may set devolution package rolling

Our Political Bureau

NEW DELHI TO JUNE

FOREIGN MINISTER Jaswant Singh's visit to Colombo on Monday comes against a backdrop of India's readiness to push the case for a devolution package for the Tamils. In Sri Lanka for two days, Mr Singh will meet President Chandrika Kumaratunga and leader of the opposition Ranil Wickremasinghe, and also other Tamil and Buddhist leaders. Substantial discussions are likely to be held between Mr Singh and his counterpart Lakshman Kadirgamar.

On the eve of his departure, Mr Singh met Prime Minister Atal Bihari Vajpayee and briefed him of the latest situation in the island nation.

The aim clearly is to set the ball rolling for the devolution package. In the past few weeks Chandrika Kumaratunga has been holding informal talks with the entire gamut of the political leadership to build a consensus on the issue. She met the UNP leader on Saturday despite the



Jaswant: Colombo crusade

confusion in the aftermath of the suicide bombings. Mr Singh will, therefore, get a first-hand flavour of the political and military situation in the strife-torn island. The last major Indian dignitary to visit Sri Lanka was in March 1999, during a South-Asian Association for Regional Cooperation (Saarc) foreign ministers' conference.

India has been pushing this devolution package — fine-tuned by Ms Kumaratunga in 1995 — for a while. The fact that the LTTE

has declared a temporary ceasefire on the eve of Mr Singh's visit is not without significance, government sources said. According to agencies, in a statement from their London office, the LTTE called on the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) and the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) to help arrange the truce in Thenmarachchi division, where fierce battles erupted on Friday.

Questioned by reporters, Mr Singh said: "I am going as a friend of Sri Lanka and as a friend of peace."

The ministry of external affairs spokesman said the visit was intended to "buttress the existing understanding between the two countries." Unstated was the fact that after Mr Karunanidhi's statement of a Czech solution to the Lankan crisis, it was felt necessary to spell out India's stand at a very high level. Part of the agenda of Mr Singh's visit, therefore, is to reassure the Sri Lankan government that India did not endorse Mr Karunanidhi's views.

The Economic Times

11 JUN 2000

India will initiate strategic dialogue with UK, Russia

The Times of India News Service

NEW DELHI: Purchase of "Hawk" advanced jet trainer and aircraft carrier "Admiral Gorshkov" may be finalised this month when defence minister George Fernandes visits Britain and Russia.

The importance of the two visits, taking place one after the other, lies in the fact that India will conduct separate strategic dialogue with the two nuclear powers, which are also major suppliers of arms and equipment of long standing.

Mr Fernandes will be on a four-day visit to Britain, beginning June 14. His Russia visit is scheduled for this month-end —in preparation for President Vladimir Putin's visit to New Delhi, possibly this October. Papers pertaining to the purchase of aircraft carrier "Admiral Gorshkov" are likely to be initialled during Fernandes' Moscow visit.

Official sources say a Russian firm in Kazan is preparing to meet Indian Air Force's requirements of MI-17-IV transport helicopters. The IAF is understood to have sought 40 of these choppers.

The delivery may start once the letter of credit is opened by the Indian side.

India has short-listed British Aerospace's "Hawk" advanced jet trainer, and sources say the final decision and details are now with the IAF.

Mr Fernandes' visit to Britain will be the first by an Indian defence minister to that country in nearly a decade. Heading a high-level delegation, Mr Fernandes is likely to cement a number of memoranda of understanding (MOUs), signed by the two countries in January when a high-level Indian defence team went to London, a defence ministry spokesman said.

Mr Fernandes would be accompanied by defence ministry additional secretary Subir Dutta, Lt-Gen Sampat Kumar, director-general (ceremonial) at Army HQ, and other top-ranking defence and air force officials. A highlight of Mr Fernandes' visit may be talks on setting up a National War Museum in India on the pattern of Britain's world famous Imperial War Museum.

Before flying to London, Mr Fernandes will have a day-long halt in Brussels, the Belgian capital, where he will deliver a lecture at the European Institute of Asian Studies. Sources confirmed that Fernandes was also scheduled to pay a private visit to the US, but gave no details.

THE TIMES OF INDIA

11 JUN 2000

Karunanidhi's views on Lanka obsolete: Panja

Arindam Sarkar
Calcutta, June 10

SRI LANKAN President Chandrika Kumaratunga and her Cabinet should tackle the aspirations of Sri Lankan Tamils without any interference from third parties. And India does not support any idea propagating the division of the country into two parts as suggested by Tamil Nadu Chief Minister M. Karunanidhi, Union Minister of State for External Affairs Ajit Kumar Panja said here yesterday.

"India strongly condemns the killing of Sri Lankan Industries Minister and 22 other innocent people by the LTTE. But we believe that the only way to solve this problem is by granting local autonomy to certain parts of Sri Lanka or creation of new states without disturbing the sovereignty and integrity of the nation. This will definitely put an end to the LTTE crisis," Mr Panja told *The Hindustan Times*.

Mr Panja stressed that it is not India's suggestion that Sri Lanka should be divided, as reportedly claimed by some leaders.

"Karunanidhi's suggestion of dividing the nation to bring about peace in Sri Lanka is a theory of the last millennium. Today, we

believe in consensus politics within the nation. From India's part, there will be no armed interference, it can at best participate in humanitarian work," he declared. Talking about the recent devel-



opments in Sierra Leone, Fiji and Solomon Islands, Mr Panja said that India was deeply concerned and watching with dismay the overpowering of the democratically-elected government by armed men.

"Negotiations are on in Sierra Leone. Both Australia and New Zealand are trying to find a solution to the problem. So far, the attitude of the RUF field commanders has been very positive. Our force headquarters is expecting the release of the detainees very

soon," Mr Panja said.

"We are equally concerned about the welfare and safety of Fiji Prime Minister Mahendra Chowdhury and his Cabinet colleagues. We have called upon Fiji to uphold the principles of the Harare Declaration and Millbrook Action Programme. Apart from us, Australia, New Zealand, the United Kingdom and the US have condemned the coup in Fiji in strong terms. The US State Department acting-spokesman Philip Reeker has strongly condemned the criminal action of George Speight and called upon the release of the hostages immediately," he said.

Mr Panja said that the US was reported to be "considering serious measures in consultation with other nations that could have a serious impact on Fiji's international contacts and outside assistance".

"India stands firmly behind Fiji and demands strict adherence to constitutional principles and immediate unconditional release of Mahendra Chowdhury and his Cabinet colleagues," Mr Panja added.

"PM Vajpayee and I have met several civilian representatives in this regard. We have expressed our support to the Fijians."

THE HINDUSTAN TIMES

India offers credit facility of \$100 m to Sri Lanka

By Charu Lata Joshi

The Times of India News Service

COLOMBO: India has offered the Sri Lankan government a credit facility worth \$100 million, apart from humanitarian relief in the form of medicines, sugar, wheat and rice. *J-F-Pm*

The announcement, which came at the end of external affairs minister Jaswant Singh's two-day visit to Colombo, however, puts an end to all speculation regarding India's military involvement in the conflict.

While firmly ruling out Indian military assistance on the lines of the 1987 IPKF intervention, Mr Singh reiterated India's stand in maintaining the territorial integrity of Sri Lanka and pressed for a lasting solution to the ethnic conflict. *137*

Mr Singh held discussions with President Chandrika Kumaratunga, leader of the opposition Ranil Wickramasinghe and representatives of Tamil parties during his visit. *11-1*

In a joint statement issued at the end of his visit, Mr Singh said, "The discussions have been productive. They have enabled the reaching of an understanding on the measures that India and Sri Lanka can take collectively, as well as individually, to bring about lasting peace in Sri Lanka."

The visit was a clear signal to the government in Colombo that "India was not prepared to get involved in a fire-fight". The visit also made it clear to the Sri Lankan government that any assistance from India would only come when "requested".

Reliable sources in the Indian delegation, however, indicated that "it is very clear that Sri Lanka wants India's presence, reassurance and support".

However, Mr Singh denied media reports regarding Indian involvement in working out a sustainable devolution package to end the conflict.

While Mr Singh's visit appeared to raise a certain amount of optimism in the Sri Lankan government, Tamil party leaders were unsure about the kind of assistance India would render.

"There was a certain amount of convergence of views, yet they (views) appeared to diverge. So, no clear consensus could emerge," TELO leader N. Srikantha told *The Times of India*.

THE TIMES OF INDIA

13 JUN 2000

Delhi ready for bigger Lanka role: Jaswant

Udayar Nambodiri
New Delhi, June 12

INDIA IS bracing for a greater involvement in the search for a political resolution to the two-decade-old conflict in Sri Lanka. External Affairs Minister Jaswant Singh said here tonight on his return from Colombo that India would provide advice to the government and political parties of Sri Lanka without encroaching upon the country's sovereignty or aiding it militarily.

India could consider the appointment of a special envoy for the country in the near future, to engage the Lankan polity in thrashing out a consensus on a

devolution package. The parties would be in constant touch with the Indian mission in Colombo. Mr Singh denied that this amounted to "facilitation of dialogue" or "mediation". He believes that the Sri Lankan political parties would "move towards a political process to end the conflict in the near future".

"We have a continuing role in Sri Lanka. But there has to be appreciation of the contours and contents of that role", he said.

Earlier, before leaving Colombo after two days of talks with Sri Lankan President Chandrika Kumaratunga, Foreign Minister Lakshman Kadirimagar and leaders of all the important political

parties, a published joint statement announced a \$ 100 million credit as "humanitarian assistance" for war ravaged northern Sri Lanka.

The details of the package are yet to be worked out. The minister disclosed that India would be willing to provide food and medicines to help the government mitigate the suffering of civilians. Sri Lanka could also get one million tonnes of wheat, rice and sugar on a counter trade basis. He ruled out helping in the evacuation of Sri Lankan troops caught in the fighting there.

He claimed that Tamil Nadu Chief Minister M. Karunanidhi's advancement of the "Czechoslovakia solution" did not

create fault lines in the relations between New Delhi and Colombo. Rather, there appears to exist now a greater degree of unanimity over "what constitutes assistance from India". And consultations (offered by India) form part of that assistance.

He expressed confidence in the possibility of a just devolution package contributing to "lasting peace" in Sri Lanka. During his talks with the country's political leaders he discerned broad agreement on this point. "I do believe in the process of moving towards a political process. However, it is the prerogative of the Sri Lankan Parliament to approve the appropriate solution".

THE HINDUSTAN TIMES

JUNE 12 1987

A successful visit

THE INDIAN position as enunciated by External Affairs Minister Jaswant Singh through two days of talks with the Sri Lankan leaders in Colombo represents a fair compromise between a realistic appraisal of the situation on the ground and the Sri Lankan Government's somewhat heightened expectations from its closest neighbour. Despite all indications to the contrary, many in Colombo had continued to believe that India would at some stage feel obliged to get militarily involved in the fighting in the Jaffna peninsula. Mr Singh's visit, however, has left no room for any ambiguity on that point. It was not just the IPKF's unfortunate experience in the island a decade earlier that determined New Delhi's latest stand. Nor was it inhibited by the occasional concerns voiced by some Tamil Nadu politicians on the Sri Lankan question. What was crucial in the present context was an understanding of the real nature of the ethnic conflict, relating essentially to the denial of the rights of the minority Tamils. Until that issue was adequately addressed through a political process, little could be achieved by simply fighting the LTTE.

It is this view which has been effectively communicated to Colombo during Mr Singh's visit, while reiterating India's commitment to the unity and integrity of Sri Lanka as a multi-ethnic nation. The \$ 100 million line of credit in addition to supplies of rice, wheat and sugar, committed by Mr Singh, were a token of India's support at a time when the Sri Lankan Government's resources position had been considerably undermined by its recent arms purchases. It is to be hoped that some of these supplies would reach the beleaguered Sri Lankan Tamil refugees in the north in keeping with the "humanitarian" character of the Indian gesture.

It is a matter of some satisfaction that the Indian role has at last been articulated in clear terms, clearing much of the confusion caused by the recent free airing of controversial views in this country. Instead of hoping to "mediate" with a party which New Delhi does not formally recognise, the focus has now shifted to a political settlement that includes a substantial devolution of power to the Tamils. Mr Singh sounded positive that Colombo would soon move on that track and engage the moderate Tamil groups in talks over power sharing within a decentralised political framework. If the Sri Lankan Government is able to deliver on that promise, it could mark the beginning of a process capable of redeeming a nation that has been at war with itself for nearly two decades.

THE HINDUSTAN TIMES

1 1 JUN 2001

Advani, on study tour abroad, seeks solutions to security woes

By Manoj Joshi

NEW DELHI: Home minister L.K. Advani left for a 11-day tour of Israel, France and the UK on Tuesday. This is his first visit abroad after taking over as Union home minister, and to emphasise that it is a working visit, he is being accompanied by a galaxy of security officials who include Union home secretary Kamal Pande, Intelligence Bureau chief Shyamal Dutta, Border Security Force

director-general E.N. Rammohan and CBI head B.K. Raghavan.

Whether this collective group will learn anything new about handling the unending security problems that India faces is another matter. There has been no official briefing, but background leaks have it that high on the team's agenda is learning about the counter-insurgency tactics of Israel's Mossad and studying the security systems of other countries like France and the UK.

