

# IB wants to break free of red tape

FROM OUR SPECIAL  
CORRESPONDENT

New Delhi, Sept. 30: Intelligence Bureau chief Shyamal Dutta has sought freedom from "bureaucratic control" over his organisation and indicated that the internal security agency would like some kind of accountability to Parliament.

Dutta's stand is considered "bold". It is one of the crucial aspects of the report of the task force on intelligence which was submitted to the Group of Ministers (GoM) yesterday. The GoM is headed by home minister L.K. Advani.

The task force on intelligence — headed by former Research and Analysis Wing (RAW) chief and Jammu and Kashmir Governor

Girish Chandra Saxena — was one of the four set up by the Atal Behari Vajpayee government in April.

Their job was to review the national security set-up according to the Kargil Review Committee's recommendations. Among the other members of the intelligence task force are M.K. Narayanan, a former IB director, former foreign secretary K. Raghunath, retired senior RAW official B. Raman and

Maj.-Gen. (retd) C.S. Nigyal. The three other task forces are on border management, internal security and defence management.

The task force on border management, chaired by former home secretary Madhav Godbole, submitted its report to the GoM on August 29.

Advani has sought a one-month extension from Vajpayee as the other two have not yet submitted their reports.

According to sources, the GoM is expected to submit the final recommendations by October-end.

One of Dutta's suggestions to the task force on intelligence was to rechristen the Intelligence Bureau as National Intelligence Organisation. The 225-page report, official said, has chapters dealing with the 'Role of Intelligence in the Changing Security Environment', 'Economic Intelli-

gence', 'Psychological Warfare' and 'Intelligence Coordination and the Role of the National Security Council'.

Senior officials said the report probes the functioning of various intelligence outfits and suggests how they should be revamped for more efficiency. It also indicated that the field of technological intelligence should remain with RAW, the country's external intelligence agency.

THE TELEGRAPH

1 OCT 2000

## Task force on intelligence submits report

By Our Special Correspondent

NEW DELHI, SEPT. 30. The Task Force on Intelligence Apparatus, set up by the Group of Ministers (GoM) on national security this April, has submitted its report to the Union Home Minister, Mr. L.K. Advani, who is also the Chairman of the GoM.

According to official sources, the 224-page report has chapters dealing with the "role of intelligence in the changing security environment", "Intelligence Bureau", "Research and Analysis Wing", "Armed Forces Intelligence", "Intelligence Branches of other Central Police Organisations and State Police", "Economic Intelligence", "Counter Intelligence", "Psychological Warfare", "Intelligence Coordination and the role of the National Security Council."

The report was submitted by to Mr. Advani by Mr. G. C. Saxena, Jammu and Kashmir Governor, who headed the task force on Intelligence, last evening. The other members are: Mr. M. K. Narayanan, former Intelligence Bureau chief, Mr. K. Raghunath, former Foreign Secretary, Mr. P. P. Shrivastav, a former bureaucrat, Mr. B. Raman, security expert and former Cabinet Secretariat official, Major-General (Retd) C.S. Nugyal and Dr. R. Narasimha.

The task force on border man-

agement had submitted its report on August 29. The task forces on internal security and defence management are likely to submit their reports shortly. The reports will be considered by the GoM for formulation of its recommendations by next month on the national security in its entirety.

## Brahmotsavam begins at Tirumala

By Our Staff Reporter

TIRUMALA, SEPT. 30. The nine-day long annual Brahmotsavam of Lord Venkateswara, began with the performance of Dwajaraham festival on Saturday.

The sacred flag with the imprint of Lord Garuda was hoisted atop the golden 'Dwajastambham' by the chief priest signalling the commencement of the festival.

Students of the Tirumala Tirupati Devasthanam (T.T.D.) — run vedapatasala, chanted slokas and scholars and pundits, recited vedas. The temple priests also performed Thirumanjanam and Thiruvaradhanam to the Lord.

Earlier, the processional deities of Sri Malayappaswamy along with his two divine consorts and the parivara deities were taken round in a procession along the mada streets. Special rituals were also performed to the main deity during the day.

# Malik-Tipnis row may cramp Padmanabhan

Shishir Gupta  
New Delhi, October 1

ARMY CHIEF General S. Padmanabhan may be forced to shed his usual combative spirit if he has to maintain synergy with his counterpart in the Indian Air Force. Gen. Padmanabhan's appointment came at a time when Air Chief Marshal A.Y. Tipnis was slugging it out with General V.P. Malik, virtually accusing the latter for being outspoken on defence matters.

Air Chief Tipnis has taken umbrage to Gen. V.P. Malik's letter to a newspaper this month, giving Army's views on "jointmanship", higher defence control structures and the appointment of Chief of Defence Staff.

The Air Chief has argued that the Army Chief's comment to the media came at a time when the Government-appointed Arun Singh Committee was looking into these matters.

The Air Chief Marshal was apparently so unhappy with Gen. Malik that he shot off a two-page letter to the then Army Chief, Defence Minister George Fernandes, Advisor (Security) in External Affairs Arun Singh and National Security Advisor and Principal Secretary to Prime Minister Brajesh Mishra.



Gen S. Padmanabhan



Gen V.P. Malik



Air Chief Marshal Tipnis

headed by Arun Singh was examining these and all other related issues.

The two services have always been uneasy with each other over the concept of jointmanship. While the IAF feels that there could be a higher degree of synergy with Army if the role and mission was specifically defined, the latter looks at the former only as a support arm in a war scenario.

Air Chief Tipnis dispatched the letter on September 19, the day Gen. Malik was given farewell at the Air House. Air Chief Marshal on the same night proceeded for a week-long trip to Russia. In his letter to a newspaper, Gen. Malik had gone on record saying that the existing higher defence control structure perpetuated single service thinking. This was not conducive for the desired level of jointmanship and synergy in defence or operational planning.

This statement apparently was construed by the IAF as Gen. Malik's support for the creation of the Chief of Defence Staff (CDS) post and integration of the Services Headquarters with the Defence Ministry. The IAF felt that Gen. Malik's comments in the media on jointmanship were undesirable, as the task force

office, Gen. Malik replied back to the Air Chief Tipnis and sent copies of it to others. The basic purport of the then Army Chief's letter was that he had never mentioned the word chief of defence staff in his letter to the newspaper. Gen. Malik maintained that it was a fact that existing defence structures were single service oriented even though the need of the hour was that military efforts should be synergised. He said there was indeed scope of improvement in desired level of jointmanship.

But the matter does not end here. Gen. S. Padmanabhan and his Vice Chief Lt. Gen. Vijay Oberoi, who are great advocates of integrated planning and joint operations, will now have to smoke a peace pipe with their counterparts in the IAF if this concept is to take off in earnest.

THE HINDUSTAN TIMES

- 2 OCT 2000

# Diversifying defence cooperation

By V. Jayanth

THE ESTABLISHMENT of an Indo-Russian Inter-Governmental Commission on military-technical cooperation can only point to a further deepening and strengthening of defence cooperation between two old allies. A host of defence deals, covering the needs of the Indian Army, the Air Force and the Navy have been clinched, providing a major impetus to the Russian defence industry.

But New Delhi, though heavily tilted towards Moscow in defence procurement in the past, needs to diversify its focus and source its hardware requirements from different countries to maintain a balance. It just cannot afford to put all its eggs in one basket. Unfortunately, the Navy and the Air Force have been nurtured on Russian ships, submarines and fighter aircraft for too long, though there have been other inductions as well. And Russian costs are half of Europe's.

It is in this context that the Defence Minister, Mr. George Fernandes' September visit to South Africa has to be viewed. He has cleared the decks for a new link with South Africa, which hosts a large defence industry, mainly in the private sector. Though the defence cooperation agreement signed there will focus on learning from each other's experiences and Indian expertise in peace-keeping to help South Africa play the lead role in a troubled continent, Mr. Fernandes has obviously discussed various options with the ANC Government. Defence analysts say India could look at both field guns and regular supply of spares for the Bofors guns already in service.

Unfortunately for India, it got into a lot of technical problems for the supply of spares for the original Bofors howitzers as well for contracted spares from Britain. These problems were felt during the Kar-gil conflict, in the aftermath of sanctions clamped on India after the Pokhran-II nuclear tests in May 1998. Consequently, defence authorities are now trying to ensure that contracts are very specific on pinning the responsibility on the manufacturers for the regular and assured supply of spares. A natural corollary of this problem is the need to diversify and

broadbase defence cooperation with a number of countries to ensure continued flow of equipment essential for defence and security.

India has acquired aircraft, submarines and other military hardware from countries such as Britain, Germany and France, in addition to the continued supplies from the erstwhile Soviet Union and now Russia. After almost a decade of slow in major defence purchases, India

up for finance, the Government must make it clear to the British supplier and the Government in London that there can be no going back on commitments to supply spares and services. The IAF badly needs these AJs to groom the pilots and put an end to the tragic loss of lives and aircraft during training flights.

The Defence Minister has also visited France and discussed the potential for enhancing cooperation with French pro-

***New Delhi, though heavily tilted towards Moscow in defence procurement in the past, needs to diversify... It cannot afford to put all its eggs in one basket.***

ducers and the Government. A fresh supply of Mirage aircraft, to augment and replace the existing IAF fleet, is being considered and this could depend on the terms on offer.

One thing is becoming increasingly clear — the defence industry in any country has emerged as an influential lobby. Nothing can prevent the manufacturers from supplying the same equipment to both sides to a conflict. Though Pakistan's armed forces have relied heavily on American supplies in the past, they have diversified in recent years, particularly because of Washington's 'strings attached' approach and the sanctions regime — the U.S. cancelled a contracted sale of F-16 and F-18 fighters to Pakistan. Islamabad has turned to other leading defence suppliers such as Britain, France, Russia and the former Soviet Republics such as Ukraine. South Africa may be preparing to sign a defence cooperation agreement with Pakistan on the same lines as it did with India. Russia and China have a new military partnership. After all, the arms industry has to survive and the exports of many Western countries depends on it.

That is one solid reason for India to think seriously about opening the defence industry to the private sector. Though the country can boast of a chain of top public sector defence units — from the shipyards and Hindustan Aeronautics to the ordnance factories — the time is

ripe for launching joint ventures in the defence sector to acquire the latest technology and diversify the base of the arms industry.

It is in this context that the Inter-Governmental Commission with Russia has to be viewed. This will have two Joint Working Groups at the officials' level — with the Defence Secretary and the Secretary for Defence Production co-chairing the two units from the Indian side — to let the Ministerial co-chairs of the Commission take the political decisions. To offset the huge trade balance in favour of Moscow, it is high time the Russian defence industry begins to invest in India. It must at least collaborate with Indian partners to take up both manufacture and research here. That can pave the way for joint production and marketing in the global market.

Already, India has emerged as a potential source for the servicing and supply of spares for the old Soviet defence supplies. The countries in Indo-China for instance have approached India to assist in maintenance and servicing of their aircraft and weapon systems. It will make sense for Russia and India to enhance collaboration so that Indian software and sophistication could be added to Russian hardware and expertise in basic equipment. Together, they could emerge as a major defence player in the world.

From India's strategic and security viewpoint, it is essential to develop a major defence industry that can not only meet national demands, but also meet some of the needs of the developing countries. India is particularly suited to cater to the needs of many Southeast Asian, West Asian and African states to build or expand their Navies. Supply of small arms can be another productive area. But to achieve that status, India needs to expand infrastructure. That will call for incremental investments, development of a spares and services industry, competitive pricing and astute marketing skills. It will take a decade or more for the country to develop that capacity, which means a decision will have to be taken now to make India a defence player in the second decade of the new millennium.

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# *Trishul* delay forces Navy to buy Israeli missile systems

SRINJOY CHOWDHURY  
STATESMAN NEWS SERVICE

NEW DELHI, Oct. 6. — Despite some international pressure, Israel has sold India a state-of-the-art anti-missile and aircraft system to protect naval ships.

The purchases were forced on the Navy as the Defence Research and Development Organisation (DRDO)'s work on the sea-skimming *Trishul* short range surface-to-air missile for the Navy has been delayed by several years. The contract for the purchase of seven Barak missile systems and the missiles was signed this week. The costs: \$270 million or Rs 1,215 crore. The Indian Air Force too may buy this system in future.

According to government sources, the USA was opposed to India buying this system, used only by the Israelis and the Singapore military.

Though a purely defensive system, it is a technologically superior device and could fuel another arms race in the sub-continent, the Americans feared.

The seven systems will be put on some of the Navy's principal combatants like the INS *Viraat*, the only aircraft-carrier with the fleet at the moment. The carrier has just undergone a refit and can be used for another decade or more.

The Barak will also be placed on the indigenously manufactured frigates. It can not only hit enemy aircraft but, crucially, enemy missiles too. This system could protect the ships from the potent Harpoon or the Exocet anti-ship missiles that enemy countries possess.

What necessitated the purchase was the Navy's unhappiness with the *Trishul* which has had 54 flight trials but is still unsatisfactory.

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## TRISHUL

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"There are still several problems with the *Trishul*. For one, it has to be pointed towards the target before it is launched, unlike the Barak which is a vertical launched missile and has more utility and better range," an official said.

Secondly, the *Trishul* has a maximum and minimum range. It cannot hit a target more than 9 km away. Nor can it hit a target that is very close. The Navy sees this as a disadvantage. Of course, the naval version of the missile is nowhere near ready.

The brief for the parliamentary consultative committee for defence released in August said: "So far, 54 developmental flight trials have been undertaken, including its naval version." While it says user trials for the Army will be held in December this year and for the Air Force by June next year, there is no reference to the Navy at all.

**Dhanush launch:** The DRDO has told the parliamentary consultative committee on defence that the launch of the *Dhanush*, the naval version of the Prithvi with a reach of about 100-200 km, will be in December 2000. The *Dhanush* can carry a warhead of 1000 kg, and therefore, a nuclear missile.

The *Dhanush* was launched from an off-shore patrol vessel earlier this year and the test failed as it fell a few metres from the ship as the software guidance systems were not working properly. The Navy then called for shore-based launches so that the warships are not damaged. Though the DRDO believes the next launch will be in December, the Navy will be happy if it is put off till the International Fleet Review in February next year. The *Dhanush* is seen as a particularly important weapon as it can change the course of land warfare from the sea.

# Advani to take tips on border control

Anil Anand  
New Delhi, June 1

WITH PAKISTAN-SPONSORED cross-border terrorism at the back of his mind, Home Minister L. K. Advani is slated to visit the Gaza strip, the famous flash-point in the Israel-Arab conflict, to pick up some more tips for effective border management in Kashmir.

Advani's 10-day foreign tour, starting in the second week of June, will take him to Israel, France and the United Kingdom. From UK, he will fly to Tel Aviv en route to Gaza.

The Home Minister's tour plan is still to be chalked-out. But it is learnt that he will have a luncheon meeting with Palestine Liberation Organisation Chairman Yasar Arafat during his visit to the disputed Gaza Strip. The main purpose of Advani's visit, apart from exchanging views on bilateral issues, is to get acquainted with the latest border management techniques being adopted by Israel.

Discounting reports that the Home Minister's visit was in any way related to the purchase of pilot-less surveillance planes, official sources said the idea to

acquire such a plane was the brain-child of Andhra Pradesh Chief Minister Chandrababu Naidu. He had mooted this idea during the first meeting of the Chief Ministers of Naxalite-hit States in Hyderabad, as part of his Government's strategy to combat Naxalism.

The issue, though not high on Advani's agenda, might figure during his stay in Tel Aviv, sources said. The sources ruled out any possibility of the Middle-East Peace Process figuring in Advani's talks either with the Israeli leaders or with Arafat. His visit will focus

on issues related to security, terrorism and border management.

Another high-point of Advani's tour will be a stop-over in the French city of Lyon, to visit the Interpol headquarters. He is expected to discuss security-related issues with the Interpol authorities. He will also visit the Scotland Yard in London.

The proposed talks with high-level functionaries of these two organisations are believed to be in conjunction with a recent Government decision to revamp the security and intelligence network.

THE HINDUSTAN TIMES

2 JUN 2000

# Centre sitting on Ribeiro Committee report

SHIVNATH JHA  
STATESMAN NEWS SERVICE

NEW DELHI, June 3. — The Union home ministry is sitting on the the recommendations of the Ribeiro Committee, set up on Supreme Court's order, for the past one-and-half years.

The committee was constituted to study recommendations of the National Police Commission as well as the National Human Rights Commission's suggestions to free the police force from excessive political control.

"Though numerous commissions and reports had agreed on the remedy to the problem, the government and the legislature had done nothing about it obviously because of their vested interest in continuing with the existing system," noted jurist Mr Shanti Bhushan said.

The Ribeiro Committee had agreed with the recommendations of the NPC and the NHRC, suggesting immediate setting up of the state and national security commissions. The state commission will com-

prise the chief minister, lok ayukta, a High Court judge and the Opposition leader in the Assembly.

The chief secretary and the director general of police will supervise functioning of police, while the commission will keep close watch on political interference in the force.

Besides the NPC and the NHRC, the former Union home minister Mr Indrajit Gupta had also endorsed the suggestion of setting up a security commission.

The committee had suggested that the police chief's post be of two-year tenure. If necessary, district police chief's post should also be made a tenure post.

A three judge Bench — comprising Mr Justice SC Aggarwal, Mr Justice SP Bharucha and Mr Justice BN Kripal — had directed the home ministry that the Independent Review Committee should be on the lines of a similar committee constituted by the Centre to suggest how CBI probes could be freed from executive control.

Supreme Court had in the Jain

hawala judgement adopted the IRC report while directing the Centre to set up a structure for selecting the CBI director by the Central Vigilance Commission whose chief would be chosen by a committee comprising the Prime Minister, Opposition leader in Parliament and others.

The court's suggestion had come after a petition was filed by a senior police officer Mr Prakash Singh, former CBI joint director Mr NK Singh and Mr HD Shourie seeking reform in the force.

The Ribeiro Committee had been asked by the home ministry to suggest reforms in the police force and re-draft the outmoded Police Acts in states.

Mr Bhushan, senior Supreme Court counsel, said the Centre had done nothing despite warnings by the Shah Commission and the Bureau of Police R&D that excessive control of the political executive over police could make the force a tool for subverting the process of law, promoting authoritarianism and shaking the foundation of democracy.

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## NAVY:

(Continued from page

forefront. Missiles with one-warheads, even if not nuclear, will definitely help influence battle. The Navy faced similar problems with *Trishul*. To solve the early problems, DRDO has created a situation where the missile can only get an enemy plane when it is between five and 11 km away, not closer," a senior official said.

The Navy is about to buy Israeli Barak anti-aircraft anti-missile system that can track incoming missiles. Sources said the Cabinet has cleared the purchase of the missile system and price negotiations are under way.

Apparently, the IAF version of the *Prithvi* too had some "limitations". But as it is moving towards "operational readiness", it is clear that the problems have been tackled.

## Navy asks for shore trial after *Dhanush* 'misfire'

STATESMAN NEWS SERVICE

NEW DELHI, June 9. — The *Dhanush* is the naval version of the *Prithvi* short-range ballistic missile. Its range is officially over 200 km, but when it was fired from a ship early last month, it covered just 40 metres.

Officially the test was declared a "partial success". But it made the Navy wary enough to ask for shore-based trials, so that its vessels are not damaged in the next test.

"After the missile was fired, it did a cart-wheel and fell into the water 40 metres away. Just 40 metres. Now, shore-based tests are necessary," a senior official said.

Ironically enough, the missile did what it was asked to do. The software that tells the missile where it is supposed to go was faulty. It may have been mistakenly programmed to do what it did, sources said.

Speaking about the test, a Navy spokesman said it was not an user trial but a technology demonstrator, and the project was with the DRDO. "Beyond that, we will not comment," he said.

The Defence Research and Development Organisation is responsible for developing the missile and the necessary re-tooling is being done. But now the ship, being refitted, will not be available till later this year. So, a ship-based test will not be possible till then. In any case, the next test will be a shore-based one.

*Dhanush* is expected to be an important part of the new naval strategy of influencing a land battle from sea. The recent revolution in military affairs has brought new technologies to the

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# A rose by any other name

Two out of every three people accused under TADA were discharged as there was no evidence against them. The law is being resurrected without any basic change, writes RAKESH SHUKLA

**T**HE TERRORIST and Disruptive (Prevention) Act is being resurrected in the Criminal Law Amendment Bill, 1995 (CLA). TADA was first enacted in 1985, re-enacted in 1987 for two years and was extended from time to time. In 1995, due to public resentment, the Government deliberately allowed it to lapse. After the lapse, the Government, like a smart adult playing tricks on an unsuspecting child, introduced the Criminal Law Amendment Bill, 1995. The old wine of TADA in a new bottle labeled CLA was supposed to erase the negative associations and make it palatable to democratic civil society. However, "existential" problems intervened and the then government became pre-occupied with trying to keep afloat on the stormy seas of our coalition politics.

This time around, recently, the Law Commission of India is lending its helping hand in unbottling the TADA genie. The Commission seems to have gone out of its way to mention religious fundamentalism and militancy, while, ironically, confining it to the context of Al-Ummah and the bomb blasts in Bombay and Coimbatore. The fundamental flaw in the recommendations is the lumping together of a wide variety of social and political movements under a blanket of "militancy and terrorism" and then prescribing the bitter pill of TADA as a necessary antidote.

An analysis of the CLA, being marketed as TADA with a human face, is required. TADA was enacted for two years as an extraordinary legislation to tackle a situation of unrest prevailing in some parts of the country. The present law is to be enacted straightaway for five years. Under TADA, an area had to be declared as a "disturbed area" before the stringent provisions came into force. The CLA has no such provision and is applicable from Kashmir to Kanyakumari. Thus, even in peaceful Kanyakumari, the police will "enjoy" the powers of interrogation and custody. As the experience of TADA has shown, wherever they can, the police invariably have used this even to counter ordinary crimes. Records prove that the maximum number of arrests and the single largest use of TADA had been in Gujarat, where there has not been even a whiff of terrorism.

The peculiar penchant for TADA is due to the fact that confessions to the police are admissible as evidence under it. The admissibility of confessions is in fact the single-most objectionable provision of TADA. Supplementing the confession provision, the police get an additional bonanza

## PLATFORM

of protracted police custody along with virtual denial of bail for the accused. These features of TADA are enshrined in sections 15-A, 18(2)(B) and 18(6)(A) respectively of the proposed CLA.

In fact, going further and contrary to the Supreme Court judgement in "CBI versus Kulkarni in 1992", (that police custody cannot be ordered after the first 15 days) the CLA permits reversion to police custody from judicial custody during the six-month period of detention on the



Notes from the underground: Inmates at Delhi's Tihar Jail

mere filing of an affidavit by a police officer.

The definitions of terrorist and disruptive activities remain broad and all encompassing. Making any person who "advocates, abets, advises, incites, or facilitates the act" liable makes the net even wider and leaves scope for roping in hundreds of innocent persons as had happened under TADA. About two-third of the persons accused under TADA were discharged by the court as there was no evidence against them. The conviction rate under TADA was just about 1.11 per cent.

Further, departing from the general rule that a person is criminally liable only for acts of commission, section 3(8) of the CLA makes refusal to give information to assist apprehension of a person involved in a terrorist act punishable. As it is, the police almost always harass family members. Now, this provision would further legitimise their "unofficial" activities.

The "human face" of CLA is in the shape of Section 19 which provides that information about the commission of an offence is to be recorded after prior approval of the Inspector General of Police. The "higher officials are a safeguard against harassment of innocents" theory has often fallen flat in this country. Indeed, several higher officials have been found to protect their own turf to the extent of tampering with evidence.

Section 19(A) directs that a custody memo should be prepared and a family member of the arrested person should be informed immediately. These are a reiteration of the law as declared by the Supreme Court in the D.K. Basu case in 1997. The blatant violation of this law is well known. CLA provides for no mechanism to check this specific breach of the law.

At the heart of the debate about laws like TADA or CLA is the understanding of democracy, fundamental freedoms and the functioning of democratic institutions. Should we, in times of crises and violence, abandon democratic checks on the state which is duty bound to safeguard the liberty and fundamental rights of the citizens and reaffirm the ordinary law of the land.

Since Independence, our rulers have not been able to abandon the colonial mindset and have invariably opted for harsher laws to tackle any social or political unrest. But the unrest continues, because the answer lies in the socio-economic and political reality; social unrest cannot be resolved by the use of jackboots. For instance, the political turmoil in Nagaland has been going on for 50 years despite the draconian Armed Forces (Special Powers) Act. Efficiency of such laws even within their own premises is best illustrated by TADA which was brought in to tackle terrorism and was initially applied in only four states; gradually, however, it was enforced in 22 states.

In fact, the Rajiv Gandhi case has demonstrated that the ordinary law of the land is adequate in dealing with terrorist acts. The Supreme Court held TADA to be inapplicable and convicted the accused of murder under the Indian Penal Code.

Similarly, the dreaded terrorists Sukha and Jinda were convicted for the murder of General Vaidya under the ordinary law. Successive governments appear to have learnt nothing from history. They seem to have no inclination to address the root causes of social unrest and instead prescribe solutions like the SHO of a thana.

## 'Govt. can't interfere in Purulia case'

By Our Special Correspondent

**NEW DELHI, JUNE 19.** With judicial proceedings underway, the Government today indicated its inability to intervene in seeking the release of the Russian nationals convicted in the Purulia arms drop case.

According to a senior Foreign Office official who was briefing the press on the upcoming visit to Moscow by the External Affairs Minister, Mr. Jaswant Singh, India will explain its position on the issue and the judicial circumstances surrounding the detention of the Russians. The official acknowledged that two of the imprisoned Russians were in poor health. Medical attention was, however, being provided to them and one of the detainees who was suffering from tuberculosis had been moved to a specialised hospital.

Sources clarified that Indo-Russian relations were not determined by any single issue. On the contrary, the de facto strategic relations between New Delhi and Moscow would be given a "de jure" status when the Russian President, Mr. Vladimir Putin visits India in early October.

During Mr. Singh's visit which begins on Wednesday, the two sides are likely to discuss ways to expand economic ties between the two countries.

There was great scope of enhancing trade which currently stood at a modest level of \$ 1.31 billion.

India, however, is a major buyer of Russian military hardware and negotiations are underway for the possible purchase of the Russian aircraft carrier, Admiral Gorshkov. Russia and India are also partners in civilian nuclear

energy field. Work on the detailed project report on the setting up a nuclear power plant at Koodankulam was proceeding according to schedule, the official said. Power will be generated by two Russian power reactors with a capacity of 2000 MW each.

### No breakthrough in Red Fort blasts

**NEW DELHI, JUNE 19.** Investigators looking into yesterday's bomb blasts at Red Fort in which two people were killed and 11 injured, have not had any breakthrough.

Police were still trying to piece together shreds of evidence collected from the spot after the explosions and have launched massive search operations in various hotels and guest houses in the area. — UNI

THE HINDU

20 JUN 2000

## 2 Al Badar salesmen of terror arrested, 4 kg RDX recovered

HT Correspondent  
New Delhi, June 20

SAIFULLAH ALIAS Iqbal, a hard-core Kashmiri mercenary described by the police as the Chief Commander of the dreaded Al Badar terrorist organisation, was arrested here last night. He is believed to have arrived here to trigger blasts in public places, after creating "safe houses" *9.0.8 n se*

Muneer Ahmed, who was accompanying Saifullah when the two of them were received by associates outside New Delhi Railway Station, was also arrested.

Four kilograms of RDX, two pencil timers and five detonators were recovered from them, the police said today.

Saifullah is believed to be involved in several encounters with

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the security forces in the Kashmir valley, including the sensational gun-battle in the Kukarnag area of Anantnag in March 1998. It left at least 25 security personnel dead and six injured.

Saifullah is also reported to have participated in several attacks on Army camps, including Bandipore and Baramullah in operations conducted in tandem with militant outfits like the Harkat-ul-Mujahideen, Lashkar-e-Toiba and the Tehrik-e-Jehad.

The two militants were nabbed when a team of the Special Cell led by the Assistant Commissioner of Police L.N.Rao, on a tip-off, kept watch in the parking area opposite the Ajmeri Gate side of the station.