Hype apart, the only credible leg of his visit appears to be the one to Lyons, where

Interpol is headquartered. The organisation plays a crucial role in fostering cooperation between police forces around the world and in facilitating bilateral and multilateral agreements to check transnational crime.

Take Israel, for example. Its fight against the Palestinian Liberation Organisation has ended in a compromise with the Palestinian entity set to evolve towards slow but certain statehood. The vaunted Israeli security machine had to flee southern Lebanon, unable to eliminate the Hezbollah. Now, like India, it is being compelled to create a border fence and a surveillance zone to keep out potential terrorists and militants.

Mr Advani is bound to find Scotland Yard an interesting place, but it is the product of a police culture that is as different from that of India as Mars is from the moon. The UK managed to contain Irish terrorism, but it is still in the process of negotiating an end to terrorist activity with an IRA which is by no means down and out.

THE TIMES OF INDIA

1 2 00

India turns to US in Sierra hostage crisis

FROM PRANAY SHARMA

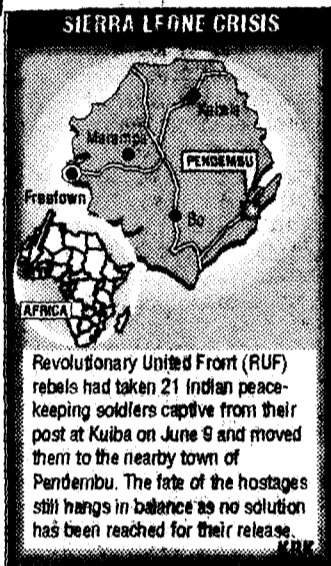
New Delhi, June 16: With the stalemate over the hostage stand-off continuing, India has turned to the US for the release of 21 of its soldiers taken captive by Revolutionary United Front (RUF) rebels while doing UN peacekeeping duty in Sierra Leone.

Delhi has asked Washington to use its influence at the United Nations Security Council not to bring matters to a head by trying captured rebel leader Foday Sankoh as a war criminal and also to prevent a drastic change in the status of its troops from "peace-keepers" to "peace-enforcers".

A resolution is scheduled to come up within a few weeks' time at the Security Council to discuss the developments in the war-ravaged African nation.

Delhi fears that a tougher stand at this point could not only jeopardise the lives of the hostages but also raise serious questions about the role of the other UN peacekeepers there.

Foreign ministry spokesman R.S. Jassal, however, said that "the situation in the area remained peaceful. There is no



change in the status of the Indian armed forces personnel there."

Asked about the conditions of the soldiers, he said: "They are in good condition in the circumstances they are in."

There was no hindrance to the supply of rations to the 21 hostages in Pendembu as also to the 213 Indian soldiers in Kailahun where the standoff

with the RUF rebels continues, he added.

Yesterday in Washington, the director-general of military operations (DGMO), Lt-Gen. N.C. Vij, accompanied by Satya Pal, the second-in-command at India's permanent mission in New York, held discussions with officials of the Clinton administration.

According to sources, they explained their concerns to US under-secretary of state (political) Thomas Pickering and other senior officials and sought their help to end the hostage crisis.

Delhi believes that the US, which virtually created Liberia — a neighbouring country of Sierra Leone and a key player in the present conflict — and continues to have tremendous influence over Liberian President Taylor, can play an important role in resolving the deadlock. However, it is not clear how far Taylor can influence the RUF rebels.

This could be a reason why India is against any step that could aggravate the situation by declaring Foday Sankoh a war criminal. Sankoh is presently in UN custody.

THE TELEGRAPH

17 JUN 2000

India's domestic and external policies often contradict each other

Home and the world

Why not be blunt about it, our prime minister has cut an extremely sorry figure while reacting to M.K. Karunanidhi's

proposal for a Czechoslovakia-type solution to the Sri Lanka problem. To suggest that the Tamil Nadu chief minister's views are "personal" is, to say the least, bizarre. The prime minister is obviously in a desperate bid to adopt a stance which, according to his view, will provide his government a face-saving formula to tackle the Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam threat. The Tigers, whether one likes it or not, have travelled a long, hard distance since 1983, when the civil war started in Sri Lanka.

During this period, they had been spurned by the international community. There was a time when India thought it could establish its overlordship in Sri Lanka by taking advantage of the ongoing tussle between the Colombo regime and the Tamils clamouring for an honourable settlement that would grant them a kind of quasi-sovereign status. Now that they have travelled a long victorious road all by themselves, no doubt they are going to pitch their demands higher. Some kind of a devolutionary arrangement will no longer satisfy them; they are now in search of honourable, full-scale sovereignty.

On the battlefield, they have got the Sri Lankan army and navy completely cornered, which is why the Sri Lankan president has sought a last-minute assistance from the government of India. This show of initiative on her part is however likely to make her unpopular even amongst the local Sinhalese. They, as much as the LTTE, have memories of the misadventure Indian army personnel were involved in in the wake of the agreement signed by Rajiv Gandhi as prime minister of India and the then Sri Lankan president, J. Jayawardene, in 1987. That was a sorry episode. Rajiv Gandhi's dream of establishing Indian dominance in south Asia was soon shattered. The India-Sri Lanka Agreement of 1987 was instrumental for more harm than good to the causes of both India and Sri Lanka.

The world at large may immensely dislike the technology of terror the LTTE has evolved in the island and its neighbourhood. There is also intense universal distaste for the mode of recruitment and training of suicide bombers. The international community is, however, unlikely to poke its head so as to bring the LTTE round to civil behaviour. By now the LTTE has learnt that it has to fight its own battle and choose its own modalities, howsoever disagreeable they might appear to be. The Colombo regime must have also reached the conclusion that the LTTE at this stage is nearly unstoppable, which is why there was an outburst of desper-

CUTTING CORNERS

ASHOK MITRA



ate last minute appeal to India and others to bail it out.

Even if New Delhi were to reject the once-beaten-twice-shy formula, it can hardly ignore the shift in ground conditions that has taken place in the course of the past decade in the country's domestic circumstances. The Constitution drafted in 1949 had assigned the task of shepherding the nation's foreign affairs exclusively to the care of the government at the Centre. Such was also the understanding for foreign trade. But the Constitution is not a magic wand. Even if it be a written one, it has to give precedence to the realities that emerge over time. In the name of conserving the unity and integrity of the nation, those who have enjoyed formal power in New Delhi over the years have done things which have rendered the supposedly federal structure far more wobbly than it was in the beginning.

The Constitution had aimed at a patchwork of arrangements, whereby the federating states will willingly agree to set aside foreign affairs to the care of the Centre. Jawaharlal Nehru — who was the foreign minister, besides being the prime minister, throughout his tenure — had set up a tradition which has continued till recently. This has been so even when the prime minister was not formally in charge of external relations.

point of view about a prospective Sri Lanka settlement can be ignored. Whatever the Constitution might say, the pressure of domestic politics will force the prime minister to redesign his Sri Lanka policy.

There is a further dilemma which globalization has brought about. Foreign trade is no longer the absolute charge of the Centre. Foreign parties, including foreign transnational corporations, have, with or without encouragement from international financial institutions, exemplified considerable initiative to establish a direct relationship with state governments. The Centre has politely and tactfully left things to develop on their own. It could hardly do otherwise, given its repeated declarations to encourage direct foreign investment in the country.

The Constitution will rest in peace, the government at the Centre will have to accept the new environment in which the country's external policy has to be framed. New Delhi will also have to worry over the reverse phenomenon, the impact of domestic policy on international relations. One of the essential concerns of domestic policy is to ensure that Inter-Services Intelligence agents from Pakistan are squeezed out. But while doing so, attention needs to be given to certain issues which cannot but have a substantial impact on external relations.

A short example will enlighten what we have in mind. Successive regimes in New Delhi have considered it expedient to annoy the Left Front government in Tripura by encouraging tribal forces to be on the rampage on the slightest of pretexts or even without pretexts. Central Bureau of Intelligence personnel have reportedly been in the lead to mobilize political groups opposed to the Left Front and see to it that they receive direct and indirect assistance from Central agencies. They have achieved some success of late and the Left Front has been ejected from its majority in the territorial council.

But reports are currently afloat that harassment of the Left Front government in Tripura has reached a stage where there is an alliance between the opposition political parties, agents of Pakistan's ISI and some branches of the Indian Central intelligence bureau who have not been receiving up to date instructions from New Delhi. In the process there has been a certain waywardness in intelligence activities which has frustrated the objectives of the national government.

It is a mixed-up situation and unless the Centre appreciates some of the nuances of the new reality, foreign and domestic relations are in danger of coming to clash with one another, leading to confusion in the formulaic basic issues in both arenas.

Whatever the Constitution might say, pressure of domestic politics will force Vajpayee to redesign his Sri Lanka policy

The prime minister has worked out the major features of foreign policy in minute detail and the nation has gone along, despite occasional convulsions such as over the MacMahon Line or the line of control in Kashmir.

But political dynamics asserts itself. Domestic developments of diverse kinds have cast their shadow over the formation of foreign policy. No Tamil party can hope to survive if it is not careful, at least ambivalent, in expressing its views about the LTTE; two of the Dravida Munnetra Kazhagam's close allies in the Tamil Nadu government are even more vocal in the declaration of their accord with the LTTE's hopes and aspirations. An aura of romanticism attaches to the notion of an independent, sovereign Tamil entity which Indian Tamils cannot detach themselves from. It is therefore futile on the part of the prime minister to imagine that the Tamil Nadu

India welcomes ICJ decision

By Our Special Correspondent

NEW DELHI, JUNE 21. India today welcomed the decision of the International Court of Justice (ICJ) to reject Pakistan's petition over the shooting of its naval aircraft and urged Islamabad to create the right atmosphere for direct talks based on the Shimla and Lahore principles.

The Foreign Office spokesman said that with "the 14-2 verdict, the court has upheld India's submission that it (the ICJ) has no jurisdiction in this matter". Pakistan had filed a petition with the ICJ over the shooting of its Atlantic maritime reconnaissance aircraft over the Kutch area and had claimed damages worth \$60.2 million for it. The petition had been filed in September last.

The Foreign Office specially welcomed the court's positive observations on the principles enunciated in the Shimla Agreement and Lahore Declaration as the basis for an Indo-Pak. rapprochement. Referring to the Shimla Agreement and the Lahore

Declaration, the ICJ has reminded both parties of their obligation to settle their disputes by peaceful means, "and in particular the dispute arising out of the aerial incident of 10 August 1999".

The Shimla Agreement, the spokesman observed, commits both countries to build trust and confidence by putting in place a "stable structure of cooperation". It also provides the basis for addressing all outstanding issues through peaceful bilateral discussions.

India, he said sought to underpin the relationship on these principles through a composite dialogue process established at New Delhi's behest. The visit to Lahore in February last by the Prime Minister, Mr. A.B. Vajpayee, also underscored this "high principle".

India stands committed to a dialogue. It calls upon Pakistan to create a "proper environment" for talks through a cessation of cross-border terrorism and abandonment of hostile propaganda.

India, had a "preliminary" ob-

jection over the admissibility of Pakistan's petition which it believed was outside the ICJ's jurisdiction, the spokesman said. Hearings were held on April 3 and April 6.

The Indian side at The Hague was represented by the Attorney-General, Mr. Soli Sorabjee, Mr. P.S. Rao, Joint Secretary in the Legal and Treaties division of the Foreign Office, and two international lawyers.

22 JUN 2000

Sorabjee wins in world court

Pak plea on Atlantique shot down

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

THE HAGUE, June 21. — The International Court of Justice today upheld India's objections to Pakistan raking up the shooting down of its surveillance aircraft over Kutch last year, ruling that the court had no jurisdiction to adjudicate the matter.

The significant verdict rebuffing Islamabad's efforts to seek \$60 million damages from India for the shooting down of Atlantique naval aircraft was delivered by a 14-2 vote and was announced by Bench president Mr Gilbert Guillaume of France at a public sitting of the court here.

"The case is closed," said a spokesman of the international court. The verdict was final and without appeal, he added.

Atlantique was shot down by the IAF on 10 August, killing all 16 naval personnel on board. Pakistan wanted the court to intervene in the case while India opposed the court's assumption of jurisdiction on the basis of Islamabad's application.

Pakistan had urged the court to "dismiss the objections raised by India and accept its jurisdiction". India maintained that none of the arguments advanced by Pakistan was 'sound' and did not provide a basis for invoking the court's jurisdiction.

Public hearings in the case titled 'Aerial Incident of Aug-

ust 10, 1999 (Pakistan vs India)' lasted four days, ending on 6 April.

Arguing that the court did not have jurisdiction in the matter, India cited an exemption it filed in 1974 to exclude disputes between India and other Commonwealth states and disputes covered by multilateral treaties.

Attorney-General Mr Soli Sorabjee, who led India's legal challenge, told the court that Pakistan was "solely responsible" for the incident and that Islamabad must "bear the consequences of its own acts".

Pakistan, unlike India, tried to politicise the case by referring to the Kashmir issue, Kargil conflict and Indo-Pak relations, and alleged that the shooting was motivated.

The court had earlier said the question of jurisdiction would be addressed before going into the merits of the case. Mr Sorabjee and his team of lawyers, including those from the UK and France, focused solely on the legalities of the court's scope for jurisdiction.

Mr Sorabjee rejected Pakistan's contention that the Simla pact gave a legal basis for invoking the court's jurisdiction vis-a-vis bilateral disputes.

The foreign ministry has welcomed the court's observations on Simla Agreement and Lahore Declaration, adds SNS from Delhi.

THE HINDU

JUN 22 2000

FRIDAY, JUNE 23, 2000

A DIPLOMATIC TRIUMPH

THE RULING OF the International Court of Justice, judicial arm of the United Nations, on a complaint from Pakistan relating to the downing of a reconnaissance aircraft over the Rann of Kutch soon after the Kargil confrontation last summer is a diplomatic triumph for India. The Hague court rejected each one of Pakistan's arguments on the question of its jurisdiction to adjudicate the dispute over the shooting down of the Atlantique on August 10 last year. The court did more. Asked to adjudicate, the panel of learned judges has gone on to offer some home truths to the two protagonists. Going beyond the confines of the points in question and stretching its own conclusions, the court has made the extremely interesting remark that its lack of jurisdiction "does not relieve the states of their obligation to settle their disputes by peaceful means." The court recalled that the obligation as regards India and Pakistan was restated particularly in the Shimla Agreement and the Lahore Declaration, and went on to remind the two countries of that undertaking "to settle their disputes by peaceful means." The ruling, which by the very nature of the reference and the case covered no substantial point of international law, has effectively thrown the ball back in the subcontinental court. It must come as welcome support for bilateralism from unexpected but well-respected quarters.

The verdict caps a string of defeats for Pakistan in its decades-long attempt to gain territory in the Rann of Kutch. It had gone to war once to resolve the dispute over the maritime boundary. Sir Creek, a 100-km long estuary in the marshes of the Rann of Kutch, has been a bone of contention and has shown up the absence of a spirit of give and take. The prospect of finding oil and gas in the sea off the Kutch

has seen Pakistan intensify its multifaceted effort to gain control of the marshy land over which the Atlantique was brought down last August. But the downing — and the use of a high performance combat aircraft like the MiG 21 against a slow moving aircraft — brought no credit to India or Pakistan. Coming in the post-Kargil atmosphere of mistrust, the launching of a military response to the aerial intrusion was deemed unwarranted considering its potential for escalating tensions, which were still at breaking point as a fallout of the confrontation in the Himalayas. In less than two months, Pakistan took its dispute to The Hague after India rejected its demands for huge compensation for the loss of the aircraft and the lives of 16 defence personnel aboard. Wednesday's ruling in effect dismisses the case by declaring that the court has no jurisdiction to adjudicate the dispute.

The court's unsolicited remarks on bilateralism must induce rethinking in both the capitals. New Delhi, instead of returning to the triumphalism mode, must heed the call from the international court and shed its hardline stance on resuming the dialogue. The weight of the advice from The Hague must impel the two countries to return to bilateralism. "The requirement of good faith obliges the two countries to create an atmosphere where the bilateral negotiations or any other peaceful means mutually agreed upon can be conducted and carried on meaningfully," said one judge in a separate opinion. The observations of the International Court lend powerful support to the voices of sanity on both sides of the border which have been ceaselessly urging a return to the path of negotiations to resolve bilateral disputes.

23 JUN 2000

BRAVO, SORABJEE!

India wins hands down at The Hague

DETAILED comment must await a study of the full judgments of the International Court of Justice where Pakistan chose to hold India responsible for the shooting down of their Atlantique aircraft in which several people unfortunately perished on 10 August 1999, when tensions between the two countries were high. The Pakistanis made two mistakes. One, to deny the right of every nation to enter reservations at the time of accepting the jurisdiction of the court — the Commonwealth reservation. It has been a long standing practice of the Commonwealth to settle disputes between member states within the Commonwealth and the jurisdiction of the International Court is barred. Pakistan first argued that India's reservation did not apply, if it did apply once it was now obsolete because it was not urged in matters relating to WTO among other fora. This is disingenuous. It is also dangerously close to begging the question. The other was a mistake in tactics. While India adhered to legal arguments and exercised restraint in the face of provocation, Pakistan brought in Kargil, and Kashmir to which the simple answer was that these issues were irrelevant. The attorney-general and law minister of Pakistan, Aziz A Munshi should have known that attempts to raise political issues and bring in extraneous matters would not impress the court.

By contrast, India's attorney-general who argued himself, was a picture of reasonableness. Yes, there were disputes between India and Pakistan: yes, they should be resolved and in peace but the legal issues could not be abandoned when Pakistan was bringing the matter to the International Court of Justice. Yes, Pakistan's disputes were mainly with India and vice versa but that did not negate the fact of the reservation. The court accepted his preliminary point that there was no occasion to go into the merits before the preliminary point of jurisdiction was decided. By a majority of 14 to 2, the court upheld India's contention that they had no jurisdiction and refused all Pakistan's contentions to the contrary. In any court this is a signal victory, in the International Court of Justice the majority gives cause for satisfaction. Only Jordan apart from Pakistan itself differed and it would be interesting to see the reasoning of the judge from Jordan. The court has indeed urged both sides to decide their disputes amicably — two points need to be made. The court could hardly be expected to urge India and Pakistan to fight it out among themselves, all the court did was to express the hope of a peaceful settlement. This is natural and understandable but it is obiter dicta, not enforceable. Sorabjee was right to concede that there were serious differences between the two countries and that they should be settled mutually. But on television he drew attention to the need for improving the atmosphere as a prerequisite. It can be no one's case that Pakistan can carry on a proxy war, infiltrate mercenaries into India by force and stealth, to rape, pillage and murder and expect India to respond positively. Cross-border terrorism must end before any talks can begin.

Having won a famous victory, India's responsibility has not lessened. As the stronger party and the party with most of the goodwill on offer on this count, we must be ready to respond when time and circumstances are right. Peace with Pakistan must remain an objective however unrealistic it may appear at the moment. Meantime it remains to congratulate our attorney-general on a sterling performance.

23 JUN 2000

India awaits envoy's report on Fiji accord

Udayan Nambodiri
New Delhi, June 23

INDIA IS studying the implications of the accord reached between George Speight, the Fijian army and the Great Council of Chiefs, which is expected to be signed tomorrow in Suva and hopefully end the 36-day hostage crisis. The High Commissioner in Fiji, Mr I. S. Chauhan, is learnt to be preparing a report on what the accord holds out for the future of democracy in Fiji and, in particular, the political rights of the country's ethnic Indian community.

"We are waiting to see what are the contours of this settlement. The report of the High Commissioner in Suva is expected to give a clear picture," Mr Raminder Singh Jassal, the spokesman for the External Affairs Ministry said here tonight.

The accord, if signed tomorrow, will end the ordeal of Prime Minister Mahendra Chaudhry and 30 of his colleagues which began when Speight's rebels attacked the Parliament building in Suva May 19 marking the beginning of Fiji's third coup. Over the past 34 days, the President of Fiji, Ratu Sir Kamisese Mara, resigned, a military government under Commodore Frank Bainimarama took over and the three parties in the conflict agonised over details of the pact which could end the constitutional crisis.

India automatically assumed a role for itself as ethnic Indians make up more than 43 per cent of the population of Fiji. India urged the Commonwealth to take stern action against Fiji instead of using the stick itself. Fiji was expelled from the Commonwealth's councils on June 6. New Delhi despatched a senior diplomat to Canberra, Suva and Wellington to hold consultation.

Mr Jassal said, "we are keen to see the restoration of the Mahendra Chaudhry regime". However, the immediate concern of the deposed Prime Minister, who along with his son are held hostage, is reunification with his wife, Mrs Virmati Chaudhry. She told a radio station in Suva that she was "overjoyed". Earlier, she had announced she had "forgiven" Speight and his group for their actions.

THE HINDUSTAN TIMES

24 JUN 2000

Uncertainty persists over India's move on Fiji

Udayan Nambodiri
New Delhi, May 31

THE FAST changing developments in Fiji has lent an air of uncertainty to the mission undertaken by the External Affairs Ministry. Though Secretary (economic relations) S T Devare left last night for the Australian capital, Canberra, from where he is to proceed to Fiji by a special aircraft, sources here are sceptical over the extent to which his trip will help the Indian community in the island nation.

Mr Devare along with Indian high commissioner in Australia C P Ravindranathan are to lease a private aircraft and land on an airstrip to the north of the island. Though an official spokesman said the object of their trip is to carry out "consultations in Suva," it is not clear how an official delegation can engage Fiji's new rulers who India does not recognise.

In previous dealings with countries with which India was not inclined to engage officially, the custom of sending unofficial emis-

saries had been resorted to. In the case of Sri Lanka in the late eighties and with Pakistan in the early days of the Kargil conflict, New

Karan for pro-active role

FORMER UNION Minister and Rajya Sabha member Karan Singh today said that India must "spearhead a worldwide campaign" against Fijian coup leaders who wanted to relegate ethnic Indians to second class citizens. The recent events in Fiji were a source of deep concern and India must play a more pro-active and effective role keeping in view the large Fijian population of Indian origin.

HTC, New Delhi

Delhi had despatched journalists enjoying contacts in influential circles so as to achieve the twin objective of establishing contact and maintaining a facade of official disapproval. Even as Mr Devare was on his way, the MEA spokesman maintained that India did

not recognise the military regime in Suva that has taken over from President Ratu Sir Kamisese Mara. The restoration of the Mahendra Chaudhry regime is still the single point Indian demand. India also condemns reimposition of the 1990 "racist" constitution which denies Indians right to political power.

The situation in Suva is quite confusing. The military ruler Frank Bainimarama has offered the coup leader, George Speight and his followers, amnesty and has accepted virtually all his demands. However Speight has not released his hostages, who include Prime Minister Chaudhry.

The interim Prime Minister appointed by Bainimarama, Ratu Epeli Nailatikau, is the son-in-law of the President Kamisese Mara. He is married to the former President's daughter, Adi Koila Mara, who is herself one of the hostages held along with deposed Prime Minister Chaudhry.

To Delhi, everybody claiming to be anybody in Fiji right now cannot be touched with a bargepole. Reports indicate the

Bainimarama-run military is frankly anti-Indian who has confirmed his leanings by scrapping the 1997 constitution. Speight is seen as the political upstart who triggered off the crisis either by himself or in collusion with the military.

Matters got exacerbated today when it was announced that the leader of the 1987 coup, Sitivini Rabuka, has joined the new government as a member of the "Council of Advisers".

The Indian initiative is born out of a desire to protect the interests of the ethnic Indian community. Large numbers of them are believed to be pressing the Australian government for evacuation as refugees, but Canberra today refused to view them as political refugees and grant them asylum. Meanwhile Commonwealth secretary general Don Mc Kinnon said today that the coming meeting of the Commonwealth Ministerial Action Group (CMAG) is expected to take a "pretty hard line" against Fiji. He however wondered aloud as to what effect it would have on Fiji in the short term.

THE HINDUSTAN TIMES

1 JUN 2000

Role only if Colombo requests: Jaswant

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g. f. P. Singh

By P. S. Suryanarayana

SINGAPORE, JUNE 2. The External Affairs Minister, Mr. Jaswant Singh, who is here on a three-day official visit, today reaffirmed India's commitment to uphold the territorial integrity of Sri Lanka and expressed the view that this could also be best preserved if the aspirations of all the people in Sri Lanka were met.

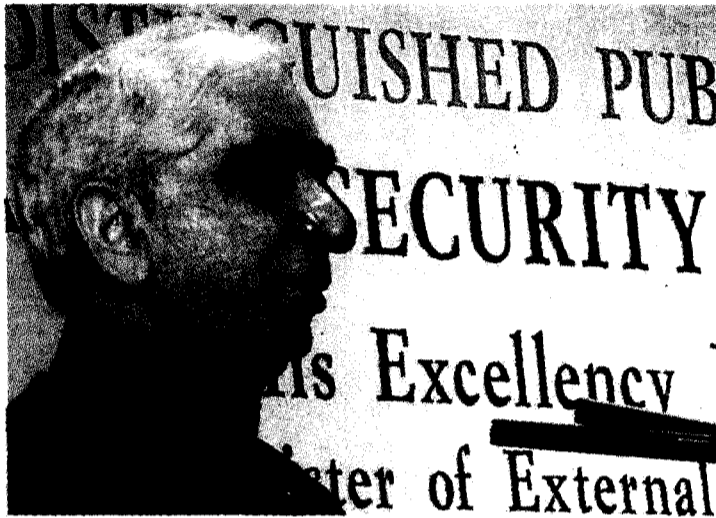
Answering questions after a public lecture on the latest security paradigm for India and the ASEAN, Mr. Singh said that India was "engaged" with the Sri Lankan Government. He said that India "cannot independently assume" for itself "a role in Sri Lanka that is not at the Sri Lankan Government's request."

Not visualising a role for the United Nations, either, Mr. Singh pointed out how Norway, whose facilitative role of bringing peace to Sri Lanka had been requisitioned by Colombo itself, was in "constant touch" with India.