"There was information that the Inter Services Intelligence (ISI) had deputed certain militants to

prepare safe houses in the capital to carry out explosions," said the Delhi Police Commissioner Ajai Raj Sharma. "For the past 15 days this information was developed upon and surveillance was kept in sensitive areas, ultimately leading to the arrest."

Saifullah and Muneer are reported to have confessed they plunged into militancy after their initial training in camps located in Pakistan-occupied Kashmir (PoK).

Saifullah reached Delhi last evening and headed for the Inter-State Bus Terminus where the consignment was handed over by a contact. He then went to the railway station when the police caught up with him. "We were lucky that Saifullah was nabbed the moment he arrived in the capital," Commissioner Sharma said.

21 JUN 2000

# George arms-trip to Russia

FROM OUR SPECIAL  
CORRESPONDENT

New Delhi, June 25: India and Russia will sign a protocol to strengthen defence co-operation during a five-day visit to Russia by defence minister George Fernandes starting Monday.

The protocol will be signed by Fernandes and his Russian counterpart Marshal I. Sergeev, an official statement said here today.

Fernandes will call on Russian President Vladimir Putin and is also scheduled to meet secretary of the Russian Security Council S. Ivanov, the commandant of Leningrad Military District and other dignitaries.

Putin is scheduled to visit India in October this year. During

his visit, the Declaration on the Strategic Partnership between India and Russian Federation is expected to be signed.

The defence minister will hold one-to-one and delegation-level talks with Sergeev who is also marshal of Russian armed forces, and witness a flight demonstration of Su-30 MKI,

a version of Su-30 K, a multi-role aircraft specially tailored to suit Indian requirements, the statement said.

The minister will also visit the Baltisky plant of St. Petersburg shipyards and the Admiralty shipyards where submarines,



Fernandes

frigates and other naval vessels for the Indian Navy are constructed.

The Indian delegation includes defence secretary T.R. Prasad, additional defence secretary (defence production) Dhirendra Singh and senior officers from the army, navy and air force.

Fernandes' visit is the latest in the series

of high-level contacts between India and Russia reflecting the "multi-faceted" and "time-tested" relations between the two countries. It will further strengthen bilateral relationship, particularly in the field of defence cooperation, the statement added.

THE TELEGRAPH

25 JUN 2000

## Fernandes in Moscow for talks on defence ties

By Vladimir Radyuhin

**MOSCOW, JUNE 26.** The Defence Minister, Mr. George Fernandes, has arrived in Moscow today for talks on boosting defence cooperation between the two countries.

His five-day visit continues a series of high-level bilateral contacts began last week by the External Affairs Minister, Mr. Jaswant Singh, in the run-up to the visit of the Russian President, Mr. Vladimir Putin, to India in October first week.

Mr. Fernandes is expected to make history by becoming the second Indian official to be received by the Russian President within one week (Mr. Jaswant Singh met Mr. Putin last Friday).

The Defence Minister will meet the influential Security Council Secretary, Mr. Sergei Ivanov, and hold talks with the Russian Defence Minister, Marshal Igor Sergeev, and his first deputy, Mr. Nikolai Mikhailov.

A protocol to strengthen defence cooperation is to be signed.

Ways to expand contacts between the armed forces and defence ministries of the two countries would be discussed, the head of the Russian Defence Ministry's International Department, General Leonid Ivashov, said.

The Interfax news agency quoted him as saying there were "good prospects" for military-technical cooperation between India and Russia.

No arms deals would be signed,

diplomatic sources said, but the two sides would discuss a number of new contracts.

The purchase of 310 T-90S main battle tanks was expected to be clinched shortly, the sources said.

Talks are continuing for a refit of the Gorshkov aircraft carrier Russia gifted to India last year and the acquisition of three electronic surveillance AWACS planes and four Tupolev TU-22m 'backfire' bombers.

## Chief secretaries to review security

By Our Special Correspondent

**NEW DELHI, JUNE 26.** A meeting of the State chief secretaries, police chiefs, and home secretaries will on Wednesday discuss strengthening the State police network, strengthening intelligence set ups and steps to stop illegal immigration. The meeting will also review the internal security in various States, militancy in Jammu and Kashmir and the North-Eastern States.

Recent caste killings in Bihar and Naxalism will also be discussed, official sources said.

The meeting will be inaugurated by the Union Home Minister, Mr. L.K. Advani and it will be attended by Ministers of State in the Home Ministry, Mr. C.H. Vidya Sagar Rao and Mr. I.D. Swamy and senior officers of the Ministry.

THE HINDU

27 JUN 2000

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# Army needs more firepower

STATESMAN NEWS SERVICE

29/6  
NEW DELHI, June 28. — The Army, which awaits a new chief of staff, urgently needs more firepower, night-fighting capabilities and communication equipment.

At the last official meeting with his top commanders some time ago, the outgoing Army chief, General VP Malik, spoke of the expected increase in firepower with the addition of new tanks, artillery and rocket-launchers to the armoury.

General VP Malik said more Russian-built Smerch multi-barrelled rocket-launchers, which were very useful in the Kargil conflict, will be bought.

The 130 mm artillery pieces, used to some extent in Kargil, may be on their way out.

These Russian weapons will be replaced by the heavier 155 mm artillery towed pieces.

With Bofors, whoever the owners, still unacceptable, the defence ministry is looking for guns from other countries, including South

Africa.

The Army is also keen on self-propelled guns to move with its tanks.

The T-90 deal is apparently through and 300 tanks will be imported from Russia. Some young officers may be sent to Russia for training; the tank regiments that will receive the weapons have already been earmarked.

The chief has also suggested focus on night-fighting abilities.

For this, thermal-imaging systems are a must for tanks since conflicts are likely to be short and intense in the future.

The Army also needs better communication equipment. During the Kargil conflict, a secrecy device, Nisha, is responsible for a lot more casualties.

Information technology is another weak area and one way of improving matters is with an Institute of Technology at Hyderabad. The chief minister of Andhra Pradesh, Mr Chandrababu Naidu, laid the foundation stone of the institute in January.

THE STATESMAN

29 JUN 2000



# States okay move to draft anti-terrorism Act

Our Political Bureau  
NEW DELHI 28 JUNE

**T**HE CENTRE on Wednesday succeeded in securing the support of a states for the enactment of a fresh anti-terrorism legislation to fill the void created by the lapsing of Terrorists and Disruptive Activities (Prevention) Act (Tada).

"All the states were in agreement that there is a need for such a law," Union home secretary Kamal Pande told newsmen soon after a day-long conference of state chief secretaries, home secretaries and directors general of police here on Wednesday, to review the internal security situation in the country.

The need for a new anti-terrorism law was earlier brought

into focus by the law commission which noted that the law enforcement agencies were facing difficulty in bringing the subversive elements to book in the absence of a comprehensive law to deal with terrorist acts. The TADA had been allowed by the Centre to lapse after allegations/reports of its misuse by the states for "detaining and harassing minorities" gave it a draconian face.

The desirability of a similar anti-terrorism law but with a more human face was also stressed by Union home minister L.K. Advani in his inaugural address to the chief secretaries-DGPs meet. Expressing concern at inadequacies of the existing legal framework "that somehow is not geared to distinguish between crimes against the state

and ordinary crimes," he said there was a need to replace old laws and change the procedures to deal with crimes against the state and those having a bearing on internal security.

Even as the states have agreed in principle to the Centre's proposal for an anti-

## TACKLING TERROR

terrorism law, it may be some time before the legislation sees the light of the day as the state governments are yet to send their recorded views on the various provisions of the proposed law.

The consensus on desirability of an anti-terrorism law notwithstanding, another proposal by the Centre for inclusion of certain

crimes like terrorism, cyber-crimes and smuggling of narcotics and counterfeit currency in the concurrent list met with reservations from the states who saw it as an encroachment upon their exclusive jurisdiction over law and order matters. "At the end, however, when the enormity of these crimes with national-implications had been explained, all the states felt that the proposal for a federal law enforcement agency to investigate these crimes could be considered," claimed the Union home secretary. The states have been asked to submit their views on the proposal by June 30.

The MHA officials also discussed with state representatives the agenda for the upcoming meeting of chief ministers here in

August on internal security. The following items have been short-listed for discussion at the meeting to be presided over by the Prime Minister: strengthening of state police forces, revamp of intelligence machinery, anti-terrorist law, amendments to the FCRA, national identity-cards, reform of criminal justice administration, setting up of a federal law enforcement agency, border management and responsive governance.

All these areas were touched upon at Wednesday's meeting. Briefing newsmen, Mr Pande said it was decided that the Centre and states should "galvanise the enforcement machinery in management of internal security, besides providing good governance and effective delivery system at the grassroots level."

The Economic Times

# India shouldn't sign the CTBT without testing a neutron bomb'

**The Times of India News Service** (N-82)  
MUMBAI: P.K. Iyengar, former chairman of atomic energy commission, has said the process of nuclear weaponisation in India must continue, leading to the development of a neutron bomb and testing it.

Without testing a neutron bomb, India on no account should sign the Comprehensive Test Ban Treaty (CTBT), Mr Iyengar said while addressing a meeting of Vijnan Bharati, an organisation consisting mainly of scientists, here on Sunday.

The theme of his two-hour presentation was "NPT ( nuclear Non- Proliferation Treaty) and CTBT — Are they step towards nuclear disarmament."

"If you want fourth-generation nuclear weapons we cannot be cowed down to sign the CTBT. India must exercise its sover-

ignty," Mr Iyengar emphasised.

Describing the neutron bomb as the most-favoured nuclear weapon today, he called it a deadly weapon that could kill human beings, but at the same time not damage materials. "It is more efficient in weight and the total energy produced," he told the audience at the Homi Bhabha Centre for Science Education. Many among the audience had contributed to the success of Pokhran-1, 1974, and Pokhran-2, 1998.

Referring to India's nuclear doctrine that has stipulated the country will maintain a deterrent nuclear arsenal and have a "survivable deterrent," the former chairman said from the scientific point of view these goals could not be achieved without further testing. According to him effective weaponisation calls for additional tests of improved designs of thermonuclear explo-

sives as well devices having larger yields.

"Design changes and tests will also be needed to validate submarine-based weapons. We need to conduct more tests," he stressed throughout his talk which was supported with slides.

According to the country's top nuclear weapon designer both the NPT and the CTBT have been discriminatory in character, dividing the UN member-states into the nuclear haves and the have-nots.

"In spite of India's commitment to the disarmament of weapons of mass destruction, the nuclear-weapon states refuse to consider a time-bound disarmament arrangement and its monitoring," he said.

After India conducted its first nuclear test at Pokhran on May 18, 1974, the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) revised its safeguard policy. This, apart sci-

entific exchange programmes between industrially-advanced countries and India in nuclear affairs came to a halt.

Mr Iyengar said advances in nuclear science and technology continued to provide new means of making nuclear weapons. He said the five weapon-states — the U.S., the UK, France, China and Russia — have been doing research and development in these areas which could change the character and cost of new nuclear weapons.

"Recent statements from the U.S. show that the nuclear powers are not serious about global disarmament. In these circumstances, India cannot close its options by signing the CTBT or the NPT," he said.

"If this country has to compete with China in the development of nuclear weapons, then India is still not in a position to sign the CTBT," said Mr Iyengar.

In this context, he said the development of new types of nuclear weapons were being considered by the Big Five. Advances in chemistry have made possible the development of new type of atomic bomb. He said the size of the bomb could be reduced, but it would have a powerful yield.

There were what are known as "trans-plutonic and super heavy elements" which have properties of very small critical mass.

According to him weapons may be developed based on them. There were also pure fission explosions that could use new type of triggers which did not need either plutonium or uranium. In a question and answer session Mr Iyengar said India was equipped with an effective nuclear delivery system like the Mirage-2000 fighter, the surface-to-surface 'Prithvi' and the intermediate range ballistic missile, 'Agni'.

THE TIMES OF INDIA

MAY 1998

# Half of arms used in Kargil operation lost in a day's blaze

GAURAV C SAWANT  
NEW DELHI, APRIL 30

ARTILLERY ammunition equalling approximately half of what was used during the Kargil conflict in two months has been lost in a day's blaze at the Bharatpur ordnance depot.

It had taken between three and five years to build the ammunition stock and may take longer to rebuild now. Coupled with it is the spiralling cost. The Army's main problem is that the ammunition is

not available off the shelf in any country and the war capability of three strike Corps has been hit.

As the Army comes to terms with the loss of 10,000 metric tonnes of ammunition, most of which comprises its air defence capability, artillery and armoured corps in the Southern Command, there are rising concerns about rebuilding the already meagre stocks.

Preliminary reports indicate a loss in the sheds containing high-explosive anti-tank (HEAT) shells, FSDS armour piercing shells, 155-

mm and 130-mm shells apart from both anti-tank and anti-personnel mines. The 155-mm shells (Swedish), Multi Barrel Rocket Launchers (MBRL) rockets and the Russian ammunition are all imported and will be hard to replenish.

"Apart from what has been completely written off, there is another 6,000 metric tonnes of suspected rogue ammunition," said a senior Ordnance Corps officer. Rogue ammunition is undependable and has to undergo six months

of check before it is declared either fit for use or detonated underground. "Half of what had been used for 155-mm, 130-mm and 105-mm field guns during the Kargil conflict appears to have been lost here overnight. Detailed inventories would be made apart from carrying out tests to see what all can be salvaged," sources said.

What is worrying the Army is that most of its air defence capabilities have been imported from Russia. And some of them are stored there. "Though ammunition deals

move faster than equipment deals, funds pose a problem. Even training of troops would be severely affected due to lack of ammunition," sources said.

Bharatpur is the second largest ammunition depot in the country and holds most stocks that cater to the strike corps in Rajasthan and Bhatinda apart from the one at Mathura. The depot also provides strike capability to the Bison formation, all facing a formidable adversary. "The Army expects the next engagement in the Rajasthan

deserts. For that ammunition was being stored and now almost one-third of Southern Command's ammunition is either destroyed or suspect. The situation is indeed serious," sources said.

Apart from training and time for replenishment, it is the cost and availability that is worrying both artillery and armoured corps officers since readymade ammunition will not be available and the demand-supply will send prices soaring apart from suspect quality ammunition being purchased.

INDIAN EXPRESS

1 MAY 2000

# Internal security grim: report

By Our Special Correspondent

**NEW DELHI, APRIL 30.** The annual report of the Union Home Ministry for 1999-2000 paints a grim picture of the internal security scenario but draws satisfaction from the way the Ministry responded to the challenges with "calculated strategy and action plans."

The report, released to the media, lists problem areas — Jammu and Kashmir, North-East, left wing extremism, induction of arms and ammunition and fake currency from across the border — but the action plan sounds all too familiar. For the first time in recent years, the report carries the mantra of "Security for Peace, Peace for Development", often referred to by the Home Minister, Mr. L.K. Advani, in his recent public speeches in the North-East and elsewhere.)

Referring to the heightened challenges posed by foreign-sponsored terrorism in Jammu and Kashmir, the report says while the overall security scenario showed an improvement in the first few months of 1999, militancy-related activities showed an up trend in the post-Kargil period. "The dissolution of the 12th Lok Sabha, announcement of fresh general polls and the reverses suffered in Kargil by Pakistan con-

tributed to the increase in militancy-related incidents," it says.

The report refers to designs to resuscitate militancy in Punjab, ethnic violence in the North-East, ideology-clad left wing extremism in Andhra Pradesh, Bihar, Madhya Pradesh, Maharashtra and Orissa and unleashing of caste wars by private armies in Bihar.

The Centre is continuing with its four-pronged strategy to counter terrorist and separatist violence in Jammu and Kashmir by deepening the democratic process, accelerating economic development, isolating foreign mercenaries and playing a proactive role to neutralise them. The core elements of the strategy are: curbing infiltration, countering militancy in the hinterland, protection of minorities, greater interaction with the border population, enhancing intelligence capabilities, greater functional integration through an institutional framework of operational and intelligence groups at the Unified Headquarters in Jammu and Srinagar.

As reimbursement of the security-related expenditure to Jammu and Kashmir from 1990 onwards, the State received Rs. 1,318.13 crores till 1999.

In the North-East, the Centre has shown a willingness to meet and discuss the legitimate grievances of the people, resolved to counter violence firmly, boost infrastructure development and generate employment opportunities. "The key to the solution of the problem of militancy in the North-East lies in the development of the region."

## 3 new trains from July 1

**MUMBAI, APRIL 30.** The Mumbai Rajdhani and the August Kranti Rajdhani express trains would now run throughout the week from July 1, the Railway Minister, Ms. Mamta Banerjee, said here on Saturday.

Addressing a function to mark the inauguration of the Mumbai Railway Vikas Corporation (a joint undertaking of the Indian Railways and the Maharashtra Government), she said three new weekly trains, Kurla-Madurai Express, Bangalore-Jodhpur Express, and Bangalore-Ajmer Weekly Express would be introduced from July 1. The Pune-Ahmedabad Ahimsa Express would be extended up to Gandhidham once a week from July 1. — PTI

THE NEW

1 MAY 2000

GRASS CAMOUFLAGE FOR ARMS DUMP OUTDATED

# Wide agenda for Army probe

By Atul Aneja

NEW DELHI, APRIL 30. The practice of allowing tall grass to grow in ordnance depot compounds, the existing hazards in loading and off-loading ammunition trains in the dump area and the need for technical innovations to make storage safer are likely to be analysed by the Army's in-house inquiry into the Bharatpur fire, highly-placed sources here said.

The fire in the Southern Command's key ammunition dump, which destroyed 8,000 to 10,000 tonnes of ammunition, apparently spread quickly due to the presence of tall grass in the depot compound.

Sources in the Government here pointed out that Army regulations permitted the growth of grass around ammunition dumps, despite the knowledge that its presence could lead to a fire. Tall grass, it is assumed, can help conceal the dump. This camouflage is necessary for escaping enemy air raids during war time.

Analysts here, however, argue that with better technical and human means of surveillance and intelligence gathering available, it is now easier to predict air raids than in the past. Consequently, the existing regulation permitting the growth of grass needs to be reviewed.

The current practice of loading and unloading ammunition trains, for either bringing in sup-



Villagers carrying unexploded and semi-exploded shells at Aanipur near the Bharatpur ammunition depot which caught fire on Friday. — Photo: Shanker Chakravarty

plies or for dispatching war material to operational areas, is also expected to receive considerable attention by the inquiry panel.

According to the existing drill, these trains should leave the storage area at the earliest as their prolonged presence could be hazardous. A fire in an ammunition dump, as in Bharatpur, could easily be compounded if a loaded explosives train, present in the area, also catches fire. The Suku committee is expected to look at ways to reduce the overload on vintage ammunition dumps. Sources

pointed out that the load on the depot can become heavier on account of delays in clearing "transit ammunition". These explosives are temporarily stored in a dump before being shifted to the final destination. A lethargy in their transfer can strain infrastructure and lead to accidents.

One of the striking aspects of the incident is the presence of large quantities of vintage 3.5 inch rockets at the Bharatpur depot. The heat generated by the fire caused several rockets to explode. Sources here said that the

soldiers handling the rockets were aware of their unpredictable behaviour even when atmospheric temperatures rise. Not surprisingly, the rockets are to be phased out of the Army soon and replaced with more modern ones. Reviewing the prioritisation of storing ammunition is also likely to be probed by the committee.

While the committee may look at the broader ramifications of the incident, it will pay maximum attention to whether sabotage caused the blaze.

Exodus continues: Page 13

1 MAY 2000

# Operation Vijay: victory for valour, warning for Jammu in for 'hot'

SRINJOY CHOWDHURY  
STATESMAN NEWS SERVICE

NEW DELHI, May 2. — The Indo-Pak "war" in Kargil officially began on 3 May 1999, when Pakistani soldiers were spotted digging bunkers. Today, a year after the war, many questions remain unanswered, and the Subrahmanyam Committee report is being dismissed by many veteran officers of the armed forces as "whitewash" and "unbecoming of men like Lt-Gen KK Hazari, K Subrahmanyam and BG Verghese".

The report correctly mentions the intrusion was discovered on 3 May, but officials are surprised there is no explanation on how it couldn't have been detected earlier. "If an Armyman is sitting at the battalion (later brigade) HQ in Dras and looks up, it is inconceivable to believe his trained eyes won't notice any movement on Tololing. Then again, you look for lights at night," a senior officer said.

The report does not mention that though ammunition dumps in Kargil were blown up by Pakistani artillery fire, it did not make people think.

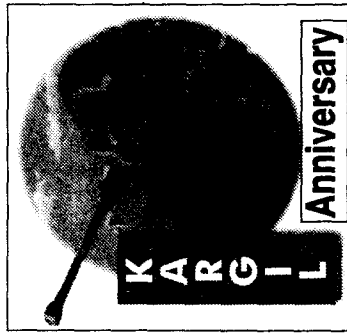
For, the fire was so accurate, the Pakistani artillery observation posts were almost definitely on the Indian side of the LoC.

The report mentions (paragraph 8.13) about the plan to move 70 Brigade to the Dras area before the intrusion. The brigade was deployed in the Valley for five years and if there was a serious plan to move the brigade, it is a sort of admission that the Army feared Pakistani activities in the Kargil area last summer. In fact, a senior general in Srinagar had spoken of the possibility of a Pak intrusion in January 1999!

There is the curious case of the Northern Army commander, Lt-Gen HM Khanna, going from Udhampur to Pune in the middle of the war for "a briefing" with his predecessor, Lt-Gen S Padmanabhan. This paragraph (13.76) appears strange even assuming the widely-circulated report in Army circles about the northern Army commander's plan to build a house in Pune, not to mention a son's wedding are untrue. For, there are secured lines for briefings and perhaps, even video-conferencing facilities that can ensure a general does not have to leave a battlefield in the middle of the biggest operation in years. The Corps of Signals could have arranged a secured line between one army command and another.

The Winter Air Surveillance Operations (WASO) were of negligible value, the report

says (13.15) and (8.19). One reason mentioned is the vibration of the helicopter made sighting through binoculars difficult. It is difficult to believe an observer cannot see because the chopper is vibrating, senior army officers said. For, one of the basic functions of a chopper is to direct artillery fire at targets and here too, binoculars may be necessary. Lieutenant-general Hazari should know — he was a gunner. Also, if the vibrations made things so difficult, choppers wouldn't have been used at all.



Another major issue is that apart from Brig Surinder Singh, commander 121 Brigade, no one is even held responsible for the debacle. There is no doubt of his failure to use the resources at his command — soldiers on patrols. There is also no doubt that patrols were difficult in the areas, particularly in winter. He had asked for satellite pictures and drones with cameras and sensors fitted onto them.

India did not have such equipment then.

Later, the report says exactly what Brigadier Surinder Singh said — that these intrusions could have been detected if India had half-metre resolution satellite imagery capability, appropriate RPVs that could operate at such heights.

Several other contentious issues are glossed over. The report mentions that the Army asked for air-support on 8 May. The first air attacks on enemy positions were made on 26 May. There is no reason mentioned for the time-lag or the tug-of-war between the army and the air force. More importantly, it would have been worth speculating how different the battle would have been if the Indian Air Force was activated two weeks earlier.

Another interesting issue has been the virtual absence of any kind of reference to the Defence Minister, Mr George Fernandes. He was one of the most travelled men — he made a number of trips to Srinagar and Leh. Yet, reading the report, it was as if he had no role to play in the war.

KAVITA SUJRI  
STATESMAN NEWS SERVICE

POONCH (Line of Control), May 2. — The Army is on high alert in the Poonch-Rajouri sector, ready to meet a Kargil-like intrusion from Pakistan this summer.

Intelligence reports on ISI and Pakistani army activity suggest a "hot summer" is likely in Jammu. Troops have been positioned all along the 210-km LoC in Poonch and Rajouri that cuts through dense forests, rivulets, nullahs and mountains.

The Army's state of preparedness is "quite good", Major General VS Yadav, General-Officer-Commanding, 25 Infantry Division, responsible for Poonch and Rajouri, said. He added the coming months will be crucial.

"Though Pakistan's intentions may lie to some restricted area in Poonch-Rajouri sector, its main motive would be to focus world attention on Kashmir once again," the GOC said.

With the snow melting on the Peer Panjal mountain passes, militants will have the freedom of movement. Pakistan will infiltrate more mercenaries during this period and pressure the security forces. About 2,000 mercenaries can be pushed into Indian territory in two weeks time when the snow melts.

Maj Gen Yadav said these mercenaries are better trained than their predecessors as they have been trained at the Tilla field firing ranges in them

Pakistan. Re he said.

"We should both along the GOC said.

This year, been working money is being operations out in a "hot Most military training" which the

tion used mortar is a date. At least, made a Poonch include: however, "normal" Pakistan' in the of infiltrate push its will create "To m veillan ventu them

WEDNESDAY, MAY 3, 2000

## TIME FOR COMPREHENSIVE REVIEW

THE MASSIVE FIRE and explosions at the Bharatpur arms depot last week mark another eye-opener for the Indian Army. It is not the first fire of its kind in an arms dump, nor will it be the last. The Jabalpur and Pulgaon incidents have not been forgotten, but it is not certain if the Army and the other services have learnt their lessons from such mishaps. The irony of the Bharatpur fire is the preliminary and official theory that a summer fire from the tall elephant grass outside the ammunition dump caused the blowup. To let nearly 10,000 tonnes of arms, ammunition and weapons, valued at about Rs. 376 crores, be consumed by such a fire speaks of unpardonable negligence. For a country which wants to maintain a minimum nuclear deterrent, these levels of safety are anything but satisfactory. An in-house court of inquiry has been set up and Maj. Gen. C. B. Suku heads the panel to go into the entire episode. The tragedy is that apart from losing so much of the firepower of the Southern Command, this accident has caused havoc to the lives and dwellings of villagers in the vicinity of the 2,000-acre complex. At least now, the Suku committee, the Army and the Defence Ministry must go into the whole question of the location and safety of ammunition dumps.

Like so many of the outdated laws in the country, the rules and practices in the security forces are also out of tune with the realities today. Unless there is a continuing internal review and audit of procedures, it is unlikely things will change. Only when such a catastrophe strikes, do the authorities wake up and respond to the crisis. Again, because of the 'holy cow' treatment reserved for the armed forces and the veil of secrecy on grounds of national security, the follow-up on the findings cannot be monitored. Even assuming that the Suku committee does a thorough job and prescribes new and safer norms for the location and protection of these

dumps, where is the guarantee that they will be implemented? That is the problem with the Defence services. Under the mask of national security and the curtain of 'classified information', not much is known about such committee reports. For a change, the Government agreed to table the Subrahmanyam committee report on what went wrong in Kargil. The Defence Minister, Mr. George Fernandes, has gone a step further and asked the Chief Vigilance Commission to scrutinise all the defence deals in the past 15 years. So, the Defence Ministry will have a new load of reports very soon. How it acts on them is the issue.

Apart from the huge losses in the arms depot complex, the Government must also go into the human tragedy. Scores of villagers have lost their dwellings and livelihood in this blaze and hundreds have fled the area in search of food and jobs. The Suku committee must go into this aspect and lay down the safety norms in areas where these dumps are located. Besides providing adequate compensation to affected families, a rehabilitation programme for the area may be imperative. While reviewing the procedures, the panel must find out if it will be wiser and safer to decentralise the depots further and provide smaller dumps with better safety measures. There is a potential Bharatpur in any other drought-hit place where a similar arms depot is located. Fire fighters cannot be expected to handle such a serious situation to contain the damage. Now is the time to plan for a phased redesigning and modernisation of all defence depots and storage facilities. The question of providing a suitable camouflage to these locations must also be addressed. The Suku committee and the Defence Ministry have their task clearly cut out. The country certainly cannot afford to lose such costly and precious ammunition in a grass fire caused by the scorching heat.

THE HINDU

3 MAY 2000

# Mercenaries told to keep locals in good humour

VINAY JHA  
STATESMAN NEWS SERVICE

NEW DELHI, May 3. — Anxious at the erosion in popular sympathy, foreign mercenaries active in Jammu and Kashmir have been asked to mind their Ps and Qs to try and win back local support.