Asked to spell out what Pakistan had to do to create a climate conducive for the resumption of talks with New Delhi, Mr. Singh said that a stoppage of the efforts at promoting cross-border terrorism and a reaffirmation of bilateral treaties and agreements such as the Shimla Accord and the Lahore Declaration would be among the measures needed.

Alternative on n-issue

On the nuclear issue, Mr. Singh said that India had proposed an "alternative route to disarmament." The "no-first use of nucle-



The Foreign Minister, Mr. Jaswant Singh, giving a lecture on 'security for India and the Association of South-East Asian Nations in the coming century' at the Marina Mandarin Ballroom in Singapore on Friday. — AP

ar weapons" as a norm for international commitment, the non-use of nuclear weapons against those unarmed with such arsenal, and a provision for "a dealert" of deployed weapons could constitute such an alternative approach, he outlined.

As for India's credentials to play a stabilising role in the affairs of East Asia, Mr. Singh pointed out that this need not be seen as a spinoff of the recent visit of the U.S. President, Mr. Bill Clinton, to India and the resultant view in some diplomatic quarters about a nascent Indo-American strategic relationship.

Affirming New Delhi's belief

that "India and the U.S. are natural allies" and that the two countries were now moving in the direction of firming up that reality, Mr. Singh underscored that "this is not to imply that Indo-U.S. relations are, in any sense, directed against any other bilateral relationship or any other country or grouping."

On the new regional proposal of an Asian monetary fund, Mr. Singh said he would "encourage discussion" on it. But he would "tread cautiously in Asia" in regard to the idea of a currency bloc, Mr. Singh said.

Role for armed forces?: Page 14
Goh optimistic on ties: Page 14

THE HINDU

3 JUN 2007

Jaswant seeks bigger world role in Fiji, less in Lanka

REUTERS, AP, AFP & PTI

SINGAPORE, June 2. — Mr Jaswant Singh today ruled out a role for UN in Sri Lanka, but demanded greater Commonwealth involvement in Fiji, where gunmen are holding the Prime Minister hostage.

"I personally do not see a role for the UN as such," the external affairs minister said at a question-and-answer session after a speech on India and regional security at the Institute of Defence and Strategic Studies here.

But India is prepared to evacuate embattled Lankan troops from Jaffna, but only if Colombo requests it to.

India would like to see greater international interest in Fiji. The Commonwealth could act

under an action programme that discouraged forceful unseating of elected governments, Mr Singh said. India is holding talks with Australia and New Zealand and some other countries to get the group.

An Indian envoy reached Suva today after holding talks with

■ Editorial: Square one, page 8

regional powers. Mr ST Devare was accompanied by the Indian High Commissioner in Australia. They will meet the Indian envoy in Fiji and ethnic Indians Mr Devare will leave for New Zealand tomorrow.

Lanka

Colombo today said 15 LTTE rebels and three soldiers had been killed in fighting at

Chavakachcheri, south of Jaffna town, since yesterday.

Ban lifted: Sri Lanka today lifted the ban on public meetings and processions, and hinted that press censorship too may go soon.

Fiji

Fijian rebels may release the 30 hostages, held in the Parliament building, by the end of this week, coup leader George Speight said today. Tribal chiefs will meet on Monday, and Speight said he expected the hostage crisis to be resolved before the meeting.

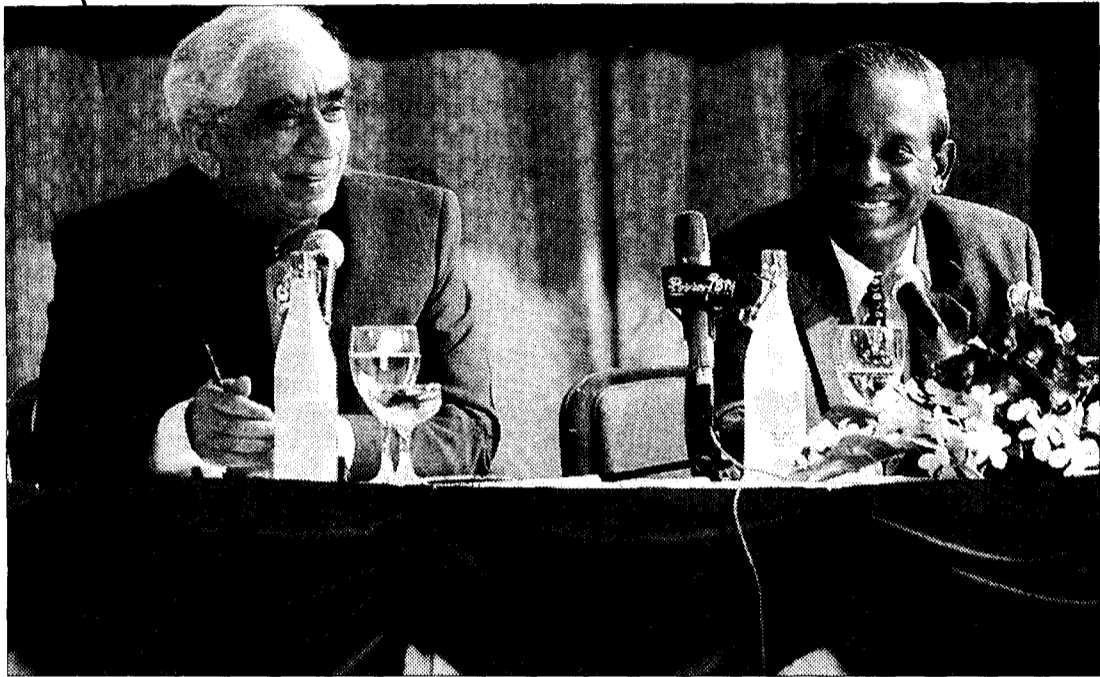
Gunshots were heard today inside the parliament. soldiers outside the complex said. One man was rushed away from the parliament building in an ambulance. Radio Fiji said he was a Speight supporter.

THE STATESMAN

3 JUN 2000

EF 10
3/16

India supports plan for Asian Monetary Fund



THINKING ALIKE: External affairs minister Jaswant Singh with Singaporean foreign minister S. Jayakumar at a lecture organised by IDSS in Singapore on Friday AFP

Singapore

2 JUNE

EXTERNAL AFFAIRS minister Jaswant Singh on Friday welcomed discussions of an Asian Monetary Fund (AMF) but said the region was not ready for a common currency unit.

"It's an idea (AMF) that must be encouraged. We must look at it closely," he said in a forum here after delivering a lecture on India's security links with the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (Asean).

Given the diversity among the Asian countries, it will not be easy to move towards a common currency, said Singh who is on a three-day official visit here.

Even though the economies within the European Union are more closely integrated than their Asian counterparts, the euro has yet to be fully accepted, he added, citing Britain's refusal to join as an example.

The International Monetary Fund's new managing director

Horst Koehler said on Thursday that he welcomed the discussion on AMF, an idea rejected by many IMF officials and member countries in the past.

AMF was first mooted by Japanese officials during the early days of the Asian economic crisis in 1997 to help East Asian economies in trouble and check financial contagion in the region.

Delivering a lecture at the Institute of Defence and Strategic Studies, Mr Singh said a strong and prosperous India will be a factor for stability in the Asia-Pacific region, which lacks a security framework.

"Asia lacks an over-arching security framework," Mr Singh said in his lecture on India's security links with Asean.

"This is a shortcoming born, in part, of the overhang of a colonial past and in part of our Asian inability to construct an accord out of divergence," he said.

"The engagement of a militarily stronger, economically

prosperous, democratic and secular India imparts greater stability to the region," he said, adding: "India is a factor for stability in the region."

He said India's participation in the Asean Regional Forum (ARF), an annual security gathering which also includes global nuclear powers, will spur regional stability. ARF will meet in July in Bangkok.

"Our participation in the ARF reflects India's increasing engagement, both in politico-security and economic spheres contributing to the building of greater trust, confidence and stability in the region," he said.

Asean groups include Cambodia, Indonesia, Laos, Malaysia, Myanmar, the Philippines, Singapore, Thailand and Vietnam.

The ARF includes Australia, Canada, China, the European Union, Japan, South Korea, Mongolia, New Zealand, Papua New Guinea, Russia and the US. AFP

The Economic Times

3 JUN 2000

India looks forward to C'wealth

BY OUR CORRESPONDENT

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New Delhi, June 4: After lobbying for two weeks, India is looking upto the Commonwealth nations to take some harsh measures against Fiji which has been witnessing a political turmoil since the May 19 coup by failed businessman George Speight.

The Commonwealth Action Group is meeting in London on June 6 where it is expected to take some action against the island nation.

The action group comprises eight members, including Botswana and Nigeria from the African continent, Malaysia and Australia from the Pacific region, Bangladesh from South Asia, Canada from the North America, Barbados representing the Caribbean and the Great Britain.

India has been in touch with most of the Commonwealth countries to

maintain pressure against Fiji which witnessed double coup in a week's time.

The Indian government came under domestic pressure to take initiative in the developments in the island nation where more than 40 per cent of the people are of Indian origin.

Prime Minister Atal Behari Vajpayee had asked external affairs minister Jaswant Singh to maintain international pressure. Mr Singh, who visited London after completing his visit to Iran, met British foreign secretary Robin Cook and discussed the situation in Fiji.

After he returned to India, Mr Singh sent a special envoy S.T. Devare, secretary economic relations in the ministry of external affairs, to Fiji and regional players Australia and New Zealand.

The Commonwealth has a strong

position against the member countries which do not follow the political values, described as the democracy and democratic process.

As per the Millbrook action plan that followed the Harare declaration, some of the steps taken under such an event include immediate public expression by the secretary-

general of the Commonwealth's collective disapproval of any such

infringement of the Harare principles; early contact by the secretary-general with the de facto government, encouraging bilateral marches by member countries, especially those within the region, both to express disapproval and to support early restoration of democracy; appointment of an envoy or a group of eminent Commonwealth representatives; suspension of participation at all Commonwealth

meetings and of Commonwealth technical assistance if acceptable progress is not recorded by the government concerned after a period of two years; and consideration of appropriate further bilateral and multilateral measures by all member states (e.g. limitation of government-to-government contacts; people-to-people measures; trade restrictions; and, in exceptional cases, suspension from the association).

In the case of Fiji, most of the countries have already denounced the coup and some of them including Australia have already threatened to impose several sanctions against the island nation.

India has maintained right from the beginning that the Harare Declaration and the Millbrook Action plan should be respected.

The Commonwealth secretary-general, Mr Don McKinnon, has already visited Suva.

Focus:Fiji

THE ASIAN AGE

- 5 JUN 2000

MONDAY, JUNE 5, 2000

INDIA AND THE ASIA PACIFIC

MR. JASWANT SINGH'S Singapore visit could not have been better timed. Finding a gap in his increasingly heavy schedule of visits, the External Affairs Minister has used the visit to exchange views with Singapore's leaders on a range of bilateral, regional and international issues on which the two countries can ideally work together. Coming a few weeks ahead of ASEAN's annual ministerial meeting, it provided a window for Mr. Singh to discuss the possible agenda and scenario of discussions that could emerge at both the ASEAN Regional Forum (ARF) and the dialogue with its partners. If at all any reaffirmation was needed of New Delhi's 'Look East' policy and enhanced interaction with Southeast and East Asia, Mr. Singh was quick in giving that. His personal and warm interactions with the Prime Minister, Mr. Goh Chok Tong, the Senior Minister, Mr. Lee Kuan Yew, and the Foreign Minister, Prof. S. Jayakumar, not to mention the prestigious lecture at the Institute for Strategic and Defence Studies, add up to a deepening and strengthening of the already strong bilateral ties with the City State. Mr. Singh summed it up when he said "the engagement of a militarily stronger, economically prosperous, democratic and secular India imparts greater stability to the region".

Every aspect of that statement carries weight with ASEAN. Five years ago, in 1995, when India's 'Look East' policy coincided with its economic reforms programme, Southeast Asia woke up to the potential for political, economic and security cooperation with New Delhi, making India a full dialogue partner. When it is all set to embark on second generation reforms and sustain a GDP growth of about 7 per cent or more, the prospects will be all the more. Like India, ASEAN does not believe that bilateral relationship should be directed at any other country or grouping. Just as ASEAN wants to engage China, Japan, U.S. and India on parallel track, New

Delhi reserves the right to work on its ties with the U.S., China and ASEAN separately. It is significant that these relationships converge at the annual ARF, a security dialogue platform specially created by ASEAN. Having engaged Southeast Asia as a dialogue partner, India now believes that the time has come for it to graduate to an enhanced dialogue status — to be invited to ASEAN's annual informal summits, along with China, Japan and South Korea. At least half of ASEAN's 10 members have already encouraged or endorsed this move and it is about time the Southeast Asian grouping bestowed that recognition on India. That could ultimately lead to a renewed bid for India's membership of the Asia Pacific Economic Cooperation (APEC) forum.

Among ASEAN's major concerns with the subcontinent are the growing tensions between India and Pakistan. These have only increased after the South Asian neighbours drove home their nuclear prowess two years ago. South Asia and Kashmir in particular emerged as a potential nuclear flashpoint in Asia, causing increased concern to Southeast Asia. ASEAN will certainly want to know how India plans to deal with its western neighbour and prevent a major confrontation. Like the U.S. and the rest of the world, it will like to see a resumption of dialogue at the earliest. New Delhi must remember that Islamabad and Gen. Pervez Musharraf are not without friends in that region. China will continue to influence its southern neighbours not to ignore Pakistan. Mr. Singh must use all his persuasive powers to convince not just Singapore but other ASEAN friends also about how it proposes to manage its relations with Pakistan in the short and medium-terms — with or without a democratically-elected Government. That will impact on the stability, security and prosperity of the region. Mr. Singh will find this issue cropping up again at the ARF or other platforms.

THE HINDU

MEA unfazed at DMK's call for Lanka division

STATESMAN NEWS SERVICE ①

NEW DELHI, June 5. — The ministry of external affairs remained unfazed today in the face of Mr Karunanidhi's call for a territorial division of Sri Lanka on the Czech model to resolve the ethnic problem. The foreign ministry spokesman merely said: "There is no change in India's position" vis-a-vis creation of the Eelam. *S. P. P. M.*

The Sri Lankan government had not raised the issue, he said, adding that it was well aware of the position of the Indian government.

The government's nonchalance could, however, be an indicator of preparations for a larger shift in policy, hinging on the issue of devolution of power within Sri Lanka.

Last week, a senior Cabinet minister unofficially spelt out what he termed as the central focus of India's policy towards Sri Lanka — the issue of devolution.

While this position hasn't been officially acknowledged yet, there are sufficient indications that both India and Sri Lanka are preparing to

take this up at a formal level in the near future. A Sri Lankan minister has already said the two countries would soon be entering into a dialogue, a fact that has not been refuted by India.

The Sri Lankan President, Mrs Chandrika Kumaratunga, has also indicated a shift in her stand, stating categorically today that there would be no dialogue with the LTTE unless the organisation agreed to her conditions.

The hardening of her stand could be based on the preparations under way for a concrete move on the issue of devolution in the near future.

This move could be the reason for the sentiments expressed by the DMK leader, Mr Karu-

nanidhi, articulation of which seems premeditated rather than an emotional outburst. Mr Karunanidhi, while advocating a division of the state, had hinged this demand on the failure of the Sri Lankan government to devolve power.

The BJP today took a convoluted stand on Mr Karunanidhi's statement. The party did not disown his statement, though it kept a strategic distance to leave ample scope for manoeuvring.

The party vice-president, Mr Jana Krishnamurthy, said Mr Karunanidhi's statement did not contradict the BJP's stand that the Sri Lankan government should give more powers to the Tamils. "We've been talking of devolution of power," he said.

CENSORSHIP LIFTED

COLOMBO, June 5. — Sri Lankan government today lifted its censorship on foreign media but maintained the restrictions on the local media. The restrictions on media coverage of the war in Jaffna were imposed on both foreign and local media on 3 May after LTTE made a series of gains in its offensive to re-capture the northern peninsula. The decision to ease the regulations comes after the army halted the LTTE offensive. — PTI

On the DMK leader's statement about a separate Eelam, Mr Krishnamurthy said both the BJP and the NDA government stood for united Sri Lanka.

Mr Krishnamurthy, however, said the Tamil Nadu chief minister was talking about Eelam only if the Sri Lankan government

failed to meet Tamils' aspirations there.

While supporting the government line of finding a solution to the Lankan crisis without compromising that country's territorial integrity, AICC general secretary, Mr Ghulam Nabi Azad, said the NDA leaders were speaking in different voice on Sri Lanka.

The CPI-M Politburo said Mr Karunanidhi's statement "goes contrary to the country's stand that a solution to the Lankan crisis should be found within the framework of Sri Lanka's unity".

■ Photograph, another report on page 7

■ Editorial, Bordering on indecision: page 8

THE STATESMAN

- 6 JUN 2000

Cong., Left criticise Karunanidhi's proposal

By Our Special Correspondent

NEW DELHI, JUNE 5. Even as the Government sought to shrug off the Tamil Nadu Chief Minister, Mr. M. Karunanidhi's controversial statement on Sri Lanka with the Foreign Office maintaining that there was no change in India's official position, the Opposition parties alleged "confusion" in the ruling National Democratic Alliance on the issue and demanded that the Prime Minister, Mr. Atal Behari Vajpayee, "condemn" the DMK chief's remarks.

They said that for Mr. Karunanidhi, a senior NDA leader, to suggest a "division" of Sri Lanka as a solution for the ethnic conflict was a serious matter. The NDA allies, they said, had been speaking in conflicting voices reflecting a lack of clarity on a sensitive issue.

The Congress(I) demanded a categorical statement from the Prime Minister clarifying the NDA's position. Mr. Ghulam Nabi Azad, who looks after the party's Tamil Nadu affairs, said the Congress(I) was firmly opposed to a division of Sri Lanka and believed that its territorial integrity was "sacrosanct". The ethnic conflict in the island state must be resolved within the constitutional framework of Sri Lanka in keeping with the "aspirations" of the ethnic minorities.

The Left parties were equally "disturbed" by Mr. Karunanidhi's statement and said the Government must respond as it was at variance with India's stand that a solution to the Sri Lankan crisis should be found within the framework of that country's unity and territorial integrity.

The CPI(M) pointed out that the creation of a separate Eelam would have "dangerous consequences in the region and serious implications for India". It demanded that the Government "immediately condemn" Mr. Karunanidhi's statement, as also similar statements by other NDA allies.

The CPI general secretary, Mr. A. B. Bardhan, termed the statement "unwarranted and uncalled for" saying it indicated the "confusion" in the NDA. "By talking about the Czech model, Mr. Karunanidhi has shown his ignorance of what led to the division of Czechoslovakia", he said, reiterating his party's "commitment" to Sri Lanka's multi-ethnic and territorial unity.

The Bharatiya Janata Party, meanwhile, said it remained wedded to the Government position that a solution should be found within the framework of the Sri Lankan constitution, and that a resolution was possible only through talks between the Sri Lankan government and the LTTE.

Mr. J. P. Mathur, BJP vice-president, pointed out that at an all-party meeting there was a broad consensus on the Government's policy on Sri Lanka, and the allies from Tamil Nadu were party to that consensus. The Prime Minister had also talked separately to the parties from Tamil Nadu and they had expressed "satisfaction" with the Government's view.

Mr. Mathur made it clear that the BJP "did not want Sri Lanka to be divided" Czechoslovakia style or any other way.

Govt. stand unchanged

By Our Special Correspondent

NEW DELHI, JUNE 5. India's position on Sri Lanka has not changed and Colombo has not raised the Tamil

Nadu Chief Minister, Mr. M. Karunanidhi's controversial remarks on the situation on the island with New Delhi, the Foreign Office said today.

"There is no change in our position", the Foreign Office spokesman said when asked to comment on Mr. Karunanidhi's assertion that Sri Lanka should either devolve more rights to the Tamils or follow the Czech model (of carving out two new independent states) to resolve its ethnic crisis.

The spokesman declined any comment when he was asked whether Mr. Karunanidhi had conveyed his suggestion to the Government.

He said Sri Lanka was constantly in touch with India but it had not raised the issue.

"The Sri Lankan government is aware of the position of the government of India," he said.

'Sri Lankan's Tamils not for separation' Page 13

HEADS WE LOSE

Presidential slip in China

IT may be churlish and illogical to ask whether President's Narayanan's long visit to China accomplished anything substantive. Head of state visits are not about nuts and bolts of foreign policy. Depending on the point of view, they are either enjoyable tourist trips or about creating what diplomats call atmospherics: such feel good factor as is generated by elaborate banquets, cordial meetings and folk dancing. Of course, the head of state makes speeches, as did President Narayanan. Such speeches, too, are not the stuff of serious analyses since they are mostly variations of the "we are all jolly good fellows" theme. But the President, even within the constraints of his remit, seeks to leave a stamp beyond the ceremonial. Sometimes he does this with positive results: returning dubious state bills, questioning application of Article 356. But he has also muddied waters that did not need a presidential wading-in. And so it was that while addressing his audience at Peking University, he opined that *panchsheel* and not a unipolar system is the best bet for a "globalised world". The message between the lines is hard to miss.

The voice from the past, no longer relevant, is ominous. The US is bad, Asian brotherliness is good. Put another way, what Narayanan's words mean is that India is better off hitching its wagon to a repressive, wannabe hegemon that is infamous for its absolutely cynical use of power politics (ask Hong Kong and Taiwan democrats) than the world's most powerful democracy which, its global policeman attitude and sometimes insufferable moralising notwithstanding, has recently warmed towards India. More, that warmth is based largely on the best of all diplomatic counters, economic potential. In contrast, Sino-Indian economic diplomacy is virtually non-existent and is likely to remain so for quite a while. Worse, partly because of that and partly because of China's strategic views, it continues to consider Pakistan perfectly acceptable. What kind of Indian interest is being served here? And what other purpose does President Narayanan's thesis achieve than trying to recall the "glory" days of Nehruvian foreign policy, which cost India so much economically as well as strategically. If the Vajpayee government has one foreign policy achievement it is that, helped by Pakistani stupidity, the Prime Minister and Jaswant Singh finally took Indo-American relations beyond tired, mutually exclusive rhetoric. Will India risk all that to court a despot, which is what China is? Some may argue that the US courts the despot, too. But the calculations there are different: a superpower trying to contain a pretender and trying to force open its markets. India is not in that league. Which brings in the second reason why Narayanan's non-ceremonial speech was off the mark. The Chinese are not interested in India's offers of solidarity. They want US respect, capital and tolerance of their appalling human rights record. India figures nowhere and the Chinese see nothing to be gained by upgrading bilateral relations. So, the President was really speaking to an audience entirely inappropriate for his appeal, and his speech was unmindful of India's realistically assessed interests. Better surely to concentrate on folk dancing.

Czech model not relevant to Sri Lanka, says BJP

By Our Special Correspondent

CHENNAI, JUNE 6. While expressing strong opposition to any division of Sri Lanka, the BJP today dismissed the Czechoslovakian model of separation suggested by the Tamil Nadu Chief Minister, Mr. M. Karunanidhi, as not relevant in the case of the island nation.

"The situation is entirely different in Sri Lanka," the BJP vice-president, Mr. Jana Krishnamurthy, told reporters. The creation of the new states of Czech and Slovakia was done on the basis of consent, not confrontation. Also, the decision on the division of Czechoslovakia was taken without third-party intervention, and carried out in peace, not in war.

Mr. Karunanidhi, he said, had talked of the Czech model during a public meeting organised as part of his birthday celebrations. The BJP would rather go by the statements he made on the floor of the legislature. The Czech-type solution was his personal view, though it carried the weight of that of the leader of the DMK.

But when it was pointed out that Mr. Karunanidhi had stated in the legislature that he would be happy if Sri Lankan Tamils won a separate Eelam, the BJP leader said in that case, Mr. Karunanidhi should have taken up the issue with the Prime Minister, Mr. A. B. Vajpayee, in New Delhi. The Chief Minister was free to express his views to the Prime Minister. But, after the meeting with Mr. Vajpayee, the Chief Minister had actually gone on record that he endorsed the Centre's line on Sri Lanka.

However, Mr. Krishnamurthy did not agree that the Chief Minister was "playing a double-game" and speaking in different voices in Delhi and in Tamil Nadu. Mr. Karunanidhi, he said, was a seasoned leader and he represented a State which had interests in the Sri Lankan matter.

Mr. Krishnamurthy denied that the constituents of the ruling National Democratic Alliance differed on the Centre's handling of issues arising out of the conflict in Sri Lanka. The allies were free to have their own views. Problems would arise only if they disagreed with the Centre's line.

On the PMK founder, Dr. S. Ramadoss, equating the Sri Lankan crisis with the fight for independence of Bangladesh, the BJP leader said there was no link between the two situations. As for the views of the MDMK leader, Mr. Vaiko, on Sri Lanka, he said Mr. Vaiko had at first opposed the extension of the ban on the LTTE, but supported it once the Centre took a decision.

At the same time, Mr. Krishnamurthy said the allies could have avoided making statements which gave scope for different interpretations. Agreeing that the coordination committee was the right forum for the allies to air their views, he said: "Old habits die hard."

Asked how India offer to mediate between Sri Lankan Government and the latter

- 7 JUN 2000

PM distances Govt from DMK chief's 'personal views'

PRIME MINISTER Vajpayee has termed Tamil Nadu Chief Minister M. Karunanidhi's statement on division of Sri Lanka as his "personal views" which do not signify any change in India's position.

On his return here today from Manali, Mr Vajpayee said the DMK chief's suggestion did not reflect the views of the NDA, which is committed to a common agenda.

The PM's clarification comes after Opposition demands that he personally set the record straight as Mr Karunanidhi's comments, amounting to a call for splitting the war-torn neighbour, have evoked sharp reaction from Colombo.

In a related development, the DMK has been invited to tomorrow's specially convened meeting of the Cabinet Committee on Security (CCS). Union Commerce Minister and senior DMK leader Murasoli Maran would be a special invitee at the meeting, the purpose of which is to reiterate the Government's commitment to Sri Lanka's territorial integrity.