Respect for village elders and courtesy to the womenfolk head the list of instructions learnt to have been conveyed to the mercenaries from across the border in the past few weeks. They have also been asked to be more sensitive to the local ethos and social norms, home ministry sources said.

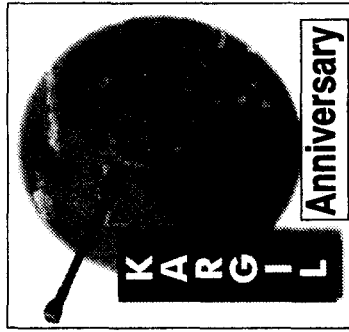
They said there had been a similar shift in strategy by militants in other parts of the

country rocked by separatist violence.

"Even in areas where foreign mercenaries have not come into the picture, militant leaders have periodically sent out clear instructions to the cadres to keep the locals in good humour," said a ministry official, referring to militancy in the North-east.

Sources pointed out that efforts by foreign mercenaries to impose their fundamentalist tenets on the Kashmiris had led to alienation and distrust. These efforts were more pronounced when the mercenaries were Taliban-influenced or Taliban-educated. There have been reports that such groups did not have an easy time interacting and mingling with the local population.

"This is a big difference from the initial days of militancy, when local militants had the complete backing of villagers



ranging from the elderly to children," an official pointed out.

Security forces have been putting the militants under

pressure, having tided over the post-Kargil phase when foreign mercenaries infiltrated into the state. What has aided them is the greater flow of authentic information about militant hideouts and plans.

This had helped security forces to reorient their approach, by developing the information and going after the militants rather than waiting for them to strike, sources said.

The Chhatti Singhpora massacre has also given the militants a bad name, especially with the government maintaining that it was the handiwork of foreign mercenaries.

Senior home ministry officials said the locals have been more forthcoming with intelligence inputs on the movement of mil-

itants. "The whole campaign of Pakistan-sponsored militancy has been taken over by foreign mercenaries from groups like the Lashkar-e-Toiba and Harkat-ul-Mujahideen," an official said.

According to sources, only one local outfit, Hizbul Mujahideen, was active now. With the reins of militancy firmly in the hands of the foreign mercenaries, a larger number of locals from villages which were earlier secure hideouts for the militants have been coming forward with information.

Sources pointed out that unlike in the past, when the movement was run by home-grown militants, many locals no longer identified with the militants these days.



**Trishul failure forces defence ministry to bank on Barak**

# Israel missile muscle for India

FROM CHANDAN NANDY

New Delhi, May 4: The failure of the naval version of *Trishul* has forced the defence ministry to place an order for about 30 Israeli *Barak* missiles.

Though Delhi has procured military hardware from Tel Aviv in the past, especially after the Kargil war, this is the first time it will be importing Israeli naval missiles and missile systems.

Neither Delhi nor Tel Aviv made it official, but at the height of the Kargil conflict, India had sought, and got, Israeli military expertise for hitting precise infiltrator bases in the mountain ranges.

Highly-placed sources in the navy said the order was placed with Rafael-Israel Armament Development Authority and Israel Aircraft Industries Ltd. It manufactures the *Barak-1* missile system which can effectively counter existing and future anti-ship air threats, including supersonic sea-skimming missiles.

Satisfied with the preliminary tests, naval sources said the *Barak* missiles and accompanying missile systems will be fitted on five existing frigates and corvettes. Each ship will have sets of either eight or six Israeli missiles. There is no proposal to instal the missiles on new ships likely to be commissioned later this year.

The sources said all the tests of the indigenously-produced *Trishul* conducted on sea have failed. "The missile has yet to stabilise and has not been able to clear tests in adverse weather conditions. The missile could not even reach its target," a source said. *Trishul*, conceived in the mid-eighties by the Defence Research and Development Organisation (DRDO), was to be a short-range missile system in which the warhead was designed to fly parallel to the sea surface.

Last year, differences of opinion emerged between the navy and the DRDO on whether to go for the Israeli system or *Trishul*. While the navy was keen to procure *Barak*, the DRDO was pressing for *Trishul*. It was only after the latest tests on *Trishul* failed a couple of months ago that the DRDO finally gave in.

*Barak-1* was designed to be an accurate, highly immune, autonomous, vertical launch, short-range anti-missile system.

The website of Rafael-Israel Armament Development Authority and the Israel Aircraft Industries Ltd says the system "features very low level flight capability, high fire power and a large kill radius". Besides, the company claims that the system is fully operational day and night and even in adverse weather conditions.

THE TELEGRAPH

- 5 MAY 2000

# Army plans exercise to test infiltration detection time

Shishir Gupta  
Bhuj, May 5

THE INDIAN Army is planning a division-level exercise in Saurashtra and Kutch areas of Gujarat later this month to test and evaluate the reaction time of its forces in case of possible infiltration from across the borders.

The war game is being staged in the wake of "readjustment and reinforcement" of the Pakistani forces along the Rann of Kutch and the Sir Creek areas. The Pakistani forces have increased their presence in this area through technological upgradation of its profile and a number of surveillance bases have come up across the Sir Creek area.

It is understood that the war game will involve a "surprise infiltration of irregulars or troops" into the Indian Territory along the Gujarat coastline or into the Rann of Kutch. The exercise will test the infiltration detection time by our troops, coordination between the Army and the intelligence agencies and the overall

response of the force.

Highly-placed sources said this exercise is a culmination of a series of "Tatrakshak (Coast Guard)" war games that have already been carried out in the past two months. It is believed that three Tatrakshak exercises have already been held, the last of which concluded this Wednesday.

The Tatrakshak series involved the three armed services, Coast Guard, Border Security Force (BSF) and the intelligence agencies. The idea behind these exercises was to improve the overall coordination between the various forces deployed in the region and reduce the response time.

Although Defence Minister George Fernandes described the increased Pakistani presence across the borders as "defensive" in nature, the threat perception among the local Army commanders was that Pakistan might try to sneak in small groups of trained irregulars into Kutch or along the Saurashtra coastline. The motive behind infiltration will apparently be aimed at

causing harm economically or degradation of force profile through sabotage and subversion.

There is serious concern within the armed and para-military forces about the developments across the border as Gujarat State has massive infrastructural investments in the form of oil refineries, petrochemical complexes and ports. As a result, the security around Bhuj and Naliya air bases has been strengthened and round-the-clock vigil is being maintained at army installations.

Last month, Senior Defence Ministry and Indian Army officials briefed the Parliamentary Committee on Defence on developments across the borders along the Rann of Kutch and the Sir Creek areas.

Sources said that Pakistan has built surveillance bases, equipped with powerful radars, surface-to-air missile batteries and anti-aircraft guns, in a number of places such as Shah Bandar, Keti Bandar, Jati, Rahim Ka Bazaar and Nagar Parkar.

THE HINDUSTAN TIMES

5 MAY 2000

FD-1  
6/4

# Ready for talks with Kashmir militants: Advani

**ON BOARD SPECIAL AIRCRAFT, APRIL 5.** The Home Minister, Mr. L.K. Advani, today offered to hold talks with Kashmir militants on the issue of autonomy but within the framework of the Constitution.

"The Government is willing to hold talks with militants on every demand, legitimate or perverse, if they abandon the path of violence," he told presspersons on his way to Gujarat.

Asked about the demand for restoration of pre-1953 position in Jammu and Kashmir, he said the talks could cover this aspect also, the basic parameter being within the Constitution.

Mr. Advani cited the talks with organisations such as the NSCN (IM) and Bodos and said though these efforts might not have yielded total peace, there had been "considerable peace".

Describing the recent release of three Hurriyat leaders as an initiative towards achieving peace and normality in Kashmir, he said "it was not a casual action but an outcome of a joint decision by the Centre and the State Government".

Ruling out any talks with Pakistan in the present situation, he said "there will be no dialogue with Islamabad unless and until it stops sponsoring cross-border terrorism against India."

He said the U.S. President, Mr. Bill Clinton, endorsed India's stand during his recent visit to South Asia and conveyed to Pakistan that it had to create appropriate conditions for talks.

"Pakistan cannot go on killing people and press for dialogue at the same time. It must create conditions in which talks can be purposeful."

The Centre's attitude towards Pakistan changed after the Kargil intrusion, as Islamabad had betrayed India's initiative through the Lahore process.

The Government's approach towards Pakistan-sponsored terrorism could be 'firm and nasty', he said but its attitude towards those resorting to violence and undemocratic means in various parts of the country would be different.

The Government had been thinking about the release of the Hurriyat leaders for the last couple of months, the Minister said.

He declined to comment on the police firing in Anantnag, saying that the State Government had al-

ready announced a judicial probe. The killing of 35 Sikhs in Chattisinghpura was a 'major blunder' and a 'tactical mistake' on Pakistan's part.

Later in Kalol, Gujarat, Mr. Advani said that during the next five years Gujarat would attain a respectable position in respect of literacy. Inaugurating a railway

## Hurriyat cautious

By Harish Khare

**NEW DELHI, APRIL 5.** The all-party Hurriyat Conference has reacted cautiously to the Union Home Minister, L.K. Advani's reported offer to hold dialogue with the militants in Jammu and Kashmir.

Official sources indicated that the release of the Hurriyat leader, Syed Geelani, (with two other senior leaders) could only mean that the stage was being set for a "dialogue".

It is also learnt that another senior leader, Mr. Yasin Malik, may also be released soon.

The Hurriyat Conference claimed that the release of the leaders was due to "global pressure on India"; the official sources were not inclined to dispute this interpretation, and agree that it could be seen as a by-product of President Clinton's visit to the sub-continent.

Another Kashmiri leader, Ms. Mehbhooba Mufti, of the Jammu and Kashmir People's Democratic Party, demanded that the Government should open a dialogue "with all sections of the local population including those whose position may be diametrically opposed to that of the ruling establishment."

Details on Page 13

manned level-crossing between Kalol junction and Randheja station, Mr. Advani said the NDA Government would endeavour to provide shelter, health, education and literacy to all in the next five years.—PTI, UNI

Advani for 'grand alliance': Page 13

5 MAY 2000

## SUMMER OF '99

### Kargil and after

WHAT lessons have the Indian establishment learnt from Kargil? This newspaper's reports marking the first anniversary of the near-war provide an answer: men on the field, *jawans* and officers, are better prepared, less likely to be overrun; while the civilians who run the defence administration from Delhi, and, in part, the generals, are exactly as they were before Kargil. They will see no evil, hear no evil and, therefore, do no good. Which is why the Subrahmanyam report is an elaborate exercise in protecting the boys, and neither the MoD, nor anyone else has any interest in reviewing what really went wrong. Perhaps the ruling politicians are content that Kargil paid them handsome dividends, and still continues to, witness the reaction of some Bharatpur villagers affected by the army depot fire who said the memory of Kargil helped them better "cope with" the devastation. The government *qua* government, too, has reasons to be happy: Kargil got us in the good books of the US, the dramatic climax of which may have been reached when Clinton clapped and pirouetted with Indian village belles. He didn't dance in Pakistan, did he? Instead, his administration has almost named Pakistan a terrorist state. So, why rake up unpleasant stuff like who goofed in Kargil, or honestly try to evaluate whether we have bridged the technological gap so as to monitor the LoC better.

A year spent in learning nothing and covering up everything is completely normal in Indian administration. Look at the shoddiness of the official response to the drought after last year's Orissa cyclone was supposed to have taught administrators all about crisis management. But Kashmir extracts a special price from the nation: a permanent constriction of choices in a wide range of issues, from foreign and defence policy, and internal security to federalism and the minorities question. Most of all, it casts a shadow on Indian democracy looking at which outsiders are naturally provoked to ask: how does a democratic nation square its credentials with the state of violent siege in one of its provinces? The Indian establishment pretends to answer this question by pointing to PoK; that is, no solution till the cross-border terrorism issue is resolved. But do we really want PoK? If the Indian border ends on the other side of PoK, we will have as neighbours some of the most lawless territories of the subcontinent, apart from doubling the scale of the Kashmir problem internally. Is that the solution? Or is it better to accept ground realities, unilaterally declare the LoC as the international border and call Pakistan's bluff? India will have the global community on its side in this policy. However, if it continues to parrot the lines MEA mandarins can now repeat in their sleep, diminishing returns from the goodwill of Kargil will kick in faster than the government imagines. That, from the official point of view, is another reason why no one must know what we did wrong last summer.

THE STATESMAN

7 MAY 2000

## Talks with Hurriyat not now: Advani

By Vinay Kumar

**NAGPUR, MAY 6.** The Union Home Minister, Mr. L.K. Advani, today said the Government did not have any "intention for the time being" to extend a formal invitation to Hurriyat leaders as part of the ongoing efforts to usher in peace in Jammu and Kashmir.

Categorically refusing to react to the reported statement of senior Hurriyat leader and Jammu Kashmir Liberation Front (JKLF) president, Mr. Yasin Malik, that Pakistan should be part of a tripartite dialogue to solve the Kashmir issue, Mr. Advani said the Government was aware of the "contradictory stands" of Hurriyat leaders.

"First, let Hurriyat leaders make up their mind," he said, while addressing a press conference at the Circuit House here. The Hurriyat leaders are demanding a formal invitation for talks from the Centre and involvement of Pakistan in tripartite dialogue. Taking a strident stand, Mr. Advani categorically rejected both.

The Home Minister said the Government had been thinking of holding talks with various leaders and groups concerned with Kashmir for the past three months, much before the U.S. President, Mr. Bill Clinton's visit to India in March. It was the first indication offered by him that the BJP-led coalition Government was not acting under any pressure in its initiative for restoring peace in Jammu and Kashmir.

Categorically ruling out any talks with Pakistan till it stopped cross-border terrorism, Mr. Advani said the Government would rebuff any Pakistani attempt to internationalise the Kashmir issue. "The vital issue is that cross-border terrorism, being aided and abetted by Pakistan, is now being discussed in various international fora," he said.

He said the Government was repeating in Kashmir what it had done in Nagaland and Assam for initiating peace process in the recent times. "We are talking to Naga and Bodoland groups," he said seeking to draw a similarity between the two situations.

In his broad formulation, the Government would be ready to talk to any group or militant organisation which abjures violence and agrees to hold dialogue within four corners of the Constitution.

Describing Hurriyat leaders as a "section of dissidents", he said they had been in jail for the past six months and it was felt that their release should be the first step in taking any peace initiative in Jammu and Kashmir and building up an atmosphere for talks to end militancy there.

### 'It is Sri Lanka's internal problem'

To questions on Sri Lanka, he said it was the island nation's "internal problem" and categorically ruled out military intervention by India.

THE HINDU

7 MAY 2000

# Bill to restrict arms inspection in security interests

SRINJOY CHOWDHURY  
STATESMAN NEWS SERVICE

NEW DELHI, May 6. — The Chemical Weapons Bill being readied by the Centre aims to "deny or restrict inspections where India's national security interests and economic well-being are in jeopardy."

The inspections have to be restricted as the chemicals industry has evolved innovative and low-cost technologies making it competitive internationally. The chemical industry now accounts for 15 per cent of India's industrial production, 17 per cent of exports of manufactured goods and 19 per cent of the Centre's excise and customs revenue.

Signing the convention would mean making certain declarations and allowing verification activities by the Chemical Weapons Convention (CWC). India's share of the total international production of chemicals is about 4 per cent. These chemicals are used for non-prohibited purposes.

A Cabinet note on the issue said that "...while abiding by the various obligations of the convention, the confidentiality of the innovative low-cost technologies developed in the country is not compromised under the guise of verification procedures and industrial secrets and sensitive information is not pried upon in the process of scrutinisation of records and inspection of chemical manufacturing facilities by the international organisation under the provision of the CWC."

The Bill will also prohibit samples being taken out of the country. This too will help to protect industrial secrets. These points are drawn from the American experience as a similar US Act, signed by President Bill Clinton in October 1998 does not allow an American chemical sample to be inspected outside the country. The US can deny a "request to inspect any facility in the country where the President determines that the inspection may pose a threat to the national security interests of the United States."

The US had also said that there would be fewer restrictions of chemicals used to make chemical weapons or those that have dual uses. The Indian Chemical Weapons Bill is expected to have a similar section.

The American Bill was studied by a high-level steering committee and its recommendations are with the Centre.

Signing the Chemical Weapons Bill entitles India to a number of obligations including regular reporting of data relating to production, processing, consumption, use and transfer of chemicals, chemical weapons and their production facilities. These can be verified by the International Organisation for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons.

As information has to be provided to the OPCW, it becomes necessary for a national authority to be set up. The Chemical Weapons Bill calls for setting up such a body to collect data, undertake trial inspections, ensure accuracy of the data provided by the industry and facilitate OPCW-to undertake routine and "challenge" inspections.

The Bill also calls for a provision to allow appeals against decisions of the national authority. The appeals can be made to the department of chemicals and petrochemicals, Government of India.

THE STATESMAN

MAY 2000

# Advani tests the waters, says ball in Hurriyat court

AJAY SURI  
SRINAGAR, MAY 8

WITH the snow on the higher reaches melting and reports of Pakistan itching to push fresh infiltrators deep into Kashmir pouring in, the Union Home Ministry has got down to business in right earnest. Soon after reaching here on Sunday afternoon, L K Advani moved into a closed-door meeting with Governor G C Saxena and Chief Minister Farooq Abdullah on this vital aspect which for the past one decade has made peace impossible in J&K.

No, Advani did not meet any Hurriyat leader, putting to rest speculation that had engulfed the Valley and New Delhi alike in the past few days. But he did enjoy the Dal Lake in a big way, shattering its calm water on a speedboat — with not too many conspicuous security guards in toe — along with his daughter, Abdullah and a few top bureaucrats. “My moving around freely in Dal should send a message to Pakistan,” he later remarked light-heartedly.

Admitting the magnitude of the problem of infiltration, Advani said he had discussed the matter at length with the CM and the Governor. Some new strategies have been chalked out but he sounded a bit apprehensive too.

“After all, the post-Kargil phase has triggered a change in world opinion about Pakistan. But how much Pakistan restrains itself this

time (by not sending infiltrators) is a different issue,” he said after the meeting. Held at an undisclosed location, the meeting was attended by top officials from various security forces and intelligence agencies now active in Kashmir.

On the question of holding talks with the recently released Hurriyat leaders, Advani made it clear that “the ball is in their court now. We are open to anything.”

Significantly, the Home Minister linked the possibility of shaking hands with Hurriyat with a blunt refusal to resume talks with Pakistan. “Unless Pakistan stops cross-border terrorism, there can be no talks with it. But we are open to talks with anyone from Jammu & Kashmir. Our stand on Pakistan juxtaposes with our conciliatory approach to our own people,” he held.

If this wasn't a big enough hint, Advani added that it was for the Government of India to send a proposal of talks to Hurriyat. Observers, however, see a distinct gameplan in New Delhi's not-yet-ready mood to involve Hurriyat for the talks. Besides testing the waters, it is believed, New Delhi wants to see how far the Hurriyat would go in assisting it in sorting out the Kashmir mess and — more importantly — shed its pro-Pakistan bias.

Declaring that there would be no let-up in action against hardcore militants, whether in Kashmir or in the North-East, Advani said the Government realised that mili-

CONTINUED ON PAGE 2

INDIAN EXPRESS

9 MAY 2000

# Defence panel questions tank deal with Moscow

BY RAHUL BEDI  
 New Delhi, May 9: Negotiations to buy around 300 Russian T-90S main battle tanks have run into trouble with the all-party Standing Committee on Defence questioning the lack of transparency in the deal worth over Rs 4,000 crores.

The committee has also reportedly queried the validity of the Army hastily opting for an MBT operationally little better than the T-72 M1s, which are at present in service

with around 37 of the Army's 58 armoured regiments and in the process of being upgraded. The Standing Committee on Defence is also believed to have grilled Lt. Gen. Shamsher S. Mehta, deputy chief of Army Staff (planning and systems) and powerful head of the T-90S price negotiation committee (PNC) over opting for the hugely expensive and operationally feeble MBT which, once inducted, would remain in service for at least 25-30 years.

The Public Accounts Committee, which tabled its report in Parliament last month, was informed that the T-90s were being inducted as an "interregnum" purchase till the locally-designed Arjun MBT was made available. "Such an assumption is laughable," officers said. Over 300 MBTs, they declared, are never ever inducted into service, by any Army, as stop-gap solutions. And certainly not by a poor country like India.

Senior officers said inducting T-90s into service would ensure dependency on an unreliable supplier for spares and ammunition for decades. The T-72M1s or Ajeyas for example, built locally under licence by the Heavy Vehicles Factory at Avadi, near Chennai, have since the late 1980s,

would also see off Arjun, putting paid to all local ambitions for self-sufficiency. In a recent internal audit, the Army is believed to have recommended shelving Arjun, confident that the T-90 was a "done deal."

Gen. Mehta, the first Army officer ever to head a PNC, has been pressing for the T-90S ever since their acquisition was first mooted three years ago. PNCs are normally headed by defence ministry officials who negotiate contracts after military equipment has been cleared by the respective service for purchase following extended evaluation and trials. But defying all accepted norms and procedures, Gen. Mehta was specially appointed head of the T-90S PNC by defence minister George Fernandes over 18 months ago. Ever since, Gen. Mehta has held nearly 70 PNCs with the Russians and had hoped fervently to sign the T-90 deal before the end of the financial year 1999-2000, which ended on March 31, to exhaust the Army budget, a large propor-

tion of which eventually reverted to the Central fund. The cash-strapped Russians, on the other hand, capitalising on the Army's eagerness to buy the T-90S in completed form, arbitrarily upped the price from \$2.1 million (Rs 9.03 crores) per tank to around \$2.8 million (Rs 12.04 crores) apiece. "They (the Russians) knew India was a captive customer, one who could easily be manipulated," an officer said. And, having locked us in, they are now refusing to budge, he

## STATE OF DEFENCE-1

Tomorrow: Army's budgetary lapses

are still heavily dependent on imports, including oils and seals from Russia, despite defence ministry claims of having substantially "indigenised" them. The T-90

Turn to Page 2



# 401 Naval exercise on east coast 90 b/m

By Atul Aneja 1975

NEW DELHI, MAY 12. In a calibrated show of strength, the Indian Navy and the Coast Guard concluded a day-long exercise on Thursday along the eastern seaboard, not far from the Sri Lankan coast.

Five naval ships including a frontline Kashin class destroyer, Khanjar class corvettes and offshore patrol vessels participated in the exercise between Visakhapatnam and Chennai. Naval helicopters, which operate from the decks of some of these ships, also participated. The aviation element of the "show" included Dornier aircraft of the Coast Guard.

The heavily-armed Kashin class destroyers are some of the most capable warships with the navy. Besides packing a lot of punch they can function as "command and control" nodes in a battle involving several vessels.

Analysts here view the exercise as a "graduated" show of strength to demonstrate the navy's operational preparedness to the Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam. Conversely, the manoeuvres were meant to boost the flagging morale of the Sri Lankan forces trapped in the Jaffna peninsula. Sources said the earlier venue of the exercise off Visakhapatnam was deliberately shifted southwards with an eye on the recent flare-up between the LTTE and Sri Lankan forces in the Jaffna peninsula.

Navy sources when contacted, however, termed the exercise a "routine workout", planned much in advance. "We routinely hold these exercises between Paradip, Visakhapatnam and Chennai. Similar manoeuvres are also held in the Arabian Sea," they said.

Meanwhile, the Chief of the Air Staff, Air Chief Marshal A. Y. Tipnis, arrived here after a five-day visit to Sri Lanka. Soon after his

arrival he met the External Affairs Minister, Mr. Jaswant Singh. Later, the Air Chief is expected to present an "assessment report" to the Government based on his trip.

In a related development, the Navy and the Coast Guard intensified surveillance along the Tamil Nadu coast under "Operation Pasha". Given its close proximity to Sri Lanka, the surveillance zone has been horizontally divided between the Coast Guard and the Navy. The former has deployed offshore patrol vessels and Anderson marine fast boats along with a helicopter component in this zone.

According to sources, Operation Pasha is geared to prevent medicines and kerosene reaching the LTTE cadres in their jungle strongholds in Sri Lanka. Besides, Indian fishermen are stopped from straying into Lankan waters as they can be vulnerable to inadvertent armed attacks by the Sri Lankan Navy.

THE HINDU

13 MAY 2002

BAN ON LTTE EXTENDED BY 2 MORE YEARS

# Some Punjab militants may be released: Advani

By Arunkumar Bhatt 110-1

*g. D. S. N. Security*

**NASHIK, MAY 14.** The Union Home Minister, Mr. L.K. Advani, today indicated that the Government was actively considering the release of Punjab militants, who were not facing any serious charges but were imprisoned under the National Security Act (NSA) for their pro-Khalistan views during militancy in the State.

Addressing a press conference here, Mr. Advani said he had asked the officials of his Ministry to prepare a detailed report on the Punjab militants for the purpose. "I have asked officials of my Ministry to prepare a list of those who were detained in Punjab under NSA and TADA. If leaders of the Hurriyat can be released, why not these persons," he said.

The Minister said any decision on their release would be taken on a case-by-case basis and merit. With militancy having ended in Punjab, it was felt that the cases of those detained could be reviewed.

Mr. Advani announced the extension of the ban on the Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam (LTTE) for two more years, sending a strong signal to Sri Lanka that its approach to the Jaffna war was on even keel, despite parties from Tamil Nadu being a part of the ruling BJP-led coalition. He

said that the earlier ban on the LTTE ended today and the Centre had decided to extend it for two more years. The step comes in the wake of several allies' demand that India support the LTTE.

The Government had released the Hurriyat leaders in its first step and was now evaluating its impact. He said the Jammu and Kashmir Government had always been kept 'in the picture' by the Union Government and the former would be a party to the talks with the Kashmir leaders whenever it took place.

Mr. Advani said the Government's policy ap-

*1575*

proach had brought about a major change vis-a-vis Pakistan's Inter-Services Intelligence and its disruptive activities. Three years ago, any talk of the ISI was viewed as communal "but now even the Home Minister of West Bengal has complained that the Centre talks about the ISI menace in other parts of the country but not in West Bengal".

Mr. Advani was here to participate in the meeting of the State Council of the Maharashtra BJP. He did not make happy a section of the State leadership when he told a questioner that the allegations levelled by the Sena-BJP leaders that the State Home and Deputy Chief Minister, Mr. Chhagan Bhujbal's official residence had become a den of the ISI agents were baseless.



The BJP leader of Opposition in the Maharashtra Legislative Council, Mr. Nitin Gadkari, and his counterpart in the Assembly, the former Chief Minister, Mr. Narayan Rane, had levelled the allegations. Mr. Bhujbal had initiated defamation proceedings against them.

Mr. Advani said that the Budget session of Parliament had shown that the strategy of the Congress (I) to divide the NDA on economic issues had collapsed. He said the Congress(I) had followed a similar approach earlier to divide

the BJP and its Government and the RSS and BJP, but that had also failed.

Mr. Advani alleged that, even after being in power for 50 years, the Congress had not been able to formulate a constructive response since it was in the grip of pure negativism.

Earlier, he had told the party meeting that the TINA (there is no alternative) factor that used to sustain the Congress(I) rule was now helping the BJP and its allies but they should not depend on it. They should seek the popular mandate on the basis of the party's performance and should strive to do better.

THE HINDU

MAY 2000

15 MAY 2000

## Trishul test-fired

By Our Staff Reporter

**KOCHI, MAY 14.** The Trishul missile was testfired here on Sunday in the presence of the Defence Minister, Mr. George Fernandes.

This was the sixth of a series of testfires of the surface-to-air quick-reaction missile. Three more test-fires would be carried shortly before the "anti-missile missile" goes on to the evaluation stage. After the close of all the nine tests in the current campaign, the DRDO will present its report to the Naval headquarters.

Today's testfiring, witnessed by the Defence Minister was carried out on INS Dronacharya against a stimulated target. The missile, when fully developed, could destroy an incoming missile.

PTI reports:

Mr. George Fernandes, reiterated that India had no plans to repeat its intervention a few years ago in the Sri Lanka, but said the Centre was closely watching the developments in the Island Republic.

31 MAY 2001

15 MAY 2001

## Advani touches

## RAW nerve

FROM CHANDAN NANDY

New Delhi, May 15: Going beyond its brief, L.K. Advani's home ministry will now "task" the Research and Analysis Wing (RAW) and the Directorate-General of Military Intelligence so that these agencies can unearth actionable intelligence.

The home ministry had set up a Core Intelligence Processing Unit in September to activate the Intelligence Bureau so that the internal security service would answer to demands of timely and actionable intelligence. But North Block has now entered an area which is specifically dealt with by the Cabinet secretariat and the army headquarters.

The move to "task" the RAW may not go down well with the external intelligence agency and the Cabinet secretariat, to which it reports. In the IB's case, the home ministry did not face much "opposition".

THE HINDU

15 MAY 2001

# Recipe for spy turf tussle

FROM OUR SPECIAL  
CORRESPONDENT

**New Delhi, May 15:** The home ministry's decision to "task" the Research and Analysis Wing and the Directorate-General of Military Intelligence for actionable intelligence will not be taken to kindly by their officers.

So far, the home ministry's intelligence-processing unit used to prepare a broader assessment of national security and, on the basis of intelligence inputs received, task the Intelligence Bureau (IB)

and paramilitary forces to produce "actionable" intelligence. Now, RAW and the military intelligence wing also would be tapped.

Most RAW officers belong to a separate cadre, called the Research and Analysis Service. Although RAW chief A.S. Dulat belongs to the Indian Police Service, the presence of IPS officers in the agency is negligible. Its chief reports to the Prime Minister.

The intense rivalry between RAW and IB on one hand and the military intelligence wing on the other is no secret. The army has

often complained about the secret services' "unwillingness" to part with sensitive intelligence.

There have been several instances — Kargil was a classic example — when the three agencies did not share intelligence.

North Block officials argued that "tasking" the RAW was imperative as "internal security is now intertwined with external security". "Neither is any attempt being made to encroach into others' territory, nor will operational matters be affected," an official said.

THE TELEGRAPH

MAY 2000

# Kargil lapses show up in defence report

STATESMAN NEWS SERVICE

NEW DELHI, May 15. — A year after Kargil, the defence ministry's annual report for 1999-2000 admits to shortages in vital equipment for soldiers during the war and also, a lack of sophisticated equipment that could potentially win or lose a war.

The report says the shortages in weapons, equipment, ammunition, clothing and logistics had "built up over a number of years" and "came to light during the Kargil conflict". This is a clear admission of lack of planning and foresight and was paid in blood during the war.

The report said "action is well under way to fill these voids".

The ministry admits to the lack of surveillance systems, weapon-locating radars, integral helicopter lift capability, communication and firepower for mountainous terrain, high altitude unmanned aerial vehicles or drones, communication interception equipment, satellite imagery capability besides development of skills in encryption and decryption.

Without surveillance capabilities and UAVs, the Army failed

## SIX UPGRADED MiGs FOR IAF BY MARCH 2001

NEW DELHI, May 15. — The first batch of six upgraded MiG-21 combat aircraft are expected to be handed over to IAF in March 2001, the defence minister told the Rajya Sabha today. Work on their modernisation have begun.

The modernisation would enable the 125 MiG-21 BIS jets to remain in operational service until 2020, Mr George Fernandes said, rejecting the view that the planes were at the end of their life-span. A decision would be taken "very soon" on the Advanced Jet Trainer. Price negotiations for indigenous production of the SU-30 had commenced, he said.

Price negotiations were at an advanced stage for buying the T-90 tank from Russia. Progress was also being made in acquiring Weapons Locating Radars from Ukraine, some units would be outright purchases and subsequently domestic production could be taken up. — SNS

to detect the intrusion early. Most Indian casualties were caused by Pakistani artillery, and weapon-locating radars would have helped. The absence of helicopter lift capability slowed the advance in the later stages of the war.

Pakistanis have high-altitude UAVs (unmanned aerial vehicles) which regularly intrude into Indian airspace and take pictures of vital installations. It also has weapon-locating radars.

Like all defence ministry annual reports, this too criticises Pakistan and is wary of

China. China's modernisation programme of weapon systems is still on. "China has further improved her ICBM capability by test-firing DF-31 missiles and laboratory testing DF-41 missiles. The presence of Chinese SSBNs (submarines) may soon be a reality."

There are references to China improving "her strategic air and sea-lift capabilities. The PLA is being restructured to enhance its trans-border military capability by improving mobility, firepower and ensuring better coordination in joint service operations". But to

smoothen things, the report adds: "there have been positive trends in the Sino-Indian relationship and the border areas have remained largely peaceful".

But there are warnings about China's military ascendancy vis-a-vis South-East Asia. The USA is less likely to intervene as US-China relations have improved. It added that China has built up "strategic" relations with countries in the Bay of Bengal area (a reference to Burma) by offering military aid at "friendship" prices. Sri Lanka's reliance on military hardware from China to fight the LTTE have "security implications for the region", it added.

The report pulls fewer punches with Pakistan. It says Pakistan actively encourages terrorism against India, and is emerging as the epicentre of Islamic fundamentalism. The military takeover in Pakistan "is likely to have far reaching implications to the security environment of the region".

"Pakistan's nuclear arsenal is in military hands, unfettered by even the presence of the facade of civilian-political control."

THE STATESMAN

16 MAY 2001

# Blast kills Kashmir minister

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA & UNITED NEWS OF INDIA

SRINAGAR, May 15. — The Jammu and Kashmir Minister of State for Power, Ghulam Hassan Bhat, was killed after terrorists blew up his vehicle at Mundpora in Anantnag, south Kashmir, this morning.

The minister's two bodyguards, driver and a wireless operator were also killed.

Bhat was travelling on the Doru-Qazigund road from Doru to Srinagar when a landmine went off under his car at about 10 a.m. The vehicle was blown

to bits, some of which landed 200 metre away. The blast was heard from five km. All occupants of the car died instantly.

No militant outfit has so far claimed responsibility for the blast.

Bhat, who would have been 47 next month, was inducted into the Farooq Abdullah government five months ago. He is the first serving Kashmir minister to have

been killed in more than a decade of terrorism in the Valley. His National Conference colleague, GL Kar, was murdered by terrorists outside his home in Langate, Kupwara, last year.

More than 20 former Jammu and Kashmir ministers and legislators have died in militant attacks since 1989. In the past four years alone, the ruling National Conference and other mainstream parties have lost more than 200 leaders and workers.

Bhat was a lawyer before he joined politics. He defeated the

Congress's Mr Ghulam Ahmad Mir at the Doru Assembly seat in the 1996 elections, and was made minister in 1999.

The government ordered closure of all its offices today as a mark of respect to the dead leader. The national flag flew at half mast.

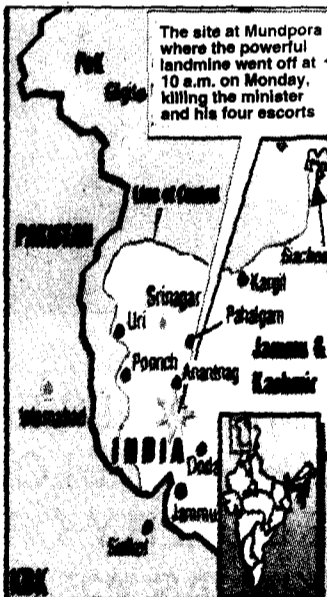
The Governor, Mr Girish Chandra Saxena, and the Chief Minister, Dr Farooq Abdullah, condemned the killing. Mr Saxena described Bhat as a popular and respected leader, and extended condolence to all the bereaved families.

Mr Abdullah described the assassination as a dastardly act of Pak-sponsored terrorism, and said no sacrifice was too big to restore peace and normalcy in the state.

The Chief Minister said Bhat was dedicated to the welfare of the people for whom he laid down his life. As a leader, legislator and minister, he excelled, and has left behind an indelible

mark of his personality on all that he undertook. Bhat's death had deprived him of a valuable and dynamic colleague, Dr Abdullah said.

**Advani grief:** Mr LK Advani expressed grief in New Delhi and condemned the dastardly act by ISI-backed terrorists. But Bhat's killing, he said, would only strengthen the resolve of the central and state governments and the people of Jammu and Kashmir to return normalcy to the state.



The site at Mundpora where the powerful landmine went off at 10 a.m. on Monday, killing the minister and his four escorts

■ Another report and photograph on page 6

THE STATESMAN

15 MAY 2000

# Govt considering Law Commission's draft bill

New Delhi, May 17

HOME MINISTER L K Advani today said the Government was considering the draft Prevention of Terrorism Bill submitted by the Law Commission to replace the elapsed Terrorist and Disruptive Activities (prevention) Act (TADA) and ruled out bringing back an amended version of the controversial Act.

Replying to questions in the Rajya Sabha, Mr Advani said the Government would take the views of all states and political parties before bringing the new legislation. The new Bill would have adequate safeguards to prevent its misuse and at the same time be effective to fight terrorism, he said, adding that abuse of provisions of TADA was the main reason for allowing it to lapse in 1995.

"It should not be a cosmetic law. It should not be enacted just because we don't have a Central law to deal with terrorism," Mr Advani added.

He said the Law Commission submitted the draft Bill in the last week of April.

The draft Bill was prepared by the Commission after studying similar laws in other countries and conducting discussions with various sections of society.

Minister of State for Home Vidya Sagar Rao said the issue was referred to the Law Commission as there was no consensus among political parties on the Criminal Law Amendment Bill, which was introduced in the Rajya Sabha in 1997 to replace TADA.

Mr Advani said the Law Commission in its report had concurred with internal security experts' view that terrorism was not a passing phase and said future generations would hold us responsible for dereliction of duty if the menace was not effectively countered. He said the draft Bill would be sent to all states for their views and discussed at the next meeting of the consultative committee attached to the Ministry. (PTI)

10 MAY 2000



# CBI seeks Interpol help to extradite IA plane hijackers

NEW DELHI: The CBI, which is probing the IC-814 hijacking case of Indian Airlines to Kandahar in December last, has approached Interpol for issuance of a "red corner" notice against five hijackers and two of their accomplices.

Agency sources said the CBI, after obtaining warrants against seven people from a designated court in Patiala, have approached Interpol for issuance of the "red corner" notice against them.

The persons are five hijackers Ibrahim Athar, Sunny Ahmed Aqzi, Zahoor Ibrahim, Shahid Akhter Sayed and Shakir, and their two accomplices Yusuf Azhar and Abdul Rauf, the sources said.

Yusuf Azhar and Abdul Rauf are believed to be key conspirators from Kathmandu on Christmas eve to Kandahar in southern Afghanistan.

The agency sources said all the seven people are believed to be in Pakistan and the CBI would ask Interpol to seek their extradition from that country. Pakistan is a signatory to Interpol.

Besides this, Pakistan is under obligation to extradite the hijackers under the Hague convention on hijacking and the treaties signed under the SAARC aegis, the sources said.

The CBI had secured warrants against the seven from sessions court in Patiala on May 12, the sources said. The agency in its applications has named Pakistan as the country where all the seven accused are believed to be living.

While Athar is said to be a resident of Bhawalpur, other four hijackers and two accomplices are stated to be residents of port city of Karachi, the sources said.

The two accomplices — Abdul

Rauf and Yusuf Azhar — are brother and brother-in-law respectively of Maulana Masood Azhar, one of the three released militants in exchange for the hostages, the sources said.

Meanwhile, in a related development a city court in Patiala on Wednesday extended judicial remand of three alleged conspirators in the hijacking of Indian Airlines plane to Kandahar till May 30.

The three — Abdul Latif alias Patel, Bhupalmar Damai alias Nepali and Dalip Kumar — were produced before the session and district judge K.S. Grewal on Tuesday amidst tight security, and the judge conducted the proceedings in-camera.

Besides these three, West Bengal police had arrested others, believed to be Bangladeshis, from 24-Parganas district last month.

While Latif and Nepali are alleged by the agency of having provided logistical help to the hijackers and helped them in procuring Indian passports, Bhujel has been alleged to have helped the hijackers in procuring arms used for hijacking.

The role of the fourth arrested, Belal, was being ascertained.

The special CBI team, probing the recent hijacking of an Indian Airlines plane, is also likely to visit Kathmandu and Dubai soon in search of evidence on Pakistan's suspected role in the eight-day long ordeal.

Agency sources said that the team, headed by CBI's joint director (special crime) M.L. Sharma, is also expected to send senior officials to Amritsar where the IC-814 was first taken after it was hijacked by suspected Harkat-ul-Ansar (HUA) militants on December 24.

THE TIMES OF INDIA

18 MAY 2000

# India, France begin defence dialogue

By Our Special Correspondent

NEW DELHI, MAY 18. India and France today shared their perceptions on developments in Asia, Asia-Pacific and Europe as part of their strategic defence dialogue.

These discussions were held between the visiting French Defence Minister, Mr. Alain Richard, and his Indian counterpart, Mr. George Fernandes. Diplomatic sources here pointed out that identification of a common strategic agenda was necessary for defining cooperation in other spheres, including military hardware exchanges. The three Services Chiefs also called on the visiting Minister.

Delegation-level talks between the two sides will be held tomorrow. Mr. Richard on Friday will also call on the President, Mr. K.

R. Narayanan, and the Prime Minister, Mr. Atal Behari Vajpayee.

On the military hardware side, France is bidding for a \$1-billion Indian order for Advanced Jet Trainer (AJT). The two sides are also negotiating possible sale of 10 Mirage-2000 aircraft for the Indian Air Force. Besides, New Delhi and Paris are working together to revive India's submarine construction line at the Mazagon Docks in Mumbai. France is also a supplier of critical parts which go into Russian military equipment, especially aircraft which are being supplied to India.

The two sides have recently expanded inter-Services cooperation. For the first time, the French had brought in an aircraft-carrier for exercises with the Indian Navy in the Indian Ocean.

19 MAY 2000

# India awaits ceasefire before Jaffna mission

HT Correspondent  
New Delhi, May 23

**A**FTER TWO intensive sessions of the Cabinet Committee on Security (CCS), India today ruled out any military intervention in the ongoing Sri Lankan conflict except for providing humanitarian assistance to the island nation "subject to proper conditions".

Awaiting political orders, which seemed contingent on a formal request from Colombo, the armed forces were ready with contingency plans to evacuate the nearly 30,000 Sri Lankan soldiers holed up in the Jaffna peninsula.

However, National Security Advisor Brajesh Mishra told newsmen after the second CCS meeting this evening that "no formal request from Colombo has yet been received regarding humanitarian assistance".

To facilitate the CCS confabulations, a meeting of the full Cabinet was cancelled in the morning and the Prime Minister skipped his departure for Bhopal in the evening.

Mr Mishra's announcement was brief

and revealed no details about the timing, nature and extent of the possible humanitarian mission. Informed sources, however, said the Indian rescue operation

## Vaiko satisfied with Govt's approach

MDMK LEADER Vaiko on Tuesday discussed the Sri Lankan crisis with Prime Minister Vajpayee and Defence Minister George Fernandes separately and expressed satisfaction with the "meticulous and cautious approach" of the government towards the ethnic strife in Sri Lanka. Speaking to newsmen later, he said that both Mr Vajpayee and Mr Fernandes had denied any Indian involvement in the Sri Lankan developments.

HTC, New Delhi

would be subject to a cease-fire between the warring forces.

Indications to this effect were available when Mr Mishra said that the Norwegian representative for the Sri Lankan peace

*J-D & N. Secular*  
talks, Mr Eric Solheim, would be reaching here tomorrow to brief Foreign Secretary Lalit Mansingh about the outcome of his efforts. In recent days, he is understood to have held wide-ranging discussions in Colombo.

Mr Atal Behari Vajpayee's decision to stay put in Delhi and not tour Bhopal was a confirmation of the fast-moving developments on the Sri Lankan front. However, he is likely to keep his engagements, over the next two days, in Tirupati and Paradeep.

Highly placed sources said the Indian contingency plans included use of civilian planes, if necessary, to airlift soldiers from Jaffna.

These plans, they clarified, would be put into operation immediately after a go-ahead signal is received from the political authorities.

It is understood that the Indian contingency measures would focus on the timing, swiftness and elimination of any direct confrontation with the LTTE. "All these parameters have been built into the plan", the sources said.

See also Page 14

THE HINDUSTAN TIMES

24 MAY 1988

# White Paper on ISI still on anvil: Advani

HT Correspondent  
New Delhi, May 25

CONTRARY TO popular perception, the Union Home Ministry is still toying with the idea of releasing a White Paper on the activities of Pakistan's Inter-Services Intelligence in India.

In an interview, to be telecast by the Doordarshan tomorrow, Home Minister L. K. Advani said the idea hadn't been shelved altogether: "The White Paper could not be issued earlier due to the demand from various quarters that it should be a comprehensive document. But the release of such a detailed document could have jeopardised the ongoing anti-ISI operations."

Sharing his views on the situation in Kashmir, he said neither the gun nor the conversion of the Line of Control (LoC) into an international border could be the solution to the lingering Kashmir problem.

While stating that he was not averse to greater autonomy for Jammu and Kashmir, if it helped in resolving the crisis, Mr Advani clarified that the autonomy theory could not be confined to Kashmir alone. It would also have to include in its scope other regions of the State.

The Home Minister was of the view that forcing the pace of the peace process would not help, as

all parties' views needed to be heard. Lack of autonomy was not the root cause of militancy in the Valley, he stated.

In response to a question, Mr Advani did not rule out the possibility of holding talks with the All Party Hurriyat Conference (APHC) in the near future. The Government, he said, had already proved its commitment to a dialogue by releasing the jailed APHC leaders.

Explaining his concept of a 'pro-active' Government policy, he said: "We would continue to combat militancy sternly. But a simultaneous effort has to be made to pinpoint the reasons that forced the Kashmiris to pick up the gun. There is a need to redress their legitimate grievances".

Opposing the conversion of LoC into an international border, he commented: "I will not ignore Parliament's unanimous (1994) resolution to get the Pak-occupied-Kashmir vacated from Pakistani control".

The Home Minister maintained that bilateral talks with Islamabad would not serve any purpose until Pakistan stopped cross-border terrorism. As such there was no perceptible change in Pakistan's intentions towards India: "We will change our line of action if any noticeable change takes place in Pakistan's attitude."

THE HINDUSTAN TIMES

26 MAY 2000

FRIDAY, MAY 26, 2000

## TIME AND SPACE

AMONG THE WAYS of looking at INSAT-3B, which was successfully launched in March this year, is how India's orbiting satellites could give a head-long push to time, long buried in the past, into the space age. The support which INSAT-3B could give for development programmes such as the Gramsat Pilot Project inaugurated by the Prime Minister, Mr. Atal Behari Vajpayee, for the benefit of tribal women in Koraput, apart from the hi-tech services it offers for telecommunications, television and weather forecasting, is an illustration of how one half of the world still living in the pastoral past in places such as Koraput is not as far away from the other half in the rarefied world of advanced science and technology. It must be mentioned here that Koraput in Orissa had already stepped into the hi-tech world three decades ago when the Hindustan Aeronautics Ltd. (HAL) set up its factory at Sonabeda for the production of the advanced MiG aircraft engines for the Indian Air Force in collaboration with the erstwhile Soviet Union. This is among the prestigious projects of the HAL. The Sonabeda division of the HAL employing a large number of skilled workers and engineers with many of them drawn from Koraput and just a generation away from the ancient civilisation of the Adivasis is itself a striking example — though this may not be as well known as it should be — of a hamlet sunk amidst hills of breathtaking beauty having reached the space age with a charming felicity. The descent into Sonabeda of hi-tech equipment, such as numerically controlled machines and the upgraded heat-treating processes for making the Light Combat Aircraft for the IAF, and the services which the Gramsat Pilot Project will be getting from the C-band transponders of INSAT 3B are an illustration of science and technology making it possible for rural communities to leap from the centuries in which they had been stuck to the fast-advancing present.

The Prime Minister's poser on why should we lag behind when the entire world is running faster while having the resources and manpower to be able to keep pace with them places matters in the right perspective. The questions here hinge upon how the resources should be harnessed. While the satellites launched by the Indian Space Research Organisation (ISRO) could be used for the eradication of illiteracy and promotion of health care in rural areas, the demands which will have to be met for the achievement of these objectives are quite formidable. The beaming of the satellite programmes to the targets for teaching the three R's is by itself a much simpler task given the availability and the utilisation of the transponders for the purpose. The more exacting task is the placement of the rightly motivated persons on the ground for ensuring the spread of literacy. The experience here seems to be that unless the teaching by the persons entrusted with illiteracy eradication could ensure that the sinking of the three R's into the taught is deep enough and could be retained, the gains would not be lasting. The levels of perseverance required for the eradication of illiteracy through satellite programmes will have to be met with some scouting for the rightly oriented educated unemployed.

With the response to the welfare programmes run by the health services among the rural folk having now become more friendly, the needs which have now to be met hinge upon ensuring the availability of properly located health centres and trained medicos for implementing the programmes, especially those relating to family planning in a country having crossed a population of a billion. INSAT-3B would have gone a long way in space if the programmes it is beaming from 30,000 kilometres could persuade its intended beneficiaries on the ground to walk the extra mile or two to reach the primary schools and the health centres.

16 MAY 2000

HD-12  
29/5

# One year after Kargil

By K. K. Katyal

*The prospects for resumption of the dialogue with Pakistan remain dim, but there can be no escape from it in the ultimate analysis. At some stage, the two neighbours will have to talk.*

**T**HE DAMAGE done to Indo-Pakistan relations by Islamabad's misadventure in Kargil remains acute despite the passage of one year. New Delhi continues to feel a deep sense of betrayal and is not in a mood to resume the dialogue — the absence of tangible steps by Pakistan to stop sponsoring terrorist violence in Jammu and Kashmir. It is a moot point whether the first anniversary of the Kargil conflict would have seen a thaw in tension, had the democratic Government not been dismissed in Pakistan; but the army rule, it is clear, is regarded unpropitious. The prospects of an early end to the current stalemate are, thus, dim. The scope for creative diplomacy is virtually non-existent, but whether track-II interaction has a role is to be seen.

By sheer coincidence, a comprehensive situation report has emerged from the recent discussions of a senior U.S. functionary, Mr. Thomas Pickering, in New Delhi and Islamabad. His visit had not been planned to coincide with the Kargil anniversary — the New Delhi part of it was among the series of contacts, envisaged in the vision statement signed during the visit of the U.S. President, Mr. Bill Clinton — but it became an occasion for an assessment of India-Pakistan relations. In New Delhi, Mr. Pickering's talks were held in a positive spirit, with the Indian side happy at the sympathy shown for its concerns and its cynicism about the Pakistani mood. In Islamabad, it was in the nature of a follow-up to the tough message conveyed by Mr. Clinton to the Pakistani military ruler.

The New Delhi discussions covered, as was intended, a vast area — bilateral relations, regional developments, Asian security, China, Sri Lanka, a brief reference to nuclear issues, but India-Pakistan stalemate was taken up at length. In Pakistan, that was the only other issue, apart from the domestic situation and non-proliferation matters. The talks in New Delhi were significant on two counts — one, because of the detailed enunciation of India's stand and, two, the U.S. response to it. The Indian side, it appears, elaborated the known rationale of its decision not to restart the dialogue unless a "proper climate" was created — in other words, the ground sit-

uation in Jammu and Kashmir confirmed the end of trans-border terrorism. As of now, it was pointed out, terrorist activities and the infiltration of armed bands from Pakistan continued unabated, there being no evidence of any official pressure against the jihadi outfits in Pakistan, contrary to that Government's claims. Also conveyed was the trepidation of the Indian side in dealing with the military dictatorship in Pakistan which, it was pointed out on the strength of experience, had been responsible for starting armed conflicts. New Delhi wondered who wielded the real power in Islamabad — the Chief Executive, General Pervez Musharraf, or the corps commanders or General Aziz, a key architect of the coup, who was later moved to a relatively low-visibility position.

The U.S. side was stated to have shown full understanding of India's hesitations. It found no evidence of the first tangible move by Pakistan which, as was made known by Mr. Clinton during his talks here, was necessary for a positive Indian response and for giving a push to the dialogue process. On the other hand, the first step, it was noted, had been taken by India — in ordering the release of the Hurriyat leaders in Jammu and Kashmir, with the intention of engaging them in talks (as part of the political process to resolve the Kashmir imbroglio). The Americans were believed to have concurred with the Indian view that some of the signals from Pakistan — such as Gen. Musharraf's concession to Islamic fundamentalists in restoring the rigidities of the anti-blasphemy law — were disturbing. On Afghanistan-related matters, too, the U.S. seemed to accept the Indian assessment as against that of Pakistan, obviously because there had been no concrete indication of Islamabad's pressure on the regime in Kabul nor any headway in the efforts to bring to book Osama bin Laden.

These issues, as borne out by reports from Islamabad, were taken up by Mr.

Pickering with Pakistani interlocutors. On terrorism, they did considerable explaining — and this, naturally, became a core issue as the discussion turned to India-Pakistan problems and to the dialogue issue. The official account glossed over this matter — "The Chief Executive emphasised the centrality of the Kashmir issue to peace and security in South Asia. The U.S. should prevail upon India to agree to Pakistan's sincere offer of a dialogue to resolve all outstanding problems, particularly the core issue of Jammu and Kashmir. Pakistan was similarly committed to restoration of durable peace in Afghanistan through reconciliation among Afghan parties." Not unexpectedly, it did not tell the full story.

New Delhi feels vindicated because of Washington's understanding of India's position. With the U.S. pressing Pakistan to take the "first tangible step," the Indian side may be spared immediate pressure (from the U.S. or the rest of the world community) on the dialogue issue. New Delhi would do well to make use of this respite to address the domestic side of the Kashmir problem. The release of the Hurriyat men is, no doubt, the right step but it does not mean much in the absence of related moves. The situation is highly complicated, what with the Hurriyat men speaking in different voices (their single label covers a conglomeration of hardliners and not-so-hardliners). The BJP may have put on the hold its demand for the abrogation of Article 370 of the Constitution in order to accommodate its partners in the National Democratic Alliance, but will it be inclined to take an initiative to put together an autonomy package for Jammu and Kashmir, so very essential for the resolution of the problem in the internal context? Also, there could be no guarantee that the Chief Minister, Dr. Farooq Abdullah, would not act as a spoiler.

The prospects for resumption of the dialogue with Pakistan remain dim, but there can be no escape from it in the ultimate

analysis. At some stage the two neighbours will have to talk — to engage each other. How long it will take is hard to say. However, it would be a mistake to believe that the two countries are heading towards confrontation, the description of the region as "the most dangerous place in the world" notwithstanding. It is a suspended no-dialogue situation (neither engagement nor confrontation). Is India working for the isolation of Pakistan's military regime? That is the belief of some in the ruling establishment in Islamabad — they draw this conclusion from India's moves at the Commonwealth summit, at the NAM Ministerial conference and its role in getting the SAARC summit postponed. But Islamabad, they maintain, has foiled these attempts.

That is not the non-official view in Pakistan. Now that the military regime's honeymoon with the people is over, senior leaders representing the political spectrum blame the Government for the country's isolation and for the failure to resolve the pressing economic problem. The daily *Dawn* quotes a veteran politician, Nawabzada Nasrullah Khan, who last week presided over an all-party conference (on the current situation), as having disputed Gen. Musharraf's claim that Pakistan did not face isolation — "countries like the U.S., France, Germany and the U.K. were supportive of India wanting to become a permanent member of the U.N. Security Council. The Turkish Prime Minister said, during his recent visit to New Delhi, that Turkey and India faced similar problems of terrorism. What does it mean? Nothing except that Pakistan stood isolated in the comity of nations."

The mounting difficulties, signs of unrest and open articulation of criticism is certain to have a bearing on Pakistan's approach to India. The military regime may stop taking even the cosmetic steps for the sake of improving the prospects for contacts or making a show of fulfilling conditions, considered essential by the world community for the resumption of the dialogue. Some such trend is already discernible in the General's latest statements. It only means that the stage for a serious, substantive bid for reconciliation is getting pushed farther and farther away.