HTC, New Delhi

THE HINDUSTAN TIMES

JUN 2000

JUN 2000

PM rejects Karunanidhi's proposal

By Harish Khare

NEW DELHI, JUNE 7. The Prime Minister, Mr. Atal Behari Vajpayee, has virtually rejected the Tamil Nadu Chief Minister, Mr. M. Karunanidhi's views on a Czech-like division of Sri Lanka. On his return to the capital here from a week-long holiday, Mr. Vajpayee termed Mr. Karunanidhi's proposal as "personal view, or at the most of his party" but not the view of "the NDA or the Government".

However, as a sop to an important ally, the Prime Minister has invited the DMK's senior representative, Mr. Murasoli Maran, to attend as a special invitee the meeting of the Cabinet Committee on Security on Thursday. The CCS is expected to discuss the latest situation in Sri Lanka, and Mr. Karunanidhi's proposal is most likely to be taken note of.

Mr. Vajpayee said there was no change in the Government's policy towards Sri Lanka and that India remained committed to the territorial integrity of the island, and that "we are for a peaceful settlement of the ethnic strife within the framework of Sri Lankan unity."

At the CCS meeting Mr. Maran would hear for himself this unequivocal message, and the onus of striking compatibility between the DMK's stand and the NDA agenda would be on Mr. Karunanidhi.

THE HINDU

8 JUN 2000

India & its extended neighbourhood

By C. Raja Mohan

In dealing with the new proposals for economic integration with its extended neighbourhood, the time has come for New Delhi to begin battling on the frontfoot.

AN INDIA think big and bold about its extended neighbourhood? Can New Delhi overcome the debilitating politics of the subcontinent to grab at the big opportunities knocking at its door? Two exciting proposals for regional economic integration, both transcending the subcontinent, are likely to severely test strategic planners in New Delhi. One proposal, coming from the West, tantalises India with the potential of long-term strategic bonding with the Persian Gulf through natural gas pipelines. And the other from the East, called the Kunming Initiative, is named after the capital of Yunnan province in southwestern China. Yunnan wants to build regional economic cooperation among eastern India, southwestern China, Bangladesh and Myanmar.

Both proposals are grand in their conception. They are driven by the prospects of big economic spinoffs. They involve mega projects cutting across not just national boundaries but regional ones too. They imply a transformation of the geopolitics of India's neighbourhood. The first will integrate India with the Persian Gulf and beyond. The second will link India with China and South East Asia. Both the projects also allow India to revive economic linkages that have become dormant over the recent decades.

The two proposals are, in essence, about rediscovering India's extended neighbourhood, regaining its strategic leverages in the region, and reclaiming its historic role in the areas abutting the subcontinent. But coming in the way are India's traditional security concerns about its more immediate neighbours and apprehensions about the impact of trans-regional cooperation on the internal dynamics of the restive areas within India. Does India have the genius to balance the imperative of long-term strategic calculus with immediate tactical considerations on national security?

But first we must turn to the idea of extended neighbourhood itself. It is only in recent years that India has sought to reintegrate the neighbouring regions of Persian Gulf, Central Asia and South East Asia into its foreign policy vision. Although Jawaharlal Nehru talked about building an area of peace and cooperation

in Asia, the Cold War and its impact on the region sharply limited India's ability to pursue the Nehruvian goal. The strategy of Non-Alignment did provide India with some political linkages in its neighbourhood. But they were largely shaped by the dynamics of the Cold War at the global level and did not translate into regional security benefits.

There was very little commercial underpinning to India's relations with its extended neighbourhood. Thanks to the policies of economic autarchy that Non-Alignment promoted, there was hardly any movement towards regional economic integration. South East Asia, with its regional framework of ASEAN, was an honourable exception, but politically it stood on the other side of the Cold War divide.

It was the collapse of the Soviet Union and the pressures for open-door economic policies that pushed India into thinking more seriously about economic opportunities to the East and West of its immediate neighbourhood. India's own expectations of rapid economic integration within the South Asian Association for Regional Cooperation (SAARC) did not materialise, thanks to Pakistan's reluctance to open its economic doors to India. With the future of SAARC now looking grim after the military coup in Pakistan, there is growing interest in India about both sub-regional cooperation and trans-regional integration beyond the subcontinent.

The former Prime Minister, Mr. P. V. Narasimha Rao, developed the so-called "Look East" policy. Mr. Inder Kumar Gujral took it further by talking about India's "extended neighbourhood", encompassing the Persian Gulf, Central Asia and South East Asia. The External Affairs Minister, Mr. Jaswant Singh, has emphasised the importance of engaging these regions more purposefully than before. With trade becoming an important element of na-

tional strategy, the extended neighbourhood had begun to register in India's strategic consciousness.

But how does India translate the slogan on the significance of the extended neighbourhood into concrete action? That is where the two new proposals on trans-regional cooperation come in. The first is about binding India and the Persian Gulf in a long-term energy relationship through a gas pipeline. It came up when Mr. Jaswant Singh travelled to Iran last month. Iran has abundant reserves of natural gas and wants to export it to India,

whose thirst for hydrocarbon resources is enormous. Other countries on the Arab side of the Gulf such as Qatar and Central Asian states such as Turkmenistan too have huge surpluses in natural gas. They would like to pump their natural gas into a pipeline to India, which has emerged as one of the top importers of petro-products in the world.

India is the nearest and biggest market for the natural gas surpluses in their extended neighbourhood. The countries of the Gulf as well as various international consortia are keen to build an overland pipeline to meet the natural gas demand in India. There is also commercial interest in India in such a proposal.

But there is one big catch. An overland pipeline will have to come through Pakistan. Islamabad after some initial reservations has now supported the project. But there are very strong reservations in New Delhi against a pipeline that passes through hostile territory. There is apprehension in New Delhi that such a project will allow Islamabad to control a major energy supply route into India and put at risk large downstream investments using the imported gas.

Many in India would prefer sticking to the current policy of importing natural gas in a liquefied form aboard ships, or a pipeline that runs along the sea-bed from the

Gulf to India. Others argue that the overland option is the cheapest one, and it should not be impossible for India to insure against the risks of Pakistan's unreasonable behaviour.

Does the pipeline give Pakistan a hand on the energy tap to India? Or does it bind Islamabad into a framework of regional economic integration? A natural gas pipeline could be followed by possible road and rail links and develop into a commercial corridor between India and the Gulf, cutting across Pakistan. It could also become India's gateway into Central Asia via Iran. Those who make the latter case agree that Pakistan might indeed be tempted to turn off the tap, but they suggest Islamabad will find it impossible to displease Iran and the Arab states by interrupting their sales of natural gas to India.

A similar tension is tying down the Indian debate on the Kunming initiative that came into view when the President, Mr. K. R. Narayanan, travelled to China recently. Emboldened by their new prosperity and encouraged by Beijing, Yunnan's provincial authorities are thinking big about building commercial linkages with their neighbouring regions in South East Asia and the subcontinent.

Yunnan's cooperation is already intense with Myanmar and growing with the nations of Indo-China. It is proposing rail, road and air links among India's Northeast, southwestern China, Bangladesh and Myanmar to facilitate the movement of goods and people.

At the academic level, there is great excitement about the prospect of a land bridge to China and South East Asia through Bangladesh and Myanmar and the promise of bringing greater prosperity to India's Northeast. But Indian policymakers have deep anxieties about getting into a sub-regional grouping with China and are concerned about the long-term consequences in the troubled Northeast. The conservatism of the security establishment is understandable. For too long India has been on the backfoot in conducting its external relations. In dealing with the new proposals for economic integration with its extended neighbourhood, the time has come for New Delhi to begin battling on the frontfoot.

Left flays Karunanidhi's argument

By Our Special Correspondent

NEW DELHI, JUNE 7. The Left parties said today the Tamil Nadu Chief Minister, Mr. M. Karunanidhi's statement "defending" his controversial remarks on Sri Lanka had made things worse, and reiterated their demand that the Prime Minister, Mr. A.B. Vajpayee, rein in his allies.

They were not impressed with the Defence Minister, Mr. George Fernandes' "rationalisation" that local political compulsions could have been behind Mr. Karunanidhi's remarks, and senior Left leaders emphasised that nothing could justify the sort of things the DMK chief had been saying.

The territorial integrity of a country was too serious a matter to be dragged into the compulsions of political parties. Senior leaders of the ruling coalition should be particularly cautious in commenting on sensitive issues, the CPI(M) and the CPI said.

"This is not an issue on which local political compulsions can dictate the approach or on which individual constituents can air their own views publicly," the CPI stated pointing out that the issue concerned a "friendly neighbouring country whose territorial integrity is at stake".

The CPI(M) repeated its charge that there was "confusion" within the ruling National Democratic Alliance and wanted the Prime Minister to clear the air. It echoed the CPI's view that the Prime Minister could not remain silent when his own allies were openly making statements contradicting the officially stated position of the Government.

"Whatever the compulsions of running a coalition Government, the Prime Minister's silence on such a sensitive issue cannot be justified," the CPI general secretary, Mr. A.B. Bardhan, said.

Efforts on for soldiers' release

STATESMAN NEWS SERVICE

NEW DELHI, June 8. — Efforts continue for the release of the 23 Indian soldiers detained at Kailahun in Sierra Leone. But the 213 other soldiers caught in a stand-off remain isolated with surface access to the area cut off, except for food convoys.

The RUF field commander had yesterday assured the Indian company commander at Kailahun that the Indian soldiers would be released soon, a MEA spokesman said. India saw this as an "encouraging" move. There was no threat to the lives of the Indian soldiers, he asserted.

A team of senior MEA and defence officials and officers from the Army headquarters was in Sierra Leone to look into all aspects of the Indian presence there.

The team comprises MEA joint secretary Mr Dinkar Srivastava; the DGMO, Lt. Gen. NC Vij; the JS (G) in the defence ministry, Mr BS Lalli; and Air Commodore Shah from the Air HQ.

The MEA spokesman ruled out a review of Indian participation in peacekeeping operations. He said India was in touch with all relevant countries about the situation at the official level.

India stuck to its official line, saying its soldiers were caught a "stand-off position" with the RUF in Kailahun, while reports from Sierra Leone quoted UN officials as saying that they were surrounded and negotiations were under way for their release.

Agency reports from Sierra Leone said a Jordanian and Nigerian contingent had refused to obey the UN Force Commander Lt Gen. VK Jetley.

Another report said an Indian contingent had taken control of Rogberi junction after the Jordanians pulled back and the Nigerians said they had lost too many lives.

THE STATESMAN

9 JUN 2000

India secure UN peacekeepers

between Singh and Albright centered mainly for discussions on the planned visit of Prime Minister Atal Behari Vajpayee to the US sometime in September this year. On nuclear non-proliferation, Singh outlined the Indian position on how the government had an "obligation" to obtain "political consensus" in this country over the issue.

Albright was also told that India "will be moving towards it (achieving national consensus) now". The disarmament issue was emphasized when Albright emphasized the importance attached by Washington in giving "priority" to non-proliferation matters.

On Indo-US relations, officials said Albright recalled US President Bill Clinton's invitation to Vajpayee to visit the US and informed Singh how Clinton wants to "personally reciprocate" the warmth he got during his five-day visit to India last March.

Albright spoke about how Clinton was "extremely happy" with the

visit marked by "exceptional warmth".

She also expressed US' desire to maintain constant dialogue with India and referred to the possibilities of further meetings between the Foreign Ministers of the two countries at international meetings.

A second meeting between Singh and Albright is not ruled out during the next month's meeting of the Asian Regional Forum (ARF) in Bangkok.

Noting that parleys with Singh was the only bilateral meeting Albright had during her three-day stay in Warsaw, Indian officials said there was a clear intention by both the sides in maintaining the momentum of strengthening Indo-US relations which was built during Clinton's visit.

Singh said the situation in Jammu and Kashmir figured at the meeting during a general talk on regional issues and asserted there was no particular focus on the Kashmir issue.

US to help India secure release of its UN soldiers

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA
WARSAW, JUNE 27

THE United States has assured India that it would take up with the concerned authorities the issue of securing the safety of Indian peacekeepers in strife-torn Sierra Leone even as New Delhi sought "greater clarity" and cooperation to ensure their well-being.

External Affairs Minister Jaswant Singh told newsmen that this assurance was given by US Secretary of State Madeleine Albright during their hour-long meeting on the sidelines of an inter-governmental conference on "Democratic governance," here last night.

Singh said the "difficult and complex" situation faced by the Indian peacekeepers in Sierra Leone figured prominently in the meeting held in the Sheraton hotel.

"The Secretary of State was fully supportive and very understanding of our concerns (over the safety of the Indian peacekeepers) and promised to discuss with the concerned officials" Singh said.

Indian officials said Albright made it clear that there was a need to ensure the safety of Indian peacekeepers.

The situation faced by the Indian peacekeepers in the African country is also expected to figure during the planned meeting between Singh and the UN Secretary General Kofi Annan here later today. Issues relating to non-proliferation and disarmament also figured along with bilateral and regional matters at the meeting

CONTINUED ON PAGE 2

INDIAN EXPRESS

28 JUN 2000

India, EU may solve textile trade dispute'

STATESMAN NEWS SERVICE

SC-8

LISBON, June 28. — India and the EU should be able to resolve the textile trade dispute in two to three months' time. This was stated by both the external affairs minister, Mr Jaswant Singh, and the commerce and industry minister, Mr Murasoli Maran. But differences remain over the issue of European punitive trade action on Indian commodities.