THE HINDU

5 MAY 1999

# Malik invites private sector to make advanced weapons

The Times of India News Service

NEW DELHI: Declaring that "national defence is everybody's business", the Army chief, Gen V.P. Malik, on Tuesday invited the private sector to enter advanced armament production fields like surveillance systems, weapon locating radars, night-vision devices and long-range target engagement means, where the country lacked capability.

Stressing the urgency of indigenous production of such advanced weaponry system, Gen Malik said the country was facing two major obstacles in this field of "non-availability of technology and absence of advanced manufacturing capa-



Gen. Malik

bility". This, he stressed, "has to be overcome".

Hinting that a "demarcation and adjustment" of sectors could be made for private, public and concurrent sectors, Gen Malik told the Confederation of Indian Industry (CII) that surplus capacities of defence public sector undertakings and ordnance factories should be made available to the private sector which has already gained access to the defence research laboratories.

Hinting at a major policy shift, he said: "The public sector will no doubt dominate the strategic and lethal areas like major armaments and ammunition production. But some policy changes can be made, provided that the industry is bold and prepared to step in."

The Army chief thought there is a case for opening out many more areas of defence production for pri-

vate sector.

Many of the 39 ordnance factories, established with the main purpose of achieving self-reliance for the armed forces, are not cost effective and sometimes they "do not measure up to expectations", he said. "We don't wish to go in for imports and will like to become self-reliant," he said. The private sector has considerable scope to meet the army's requirements, particularly for high-altitude equipment and uniforms.

Gen Malik said that the industry and trade could produce several non-critical items which ordnance factories were now making, and take over production of as many items as possible.

Similarly, of the nine defence PSUs, comprising 31 units, only Bharat Dynamics Limited (BDL) is purely for defence use.

THE TIMES OF INDIA,

31 MAR 1991

# Central ban soon on PWG naxals, says Advani

By Our Special Correspondent

**NEW DELHI, APRIL 6.** The Union Home Minister, Mr. L. K. Advani, today said the ban on the People's War Group (PWG) would be imposed soon.

"It will help the affected States to coordinate better and launch inter-State operations against the

extremists. The ban will come soon," he said after inaugurating a seminar by the Special Protection Group to mark its raising day.

The proposal to bring about a ban was discussed at the meeting of the Chief Ministers of Andhra Pradesh, Madhya Pradesh, Maharashtra and Orissa.

The meeting gave the nod for a

joint operational centre to direct and monitor anti-naxalite operations in these States.

Asked about extension of the ban on the LTTE, Mr. Advani said the Centre was awaiting the Tamil Nadu Government's recommendation in this regard. The ban is scheduled to expire on May 17. It is usually extended for a period of two years.

PTI reports:

Mr. Advani labelled organisations such as the Hurriyat Conference in Kashmir as "dissident groups" and sought to make a clear distinction between talking to such groups and policy towards Pakistan.

Mr. Advani defended yesterday's offer to hold talks with the militant groups in Jammu and

Kashmir saying the Hurriyat Conference was only a "dissident Indian group".

Asked what was expected of the talks, he said "though much may not come out of such talks, the idea of releasing Hurriyat leaders was to draw a line between policy towards Pakistan and dissident groups within the country."

To a question on the released Hurriyat leaders talking to Pakistan, he said: "let them talk".

**Many front organisations may be hit: Page 10**

7 APR 2000



# The Kargil committee report

By Sudhanshu Ranade

HD-12  
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N Sec under

**T**HE STATE of affairs revealed by the Kargil committee report is frightening. Ignorance or immaturity in the case of particular politicians (or parties) one has to live with as cheerfully as one can. But the massive gap that evidently exists between the 'human capabilities' or policy preparedness of our experts on the one hand, and, on the other, the awesome technological sophistication of our weapons of mass destruction make our future prospects look grim and gloomy. It is, however, possible that the situation seems alarming only because the committee was less than candid; because it deliberately combined the task of dissemination of information with the task of psychological warfare (vis-a-vis Pakistan).

There are two basic points: the way that India's nuclear capability affects the country's military strategy vis-a-vis Pakistan, and the way that the nuclear capability of Pakistan does so. According to the report, thanks to the extreme secrecy with which successive Prime Ministers dealt with the matter, both our diplomats and our armed forces were all along totally in the dark about the state of India's nuclear preparedness. Hard to believe, but that is what the report states; and that is also what our army chiefs have at times said in public. This, it is said, put India at a 'disadvantage' vis-a-vis Pakistan; which, for its part, is reported to have repeatedly threatened, to 'use its nuclear weapons as a first resort in any future confrontation'; at the highest level, for almost a decade before the 1998 tests at Pokhran and Chagai.

As a result, the report states, Pakistan could have been left emboldened by the thought that, thanks to its nuclear deterrent, it could 'sustain its proxy war against India, inflicting thousands of casualties, without being unduly concerned about India's conventional superiority'. The point is that now that we are in a position to deter the use of Pakistan's nuclear deterrent, we could, if we chose, resort to a

credible declaratory policy of swiftly punishing wanton and willful violations of the sanctity of the LoC'. Of course, if this were all that the committee thought that our nuclear capability enables us to achieve, it would have made no sense for it to stress the disadvantageous position that our nuclear secrecy placed us in all these years; when, right up to Kargil, Pakistan had for years carefully avoided brazen violation of the LoC. Accordingly, towards the end of the executive summary, the committee goes well beyond this position to state that

words, when both countries are able and willing to use nuclear weapons, should their use become necessary, notwithstanding the intimidatory postures adopted by Pakistan, the situation pretty much reverts to what it would have been if neither country was nuclear capable. It is in this connection that the President, Mr. K. R. Narayanan, in the course of his speech at the banquet he hosted for the U.S. President, Mr. Bill Clinton, made the comment that such postures were not to be taken at face value; that "alarmist descriptions will

than military victory over India; to force India to the negotiating table.

Of course, the plan did not work. But that was because of Pakistan's miscalculation, rather than because of its 'irrationality'. It is sure to try this tactic again, at some point in the future, when it believes that it has a better chance of success; taking advantage of the opportunities that would become available if India does indeed at some point seriously contemplate the exercise of its option to defend itself against massive cross-border terrorism by "decisive retaliation in a manner, time and place of its choosing".

There is also another angle to this; another bylane of rational action that the committee, unfortunately, failed even to mention, critical though it is for an understanding of Pakistan's options. Why, in the first place, did Pakistan think that it was in its interests to acquire a nuclear capability (as distinct from that other question of why China thought it was in its interests for Pakistan to have a nuclear 'deterrent' vis-a-vis India.) The answer that people are all too quick to trot out is that Pakistan thought it needed a nuclear deterrent to offset India's superior conventional capability. But it would hardly do to suppose that Pakistan was content to leave it at that, without going on to consider the impact of India's nuclear deterrent on its own nuclear deterrent. The way Pakistan looks at this question is something that we urgently need to know more about.

The way things are projected or perceived at the international level counts for a great deal in the problems that India has been having with Pakistan. This being the case, it is unfortunate that, even after the wide-ranging consultations which went into its making, the report of the Kargil committee has nothing useful to say about how exactly the country must try to 'win back alienated sections of the Kashmiri population, and attend to genuine (?) discontent'.

***The report of the Kargil committee has nothing useful to say about how exactly the country must try to win back alienated sections of the Kashmiri population.***

since it is simply not possible to effectively police every mile of our border against intrusions, "the proper response would be a declaratory policy that deliberate infringement of the LoC and wanton cross-border terrorism in furtherance of proxy war will meet with prompt retaliation in a manner, time and place of India's choosing".

The report also notes that successive Army Chiefs and Directors-General of Military Operations told the Committee that the idea of using India's conventional superiority also 'did not arise for various reasons other than the nuclear factor'. What these reasons were, the report does not say. But they do not seem to have affected the committee's overall assessment; that, after Pokhran, we are in a better position to deter attempts to bleed us dry through insurgency in Kashmir and the Northeast.

Let me now turn to the question of Pakistan's nuclear capability. So far as the 'objective' theory of deterrence is concerned, the fact is simply that India's nuclear capability deters Pakistan from using its nuclear deterrent to deter a conventional military response by India. In other

only encourage those who want to break the peace and indulge in terrorism and violence".

This logic would, however, not work if Pakistan is in fact less than rational or 'objective' in its impulses. Given that it is in Pakistan's interest to pretend that this is indeed the case, it is very disturbing indeed to find the report of the Kargil committee seemingly lending credence to this view, with the statement that "Pakistan's action at Kargil was not rational. Its behaviour patterns require to be carefully studied in order to gain better understanding of the psyche of its leadership". There is no quarrel with the position that there must be access to channels to understand the way the mind of an enemy works. But the suggestion of irrationality should perhaps have been left out of the committee's assessment. Particularly since there was indeed a rational explanation for Kargil; an explanation which the committee has itself noted — that Pakistan's intention was to make use of the post-Pokhran international concern about South Asia as a nuclear flashpoint to win a diplomatic rather

8 APR 2003

# 'ISI encouraging militants in Assam'

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

GUWAHATI, April 7. — The ISI is creating new militant outfits in Assam on communal and ethnic lines besides arranging passports for Ulfa C-in-C, Paresh Barua, the Chief Minister, Mr Prafulla Kumar Mahanta, has said. Making a statement in the Assembly on ISI activities in the state last night, Mr Mahanta said the police had gathered evidence to prove that the ISI was fomenting violence and militancy in the state by either creating new outfits or actively supporting local ones.

The ISI, he said, was also promoting fundamentalism and insurgency activities among the local Muslim youths by misleading them for the cause of "jihad". Expressing concern at hundreds of Ulfa cadres' receiving arms training from the ISI, Mr Mahanta said the ISI was inciting violence, sabotaging oil pipelines, railway tracks and other communication networks in the state.

Describing the modus operandi of the Intelligence agency, the Chief Minister said it had procured several passports for Paresh Barua and Pakistani officials in their Dhaka High Commission were arranging passports for other Ulfa leaders in various Muslim names. They were then sending them to Karachi airport from where they were being whisked away immediately in unmarked vehicles to militant training centres, he said.

Police had possession of a fraud Bangladeshi passport issued to Barua in the name of Kamaruddin Zaman Khan with the help of an official at the Pakistani High Commission in Dhaka, he said.

THE STATESMAN

APR 2000

## Ammunition loss may affect strike capability

By Atul Aneja

NEW DELHI, APRIL 29. The destruction of over 8,000 tonnes of explosives in the 400-acre ammunition depot in Kanjoli line in Bharatpur may affect the Army's preparedness for offensive strikes in deserts and also retard its ongoing post-Kargil modernisation drive.

The depot feeds ammunition to the strike elements of the Army's Southern Command. This command possesses a large number of tanks, infantry combat vehicles, artillery guns, mobile air defence vehicles and multi-barrel rockets. These mechanised columns are necessary for undertaking offensive strikes in the desert sector — the Army's favoured area of operation.

The Army's operational doctrine encourages offensive missions across the deserts towards Rahimyar Khan area in Pakistan. The primary objective of these mechanised columns is either to cut Pakistan's main communication arteries or to engage and destroy its armoured reserves — the backbone of its national defence.

The IAF has been geared to aid this movement by undertaking offensive strikes in the enemy territory and targeting high value targets such as key bridges, air fields and railway marshalling yards.

The fire in the depot, which housed anti-tank missiles, artillery shells and rockets, will therefore deplete the punch of the mechanised forces for some time. According to Government sources, a

majority of the stocks of multi-barrel rockets have been ravaged in the fire. Expensive air defence missiles, however, escaped destruction.

According to preliminary investigation, it will take some 15 days to replenish the stocks. Part of the ammunition, such as small arms rounds and low-caliber field guns, can be made up from indigenous sources. This, however, depends on the "surge capacity" or the overall capacity of ordnance factories to accelerate production of this ammunition. The factories have an in-built capacity to enhance production during a war.

Replacement of low-tech ammunition can also be done by shifting some stocks from other ammunition depots, which might have surplus. Replenishment of imported ammunition is, however, more difficult. Rockets and shells for the Bofors guns will have to be imported.

The fire will also have a "cascading effect" on modernisation. With ammunition around an estimated Rs. 6,000 crores destroyed, the allocation for modernisation for all the three services will now have to be reworked to make up this loss. This can affect modernisation, unless the Government allocates more funds.

Not surprisingly, the Chief of the Army's Southern Command, Lt. General S. Padmanabhan, is on his way to Army Headquarters for consultation on Sunday. At the moment, the Army's main task revolves around ascertaining whether the fire was caused by sabotage.

30 APR 2000

# Ammunition stocks go up in flames

VINAY JHA *SF 1 300 1*  
STATESMAN NEWS SERVICE

BHARATPUR, April 29. — The fire which broke out at the ammunition depot here yesterday has destroyed 8,000 to 10,000 tonnes of ammunition, including bullets and shells for small arms, armour and artillery stockpiled in 20 open plinths. *Q-D & N file*

Fire-fighting operations were on this afternoon, but the blaze which has killed two and injured at least three, was said to be under control. A court of inquiry has been instituted to find out what started the fire. Officers at the site maintained the fire started "outside" and later moved into the depot.

"Preliminary reports suggest the fire began outside the perimeters of the depot", Brigadier NK Mahajan said.

It spread fast due to very strong winds and the searing heat, with temperatures reaching 46 degree Celsius.

The depot, out of bounds for civilians, appeared to be under siege today with a posse of policemen guarding the gates and only fire-tenders allowed in amid intermittent blasts.

A large number of people from nearby villages stood in anxious clusters outside the gates, asking journalists from time to time whether the fire had been put out.

Just when the fire began, however, is not clear yet, with some villagers claiming they heard the first explosions shortly after 1 p.m. yesterday. Others said it would be closer to 3 p.m. "I heard the sirens around 2.45 p.m. Then I saw smoke billowing out of the

# FIRE:

(Continued from page 1)  
depot. The explosions confirmed our worst fears," said Mr Mahendra Sharma, a postman. The post office is just a stone's throw away from the depot.

Though the authorities said 8,000 tonnes to 10,000 tonnes of ammunition was destroyed, they refused to estimate the loss in terms of money. "That will have to await the probe," Brig Mahajan said.

The depot's fire-fighting gadgets and fire-tenders requisitioned from Agra, Mathura and Jaipur could not be used till late at night as munition kept going off with great ferocity.

Witnesses recounted how bullets and rockets came raining down on the villages and many refused to buy the depot authorities' claim that people in the neighbourhood were more or less out of danger.

Mr George Fernandes arrived here in the afternoon and inspected the site. With the fire well under control the next phase of the operation would be combing the surrounding areas to defuse unexploded or partly spent shells, he said.

■ See FIRE: page 10

THE STATESMAN

JUN 2000

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## India receives Bofors shells from Russia

Moscow, April 12

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INDIA HAS received from Russia powerful artillery shells, specially designed for its Bofors guns, which will improve the range and pinpoint accuracy of these guns.

Early this week, the Indian Army received the first consignment of these shells, which, according to Russian experts, will enable reduction of expenditure by 50 to 100 times, task implementation time by five to seven times, besides reducing overall cost by three to five times.

The 'Krasnopol-M' artillery system, designed and produced by the Russian "Instrument Design Bureau", the KBP, at the request of the Indian Government, enables production of these high-precision shells for the Bofors guns.

The effectiveness of the shells has been tested both in the Indian deserts and mountains, the sources said. India had approached the Russian "Instrument Design Bureau" for meeting India's requirement of appropriate shells, to be designed and produced specially for the Bofors guns, the sources said. (UNI)

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THE HINDUSTAN TIMES

13 APR 2000

# CBI seeks Operation Leech details from the Army

Soumen Datta  
Calcutta, April 17

THE CBI has sought more specific information from the Army on Operation Leech, the joint inter-services operation, in which 73 Myanmar nationals were arrested in February, 1998, in the Landfall Island of the Andamans for gun-running.

"It is felt that the number of witnesses examined so far is inadequate to cover all aspects of the operation. It is therefore requested that the following may also please be made available with a view to enabling us to complete the investigation expeditiously," said CBI inspector-general YP Singh in his letter to the Director General of Military Operations (DGMO), Lt. Gen NC Viz.

The CBI has sought detailed information on the following:

- The list of personnel who fired on the alleged terrorists/gun-runners.
- The list of personnel along with their present postings who searched the trawlers belonging to the gun-runners/terrorists.
- The list of personnel who apprehended the 73 alleged gun-runners/terrorists.
- Copy/copies of intelligence reports on the basis of which this operation was launched.
- Copies of log books of the mes-

sages exchanged during the operation.

■ Copies of the radio interception of communication of the alleged terrorists/gun-runners.

■ List of arms/ammunition used in the operation along with their caliber.

■ Identity, if any, of one Col. Grewal, who is alleged to have participated in the operation.

In his letter, Singh has also mentioned that "an advocate has filed a petition on behalf of 36 alleged terrorists/gun runners, who despite their having been granted bail are

presently confined at Port Blair, seeking their discharge on grounds of inordinate delay in investigation. Even though we are opposing the petition, it is imperative that the inputs are made available for early completion of investigation".

Singh also pointed out that the defence authorities have made available four defence personnel as witnesses." The CBI investigating officer has already examined these witnesses. Singh felt that the number of witnesses examined so far is inadequate to cover all the aspects of Operation Leech.

THE HINDUSTAN TIMES

18 APR 2000

# 'Group of Ministers' to review national security

HD-1

By Harish Khare

19/4

**NEW DELHI, APRIL 18.** The Prime Minister, Mr. Atal Behari Vajpayee, has constituted a "Group of Ministers" that will "review the national security system in its entirety" in the light of recommendations of the Kargil Review Committee.

The "Group of Ministers" is expected to give its report within six months. An announcement to this effect was made by the Government in the two houses of Parliament in the form of "supplementary Action Taken Report on the recommendations of the Kargil Review Committee."

The Union Home Minister, Mr. L. K. Advani, will head the group, which will also include the Defence Minister, Mr. George Fernandes, the Foreign Affairs Minister, Mr. Jaswant Singh, and the Finance Minister, Mr. Yashwant Sinha. In other words, the Cabinet Committee on Security affairs, minus the Prime Minister. The National Security Adviser, Mr. Brajesh Mishra, will be a "special invitee" to the "Group of Ministers." Besides, it is free to "commission such studies as it feels necessary or set up expert groups on specific subjects."

The Kargil Review Committee had submitted its report to the Government on December 15, 1999. It was headed by Mr. K. Subrahmanyam, and comprised Mr. B. G. Verghese, Lt. Gen. (retd) K. K. Hazari, and Mr. Satish Chandra. In the report, the Committee had noted that "the Kargil experience, the continuing proxy war, and the prevailing nucle-

arised security environment justify a thorough review of the national security system in its entirety." The announcement of the Advani-headed "Group of Ministers" is an attempt to heed the Kargil Review Committee.

However, the Committee was categorical that "such a review cannot be undertaken by an overburdened bureaucracy. An independent body of credible experts, whether a national commission or one or more task forces or otherwise as expedient, is required to conduct such studies which must be undertaken expeditiously."

In today's announcement it was not clear whether the "Group of Ministers" would rely on the "overburdened bureaucracy" or would tap expertise outside the Government.

According to the Subrahmanyam Committee, many specific issues need to be looked into as part of the much-needed "thorough review of the national security system in its entirety." These include the National Security Council, intelligence gathering, border management, counter-terrorist operations, defence budget and modernisation, national security management and apex decision-making, India's nuclear policy, media relations and information technology, civil military liaison and "Declaratory Policy for Line of Control."

The "Group of Ministers" is now expected to find the time and expertise to examine all recommendations, within a period of six months.

19 APR 2000

THURSDAY, APRIL 20, 2000

## KARGIL FALL-OUT

THE CONSTITUTION OF a "Group of Ministers" is the first of what are likely to be many steps towards conducting an exhaustive review of the national security system. Such a review became inevitable after the Kargil Review Committee, which submitted its report to the Government a few months ago, chose to recommend a re-examination of the national security system "in its entirety". Within this omnibus recommendation were contained a series of proposals relating to a wide range of subjects such as nuclear policy, counter-terrorist operations, intelligence gathering, border management and the interface between the civil authority and the armed forces headquarters. While a few of the suggestions were specific and action-oriented (acquisition of more high altitude unmanned aerial vehicles, UAVs, and reduction of the age profile of the army), the rest were essentially open-ended recommendations that further studies (by independent experts) be conducted in certain broad and diverse subjects related to national security.

Therefore, the principal task of the Group of Ministers — chaired by the Home Minister, Mr. L. K. Advani, including, Mr. George Fernandes (Defence), Mr. Jaswant Singh (External Affairs) and Mr. Yashwant Sinha (Finance) — is likely to be the setting up a number of other groups or committees to study one issue or another. If the recommendations of the K. Subrahmanyam-headed Kargil Review Committee are heeded in full, then the resources of a number of independent military and strategic affairs experts are going to be tapped for conducting this exercise. Such a wideranging review is arguably a periodic necessity and probably, in the present circumstances, an acute need. It is another matter that the terms of reference of the Committee — which was restricted to reviewing the events that led up to Kargil and recommending measures to safeguard the country against such armed intrusions — do not strictly support or bear out recommendations of such a broad and sweeping nature. Evidently, Mr. K. Subrahmanyam and his

fellow members worked on the premise that Kargil should not be treated as an isolated incident but something which must be analysed against the background of Pakistan's proxy war in Jammu and Kashmir and recent changes in the security environment. One result of adopting such a perspective are recommendations which are seemingly unrelated (or at least not directly related) to the Kargil conflict — for example, the suggestion that India bring out a white paper on nuclear policy. Quite remarkably, the report suggests that an important (if not the main) purpose for such an exercise is to establish that the BJP Government was not the sole architect of India's nuclear weaponisation programme. Rather, it is to demonstrate that the programme, which Mr. Subrahmanyam clearly believes had a wide consensus, was the result of policies followed by successive Indian Governments from the time of Indira Gandhi.

It is not at all clear why the task allotted to the Group of Ministers was not entrusted to the National Security Council which was set up in November 1998, in the wake of the Pokhran blasts. Constituted with the very purpose of taking a holistic view of the country's security needs, the NSC is chaired by the Prime Minister and made up of five Union Ministers — four of whom are already represented in the Group of Ministers. Whatever the reason for ignoring the NSC, now that a nodal body to implement the Kargil Review Committee's multifarious recommendations is in place, the task is to ensure this is done as expeditiously as possible. "Procrastination", as the Committee's report warned, "has cost countries dear". Moreover, it is important to remember that almost 500 Indian soldiers lost their lives during the Kargil conflict. If the Subrahmanyam Committee's recommendations help in ensuring that an armed intrusion of that nature is never repeated, then the most fitting tribute to the memory of the slain soldiers would be to see they are quickly implemented.

20 APR 2000



## Hurriyat not reciprocal, says Fernandes

LUCKNOW, APRIL 21. The Defence Minister, Mr. George Fernandes, today said the Hurriyat leaders' response to the Government's offer of talks had not been "encouraging".

HO-1 22/4  
The Centre had a positive approach to holding talks with the Hurriyat Conference and it should be reciprocated, he told reporters here.

"The government has a positive approach that is why we released some Hurriyat leaders", but reciprocity in the approach from the other end was lacking.

Asked whether the Government would release all jailed Hurriyat leaders as was hinted at by the Jammu and Kashmir Chief Minister in Delhi yesterday, Mr. Fernandes said Dr. Farooq Abdullah has given his own opinion. The steps in this regard can only be taken by the government."

To a question whether the Chief Minister's statement reflected a lack of "unity of mind" between the Centre and the State Government, he said "it would have been better had Abdullah not spoken".

Mr. Fernandes, however, hastened to add that "Farooq Abdullah is the Chief Minister, there is nothing wrong if he says something in this regard".

Coming down heavily on those who criticised the Government's efforts to boost revenues by increasing taxes, the Minister said, "we must be prepared to pay more taxes."

"On the one hand we say our forces are not being modernised and on the other we oppose any attempt to boost resources by way of fresh taxation." — PTI

See also Page 13

THE HINDU

22 APR 2000

# Plan to strengthen security forces mooted

Anil Anand  
New Delhi, April 21

11/12 221  
FACING A daunting challenge posed by the fast-changing profile of militancy with modern weaponry and technology in vogue, the Union Home Ministry has chalked out a plan to strengthen and modernise the Central security forces and to assist States in strengthening their respective police forces.

The 'futuristic assessment' of the Ministry, which has projected the need to raise 261 additional battalions as part of the plan, is likely to be examined by an inter-ministerial group. The group was set up on the directions of the Cabinet Committee on Security.

The augmentation plan, which will be spread over a period of five years, will involve an expenditure of Rs 5,413 crore. This would include an amount of Rs 2,083 crore as non-recurring expenditure, Rs 2,730 crore as capital cost and Rs 1,600 crore as annual recurring cost.

According to a presentation by the Home

Ministry before a Parliamentary Standing Committee, the respective modernisation plans by the BSF, CRPF, ITBP, CISE, NSG and the Assam Rifles are under active consideration. The implementation of these plans would have a total financial implication of Rs 4,025 crore that would include Rs 2,530 crore for BSF, Rs 546 crore for CRPF, Rs 218 crore ITBP, Rs 101 crore for CISE, Rs 84 crore for NSG and Rs 546 crore for Assam Rifles. In view of increasing

## Combating terrorism

dependence of State Governments on Central para-military forces for routine law and order duties, the Ministry has stressed that the States should take steps to modernise and upgrade their respective police forces.

Accordingly, a proposal was submitted by the Ministry officials to the 11th Finance Commission projecting total requirement of the police and its needs with specific focus on manpower, training, infrastructure, transport,

procuring weapons and equipment. The Ministry has proposed the creation of training infrastructure alone would need an outlay of Rs 26,622 crore. It has sought 100 per cent financial aid for construction of police stations, outpost buildings, mitigating housing needs, supply of weapons, manpower and equipment.

According to a Home Ministry study, combined expenditure of the State Governments on their respective police force is Rs 11,397 crore. The Finance Commission has been urged to create additional financial resources. The study suggested that the major portion of the available resources was being spent on pay and allowances and maintenance of the existing weaponry.

Agreeing with the Home Ministry's views on modernisation of the State police to check growing dependence on Central forces, the Standing Committee admitted that with their scanty resources, it would not be possible for the State Governments to undertake this gigantic task. The Union Government would have to arrange for an infrastructure.

THE HINDUSTAN TIMES

2 APR 2000

# Vajpayee, Fernandes briefed on J&K

Shishir Gupta

New Delhi, April 21

IN A significant development, Prime Minister Atal Behari Vajpayee, Defence Minister George Fernandes and the three Service Chiefs were yesterday briefed on the Kashmir developments by the Director General Military Operations (DGMO).

Highly placed Government sources said that Lt Gen NC Viji, DGMO, India, gave a presentation before the Prime Minister on the profile and posture of Pakistani forces across the 740-km Line of Control and the actual ground position line (AGPL) in Siachen. The presentation, it is learnt, focused on the insurgency situation and the latest tactics adopted by *jehadi* militants in Kashmir. The suicide car bomber, who tried to ram into the 15 Corps headquarters at Badamibagh on Wednesday, also figured in the meeting at the Army Headquarters on Thursday evening.

Taking this development as an ominous portent, the

Army is understood to have decided to increase the force profile in the State. It plans to deter the Pak-sponsored militants by using helicopter gunships for



ferrying troops and destroying militant hideouts in the higher reaches of Kashmir. The Northern Army Command, it seems, employing "vigilance in force"

strategy is all geared to give a body blow to the decade-long insurgency in the State by seeking and engaging the *jehadi* militants.

It is learnt the Army has indicated to the Government that it is in favour of fencing the borders in the Rajouri sector to prevent infiltration and strengthen anti-insurgency grid in the State. Intelligence inputs indicate that Pakistan has deployed more troops and force multipliers south of Pir Panjal and there is apparently a concentration of militants around Muzaffarabad in Pak Occupied Kashmir. There are reports that Pakistan has procured from the western vendors top-of-the-line snow clothing and snow-mobiles to equip an entire battalion of troops.

In his presentation, the DGMO is understood to have given an overview of developments relating to *fidayeen* attacks on security and Army establishments in Kashmir and Pak-aided infiltration of militants into the Valley.

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

THE HINDUSTAN TIMES

22 APR 2000

# Security review an eyewash: ex-generals

KEITH FLORY  
STATESMAN NEWS SERVICE

NEW DELHI, April 22. — If the present  
of the Subrahmanyam  
Committee's report on Kargil kindled  
some hope, the government's declara-  
tion that it had ordered "a thorough  
review, by an appropriate body, of the  
national security system in its entirety"  
has snubbed it out.

For, it has been officially said that the  
"appropriate body" is a ministerial  
group: the ministers for home, external  
affairs, defence, and finance. In effect,  
the Cabinet Committee on Security,  
minus the Prime Minister. The group  
that ought to have examined the recom-  
mendations of the "appropriate body" is  
now formulating them.

The disappointment in Defence circles  
is not just born of technicalities. Would  
any of those four ministers possess gen-  
uine expertise in Defence and security  
affairs? Only one of them has a military  
background, but it is some 30 years that  
Mr Jaswant Singh last donned the mili-  
tary uniform.

Not that security affairs are  
the monopoly of uniformed personnel,

but true expertise would require sus-  
tained study of the subject in depth, and  
few Indian politicians have devoted  
themselves to that kind of specialisa-  
tion.

That the ministerial group "may com-  
mission such studies as it feels neces-  
sary or set up expert groups on specific  
subjects", as Parliament has been  
informed, is a self-admission of its lack  
of expertise. Yet a genuine national  
security review would require spe-  
cialised attention.

What causes much concern among mil-  
itary analysts is that even if expert  
opinion is obtained by the group, it will  
be processed by their officials —  
bureaucrats who are in no small way  
responsible for the national security  
effort being far from what it  
could be.

"A huge fraud, designed to see that  
nothing is done" is how the highly  
respected Lt Gen V Raghavan (ret'd)  
described the government's action.  
"This is a clear sign that nobody wants  
to change the system." There was much  
expertise available, it had been exclud-  
ed he observed, dubbing the move as  
"hogwash."

The Subrahmanyam Committee  
had identified many shortcomings, it  
would have made sense to entrust  
that highly-rated analyst with the  
constituting task forces to deal with the  
specific weaknesses, observed the  
General.

He felt the "supplementary action  
taken report" tabled in Parliament was  
aimed at deflecting attention, to avoid  
awkward questions that MPs might  
ask.

That he was not off the mark  
was established within Parliament  
itself. Just a day after the appointment  
of the ministerial group was announced,  
did a written reply cite its establish-  
ment by way of response to a  
question on the reorganisation of securi-  
ty.

Equally unimpressed was the former  
Army Vice-Chief Lt Gen VK Sood (ret'd).  
"The government does not appear to be  
very serious, we are back to square one  
until another Kargil develops." The  
ministerial group was intended to take  
the "guiltible" public for yet another  
"ride".

Noting that the report had been tabled  
in Parliament when both Houses were

in turmoil over the RSS-Gujarat govern-  
ment issue and was yet to be debated,  
Gen Sood said the government  
ought to have been pressed into  
stating what action had been taken on  
each of the specific recommendations.  
Now everything would get lost under  
the garb of the ministerial group's exer-  
cise.

What was the government's  
position, Gen Sood asked, on what  
he believed was the critical aspect  
of the recommendations — that  
India adopt a "declaratory policy that  
deliberate infringement of the sanctity  
of the LoC and wanton cross-border ter-  
rorism in furtherance of proxy war will  
be met with prompt retaliation in a  
manner, time and place of India's choos-  
ing."

The bottom line must be the action  
that is taken observed the Deputy  
Director of the Institute for Defence  
Studies and Analyses, Cmde CU  
Bhaskar. The real value of the  
Subrahmanyam Committee report was  
that for the first time had such a docu-  
ment been made public, what it gener-  
ated would make the difference to  
national security.

THE STATESMAN

23 APR 2008

# Fernandes sees signs of Kargil II

STATESMAN NEWS SERVICE

CHENNAI, April 22. — There are signs galore that Pakistan may again try to precipitate a Kargil-like situation, Mr George Fernandes said here today. There had been incidents of suicide squads sneaking into the country and of mercenaries being lined up near the border, he said.

The Pakistani leadership too had been making statements that it would create "more Kargils", he said. "So, when there are such developments and statements, we have to take necessary precautions and make it obvious that we are prepared to handle any situation."

The defence minister was in the city to inaugurate a one-day seminar on "acceleration of defence production through the joint sector" organised by the Tamil Nadu Small and Tiny Industries Association.

He said Mr Bill Clinton's visit and appeal to Pakistan to stop cross-border terrorism had apparently had little effect on the Pakistani leadership. "It only shows that Pakistan is not prepared to take friendly advice from a long-time friend," he added.

He said there was need for a Budget allocation of 3 per cent of the GDP to modernise the armed forces and keep them in a state of constant readiness. Very little money had been allocated for Defence over the last nine years, undermining,

as Kargil had proved, the forces' level of readiness, he said.

While the NDA government had earmarked 28 per cent of the GDP for Defence in the current Budget, several projects trapped in the incubation stage for several years had been activated and extended fresh funds, Mr Fernandes added. Work had restarted, he pointed out, on the naval base in Karwar, for which the foundation stone had been laid in 1983. The country would

## TALKS OFFER

NEW DELHI, April 22. — The All-Party Hurriyat Conference today described yesterday's remarks by Mr Fernandes as "confused" and said it was yet to receive any formal proposal for talks from the government.

Mr Fernandes had yesterday criticised the Hurriyat for not responding to the talks offer. — SNS

acquire the most sophisticated weapons and modernise its 39 ordnance factories in preparation of more indigenous manufacture, he assured.

Earlier, at the seminar, he said: "We could also make and sell armaments to them. We have the capa-

bilities developed in times of adversities."

He said a consortium of four or more big companies could come together to export indigenously-made weapons. "It is time we started roping in the private sector," he said.

"Our neighbour buys arms from the same companies we buy from. How do we know these companies maintain any secrecy code? They are human too, not robots," he posed, adding: "If we still look at Indians with suspicion and trust only the White man, then surely there is something wrong with us."

THE STATESMAN

23 APR 2000

# Indian Navy eyes South China Sea

Shishir Gupta  
New Delhi, April 23

HFI 29/4

THE INDIAN Navy has ambitious plans to exercise a Kilo-class submarine and a maritime reconnaissance aircraft in the South China Sea later during the year.

Highly placed Government sources said the plan was unveiled by the Naval Operations Directorate in a presentation made during the Naval Commanders' Conference last week. The Navy would be sending its ships to hold bilateral exercises with the South Korean and the fledgling Vietnamese Navy in October-November this year.

On return, these ships will conduct unilateral exercises in the South China Sea along with the submarine. A maritime reconnaissance aircraft will be flown from the Indian shores to participate in these manoeuvres.

Significantly, the plan has been mooted at a time when the top brass of the Indian Navy is toying with the idea of changing the force profile. The Naval Headquarters feels that Indian Navy should be in the forefront of defence diplomacy in order to promote goodwill with the navies in the region. The present Naval

Commanders are weighing the idea of the Indian Navy acquiring a capability to send expeditionary forces.

This is part of the Navy's strategy to engage the navies of the region and at the same time maintain effective deterrence.

The change in the Naval top brass' thinking is in line with Defence Minister George Fernandes' speech, made during the commissioning of INS Brahmaputra on April 14, that the Indian Navy's interests lie from north of Arabian Sea to the South China Sea. The Defence Minister defined the Navy's interests while indicating that Japan and Vietnam were emerging as India's strategic partners for countering piracy from the Indian waters to the South China Sea.

The concept of sending expeditionary forces has been defined in clear terms in the United States "Naval Vision 2010" document.

The document chalks out the future programme of the US Navy, the kind of profile it should have and its role in the unfolding decade. However, it is learnt that the South China Sea exercise plan was questioned by some of the seniormost naval commanders during the conference.

They queried the Operations Directorate on the aim of such an exercise and pointed out that this move could have diplomatic overtones. According to them, it has the potential of creating unnecessary suspicion in the minds of the nations bordering South China Sea.

Defence analysts point out that there was nothing new in conducting joint exercises with Vietnam or South Korea as the Indian Navy's guided missile destroyer INS Delhi had conducted such manoeuvres in 1998. India had sent its sole aircraft carrier INS Viraat, currently undergoing refit, to the Emirates for demonstration purposes last year. The Navy has been routinely exercising with the Singapore Navy and the navies of Indian Ocean littoral states.

But the Navy's move to conduct a unilateral exercise using four or five large warships, a Kilo-class submarine and a maritime reconnaissance aircraft in South China Sea is inexplicable, the analysts say. According to them, the Russian-made Kilo-class submarine is a classified project and there was no point in exposing (picking up the radar signatures through sonabuys) these submarines to US ships patrolling in the area.

THE HINDUSTAN TIMES

24 APR 2000

# No shortage of funds for IAF: Fernandes

STATESMAN NEWS SERVICE

55-8 26/4

9 08 14 Fernandes  
**GEORGE PLEA**

NEW DELHI, April 25. — The defence minister, Mr George Fernandes, today assured the Indian Air Force that there will be no shortage of funds for the long-awaited acquisition of necessary equipment, including the advanced jet trainer, the airborne warning and control systems and air-to-air refuelling aircraft as well as addition warplanes and a modern command and control system.



Mr George Fernandes

Speaking at the Air Force commanders

NEW DELHI, April 25. — Mr George Fernandes has asked workers in the defence industries not to proceed with the strike called from 27 April. Acknowledging that some of their demands were pending, the Defence Minister said the Centre was seized of the matter and active efforts to evolve a solution were in hand. — SNS

conference, the defence minister pointed out that the Centre was fully conscious of the increasingly decisive role of air power in future conflicts and the increase of nearly 40 per cent in the IAF's allocation vis-a-vis the 28 per cent increase in the overall defence budget was indicative of this.

The IAF has been asking for an Advanced Jet Trainer (AJT) for years and the Hawk and the Alpha have been in the running for a while. India is planning to purchase an AWACS system from Russia as also the

Il-78 air-to-air refuelling aircraft.

The command and control systems will be especially necessary when the nuclear weapons are ready. All this will cost several thousand crores of rupees.

Mr Fernandes spoke of the important role of the IAF in the Kargil conflict and said air power was instrumental in limiting the conflict. He spoke of restructuring the ministry of defence, the integration of the three services and the streamlining of defence procurements were being looked into by the Centre.

During a presentation for the defence minister, Air Chief Marshal A Y Tipnis said that national assets like expensive warplanes would not be frittered away for limited goals — a repetition of his statements during Kargil. He said the IAF was at an optimum operation state of readiness and a herculean effort to support the ground troops in the Kargil area.

Efforts were being made to improve the working environment and to ensure better people joined the IAF, he said.

THE STATESMAN

26 APR 2000

## Security Check

The establishment of a high-powered 'group of ministers' to examine the national security situation "in its entirety" is a welcome if belated response to the report of the Kargil Review Committee submitted last December. The Kargil committee's mandate was not only to examine the events leading up to the high altitude intrusion by Pakistani regulars and irregulars in the Kargil region but also "to recommend such measures as are considered necessary to safeguard national security against such armed intrusions". After taking a holistic view of the entire gamut of security challenges confronting the country, the report had asked for a thorough review of the national security system and had argued the case for an independent expert body to conduct specific security studies. In establishing the group of ministers — consisting of the home minister, defence minister, finance minister, external affairs minister and the national security adviser — the Vajpayee government has indicated that it intends to learn the lessons of Kargil. However, in the absence of the necessary expert committees, it is not clear how the review will be completed in the stipulated six months, or how extensive and thorough-going it will be. The Kargil committee had, in fact, pointed out that outdated institutional arrangements and bureaucratic pettifogging led to a crucial delay in the detection of the Pakistani intrusions. Over the years, vested interests in the bureaucracy and intelligence establishments have worked to frustrate all attempts at a radical overhaul of our national security apparatus. The group of ministers can succeed in its task only if it is able to overcome the resistance offered by these interests.

The intelligence agencies have already embarked upon a low-key campaign to cover up the key findings of the Kargil committee. Through inspired leaks, it is being suggested that the agencies have somehow been maligned and that their intelligence gathering and assessment activities were more than adequate in the run-up to Kargil. The annexures of the Kargil report — based on actual records of discussion — apparently contain material that suggests the true picture was far less rosy. In the interests of transparency and healthy debate — and to highlight the precise nature of the intelligence and institutional failures that led to Kargil — the government must table the annexures in Parliament. Even though the Kargil committee's three members have repeatedly been stressing the fact that their report, as submitted, contains nothing that would compromise national security if made public, the government has refused to table the annexures. It is essential, therefore, that all those MPs concerned with national security matters raise this issue in Parliament and demand that the government not hold back any material. Apart from calling for a comprehensive review, the Kargil committee also made certain specific recommendations which need urgent implementation. The work of the National Security Council must be streamlined and well defined, with no duplication of duties; the functioning of the different intelligence agencies should be reviewed and evaluated with a view to more effective coordination and assessment; and a more integrated interface between the armed forces headquarters and the ministry of defence should be put in place. It can only be hoped that the group of ministers will design its work with such concrete goals in mind.

THE TIMES OF INDIA

26 APR 2000



5/8  
20/4

# Terrorism plagues security: home ministry report

g-DB N security

STATESMAN NEWS SERVICE

NEW DELHI, April 26. — Terrorism of a diabolical nature backed by mercenaries in Jammu and Kashmir, sinister designs to resuscitate an almost subdued militancy in Punjab, ethnic violence in the North-East and left-wing extremism in Naxalite-infested states posed a challenge to the country's internal security in the past one year, the Home Ministry's annual report has said.

The dissolution of the 12th Lok Sabha, announcement of fresh general elections and the reverses suffered by Pakistan in Kargil contributed to the increase in militancy. But the Centre was continuing its four-pronged strategy to counter it by deepening the democratic process, accelerating economic development, isolating foreign mercenaries and terrorists and playing a pro-active role in neutralising them, the report noted.

Private enas in Bihar participating in horrific caste wars, resulting in the killing of innocent people, also engaged the government's attention. The ministry has responded

with strategies and action plans for the short as well as long term.

In the North-East, militancy acquired an ominous form due to networking among militant groups and the availability of trans-border sanctuaries, coupled with the feeling of alienation and exploitation. "Militant activities in the North-east is a complex issue that cannot be tackled by any single prescription," the report

## INDO-BANGLA TALKS

NEW DELHI, April 26. — Security concerns, trans-border crimes, implementation of the Land Boundary Agreement and illegal migration of Bangladeshi nationals into India are among the issues which are being discussed in the fourth Home Secretary level talks between India and Bangladesh which began here today. — SNS

said. The key to the solution to the problem of militancy in the region lies in the development of the region, it noted.

While 12 militant groups in Assam, Manipur, Nagaland and Tripura have been declared unlawful by the Centre, units of the Army and central paramilitary forces have been deployed to assist civilian authorities in the affected states.

On Punjab, the report says Pakistan's intelligence agencies had not given up their "sinister designs" and are coaxing and pressuring Pakistan-based militants to revive militancy in the state. The central and state security agencies are therefore maintaining utmost vigil.

THE STATESMAN

2 APR 2001

# Hijack linchpin arrested from Basirhat hideout

STATESMAN NEWS SERVICE

CALCUTTA, April 26. — Laloo Mian alias Belal, a Bangladeshi national and suspected ISI agent, was arrested last night from Basirhat, North 24- Parganas, in connection with hijack of the Indian Airlines flight IC-814 to Kandahar last December.

The hijackers traded the passengers' lives — not before killing Rupin Katyal — for the release of three top terrorists arrested earlier from Kashmir.

Mian will be handed over to the CBI. Officials believe his statement may throw more light on the movement of the hijackers who took refuge in Pakistan.

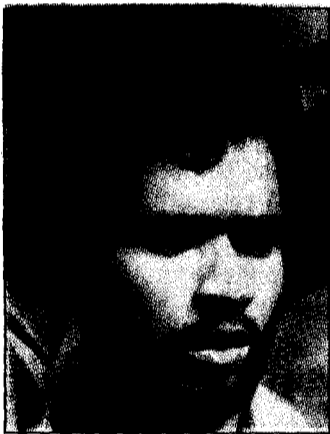
The state CID was after Mian since the New Jalpaiguri blast. It was however the Assam Police who first came to know of his existence. Last night, the state police found him in a Basirhat hideout. But five others escaped.

Mian, an explosives expert, had also set up base at Talpukur in the Hasnabad area. His principal job was to help ISI agents sneak into India from Bangladesh and Nepal, Mr Madhur Singh, ADG (CID), told The Statesman.

Mr Kuldip Singh, Superintendent of Police (North 24 Parganas), said

Laloo Mian first crossed over into India in 1997 but was pushed back. He returned and was held for having supplied a Hasnabad associate with RDX.

Put in Dum Dum Central Jail, Mian met a dacoit, Swarup Gazi, and married his sister. He moved later to Delhi and then Srinagar to train at an ISI camp.



Laloo Mian at Basirhat police station on Wednesday. — The Statesman

He also crossed the Indo-Nepal and Indo-Bangladesh borders a few times and knew the terrain and exact location of the check-posts. An "expert" in infiltration techniques, Mian always bribed the right people, CID officials said.

It was Mian indeed who allegedly helped Khalil Ahmed, an ISI agent suspected to have been involved in hijacking an Indian plane to Afghanistan, cross into Nepal via Bangladesh.

Investigations into the IC-814 hijack received a boost on 6 April after the CBI arrested Dilip Kumar Bhujel, a farmer-turned-gun-runner, at Sandibong, near Kalimpong, following definitive information that he had supplied grenades and small arms to the hijackers in Kathmandu.

Earlier, in November 1999, Bhujel travelled to Kathmandu where he met Yusuf Nepali, a gun-runner, and Abdul Latif, a

■ See HIJACK: page 8

## HIJACK:

(Continued from page 1)

suspected ISI agent. "They got Bhujel into the trade with lucrative offers", a state police official said. Bhujel came back to his native Chipushai village, seemingly, quite a rich man.

Just days before IC-814 was hijacked, he had met Sunny Ahmed Kazi, Ibrahim Akhtar and Shakir, three of the hijackers, at a Kathmandu hotel, intelligence officers said today. He gave the hijackers grenades and arms before rushing back to Kalimpong.

The CBI trapped both Nepali and Latif in January at a Mumbai nightclub. The duo spilled the beans about Bhujel and Lalu Mian. Now in CBI custody, Bhujel told the interrogators about Mian's role in the hijack, officials said.

The state Director-General of Police, Mr Dipak Sanyal, said today that Mian had helped the hijackers cross the Indo-Bangladesh border but did not really plot with them, let alone mastermind the hijack.

He knew the gaps in the border, knew the best times to cross it, and earned a living by helping people sneak in, Mr Sanyal said.

He said the state police were tipped off about Mian by the Assam Police shortly after the New Jalpaiguri blast. Several ISI agents had been held in Assam around the same time for subversive activities.

It was these ISI agents who first named Mian. Mr Sanyal said the Assam Police had found "improved" interrogation techniques which helped them extract more information from suspects.

They were less constrained by human rights considerations, he explained. Moreover, with designated a disturbed area, the police could use special powers under the Disturbed Areas Act, he said.

THE STATESMAN

27 APR 2000

# ISI man held for hand in hijacking of IC-814

Kinsuk Basu  
Calcutta, April 26

HPA 27A  
**T**HE WEST Bengal Police today arrested ISI agent Belal (alias Lalu Mian), who was involved in the conspiracy that led to the hijack of Indian Airlines flight IC-814 to Kandahar in Afghanistan last December.

With this, the number of arrests made in the hijacking case has gone up to four. Belal was apprehended in Basirhat along the Indo-Bangla border in North 24-Parganas.

Belal, 23, is a Bangladeshi national and a member of the Harkat-ul-Mujaheedin group in Kashmir. He has admitted to helping Guddu, the mastermind behind the hijacking case, cross the Bangla border from Dhaka.

Apart from identifying Guddu from a photograph, Belal has also identified one Raju who he claimed was another member of the gang.

The accused has also admitted in course of interrogation that he had accompanied Guddu to Sealdah before handing him over to one Abdur Rehaman, a key member of the Harkat gang who then flew with him to Mumbai.

A team of top officials from the CBI came here from Delhi during the day.

A resident of Dharampur village under

Sylhet district in Bangladesh, Belal (also known as Noor Mian) will be produced before Basirhat SDJM court on Thursday before being flown to Delhi for detailed interrogation.

Acting on a tip-off, a group of five police officers led by sub divisional police officer Ajit Sarkar nabbed Belal minutes

## Security tightened

**SECURITY ARRANGEMENTS** have been tightened on all Indian Airlines flights to Sri Lanka following a red alert that LTTE militants have plans of hijacking an aircraft from Colombo airport and taking it to Europe. Highly-placed Government sources said the alert was conveyed to the Ministry of External Affairs by the Indian High Commission in Colombo this month. **HTC, New Delhi**

after he arrived at Akbar Ghat across Ichhamati river in Shakchura village.

Lungi-clad officers turned up as oarsmen at the ghat and held him as soon as Belal stepped down from a boat for his father-in-law's place in Hasnabad.

Interrogations by the police throughout the day revealed that Belal left Bangladesh nearly three years ago in

search of a job. He ended up working as a daily labourer in Shillong before moving to Delhi.

A senior CBI officer said that it was here that he met Abdur Rehaman who got him admitted into the core group of the Harkat-ul-Mujahideen. He then underwent extensive training in the use of sophisticated arms.

After six months, Belal decided to return home in Sylhet and the think tank of the militant outfit found him the right man to help ISI agents slip into India from Pakistan via Bangladesh.

"For a monthly salary of 5000 taka, he was asked to help Pak members of the organisation enter India through the Bangla border. Accordingly, Belal helped seven members cross over including Guddu," said a senior police officer.

So, Belal used to frequent Basirhat and its adjoining areas from across the border by crossing the Ichhamati river. In March 1998, the Deganga police arrested him along with three others including an Afghan national, Parinda Khan, in connection with an arms case, but he managed to get bail.

State crime records revealed that Belal was also arrested once in January 1997 along with 14 others by the Basirhat police for forging passports.

\* Elusive Belal falls into police trap: P10

THE HINDUSTAN TIMES

27 APR 2000

# House panel slams defence ministry for radar delay

STATESMAN NEWS SERVICE

NEW DELHI, April 19. — The parliamentary defence standing committee has pulled up the defence ministry for not showing "any sense of seriousness in acquiring" weapon-locating radars. Efforts to acquire one began in 1989 and their absence during the Kargil war may have been felt as a large section of the 1,500 Indian casualties were caused by Pakistani shelling.

"The committee is seriously concerned by the degree of seeming casualness shown by the defence ministry in this regard. The statement made by the defence representative that we could not buy it because ... the cost was very high is unsatisfactory to say the least," the report says. It asks the Centre to take immediate steps to equip the Army with the radar.

A committee member told **The Statesman** the weapon was about to be imported when the DRDO said the Rajendra radars could be made into weapon-locating radars or WLRs. But the DRDO, then run by Dr APJ Abdul Kalam, failed to provide the WLR on time and the sanctions prevented any negotiations.

The report adds that when five manufacturers were asked to supply WLRs in 1995, only one — Hughes — responded. After trials it was found that it did not meet the requirements. It was then decided that the requirement parameters were unrealistic and the DRDO was asked to develop one indigenously. In 1998, the Army again asked for WLRs and again there was talk of devel-

oping indigenous development as well as import. As the USA had imposed sanctions after the Pokhran blasts, Iskra, a Ukrainian firm, and Thomson CSF, a French company, were contacted. The French were not keen and a delegation recommended procurement from Ukraine.

A year later, there was another presentation: Daimler Chrysler presented their Cobra WLR to the defence ministry and Army HQ. A technical delegation visited France and Germany last month. The delegation is yet to give its report and could not see the demonstration.

In mid-March, after a meeting presided over by Mr George Fernandes, it was decided that the negotiations with the Ukrainians for imports would resume. Taking strong exception to the defence ministry's decision, the committee report expresses surprise at the defence ministry's go-ahead to begin negotiations with the Ukrainians though the delegation is yet to submit a report. The same dilly-dallying was evident in the case of purchase of Smerch multi-barrelled rocket launchers.

At a meeting chaired by the defence minister last month, it was decided that trials would be held at Balasore with help from the DRDO and Cabinet approval for the purchase was sought.

The standing committee has said the ministry "should chalk out a time-bound programme for expeditious acquisition of this equipment after completion of the trial in Indian conditions".

THE STATESMAN

28 APR 2000

# Terrorism Bill not Tada's reincarnation

STATESMAN NEWS SERVICE

NEW DELHI, April 27. — The Law Commission today revealed some of the salient points of its recommendations for the proposed law that will replace the TADA. The Law Commission chairman, Mr Justice (retd) B P Jeevan Reddy, today defended the commission's recommendations, saying it had introduced safeguards to prevent any abuse of the law. The Prevention of Terrorism Bill is not a reincarnation of TADA, he said at a press conference. The legislation is necessary to combat terrorism.

Mr Justice Reddy said the commission had recast the definition of terrorism. According to the commission, terrorist acts are:

■ Using bombs or other weapons of mass destruction with the intent of threatening the unity, integrity and sovereignty of India or creating terror among the people with that intent

■ Membership or association of an unlawful organisation plus possession of bombs or weapons of mass destruction plus commission of an act which causes death or injury to a person

■ Aiding and abetting terrorism

■ Harboursing a terrorist except where he or she is a spouse.

The commission chairman said the Bill is not directed against nor meant to be used against persons or organisations fighting for socio-economic justice or against labour or other organisations, nor was it intended to stall free debate that is essential in a democratic society.

The proposed law could not be a solution to problems that are essentially political. It is meant against those persons or organisations that are trying to destroy and de-stabilise the country.

Mr Justice Reddy drew heavily on the examples of the USA and the UK to substantiate the

need for the legislation. He said the provisions in the Bill are not a significant departure from ordinary criminal law, though there are a few exceptions.

The exceptions are setting up of special courts, making confessions to police admissible in a court of law, extension of the usual periods proscribed for filing of chargesheet, stricter provisions for bail and absence of committal proceedings.

Against these provisions, Mr Justice Reddy said, the commission had introduced a number of safeguards. They include:

■ The need to obtain time-bound approval of the state DGP or review committee headed by senior secretaries after filing an FIR

■ Investigation of offence to be carried out only by a senior officer

■ Presence of a lawyer during interrogation of the accused

■ Sanction from the state government or the Centre for the

court to take cognisance of the offence

■ Quarterly review of all cases under the law.

The commission has also said there should be greater discretionary power for the court while deciding on bail applications. Supreme Court's categorisation of offences under TADA into four categories should serve as guidelines. Foreign terrorists will, however, not be granted bail except in exceptional circumstances.

Other safeguards include right of appeal to the High Court, inadmissibility of confession of co-accused, right to seek transfer of case from one special court to another for both the accused and the prosecuting agency and provisions for prosecution of corrupt officers.

Mr Justice Reddy said the commission, while drafting the Bill after two rounds of discussions with a cross-section of society, had taken care to take into account the criticism of human rights groups.

THE STATESMAN

28 APR 2000

## AMMUNITION CONTINUES TO EXPLODE

# Probe into arms depot fire

HO-1

By Pranab Dhal Samanta

**BHARATPUR (Rajasthan), APRIL 29.** The Army has instituted a high-level court of inquiry under Maj. Gen. C.B. Suku to look into the causes of the devastating fire that broke out at the Bharatpur Ammunition Depot on Friday killing three civilians. Maj. Gen. Suku, posted at the School of Artillery, Deolali, is expected to arrive here by Sunday morning.

At the depot, the explosives went off in the sheer heat generated over the past 24 hours even as officials maintained that the fire had been brought under control by about 1 p.m. on Saturday.