The textile dispute started in 1997 when the EU wanted India to lower duties on some items the Union exports to India. As a result of the EU demand for lower tariffs, the textile quota was not released for three consecutive years. Some 8,000 tonnes of Indian textile exports to the EU were held up.

In May this year, the EU trade commissioner, Mr Pascal Lamy, had announced that 3,500 additional tonnes would be released. This had followed extensive discussions between the two sides, including visits by the joint secretary, textiles, to Brussels in January this year. At the Lisbon summit,

the 3,500 tonnes agreement was formally accepted by the EU. The two sides also agreed that the balance amount would be released by the Union on India's sorting out the disputed tariff bindings on 71 other items. This, Indian ministers said, will be done in two to three months' time.

The commerce minister also said that the two sides held discussions on the market access of products like basmati rice and white sugar. On white sugar, India has been promised utilisation of other countries' unused quotas, the minister said.

However, the really thorny issues on trade were not resolved. India and Indian exporters have long been complaining about the European Commission's anti-dumping and anti-subsidy procedures. Since many of the Indian enterprises targeted by these EC investigations are small and medium scale businesses, legal and other resources required to fight the quasi judicial process prove to be extremely burdensome. Significantly, India is the most targeted country under the EC's trade defence action procedures.

The EC has also been clubbing anti-dumping and anti-subsidy investigations. That complicates the legal process even more. Indian representations on this issue have concentrated on avoiding, as far as possible, the quasi judicial process and instituting a consultative mechanism for sorting out complaints by European industry to the EC.

A working group on steel is already functioning and its meetings with European representatives have resulted in some action on anti-dumping procedures against hot rolled coils. Progress on setting up similar mechanisms is rather slow, Indian officials said. But the joint declaration, they pointed out, promises to set up high level economic and commercial dialogue, which is, they claim, diplomatese for solving disputes via trade, not court cases.

Indian exporters, particularly in steel, pharmaceuticals and textiles, the three most targeted sectors for anti-dumping and anti-subsidy EC action, would certainly hope the promise hinted in the joint declaration is kept.

THE STATESMAN

29 JUN 2000

ARUN SINGH'S MEA-I

Advisors Deform Institutions

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By AG NOORANI

TWO years ago, Defence Minister George Fernandes made repeated forays in the realm of foreign policy wreaking havoc in our relations with China. The minister for external affairs, Jaswant Singh, has been returning the compliment in form more tangible than speech. He has appointed Arun Singh as "advisor (security)" in his ministry. The one line memo informing officials of the appointment did not mention his functions or the nature of his work; his responsibilities and those of officials towards him.

The Prime Minister has a national security advisor, Brajesh Mishra. On 19 November 1998, the government set up a National Security Council, headed by the PM, comprising, *inter alia*, the ministers for external affairs and defence. Its secretariat is drawn from the former joint intelligence committee. The NSC's second tier, the strategic policy group, has the three service chiefs among its members besides the director, IB. The NSC was set up precisely in order to streamline the decision-making process. It is trite to say that national security is a wider concept than military defence and that foreign policy affects and, in turn, shaped by both. Every cobbler must stick to his last, meanwhile. Joint deliberations follow before the final product is delivered.

OBSCENE

That a minister for external affairs should take it upon himself to have his own security advisor in residence is incongruous. That this advisor should assume executive functions, with the minister's approval makes the incongruity an impropriety. That he should stretch his hands across the rest of South Block and steal eggs from nests in the defence ministry renders the situation ludicrously obscene. Jaswant Singh's Man Friday heads the task force on the management of defence, one of the four set up pursuant to the Kargil report. Reportedly, the group of ministers handling the report shot down Jaswant Singh's suggestion that Arun Singh head all four.

This advisor (security) not only receives visiting foreign officials but also summons service chiefs to meet the minister. One such meeting between him and the army chief, Gen VP Malik was arranged last month. This itself was grossly improper; as improper as the defence minister summoning Indian ambassadors or the for-

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eign secretary. Nor is that all. Arun Singh, Priya Sahgal reported in *Outlook*, "is also a frequent visitor to the briefings at the Ops Room (military operations room). At times he has also requisitioned a briefing ... the Ops Room is located at the MoD. And the briefings are usually attended by members of the Cabinet Committee on Security."

Friendship with members of the defence services and efforts to win popularity in those quarters, doubtless, make mat-

tions more than one.

During the Emergency an attempt was made to remove the provision. On 4 August 1976, it was revealed that the Swaran Singh committee had suggested that such a provision should be made, instead, by "internal orders" of a confidential nature. The Rules of business are a public document. Therein lies the difference between government under the law and one by caprice. Indira Gandhi sought to destroy Cabinet government totally.

Advisors are a new breed; but, their status and powers

come nowhere near those enjoyed by Arun Singh. There is a definitive statement by a PM as imperious as Margaret Thatcher, in the House of Commons on 10 April 1984. She distinguished between special advisors, who were civil servants subject to the rules of conduct in the Civil Service Code, and political advisors who "are not civil servants and are not paid from public funds".

Harold Wilson formally authorised appointment of political advisors by Cabinet ministers when he became PM in March 1974. He defined their role in his book *The Governance of Britain*. They vet papers, chase "Ministerial wishes", "research findings outside Whitehall", help in policy planning, liaise with the party and interest groups, and write speeches.

SELF-RESPECT

It is unthinkable that any Cabinet minister would have an advisor who can conduct depredations into the ministry, let alone other ministries, in the Arun Singh manner. The test is simple: is it open to a minister to summon officials from other ministries? If he cannot, by himself, neither can he through an aide. Nigel Lawson resigned as chancellor of the exchequer when he found Prime Minister Margaret Thatcher's advisor Sir Alan Walters exceeding his limits. No one expects George Fernandes to resign out of self-respect.

The impact of Arun Singh's doings on the morale of the defence services and officials in the MEA are not hard to imagine. This is how services are suborned. ZA Bhutto did no small damage to Pakistan's foreign service by letting in "lateral entrants". Officers on special duty have a certain reputation. So will advisors in India if this example proves infectious.

Arun Singh's appointment and conduct would have been unacceptable even if he were a strategic thinker and planner of genius. He is, in fact, a blunderbuss of proven record which excellent connections obscure.

(To be concluded)



ters easy for him, as does his friendship with the minister himself. It is institutional proprieties which matter. Arun Singh began by offering his services during the Kargil conflict and was duly appointed special executive assistant to Jaswant Singh. He rose to become "advisor". He has, apparently, access to confidential records without being sworn to secrecy.

Jaswant Singh's broad assertion that "the MEA has a very significant role to play in managing national security, along with the defence ministry" cannot justify the grotesque procedures he has unilaterally devised. Conversely, foreign policy bears on internal security. Will LK Advani, the home minister, be free to appoint "advisor (foreign affairs)" with power to stretch from North Block to South Block and poach on its turf?

IMPROPRIETY

The episode raises vital issues of Cabinet government based on the principles of collective responsibility to Parliament embodied in the Constitution. It advisedly empowers (Article 77(3) the President to "make rules for the more convenient transaction of the business of the Government of India, and for the allocation among Ministers of the said business". Rules of business have constitutional sanction. A minister who speaks on a matter that does not fall in his domain commits an impropriety. One who actively poaches on another's field flouts the Constitution and undermines institu-

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Improved ties with the Islamic world

Vajpayee belies fears

CONVENTIONAL wisdom was that, with the advent of the BJP government, India's relations with the Islamic countries would go into a negative spin. World media, labelling the BJP as the "Hindu nationalist party", projected an assertive anti-Muslim approach in India's domestic and foreign policy. This has not been the case in foreign relations. Vajpayee's visit to Lahore belied this anticipation. Though this exercise failed due to Kargil, India has been sensible about the importance of reaching out to Islamic countries. During July-September 1998, Foreign Minister Jaswant Singh met leaders of Indonesia and Malaysia during the ASEAN conferences.

A process of reviving connections with Islamic countries began after the drift which characterised India's policies towards Islamic countries since the fall of the Narasimha Rao government. Significant exchanges have taken place between India and important Muslim countries like Turkey, Indonesia and Iran since the beginning of this year. Prime Minister of Turkey Bulent Ecevit came to India in March. President of Indonesia Abdurrahman Wahid also visited Delhi. Jaswant Singh had a fruitful visit to Iran in May where he met President Khatami and Foreign Minister Kamal Kharazi. A number of Indian economic delegations have been exchanged between the countries of the Gulf and India. Ecevit's visit acquired significance when, despite Pakistani overtures and suggestions, he did not go to Pakistan. The concerns of both Wahid and Ecevit about secessionist movements in their countries, backed by cross-border terrorism, were similar to those India has about developments in Kashmir and the Northeast. There is also a convergence of strategic and security interests between India on the one hand and Turkey and Indonesia on the other, relating to Central Asia and the South-east Asian region.

Pakistani commentators have acknowledged the phenomenon when commenting on Ecevit's visit they said

that "the point relevant here is that Turkey, possibly the only country with which Pakistanis have a people to people bond, India has struck a common chord. We cannot, therefore, harbour any illusions about the extent of Pakistan's international isolation." Indonesia and Malaysia have been supportive of India's incremental integration into the Asian Regional Security Forum over the last two years. India is increasing its contacts with the secretariat of the OIC. The initiatives taken in relations with Iran by our government is of particular significance in the context of our relations with Pakistan and our interests in the Central Asian Republics. The initial months of the BJP-led government saw Iran carefully assessing its for-



J.N. Dixit

Indian cooperation in developing its surface transportation facilities and ports. Given India's hostile relations with Pakistan and the tension and uncertainties in Afghanistan, Iran is the only conduit through which India can establish closer relations with Central Asian Republics, stretching from Turkmenistan in the west and Kazakhstan in the east. India and Iran have shared concerns about the Talibanisation of Afghanistan which can generate centrifugal impulses in both. They share worries about the persecution of Shias in Pakistan. Even on Kashmir, Iran's stand is nuanced and responsive to India's concern about its unity and territorial integrity.

Iran is also keen to supply natural gas through a direct pipeline linking Iran

All these prospects of cooperation were part of Jaswant Singh's discussions with President Khatami and Foreign Minister Kharazi. Their joint directive to the Indo-Iran Joint Commission was to structure policies and projects to advance Indo-Iranian relationship in a broad spectrum.

Vice-President Krishan Kant's visit to Cairo in mid-June to participate in the G-15 Summit added another dimension to Indo-Iranian relations. India was actively instrumental in supporting Iran's admission to G-15. The visit also provided an opportunity for high-level contacts between India and Egypt. Kant's discussions with President Hosni Mubarak focussed on reviving bilateral relations. The distance which had developed between India and Egypt during President Anwar Sadat's time is fading away.

The prospects of India's relations with the Gulf countries have elements of uncertainty. Though a number of bilateral agreements were signed on economic cooperation projects with countries like Oman and Abu Dhabi since 1992, the delay in finalising operational arrangements to implement them and in the decision-making processes here have resulted in these countries pulling back from some of the projects. In the slightly longer term, increase of trained indigenous manpower in these countries will result in reduced employment opportunities for Indians in them. They are in the process of introducing progressive restrictions on immigration for long-term stay of foreigners. This will affect the skilled and semi-skilled work force of Indians who have been staying in these for nearly three decades.

The three-pronged policy being followed by the government towards Islamic countries is practical: first, to expand political contacts with them; secondly, to increase contacts with the OIC Secretariat; and, thirdly, to expand economic and technological cooperation with them. Consolidating these relations should remain an important focus of our foreign policy.

Strengthening of our ties with Iran, Egypt, Turkey and the Gulf countries has served to underscore Pakistan's increasing isolation in the international arena

ign policy orientations towards Islamic countries. By the end of 1998, and the beginning of 1999, Iran as well as other Islamic countries realised that the notions about the government being anti-Islamic countries were erroneous.

Jaswant Singh's visit to Teheran during the second half of May is the culmination of the process of the meaningful revival in Indo-Iranian relations. What are the tangible interests which underpin these relations? Iran needs friends as well as cooperation with friendly countries to break out of the isolation imposed on it by the West. India needs influential friends in the Islamic world to counter Pakistani hostility. India has the interest of obtaining energy resources from Iran and utilising it as a market for Indian exports. Iran would be interested in India's technological knowhow and

and India through Pakistani territory, in a project in which India is interested, but about which India has political and strategic doubts as the pipeline passes through Pakistani territory. Recent reports are that Iran has persuaded Pakistan to allow the pipeline to go through with a promised royalty of 700 million to 800 million dollars to Pakistan, provided Pakistan assures safety of supplies to India. The Ambanis are reportedly interested in linking the pipeline with their Gujarat refinery project.

In broader terms, India is aware of Iran's influential voice in the Organisation of Islamic Countries. It is also an influential voice in the Organisation of Petroleum Exporting Countries. There are also prospects of defence cooperation between the two in terms of Iranian requirements.