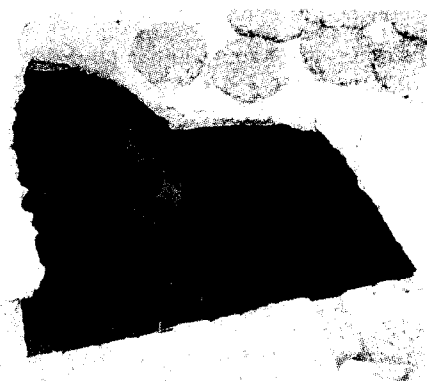
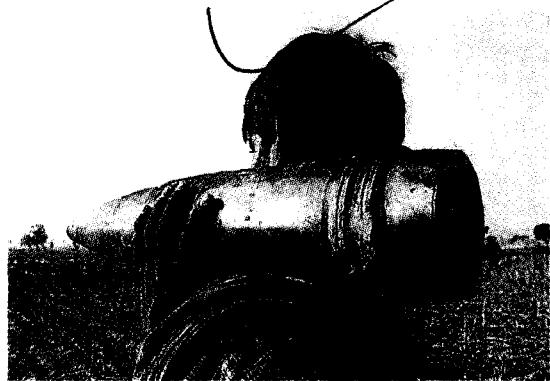
Arjun, a car repair shop owner, was sleeping in his house nearby when a rocket pierced through a window and hit him. The other deceased, Vinod Singh, was struck by a splinter at Ludhabi village close to the depot.

Despite ammunition flying in all directions, fire-fighting operations could not resume till early this morning. Except for the two fire-tenders of the depot, which were inside throughout the night, the 40-odd tenders requisitioned from the Mathura Oil Refinery, Hathras, Jhansi and Agra remained outside.

Apparently, orders had been issued that the fire-tenders would not enter the depot till the explosions stopped. Substantiating this, a fire brigade official said the heat was too intense for any exercise to succeed.

According to him, the ammunition got heated up to 2,200 degrees Centigrade while water evaporates at 1,650 degrees Centigrade. So any fire-fighting would be fruitless.

The troops requisitioned by the Army reached here at 5 p.m. on Friday and carried out a reconnaissance of the depot that even-



**Unmindful of risks, a villager carries an unexploded 130-mm shell, which escaped the wrath of Friday's devastating fire in the ammunition depot at Bharatpur. (Right) A rocket launcher, which launched itself on the roof of a house in a nearby village, is removed by residents. — PTI**

ning. According to them, 14 personnel including the depot fire-fighters and some defence service corps securitymen, spent the entire night in the depot.

While soldiers, largely from 3 Paras and 7 Paras, awaited instructions till 7 a.m., the explosions continued. Around 9 a.m., the fire-tenders entered the depot

along with the Para unit soldiers.

By then, the ammunition had apparently cooled and fire-fighters could begin their exercise. The aim was to cordon off the least-affected magazines or sheds. It is understood that there are more than 50 magazines, of which some are under construction. The remaining ammunition had been

kept on a mound in the open, protected by mud walls.

As these efforts were on, a Russian delegation of explosive experts approached the Army officers. Since most of the ammunition was supposedly of Russian origin, these experts offered help. However, they were politely turned away after a half-an-hour wait.

It is learnt that the depot stored a variety of ammunition including artillery shells for 105-mm, 130-mm and 155-mm Bofors guns. It had small-arms ammunition as well as anti-tank guided missiles, rockets and surface-to-air missiles. Most of these are understood to be used for operational and not for training purposes.

There was talk of spraying carbon dioxide from air but this was apparently scuttled as it would have been "risky" for the choppers to fly at lower heights with explosives going off without any warning.

This, however, did not deter the Defence Minister, Mr. George Fernandes, from making a brief aerial survey of the depot.

**More reports on Page 11**

## Fernandes briefs PM

By Our Special Correspondent

**NEW DELHI, APRIL 29.** The Defence Minister, Mr. George Fernandes, who visited Bharatpur today, briefed the Prime Minister, Mr. Atal Behari Vajpayee, about the fire which destroyed nearly 10,000 tonnes of ammunition. The Cabinet Secretary, Mr. Prabhat Kumar, has already apprised the Prime Minister about the fire.

Mr. Fernandes who surveyed the dump by air has reportedly said at Bharatpur that the flames were first seen in the dry grass outside the boundary of the depot. Spreading quickly before they could be doused, they touched the ammunition storage dump that was exposed. Army authorities said the fire spread quickly because of high-velocity winds.

The fire had affected 20 sheds at the depot, three of which were still smouldering. Fifteen fire-tenders and nine Army columns were engaged in containing the blaze. GOC 12 corps and Director General, Ordnance, Lt. Gen. S.K. Bhatnagar, were on the spot to supervise the operations. The Defence Minister had cut short his visit to Jammu to take a firsthand view of the inferno.

THE HINDU

6 APR 2000

# Advani warns about threat posed by ISI

By Our Special Correspondent

**NEW DELHI, APRIL 29.** Exhorting a gathering of intelligence officials and senior police officials to face the menace of the ISI's strategy of "war by other means", the Union Home Minister, Mr. L.K. Advani, sought to make a distinction between Islam and Pakistan and advised that "our intelligence and security agencies must learn to operate effectively without hurting the sentiments of our Muslim brethren".

Mr. Advani was inaugurating a special "workshop" of intelligence chiefs from across the country. The workshop was intended to make the police alive to the threat of the ISI. Intelligence Bureau experts made detailed presentations on the Pakistani agency's activities, its structure

and its ideology. The core of the presentations was the much-talked about "white paper on ISI" that Mr. Advani had earlier promised to release.

In the Minister's perspective, the ISI drew its sustenance from Pakistan's ideological stance — "India as a strategic and permanent adversary". Having failed in three conventional wars, Pakistan had, according to Mr. Advani, "made it a matter of state policy to export terrorism across the border into India to achieve its political objectives".

As Mr. Advani saw it, Pakistan had been at it for 20 years, and this "has considerably obliterated the dividing line between the nation's external and internal security. It is a war with a battlefield that extends from Kashmir to Coimbatore and from Mumbai to

Manipur. It is a war in which every State of India is a border state."

The Home Minister depicted the image of a ruthless enemy at work thus: "The enemy's means are terror, subversion, incitement of sectarian hatred and violence, fanning of separatist sentiments, and, as we have seen recently, economic sabotage by flooding fake currency. In other words, the strategic scope of the war waged by Pakistan through its ISI is far more comprehensive and diabolical than a conventional war."

In an indirect acknowledgement that Pokhran II had probably encouraged Pakistan into pro-active unleashing of terrorist activities, Mr. Advani noted that "emboldened by India's defensive response and recently the confidence gained by its acquisi-

tion of nuclear capability, Pakistan feels that it can mount covert operations at a much higher level with impunity."

Nonetheless, Mr. Advani repeated the Prime Minister's words that India had "both the will and the means" to crush this threat to India's national security, but did not elaborate. All he did was to remind the intelligence officials that "our own strategy to counter the ISI activities would also need a correspondingly higher level of intelligence and coordination than what we are called upon to mobilise in a conventional war".

Besides police officials in charge of intelligence gathering in various States, the "workshop" was attended by senior officials of the Union Home Ministry.

THE HINDU

6 APR 2000

Purulia armsdrop case

# Bleach, 5 Latvians convicted

SFH 1/2  
STATESMAN NEWS SERVICE

CALCUTTA, Jan. 31. — British national Peter Bleach and five Latvians were convicted today in the December 1995 Purulia armsdrop case. They will be sentenced on 2 February.

The six were found guilty of waging war against the Indian state.

The fourth city civil and sessions judge, Mr PK Biswas, however, acquitted the sixth accused, Vinay Singh.

The judgment was pronounced in a packed courtroom after a trial that lasted nearly two years. Peter Bleach and the Latvians — Igor Timmerman, Igor Moskvitin, Oleg Gaidach, Alexander Klichin and Evgueny Antimenko — were convicted under Section 121 of the Indian Penal Code and sections of the Arms Act, Explosives Act, Explosives Substances Act and the Aircraft Act.

There was tight security within and outside the courtroom. Bleach, dressed in a dark suit, and the Latvians, in their service uniforms, sat quietly outside the court lock-up as Mr Biswas read out the order.

Referring to the CBI charge that arms and ammunition were sought to be airdropped to some Ananda Marga members in Purulia's Bansgarh village, the judge said: "No sufficient evidence could be given

from the prosecution's side to link up Ananda Marga organisation as a whole with regard to the present matter."

He observed that the airdropped arms and ammunition were meant to be delivered to the country's insurgent outfits, which he did not specify.

"The persons linked with the present process may have some nexus with Ananda Marga organisation, but that does not mean as a whole to implicate the institution itself."

But it has been established that the place where the arms were targeted to be dropped "were of the Ananda Margis and precisely, a three-storeyed white building was the target point, and at that target point the arms were attempted to be dropped from a flying aircraft pinpointed as per evidence and material on record to be YLL DB AN-26", the judge added.

A huge cache of arms and ammunition was dropped on the villages of Jhalda, Ghatanga, Belamu, Maramu and Beradi from a Russian AN-26 aircraft on the night on 17 December 1995.

The arms included, 241 AK-47/56 assault rifles, 79 anti-tank grenades, 62 hand grenades, 10 rocket launchers, 11 nine-mm pistols, besides 3,853 rounds of 9-mm ammunition.

THE STATESMAN

1 FEB 2000



# Limited war & strategic liability

By V. R. Raghavan

*When nuclear weapons are there for the asking, a war, however limited, is a huge strategic liability. A political leadership which views the issues differently places the nation at great risk.*

THE RECENT weeks saw significant references in the country to limited wars. A couple of seminars were held in the capital and one was attended by an international audience of experts. The seminars were used by the Government to make pronouncements about India's willingness to fight a limited war. The Defence Minister used the two seminars to declare a limited war doctrine. The BJP-led Government obviously has a doctrinal penchant. It released a nuclear doctrine and immediately disassociated itself from it, calling it a mere draft. The nuclear doctrine has been shown up to be an inadequately thought out exercise. The latest preference is another instance of insufficient understanding of the grave risks involved, in the assumptions on fighting a limited war.

In an official release, the Minister has talked of the major conclusion drawn from the Kargil operations. His definitive statement is directed against Pakistan. And it says India's "forces can fight and win a limited war at a time and place chosen by the aggressor." This is not different from the infamous statement made after the 1998 nuclear tests. A senior member of the ruling party at that time taunted Pakistan to name the place and time for the next battle. The Government has either received poor counsel on this serious matter or ignored good advice. It seems to forget the battlefields of Kargil and Kandahar where it received a reply of sorts to its bold assertions. Kargil and Kandahar are two faces of a future war. It is not a limited war but is a new form of conflict without fronts, form or name. It also has an unlimited potential to be waged indefinitely. That is the true conclusion to be drawn from the conflicts of 1999.

The Minister's statement can only be interpreted as reflecting the Government's belief that it will fight a limited war, unconcerned with the new strategic realities in the subcontinent. The assumption that Kargil was a limited war will not stand scrutiny. Kargil was a series of local military actions, albeit fought with great heroism, to clear Indian territory of intruders. The operations were

skillfully handled by the commanders and brilliantly conducted by the troops. It is amply clear with hindsight that the blame for the intrusions, however, lay with the Government. It was baled out by the sacrifices of the Army and the innovative support of the Air Force. In the first instance, they should not have been placed in such a disadvantageous position. This was conveniently sidetracked by placing a gloss of victory over what was a serious political failure.

It is apparent the real meaning of Kargil has not yet been grasped in the ruling circles. Kargil, even with its small size and scope and without being a war, showed up the major lesson of modern wars. Military victories do not necessarily bring strategic success without a clear integration of political and military objectives. The Korean war, Vietnam, Arab-Israeli wars, Sino-Indian war, India-Pakistan wars, Iran-Iraq war and the war against Iraq after it invaded Kuwait have not led to conclusive strategic outcomes. The accounts of the brilliant Israeli military victories in Sinai and the Golan now seem hollow, in the light of what followed.

The intifada, in fact, achieved more for both Arabs and Israelis than all their vicious wars. The only example of the close linkage between the strategic, i.e. political, and military objectives was in the 1971 war. Even there, the politico-military outcome in the east could not be leveraged for obtaining strategic gains in the west, for example in Jammu and Kashmir.

Limited wars as a phrase came into use after World War II. It was defined by the need to avoid the use of nuclear weapons. Thus the wars listed above were all limited wars. The U.S. and the Soviet Union took great care not to fight a war directly. They prudently instituted many military and political measures to avoid fighting with each other, even at the height of

stand-off between the two countries. There is some irresponsible talk about calling the Pakistani bluff on the nuclear threat, in the context of a limited war. That is as dangerous and fallacious a mindset, as the Pakistanis' belief that Hindus will not fight.

It would be useful for the Government to examine the aims and objectives of the limited war it is willing to fight. If it is to seize Pakistani territory in retaliation for loss of Indian territory, how much of it will suffice and how long can it be retained? What will be its response to a clear warning from Pakistan that it will use nuclear weapons, unless the Indian forces vacate captured territories? Will it then respond by assuming it to be a bluff? There are some who contend that if Pakistan uses nuclear weapons, the Indian response will obliterate it and Pakistan knows about it. These assumptions of the most amazing kind ignore every dimension of the times we live in.

Nuclear weapons are instruments of deterrence against other nuclear weapons. They nevertheless require that deterrence should not fail. Neither adversary should also see his deterrence as having failed. If he does, he will be compelled to use the nuclear weapons. Success in a limited war for one side is the sure way of creating that compulsion for the other. There is therefore a responsibility for the political leadership to understand the perilously close link between a limited war and the use of nuclear weapons.

The question to be asked after nuclear weapons have arrived on the scene is clear: What will amount to victory in the limited war fought under the nuclear overhang? Whatever is victory for one side will be defeat for the other and that will bring the overhang down. A limited military success will then translate into a national disaster. When nuclear weapons are there for the asking, a war, however limited, is a huge strategic liability. A political leadership which views the issues differently places the nation at great risk.

(The writer is Director, Delhi Policy Group, and a former Director-General of Military Operations.)

## India has low defence expenditure, says CIA

WASHINGTON: India has a very low defence expenditure and a huge military manpower, the Central Intelligence Agency (CIA) of the U.S. has said. The agency, in a report, has also noted that India is a "major transit country for illicit narcotics produced in neighbouring countries."

Pointing out that India has a huge manpower fit for military service (158.142 million in the age group of 15-19), the CIA says the defence expenditure of the country was "very low" at 2.7 per cent in the fiscal year 1998-99. It adds that India has disputes with its neighbouring countries — with China over boundary, with Pakistan over status of Kashmir and water-sharing, with Bangladesh over a portion of the boundary.

It says India was the largest producer of illicit opium for the pharmaceutical trade, adding, however, "an undetermined quantity of opium is diverted to illicit international drug markets." The country is also an "illicit producer of hashish and methaqualone".

On India's economic scene, the CIA says, "Production, trade and investment reforms since 1991 have provided new opportunities for Indian businesspersons and an estimated 300 million middle class consumers." It notes that the country has avoided debt rescheduling, attracted foreign investment, and re-

vived confidence in India's economic prospects since 1991.

The CIA report contests the value of India's GDP calculated by the International Monetary Fund (IMF) to be 5.7 per cent in 1999, claiming it was only 4.5 per cent. It says that inflation would remain a "worrisome problem" for India.

However, it says that many of the country's fundamentals — including savings rates (26 per cent of GDP) and reserves (now about \$30 billion) — are healthy. Even so, the Indian government needs to restore the early momentum of reform, especially by continuing reductions in the extensive remaining government regulations.

India's exports, currency, and foreign institutional investment were affected by the East Asian crisis in late 1997 and 1998, but capital account controls, a low ratio of short-term debt to reserves, and enhanced supervision of the financial sector helped insulate it from near-term balance of payments problems, it says.

Exports fell five per cent in 1998 mainly because of the fall in Asian currencies relative to the rupee. Energy, telecommunications and transportation bottlenecks continue to constrain growth. It says that a series of weak coalition governments have lacked the political strength to push reforms forward to address these and other problems. (PTI)

THE TIMES OF INDIA

- 2 FEB 2000

# Rs 13,000-cr hike in DEFENCE: Defence allocation

(Continued from page 1)

STATESMAN NEWS SERVICE

NEW DELHI, Feb 29. — Projecting an outlay of Rs 58,587 crore on defence during 2000-2001, the finance minister has ensured that the armed forces will march into the 21st century with funds that, after several decades, somewhat match up to the grit they have consistently displayed. An increase of nearly Rs 13,000 crore over the initial provision for the fiscal now drawing to a close.

While that pleasantly surprised the defence community which had not expected more than Rs 57,000 crore, the experts stressed that a genuine upgrade in the defence effort would be dependent on sustaining the trend Mr Yashwant Sinha set today. Armed forces were not built by one good budget, they said.

The allocation marks a 28.2 per cent hike over last year's initial provision of Rs 45,694 crore, and a 20 per cent rise over the revised estimate of Rs

48,504 crore. Defence will now account for 15 paise of every rupee of government expenditure.

Of particular significance is the raising of the capital outlay to Rs 17,926 crore, up by Rs 5,295 crore over the revised estimate for 1999-2000. A 40 per cent hike that should help to jump-start the modernisation and re-equipment programmes that have virtually stagnated over the past decade.

While in absolute terms a raise of Rs 13,000 crore would be the highest-ever, in terms of percentage over a previous year's allocation it pales before the 50.49 per cent and 72.21 per cent in 1962-63/1963-64 after the Chinese aggression. Yet the provision does elevate defence spending to somewhere in the vicinity of the 3 per cent of GDP that the experts have been recommending.

Upgrading the defence effort in the Kargil sector would consume a substantial share of the

■ See DEFENCE: page 7

increased provision. The Army Chief had estimated that it would require over Rs 9 crore a day to sustain a "Siachen-like" effort in Kargil, but whether that would be the cost each of the 365 days, or only during the six cold months is open to interpretation.

The increase of nearly Rs 13,000 crore, the minister told the Lok Sabha this afternoon, "represents the largest ever increase in the defence budget in a single year. More will be provided whenever needed."

A perusal of the Budget documents would suggest that the Army's aviation wing would be upgraded, it has been provided Rs 518 crore, substantially more than the Rs 293 crore last year. There could be some movement on acquiring new tanks since the provision for heavy vehicles has been raised.

The Air Force, in the section dubbed "aircraft and aero engine" gets Rs 4,502 crore, an increase of Rs 1,800 crore which could point to the long-standing demand for an AJT materialising, and its desire for 10 "replacement" Mirage 2000s being finalised.

There is no outstanding increase under any specific provision of capital expenditure for the Navy, but the experts point out that since payments for major acquisitions are spread over several years the Budget figures do not present a complete picture of likely purchases.

The Budget papers' section on capital outlay confirms the complaint of the Service Headquarters that procedural wrangles result in non-utilisation of all the funds available. For example, the original provision for the naval fleet in 1999-2000 was Rs 2,431 crore, the revised estimate has it down by some Rs 200 crore. Yet, there are certain heads which show that the spending was actually more than the original provision.

Of some concern to the defence experts was the relatively low allocation for research and development.

An outlay of Rs 3,101 crore has been projected, just over 5 per cent of the overall defence provision. In fact, down by one per cent when compared with last year. Parliament's Standing Committee, and most analysts, have called for progressively raising research and development to 10 per cent.

As far as revenue expenditure goes, the Army gets the biggest chunk, Rs 28,939 crore followed by the IAF with Rs 7,896 crore and the Navy's Rs 4,040 crore. But the Army's wage bill would account for almost 40 per cent of its allocation — once again highlighting the need for rationalising the manpower structure to make more funds available for equipment upgrades.

Another pointer to restructuring being imperative is the defence pension bill of Rs 12,000 crore, which is steadily mounting.

# 'Defence outlay hike no big deal'

KEITH FLORY  
STATESMAN NEWS SERVICE

NEW DELHI, March 4. — This "highest ever", Rs 13,000 crore-hike notwithstanding, the armed forces cannot treat themselves to a shopping binge courtesy budgetary allocations for the next financial year. "At best, the outlay will help clear part of the backlog that has piled up over the last decade or so" a senior officer said.

Certainly the capital outlay of Rs 17,926 crore, up by Rs 5,296 crore over the Revised Estimate for the year now drawing to a close, would let the forces set about acquiring weapons and systems for which plans were cleared but matching funds weren't available. But not a great deal more.

The wish list is long, only a part will materialise. The Army wants the T-90-S tank, self-propelled medium artillery, and air-defence missile systems. But more action is likely on smaller deals: unmanned aerial vehicles, gun-locating radars, direction-finders, truly portable communication systems, and bunker-busting rifles.

The need for many of these lower profile weapons/systems was heightened by Kargil. Some immediate purchases were made and more are in the pipeline. This will eat up a fair share of the enhanced outlays. The Minister of State for Defence Production had spoken of a Rs 6,000 crore post-Kargil modernisation plan, but the forces say he was exaggerating.

What budget documents put down as "stores" (under the revenue head) will be another major expense. The Army's outlay for next year is at Rs 11,012 crore against the initial provision of Rs 7,893 crore for 1999-2000 which was subsequently raised to Rs 10,318 crore. The Kargil factor at work again.

That will be money spent on replenishing ammunition spent at Kargil. War reserves may not have been completely depleted, but stocks did run low. Hence crash imports of shells for the Bofors howitzer. The Defence Minister has informed Parliament that this year the ordnance factories will be as busy as they were during the Kargil conflict. The IAF too has to replenish its bombs and rock-

ets; Rs 5,221 will go on stores.

Budget documents point to a boost to Army aviation. The provision earmarked for aircraft/aero engines has been hiked from Rs 293 crore (revised estimate) to Rs 518 crore. The helicopters' fleet could be augmented, for with or without an electronic surveillance network, the mountainous frontiers will have to be intensively "reced" from the air.

The IAF's increase under that head is about Rs 1,800 crore, and hopefully that would mean the end of the arduous exercise to get an Advanced Jet Trainer, replace 10 Mirage-2000s and the acquisition of limited air-to-air refuelling capability.

The Navy's immediate requirement would be electronic force-multipliers, and anti-missile systems for retro-fitting on some of its older ships. Revival of the submarine-building line at Mazagon Dock is on the cards, and two or three more destroyers of the Delhi class are being contemplated.

The Navy and IAF endorse Gen. Malik's view that not a high outlay but quicker approvals would make the difference.

THE STATESMAN  
- 5 MAR 2000

## DISTURBING TREND

THE CHARACTER AND focus of resurgent militancy in Kashmir and some adjoining areas has of late appeared to conform to a new pattern. Towards the end of last year, which witnessed a fresh upsurge in militant activity, a new and dangerous trend was visible. Suicide squads entered the scene and picked on high profile targets, like the headquarters of the special forces or the public relations office. As this challenge was being met, the active militant groups in Jammu and Kashmir shifted their attention. Instead of taking on just the military targets, they have turned their wrath on innocent civilians. They have chosen vulnerable targets and public places — markets, buses and trains. Even drivers of lorries, transporting essential commodities to the northern parts, have not been spared. The latest in this series was the blast in a Delhi-bound bus from Jammu, as it was passing through Punjab. Nine innocent passengers were killed and the bus was reduced to its skeleton.

Meanwhile, the skirmishes along the LoC continue unabated. In a recent incident, eight Indian soldiers were killed at an Army post in Rajouri. At least one body was mutilated. There is an unmistakeable nexus between the tensions on the border and the escalating militancy. The objective seems to be to keep on the heat, terrorise the villagers along the border and send out a clear message that Kashmir remains a "real flash-point" in bilateral relations between India and Pakistan. What is unfortunate and condemnable is the targeting of civilians — be it in villages or in public transport. There was an instance where some militants deliberately picked on an isolated Hindu family, perhaps to whip up communal frenzy. The leader of a counter-insurgent outfit, Fayaz

Ahmed Nawabadi, was consumed in a blast. Obviously, the Central and State security forces and the police are unable to contain this menace. The Chief Minister, Dr. Farooq Abdullah, lamented, in a recent interview to this newspaper, the Centre's "indifference" to his State and stressed the need for higher financial support. He alleged "Pakistan is sustaining the militancy with new strategies of sending in suicide squads."

The security forces and the J and K police must concentrate on curbing militant activities in towns and villages. Intelligence gathering needs to be significantly improved. The Farooq Government must acknowledge the need to address the security lapses and shoulder its share of the responsibilities. The Centre must draw up an inter-State coordination panel for that region to maintain alert at the check points between States. Punjab must be put on alert to ensure that it does not return to the path of militancy. Even if it means inconvenience to passengers and increased journey time, buses have to be checked after each halt and on inter-State borders. Explosives or weapons could be taken on board any time. The bus crew can do nothing, except bolting after a mishap. And there are quite a few illegal or clandestine operators too. But the problem in the Railways may be more difficult to tackle. Improving security at stations and on trains calls for a very serious exercise, involving funds, manpower and equipment. Considering that the problem of militancy is bound to persist for a few years in many troubled States, the Railways has to think of a new system to deal with this terrorist menace. Unfortunately for the travelling public, no means of transport seems to be completely safe these days.

THE HINDU

- 6 MAR 2 000

# Kargil purchases come under vigilance watch

FROM CHANDAN NANDY

**New Delhi, March 6:** The defence ministry is preparing a fact sheet on "questionable" and "motivated" Kargil-related purchases which will be sent to the Central Vigilance Commission before the formal start of the probe into all defence deals since 1985-86.

The preparation of the fact sheet has fuelled speculation that irregularities may have occurred in several transactions. A joint secretary in the defence ministry, R.P. Bagai, is co-ordinating the preparation of the fact sheet.

One of the glaring irregularities that has come to the notice of senior army and defence officials is the "reckless" approach of negotiators to "single vendors" through "single tender".

Contracts were signed with selected manufacturers for procuring 155-mm shells, laser-guided weapons, all-purpose vehicles, thermal imaging systems, snow boots, weapon-locating radars and high-resolution binoculars.

In other words, in all the 80-odd deals made during the Kargil war and afterwards (between July and September 1999), the buyers

struck deals with one firm per country without floating global tenders. The "suspect" purchases have raised eyebrows in several quarters.

Although some in the army and the defence ministry argue that "expediency" necessitated quick shopping, sources said middlemen played a crucial role in several cases.

The role of the middlemen was also the main issue which defence minister George Fernandes wanted probed when he ordered the inquiry into all purchases by the armed forces in the past 15 years.

In at least one case, the government has started investigation into the "illicit liaisoning" of an arms dealer, believed to have been involved in the purchase of weapon-locating radars from a Ukraine company.

The Delhi-based dealer is believed to have met members of the price negotiating committee, consisting of officials from the army, defence ministry and the ministry's finance section.

Some of the deals in which irregularities have been noticed are:

■ **Weapon-locating radars:** The Rs 200-crore deal has come under

a cloud as the army purchased the radars from a firm in Ukraine, a country blacklisted here because it supplies military hardware to Pakistan. Sources said competition was "eliminated" for the purchase, which could have yielded a commission of 15 to 20 per cent.

■ **Thermal imaging systems:** The defence ministry bypassed a contract it signed with an Israeli firm and bought the systems from a French company instead, even though the trials had reportedly failed. The order was worth Rs 50 crore.

■ **Snow boots:** During the conflict, the army requisitioned 40,000 pairs of snow boots. The order was given to an Austrian company which quoted a rate higher than an Italian manufacturer. The price difference was about 65 Swiss francs per pair. A bulk of the consignment is yet to be delivered.

■ **High-resolution binoculars:** A Rs 8-crore deal was struck with a Singapore manufacturer, even though Bharat Electronics gave a quotation 25 per cent less. The Singapore quotation was accepted by a senior army official even though the defence ministry is supposed to negotiate the price.

THE TELEGRAPH

- 7 MAR 2000

## George urged vigilance panel to probe Kargil deals

STATESMAN NEWS SERVICE

NEW DELHI, March 7. -- The decision to ask the vigilance



commission to investigate the Kargil arms deals was taken by the defence minister, Mr George Fernandes.