INDIAN EXPRESS

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29 JUN 2000

ARUN SINGH'S MEA-II

Perverting Constitution Indefensible

THREE Bs — Operation Blue Star (1984), Exercise Brasstacks (1987), and the Bofors scandal (1987) proclaim Arun Singh's worth in authentic writings. Mark Tully and Satish Jacob record in their book *Amritsar* President Zail Singh's painful visit to the Golden Temple three days after the army attack. It was telecast on DD. "Politically conscious viewers notice Mrs Gandhi's watchdogs following him wherever he went. One was her own Personal Assistant, RK Dhawan ... The other was Arun Singh, Rajiv Gandhi's closest advisor. He had been one of those monitoring Operation Blue Star on behalf of Mrs Gandhi and her son. The two had been sent to make sure that the President neither said nor did anything untoward" — an admirably dignified task to undertake and in good company with a Dhawan.

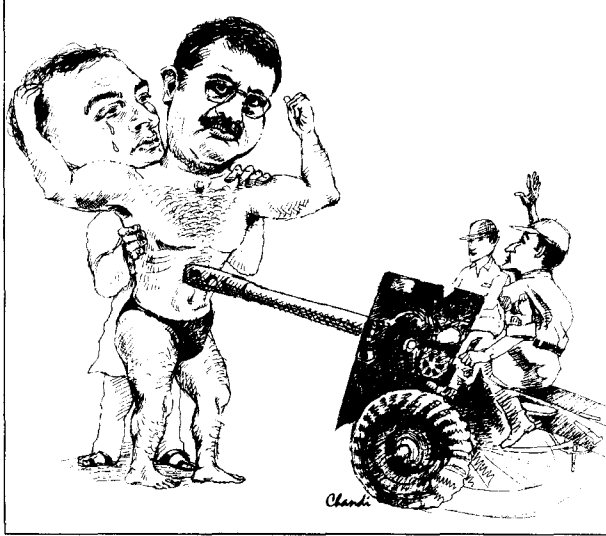
PROVOCATION

The operation was foolishly conceived and ineptly executed. Lt Gen K Sundarji, GOC-in-C of Western Command, who was in overall charge and had commanded the eventual assault which he had not foreseen, was promoted as army chief. In January 1987 his ambition and folly nearly brought us to the brink of war with Pakistan. His successor in the Western Command, Lt Gen PN Hoon (ret'd), mentions in his memoirs *Unmasking of Secret Turbulence* his talk with Rajiv Gandhi on 15 January 1987 at Army House: "I said that with the planning and deployments that had gone into the Operation it was obvious that we wanted to provoke Pakistan into war." To his credit, the PM, who also minister for defence, defused the tension. But Lt Gen Hoon is emphatic: "Sundarji's and Arun Singh's plan was to provoke Pakistan into a war with India, to thrust a war on the country ... Arun Singh backed Sundarji all the way but the Government did not know about it."

Five scholars (Kanti Bajpai, PR Chari, Pervaiz Iqbal Cheema, Stephen B Cohen and Sumit Ganguly) who did a detailed study *Brasstacks and Beyond* describe how and when "the Prime Minister appears to have lost confidence in Arun Singh who, although minister of state for defence, was *de facto* defence minister". Arun Singh and Sundarji briefed the press. "Communications within the defence apparatus were disrupted with the Ministry of Defence being kept on the periphery and all Brasstacks-

By **AG NOORANI** related decisions being taken between the Minister of State and the Chiefs of Staff Committee." This is the same Arun Singh style of work we are wit-

crores to hush up the matter before the elections. Well before he spoke on 11 May, Arun Singh had read the Bofors papers published in *The Hindu* on 22 and 27 April 1988.



Arun Singh was made the minister of state for defence on 25 September 1985, when the Bofors negotiations were entering "a crucial final state". On 25 November 1985, the Swedish under-secretary of state, Carl Johann Adberg, met Arun Singh in Delhi. Minutes of this meeting recorded by Adberg show that "the subject of kickbacks was discussed". Arun Singh told Parliament on 11 May 1988: "Actually what was discussed was that there should be no kickback."

HUMILIATION

Prashant Bhushan meticulously lists and documents the misleading statements Arun Singh made on 21 April 1987 and 11 May 1988: "He was brought to the Ministry at a crucial time when the contract negotiations entered a crucial phase. That he was heard to discuss kickbacks in the deal by Swedish officials on at least two occasions in July and November 1985. That he misled the Parliament on 21 April 1987 by saying that Sweden had agreed to inquire. That he misled Parliament again on 11 May 1988 by advising against cancellation and not disclosing Sundarji's advice about cancellation. That even when he stated that Bofors had committed a breach of trust, he did not want to get to the culprits who had corrupted and looted the nation but instead wanted Bofors to pay back a part of the loot and that too on the inducement of getting lucrative future contracts." He clung on even a year after his humiliation at Rajiv's hands.

The author is fair to him. Unlike Rajiv, Arun Singh was not corrupt. He did advise Rajiv in private to do the decent thing; in public he covered up for him. In an interview he gave in 1990 Sundarji expressed his hurt at Arun Singh's studied silence and omission to back him in the disclosures he had made in 1989 on the fateful happenings in June 1987 concerning both of them. With Arun Singh the personal factor predominated over the national interest.

Perverting the Constitution and deforming institutions are intrinsically indefensible; more so to promote a man of proven incompetence and infirm character.

(Concluded)

nessing now. The then Cabinet secretary, BG Deshmukh, wrote last year that Arun Singh "was completely bowled over by the Service Chiefs".

Arun Singh deserves praise for his famous note on 10 June 1987 urging cancellation of the contract with Bofors. Rajiv responded with characteristic boorishness. Arun Singh resigned on 18 July. But in a speech in the Rajya Sabha, on 10 August 1987, with full knowledge of Rajiv's attempts at cover up and reason to suspect his complicity, he defended him ardently: "I hold today that there is not a single thing the Prime Minister has done or his government has done that could suggest in terms of any proof at all that we (sic) are not trying to find out who, what, when and where. And that is what is important." This denial of a cover-up was false to his own knowledge. He was not frank with Parliament.

KICKBACK

Sundarji's disclosures in 1989 of Arun Singh's note, casts a darker hue on this speech. There is a whole chapter on him in Prashant Bhushan's excellent book *Bofors: The Selling of a Nation*. In another famous speech, on 11 May 1988, Arun Singh suggested that Bofors return the money but "we should not cancel the contract". The author remarks: "Completely contrary to what he knew the Army Chief had recommended, and completely contrary to his lecture on the disastrous consequences of questioning the Army Chief's opinion about something within his province, Arun Singh told Parliament that cancellation was unacceptable from the security point of view. Is that the utterance of a man who resigned to protect the honour of the Army Chief on this very subject?" In 1989 Rajiv tried to get Bofors to return the Rs 64

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THE STATESMAN

Global, At Last

This could be a point of departure for India's strategic dialogue with the rest of the world. For the first time, India is formally speaking to the entire EU in the Indo-European Union summit in Lisbon. India has been eager to take part in previous EU-ASEAN summits, and thanks to the initiative taken by Portugal — the outgoing chairman of EU — India has finally been recognised for its potential role both in economic and strategic spheres, in the international system. Though some of India's perceptions on the future of global strategy were articulated earlier during President Clinton's visit to this country, Prime Minister Vajpayee clearly declared this time that India prefers multipolarity, as a multipolar world is likely to be stabler: This is a world-view shared by Russia, France and China. The forthcoming summits with President Vladimir Putin, President Clinton and Prime Minister Zhu Rongjie will help India further refine the concept. The idea of a multipolar world — polycentric system would be a more appropriate term to use from the Indian point of view — has been there for quite some years: Professor Henry Kissinger in his book *Diplomacy* visualised a global balance of power between the US, China, Russia, European Union, Japan and possibly India. In the early '90s many observers had serious reservations about India's will to power and its ability and inclination to play the role of a balancer. Economic liberalisation and the Shakti tests made it clear that India had moved out of the era of pious platitudes and was seeking an autonomous strategic space in a polycentric world.

When China was cited as the main reason for India's nuclear tests people were not speaking of Chinese military threats to Indian security: India had to acquire the autonomous strategic space in a polycentric world alongside China, or else be consigned to its margins. Indeed, economic liberalisation and high growth rates and India's status as a nuclear weapon state are all symbiotically related. The role India seeks to play is also in a sense a logical extension of the earlier non-alignment strategy which has to be distinguished from its membership of the non-alignment movement. In the Cold War era, when the world was divided into two adversarial blocs, non-alignment was, in fact, a sophisticated balance of power game. It was not balance of power in the 19th century sense which involved small wars to maintain the balance. The nuclearised global order has to maintain the balance without wars among nuclear weapon powers. The international system is developing the rules of the game for such an order. While the Indian Prime Minister is signalling to the world that India is capable and is willing to play a global role, one wonders whether his colleagues have understood his vision and are prepared to help him to realise it. The extremism and intolerance of some sections of the ruling party and the parochial mentality of others — all of which remain uncontrolled — do not go well with such grand global 'visions'.

THE TIMES OF INDIA

30 JUN 2000

G-15 may seek more aid from developed world

Miral Fahmy
CAIRO 20 JUNE

THE LEADERS of developing countries on Tuesday began the final day of a summit expected to end in appeals to rich nations for more aid and a bigger share of world trade.

The G-15, which comprises 19 countries from Asia, African and Latin America, has blamed the West for reducing member states to penury by crippling debts and unfair trade terms.

Member states have also slammed the way World Trade Organisation (WTO) trade rules are working out, saying their fragile economies are at risk.

"Globalisation has proved selective, favouring a few while marginalising the weakest," Jamaican Prime Minister J.P. Patterson told the conference's opening session on Monday.

"The world economic system seems to have become more unstable. Our vulnerability to sudden shocks has increased."

Mr Patterson had launched a vicious attack on the West, which

A G-15 document predicts that global trade terms will only increase unemployment in developing nations and urges the World Labour Organisation to draft protective measures.

Other suggestions to emerge from the G-15 meeting include setting up a special bank, free trade zones, a political decision-making body and a think-tank for the group.

The conference is expected to reiterate a long-standing call for rich countries to contribute at least 0.7 per cent of their gross domestic product to the developing world.

A draft communiqué urges members to encourage private investment and proposes an "early-warning" system to prevent a repeat of the Asian financial crisis of 1998.

Egyptian assistant foreign minister Gamal Bayyouni said summit host President Hosni Mubarak, speaking on behalf of the G-15, would ask the G-8 to ease trade and debt terms.

He also said Mr Mubarak was likely to call on the WTO to con-

cern itself with trade and not "neo-protectionist measures" such as labour, environment, investment or competition policy.

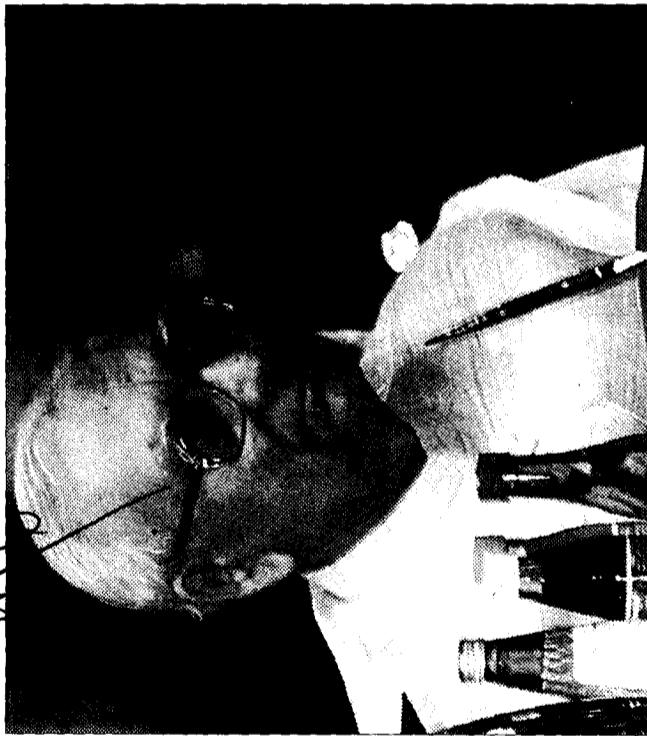
"The G-15 is the pulse of the developing world," Mr Bayyouni said. "While it is our responsibility to develop our economies, it is also the responsibility of developed nations to help us."

Nigerian President Olusegun Obasanjo has bemoaned the debt burden faced by Africa.

He paid tribute on Monday to some developed countries for writing off part of official debts owed by African states but noted that the continent's debt had risen to \$350 billion in 1998, or 65.5 per cent of GDP, from \$300 billion in 1997, with debt service swallowing 40 per cent of budgeted spending.

The G-15 consists of Algeria, Argentina, Brazil, Chile, Egypt, India, Indonesia, Jamaica, Kenya, Malaysia, Mexico, Nigeria, Peru, Senegal, Sri Lanka, Venezuela and Zimbabwe.

The Cairo summit has accepted Iran and Colombia as new members.



DEVELOPED AGENDA: Vice president Krishan Kant at the last session of the G-15 summit in Cairo on Tuesday

AFP
he accused of using trade policy which opened in Cairo on Monday, want to make a stand to the detriment of developing ahead of next month's meeting of nations, consigning them to "the the Group of Eight industrial graveyard of penury".
Participants at the summit, nations.