**Mr Fernandes** In his initial letter to the vigilance commission, the defence minister had chalked out certain areas to be investigated.

This include all deals on Kargil, including the purchase of shells for the 155 mm Bofors guns, protective clothing and night vision equipment.

He also wanted to check the allegations against Rear Admiral CV Purohit, who was accused of corruption and was strongly defended by Admiral Vishnu Bhagwat, the man the Centre dismissed.

A subsequent CBI inquiry has cleared Rear Admiral Purohit. Mr Fernandes had also asked the vigilance commission to check out all major deals made by the defence ministry since 1986. This would, therefore, automatically include the controversial Bofors and the HDW submarine deal.

Army officers said the purchases after Kargil were made quickly as the need for the equipment was immediate. They said only the necessary equipment had been purchased.

# Security lapses exposed BSF post to militants' attack: Report

SWATI CHATURVEDI  
NEW DELHI, MARCH 7

FINDINGS of the court of inquiry into the first-ever strike by Kashmir militants at the BSF headquarters in Bandipore in July last year in which four people, including a DIG died, have severely indicted senior officials for "most unbecoming conduct and cowardice".

The court of inquiry concluded last week and has recommended court martial proceedings against 13 officials. The inquiry, which has revealed shocking security lapses, was carried out by the BSF to find out how two militants managed to break into the Bandipore sector headquarters of the BSF and hold personnel inside hostage. The incident sent shockwaves in the security establishment.

The National Security Guard (NSG) conducted a commando operation to free the hostages inside the building which the court martial deemed "unnecessary". The court of inquiry has held that some of the officials indicted, who

9  
were present inside the building, "displayed most unbecoming conduct of hiding inside their quarters, not giving any indication of well-being." This forced the NSG to perform a rescue operation since there was confusion about them being held hostage.

Court martial proceedings have been ordered against A K Yadav, second in command 39 battalion, Aziz Khan, deputy commandant, Ram Avtar Singh, C Kerketta, sub-inspectors, Man Singh, assistant sub-inspector, S C Dulai, head constable, and Joginder Singh, Sarjan Singh, S B Thapa, Harendra Kumar, Prem Chand, P G Deogan and Manohar Lal.

The inquiry found out that the BSF personnel stationed at Bandipore "were not alert and those posted near the perimeter security were absent from their place of duty." This may have led to the militants breaching the perimeter security of the heavily fortified building with ease, concludes the inquiry. Yadav, the senior-most official among those present, has

been charged with "not exercising proper supervision to ensure adequate security measures and not conducting proper check of guards/sentries". The inquiry has also found that some officials posted for doing 'naka' duty (patrol duty) were simply fudging the records and were actually avoiding patrol duty.

About Ram Avtar Singh, who was in-charge of the patrol duty according to the court of inquiry, the inquiry mentions: "Singh did not go on naka duty despite being in-charge of the naka patrol". Similar lapses were detected on the part of the other officials. In the case of two officials, Surjan Singh and S B Thapa, the court of inquiry has concluded that "they were not alert and worse, were absent from their place of duty".

Even after the initial burst of fire from the militant's AK 47, Joginder Singh, an official who was present in the perimeter security ring, according to the court of inquiry, "was not occupying the post and did not even react after hearing the initial fire".

INDIAN EXPRESS

- 8 MAR 2000



# TADA REVIVED

Courtesy: Law Commission

5/8  
9/3

**T**HE Law Commission was requested by the Government of India last year "to undertake a fresh examination of the issue of a suitable legislation for combating terrorism and other anti-national activities". The Terrorists and Disruptive Activities Act, 1987 had lapsed on 23 May 1995.

The then home minister, SB Chavan, had moved in the Rajya Sabha, on 18 May 1995, the Criminal Law Amendment Bill, 1995. On 23 May, he accepted eight amendments to the Bill to mollify the Opposition. It was not enacted. The Law Commission's "Working Paper on Legislation to Combat Terrorism" makes that Bill worse, still. That is saying a lot. The Bill omitted provisions making confessions to police officers admissible in evidence and imposing on the accused the burden of providing his innocence while applying for bail.

The Law Commission not only restores them (Clauses 15(A) and 18 (6A), respectively) but adds illiberal provisions in the draft Bill appended to its working paper. For instance, its Clause 3(8) on "information about acts of terrorism" is open to abuse by the police against the press. It would expose a journalist to a year's imprisonment if he fails to disclose "as soon as reasonably practicable to the police" information which "he knows or reasonably believes might be of material assistance" in preventing the commission of an offence or in securing the arrest of the offender. Doubtless, the journalist is a citizen. But this is a grey zone which involves his rights to protection of sources. Journalists who interview members of banned organisations could be sent to prison. None will speak to a journalist who is a police informer.

## AMENDMENTS

The commission says that the 1995 Bill and the amendments to it were "designed to give a human face to the enactment". It has, sadly, chosen to disfigure it. On 2 February 1999 the BJP government sent some amendments of its own. The Commission took the Bill, "as modified by the official amendments" of 1999, "as the basis" and recommends "some additional provisions" besides. All the eight amendments of 1995, at the instance of the opposition, were ameliorative and were reported in the press. The commission was bound to publish the texts of the 1999 amendments in a document meant for public edification. It has chosen not to do so.

By AG NOORANI

The commission says, "The complaints of the human rights bodies against the TADA, when it was in force, were not so much with respect to the provisions of the Act (whose constitutionality has been upheld by the Supreme Court in Kartar Singh's case) but with respect to the manner in which the Act was implemented." This is not true. Tada was attacked precisely because it was worse than the Rowlatt Act. It was an invitation to abuse. No other legislation since independence invited such censures at home and abroad. No other law failed so dismally.

In August 1994, the Govern-

*The author is a lawyer and commentator on current affairs.* ment of India revealed that 67,000-odd had been detained since 1985 when Tada was first enacted. Only 8,000 were tried. The law served as a measure for preventive detention rather than for trial and punishment, in order to circumvent the few safeguards provided in the National Security Act, 1980. This was accomplished through Section 20(4)(a) and (b) of Tada which enabled even executive magistrates to order remand of accused to police custody for 60 days, instead of 15 as provided in Section 167 of the Criminal Procedure Code. The code permits a further remand, but only in judicial custody, for a maximum period of 90 days if the offence was punishable with death, life imprisonment or a term of ten years; in other cases 60 days was the maximum. These orders can be made only by a judicial magistrate. Tada permitted remand to judicial custody for a year.

The predictable happened. Of the 67,000 detained and 8,000 put up for trial only 725 were convicted. Thus 59,000-odd were detained without trial while 7,000 plus were tried and found not guilty.

This and much else that was published about the abuses under the Act are totally ignored in the working paper. As Lord Jellico remarked in his report on the emergency laws in Northern Ireland, "I found that some of those powers likely to infringe civil liberties are also the least valuable and the least used." In India such laws are used freely; but, to no public good. The commission scarcely discusses the aspect of human rights. It suggests not one substantial safeguard for the individual. Its only suggestion (Clause 7A) does no more than enjoin the police officer to forward the material to the DGP and the review committee for their scrutiny.

## MISUSE

This appeal from Caesar to Caesar is due to a fundamental flaw inspired by the commission's outlook and approach. The flaw lies in its view that Tada is intrinsically sound and all that is needed is "an in-house mechanism to prevent the misuse of the special powers" it confers; not substantial reform. It pays lip service to making it "accord with the present day concept of human rights" and to provision of "reasonable and real opportunity to the accused" while making the 1995 Bill far worse.

When, in 1999, the government suggested revival of the Tada provision regarding confessions to the police the commission ought to have remembered that it was upheld by the Supreme Court in 1994 by a majority of 3 to 2 and invites abuse. It, instead, merrily accepts ritual cautions by the police as "effective safeguard".

The same is true of the other "safeguards" in the 1999 amendments (Clauses 19 and 19A) — prior approval of the IGP or police commissioner; sanction of the state government, the review committee, intimation to the family and presence of a lawyer during interrogation. They do no more than grant what judicial rulings enjoin already.

The Supreme Court's majority judgment recognised that "the indisputable reality is that the Supreme Court is beyond the reach of an average person considering the fact of distance, expense etc", Section 17 of Tada provided appeal only to the Supreme Court. The 1995 Bill allowed appeal to the high court, to be heard by a Division Bench. On 23 May 1995 the BJP spokesperson Sushma Swaraj opposed this reform. Clause 17 of the commission's



Bill confines appeals to the Supreme Court. It is hard to see how terrorism is better fought by driving the accused to the Supreme Court. By an amendment to Clause 3(1) of the 1995 Bill, the words "overawe the Government as by law established" were substituted by the words "threaten the unity, integrity, security, or sovereignty of India". The commission would restore them. "This suggested addition would no doubt expand the scope of section 2 but that is only to be welcomed. Indeed, the words suggested are be found in the TADA, 1987 as well as in the original draft of the Criminal Law Amendment Bill, 1995." The expression "overawe the Government" is of colonial origin and inappropriate in modern times.

## MILITANCY

Indeed the commission goes beyond even the 1999 amendments. They deleted the words "by any action taken, whether by act or by speech or through any other media or in any matter" in Clause 4 in respect of preservation of India's territorial integrity. Even a plea for "cession" by voluntary act is barred. This would cover a boundary accord with China by cession of Aksai Chin. The 1999 deletion was sensible. The commission frowns at it.

The commission's outlook is illiberal. "A perception has developed among the terrorist groups that the Indian State is inherently incapable of meeting their challenge — that it has become soft and indolent. As a matter of fact, quite a few parties and groups appear to have developed a vested interest in a soft State, a weak government and an ineffective implementation of the laws. Even certain foreign powers are interested in destabilising our country."

The commission's belief that "religious militancy ... had first raised its head in 1993 with bomb explosions in Mumbai" must not be attributed to bias; only to ignorance. It is, evidently, unaware of Justice BN Srikrishna's finding that the blasts "were a reaction to the totality of events at Ayodhya and Bombay in December 1992 and January 1993". Was the demolition of the Babari Masjid on 6 December 1992 also not an expression of "religious militancy"? And what of LK Advani's *rath yatra* of 1990 escorted by the Bajrang Dal, to go no further?

U.S. aware of  
ISI hand  
in Assam

WASHINGTON, MARCH 10. The United States says Pakistan's Inter Service Intelligence (ISI) is fomenting extremist violence in India's Northeast, possibly working through dissident groups with bases in Bangladesh.

"We believe the ISI is helping militants in Assam," said a high-ranking State Department official, who spoke to *The Washington Times* on condition of anonymity. "Since they attack unarmed civilians for political purposes, they (the militants) meet the classical definition of terrorists."

The daily, quoting Indian and Bangladeshi sources, said their Governments had determined independently that ISI agents in Bangladesh were encouraging, training and arming some of the militants of the United Liberation Front of Assam (ULFA) and other groups.

The accusations come as the U.S. President, Mr. Bill Clinton, prepares to visit India, Bangladesh and Pakistan from March 19 to 26 — despite recommendations by his secret service that he faces a risk from terrorists in Pakistan.

The comments by the senior U.S. Official in an interview were the first indication that the U.S. also believes Pakistan is working to spread discord away from its border with India. — UNI

THE HINDU  
11 MAR 2000

# Experts group to tone up intelligence, says Fernandes

**ON-BOARD SPECIAL IAF PLANE, MARCH 12.** In the first move to follow up the recommendations of the Subrahmanyam Committee which probed the Kargil intrusions, the Government today said an experts group would be formed to draw up policies and programmes on Intelligence gathering based on the panel's suggestions. *9-0-D-N. Fernandes*

"The group, whose shape is likely to be determined next week, will look into ways and means for better Intelligence gathering, coordination between various agencies and make available accurate Intelligence to armed forces," the Defence Minister, Mr. George Fernandes, told PTI on way back from forward posts in the northern sector.

He said the formation of the group would be the first step towards translating the committee's recommendations into action. However, he said the Joint Intelligence Committee would continue to function and the proposed group would be confined to the objectives set out by the committee.

Another major recommendation was about the modernisation of the armed forces which, he said, was being carried out. "It is absolutely necessary that we modernise our armed forces. Most of the resources allocated in the budget would be spent on modernisation," he added.

He said the suggestions to improve the security network in the

mediate medical aid for troops stationed at Siachen. "My primary aim is to provide all help to the troops, who sustain wounds due to enemy shelling or environment," he said.

The Defence Minister was on a two-day visit to forward posts in the northern sector despite regular firing by Pakistanis recently. — PTI

## Pak. gearing for high-altitude warfare

By Atul Aneja

**NEW DELHI, MARCH 12.** Pakistan has recently bought enough special equipment and clothing in Europe to push in an Army battalion in high-altitude areas.

According to sources in the Government, Pakistan has bought 25 snowmobiles and 451 Parkas (special winter jackets) from Belgium. The snowmobiles can push men and equipment quickly along icy slopes to forward posts. The deal, estimated at six million Belgian francs, includes the purchase of 971 pairs of snow-boots — enough to equip an entire battalion.

The purchase of high-altitude gear by Pakistan, according to analysts, reveals Islamabad's possible intent to intensify pressure on Indian forces along the Line of Control. Specifically, Pakistani troops, of around a brigade strength, have been positioned in

the Uri and Muzaffarabad sectors, facing Tangdhar on the Indian side of the LoC.

Tensions are also high along the Poonch-Rajouri alignment, separated from the Kashmir Valley by the Pir Panjal range. The areas of Rajouri, Nangi Tekri and Sunderbani have become especially prone to cross-border violence. These areas also straddle major infiltration routes heading either towards the Doda area or the Kashmir Valley.

Analysts here say that the spiralling tensions due to heightened post-Kargil militancy in Jammu and Kashmir may become "intolerable" in the next few months. Both sides are therefore taking no chances, in case tensions lead to a larger military engagement. Pakistani watchers point out that Islamabad, has in the past preferred to fight India in Kashmir. The well-developed road network on its side, easier terrain and anticipation of local support has encouraged Pakistan to operate in Kashmir. By keeping the Kashmir issue on the boil, Pakistan also seeks to realise its political objective of internationalising the area as a nuclear flashpoint.

India, on the other hand, finds greater freedom of manoeuvre in the desert terrain of Rajasthan, rather than Kashmir. Preferring armoured manoeuvres backed by aerial strikes, military planners have laid greater emphasis on acquiring equipment and imparting training for rapid tank thrusts in the Rajasthan area.



**The Defence Minister, Mr. George Fernandes, at the Siachen Glacier on Saturday for laying the foundation stone for a hospital.** — PTI

Kargil sector had also been taken note of and some of them were under implementation.

"Several countries have raised their eyebrows on the increase in our defence budget. We are not going to attack anyone. We just want our armed forces to keep pace with the modern scientific and technological developments," he said.

Mr. Fernandes laid the foundation stone for a high-tech hospital here which would cater to the im-

# Naxal violence, threat to security: Advani

By Our Staff Reporter

**NEW DELHI, MARCH 12.** The Union Home Minister, Mr. L.K. Advani, today said naxalite violence was the major threat to internal security, next to cross-border terrorism. "This was proved in the killing of the Andhra Pradesh Panchayati Raj Minister, A. Madhava Reddy, in a landmine explosion," he said.

Speaking at the Raising Day celebrations of the Central Industrial Security Force (CISF) here, Mr. Advani said, "We have seen naxalite activities in West Bengal, Madhya Pradesh, Orissa, Andhra Pradesh and Maharashtra, and, hence the paramilitary forces have to be fully prepared to face the threats".

The Centre had called a meeting of Chief Ministers and Director-Generals of Police of

States affected by the naxalite menace for April 3 to discuss and chalk out strategies to deal with naxalite violence.

Lauding the role played by the CISF since its inception in 1969, Mr. Advani said in the face of a recalcitrant neighbour in Pakistan, which after losing three wars had adopted a "strategy of terrorism" for the last two decades, India would have to now accept the challenge to maintain peace within its boundaries.

"It is my assessment that Kargil happened because in 1997 and 1998, the number of tourists visiting Kashmir increased. This was a sort of defeat for Pakistan's proxy war and to make up for that they resorted to intrusions in Kargil," Mr. Advani said.

He said that after the IA plane hijack, the Government had decided to enhance the pur-

view of the CISF bringing eight domestic airports under its security cover. In addition, the CISF Act had been amended so as to allow the force to provide consultancy services to companies in the private sector.

The CISF Director-General, Mr. Trinath Mishra, said the force would accomplish all these tasks efficiently.

Mr. Mishra said many personnel feel disillusioned, at times, as miscreants nabbed by them were often released by the local police. This "adversely affected" their morale. He urged the Home Minister to bring the CISF employees under a special pool while they were posted in Delhi for allotment of accommodation.

Earlier, Mr. Advani inspected a guard of honour. He also presented gallantry medals.

## Fernandes warns of PoK build-up

THOISE (Siachen), MARCH 13. The Defence Minister, Mr. George Fernandes, has warned that the coming summer could be fairly "hot" for security forces posted along the Line of Control (LoC) as reports indicated some build-up in Pakistan-occupied Kashmir (PoK).

The Minister, who undertook a whirlwind tour of some forward-most posts in Leh and Siachen sectors over the weekend, said the Army was ready for a befitting reply to any Pakistani misadventure. "There are reports of some Pakistani build-up in the Force Command of Northern Areas and two other areas along the LoC in PoK... We are watching the situation and are prepared to repeat our Kargil performance," Mr. Fernandes told PTI.

Mr. Fernandes, who was also to visit forward posts in Kupwara, Gurez and other areas in north Kashmir and could not go there because of bad weather, said there were reports of Pakistan building underground shelters for aircrafts, an elongated airbase and imparting training for high altitude warfare to Pakistani troops in northern areas.

He said the development was significant as all this was happening in those areas from where Pakistan had initiated Kargil operations. The Minister's visit to the State comes in the wake of the recent spurt in shelling and clashes along the LoC.

Mr. Fernandes said "on the LoC

there are a couple of points where there has been a considerable increase in the level of cross-border firing and infiltration activities". "We do expect the coming summer to be one in which the Pakistanis will increase their activities on the border and inside Jammu and Kashmir," he said.

Mr. Fernandes said the Government was aware and monitoring all developments and taking steps to deal with eventualities.

On Pakistan's threat of another Kargil-like adventure, Mr. Fernandes dubbed these as "mere rhetoric". "I would like to interpret this as that Pakistanis want to take a few more beatings because Kargil was a disaster and a bloody one for them. So when they say some more Kargil's, obviously they would receive more beatings," he added.

He said reports of greater collaboration between the Pakistani Army and the militants had also come to "our knowledge". Mr. Fernandes termed the recent attempts by the Pakistani Army in Jammu sector as "probing incursions" and said in both these areas the Army had inflicted heavy punishment on them.

Besides this, he said, there was no significant build-up along the LoC and the international border. "There were some speculative reports which are either based on some hearsay information or are plain ill-founded," he said.— PTI

# Farakka a sitting duck for terrorists

ANUPAM DASGUPTA  
STATESMAN NEWS SERVICE

FARAKKA, March 18. — The 2.75-km Farakka Barrage is a prime target of terrorists, Intelligence reports say.

But the CISF, entrusted with the security of the barrage over which pass National Highway 34 and the main rail route to North Bengal, has too few men, fewer vehicles, phone lines that don't work and no bomb disposal squad.

Unless the problems are addressed immediately, the vital installation will be at the mercy of terrorists who have already blown up railway tracks and stations in several parts of North Bengal, officials here feel.

The Central Industrial

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Security Force top brass has been told, but nothing has been done yet.

The CISF unit here is in desperate need of a squad for disposal of bombs "and other suspicious objects", a senior officer said.

"If any of our jawans spots anything suspicious, there is little we can do to remove the object even if we see a train approaching."

There are only 12 security posts on the barrage. The jawans manning the posts are all stationed on NH-34 while the railway tracks are left unguarded.

The communication network is out-of-date. Most of the time,

the telephone lines do not work. A modern telephone exchange is long overdue.

The unit recently got a few wireless sets, but not enough of them.

Mr SL Prasad, CISF Commandant, Farakka Barrage Project, told The Statesman: "It is common knowledge that foreign operatives use Murshidabad as a base. We are extremely worried at the sudden spurt in ISI and Ulfa activities on and around the barrage. We need modern gadgets to outsmart the enemy."

Transport is another problem. Most of the CISF's vehicles need to be replaced. "We need

faster vehicles for search and surveillance operations," a CISF officer said.

The water transport scene is no better. The CISF unit, which has to keep vigil on the Ganga, has only one speed boat. More are needed, officials said, because Bangladeshi fishermen are often caught near the barrage.

The barrage's gate no.8 collapsed last year, leading many to believe that some terrorist organisation had masterminded the operation. On 6 January, Bangladeshi nationalists were arrested while taking photographs of the barrage.

The authorities are planning to form a quick reaction team for better management of any crisis. But the funds are yet to come.

THE STATESMAN  
19 MAR 2000

Involving the citizen in security debate

# Kargil report shows the way

EVER since the report of the Kargil Review Committee, chaired by K. Subrahmanyan, was placed before Parliament, it has been subjected to comments and criticism, which have been instantaneous and quick on the draw. The first point to be noted is that the committee completed its work in a remarkably short time, just about four and a half months. The other points of significance are that this is the first time that the government appointed a committee to review the causes and background of a major security crisis, consisting of outsiders, instead of resorting to a purely in-house military inquiry. Thirdly, this is the first time that the report of such a committee has been made public through Parliament.

Previous internal reviews of military conflicts and crisis undertaken by the government about the 1962 and 1965 wars, were internal and have not been made public. Fourth, the report has not just confined itself to the immediate causes of the 50-day war. It contains a comprehensive and wide-ranging analysis of the conflict-prone predicament of India and Pakistan in terms of history, Pakistani motivations and India's reactions, undercurrents of policies, mindsets and how the Kashmir issue has been dealt with by India and Pakistan. It is also the first time, perhaps, that multi-dimensional recommendations have been made to fine-tune our intelligence, security and defence establishments.

Before one deals with the criticism levelled against the report, it would be worthwhile to ask: could Kargil have been avoided? The conclusions of the report briefly state: "Had the Indian Army sought to plug all conceivable loopholes, to frustrate every eventual... and attempted to safeguard every inch of (unpopulated) territory, it would have meant Siachenisation of Kargil along a wider front with correspondingly higher annual human and material costs. This would have been neither mil-

itary, nor politically cost effective and ... such a posture ... would have enabled Pakistan to bleed India."

Indications are that the Kargil plan was originally formulated in the eighties, but activated only after General Pervez Musharraf took over the command of the Pakistani army and that Nawaz Sharif was fully aware of the Kargil plan. While the Lahore Summit between Vajpayee and Nawaz Sharif did not lower the guard of Indian decision makers, there was a failure of intelligence inputs in terms of timely assessments which in turn resulted in our being surprised and our delayed response. The report says that both Research and Analyses Wing (RAW) and Intelligence Bureau (IB) had



J.N. Dixit

which was tending to recede from the radar screen of the international community. And strangely enough, the report refers only to one military officer, Brigadier Surinder Singh, as having failed in making correct assessments and not having made relevant anticipations.

The recommendations for remedial action in the report are wide ranging with suggestions for re-structuring institutions, improvement of procedures, re-organising arrangements for flow of intelligence and assessments and so on. Volumes containing the annexures not only have texts of testimonies given and extracts of reports, etc., but also a wealth of information and data based on extensive reading of books and documents deal-

mand structure. There are some critical references up to the divisional command level, but the report has been coy about critically evaluating the responses of the Corps Command and the Northern Army Command.

There seemed to have been no mechanism to ensure effective and real time flow of information and assessments from lower army echelons, to the Army Headquarters and the Office of the Chief of the Army Staff. There are only marginal references to the role that the Directorate General of Military Intelligence, could have played.

One understands that the internal assessment report prepared by our armed forces headquarters itself was more forthrightly and critically introspective about its functioning. This is the report prepared by General Reddy which, for obvious reasons, would not be published. The rationale for not criticising the Army might be that of not affecting the morale of our armed forces which fought so bravely and sacrificed so much to regain Kargil. One wishes that the same amount of attention was given to the role of the armed forces as was given to the Intelligence Bureau and RAW.

This critical comment apart, one should unhesitatingly acknowledge that the report is a painstaking, methodical, scholarly and detailed analysis of a major military crisis that the country faced. The report is an important and substantive contribution in educating our national security concerns and predicaments. The government placing it before Parliament is a welcome initiative in introducing transparency on this sensitive subject. One hopes that the Kargil Review Committee report being made available to the public would lead to reports on previous conflicts with China and Pakistan, like Handerson Brooks report, also being de-classified. Involving the citizen in national security debate is the strongest foundation for national defence.

**One wishes that the same amount of attention was given to the role of the armed forces as was given to the Intelligence Bureau and RAW**

communicated information about the increased Pakistani activities in the Kargil sector, but these reports were not channelled to the concerned authorities. IB reports, perhaps, only went to the Cabinet Secretary and the Home Secretary. They did not go to three officials most concerned with this information, namely, Secretary, RAW, the Chairman, Joint Intelligence Committee and the Directorate General, Military Intelligence. The report says: "The critical failure of intelligence was related to the absence of any information on the induction and de-induction of battalions and the lack of accurate data on the identity of battalions in the area of Kargil during 1998" and then onwards. The Kargil intrusion was essentially limited Pakistani military exercise designed to internationalise the Kashmir issue

ing with security issues.

Having touched upon the positive qualities of the report, it is necessary to look at some of the inadequacies which are not the result of an oversight or lack of attention, but are the result of deliberate reticence. While there is detailed description of the nature and content of the exchange communications which flowed from forward areas to the Army Headquarters and back, there is no focussed critical evaluation of the inadequacies or negligence which characterised the functioning of our Army, preceding the Kargil conflict.

The report has focussed mainly on the reasons for the complacency in the Northern Command in the pre-Kargil period, than on the critical shortcomings in observations, analyses and assessment at different levels in the com-

INDIAN EXPRESS

20 MAR 2000

# India not to compromise on security: Atal

Our Political Bureau  
NEW DELHI 19 MARCH

**I**N AN attempt to deny the Opposition an opportunity to suggest that the regime is bending over backwards to please the Americans and ram in the point that the objective is to strike an enduring diplomatic relationship, Prime Minister Atal Behari Vajpayee said on Sunday India will not compromise on its security concerns and that the talks should be based on equal terms.

Aware of the dissent within the country, the Prime Minister said: "We will not take any decision under pressure on issues concerning security. Decisions will be hours," the Prime Minister told a gathering at his

residence, hours before the arrival of the US President.

Mr Vajpayee, who expressed confidence that it would usher in an enduring diplomatic relationship between New Delhi and Washington, said the relations should be based on equal terms. Recalling that Washington had resented the 1998 Pokhran nuclear tests and imposed sanctions against India, Mr Vajpayee said he had then stated that the people were prepared to face all difficulties for the sake of country's security. "The sanctions are yet to be lifted. We will have talks and we are hopeful that the relations with the US will improve now," he added.

The Prime Minister's assertions are significant as sizeable

section of the political class, brought up on an "anti-imperialist" staple has been accusing the Vajpayee regime, have even refused audience with President Clinton. Worse, the BJP's mother outfit, the RSS, has said

warned against the "hegemonic designs" of the US administration. The new RSS leadership, which views foreign policy on issues strangely coincide with the Communists, describe the changes in the economic scenario as one suited to benefit the US and other western countries.

But the Vajpayee regime appears to be determined to reap the benefits of the convergence of interests in the economic arena and the talks will centre around common initiatives con-

cerning new economy. The regime is also confident that the US' concern on terrorism will come in handy in New Delhi's dealings with the hostile neighbour.

New Delhi, which believes that there is greater appreciation of its concerns, feels that the visit will also help in formulating a global policy against terrorism.

India's forward movement in the sphere of knowledge-based economy is pegged to be the high point of deliberations between the two sides.

New Delhi is expected to take up the issue of protectionism and will demand laws to promote interaction between the two sides.

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# The defence budget

By V. R. Raghavan

THE RS. 58,587-crore Indian defence budget has evoked a wide ranging response. It is the largest annual increase in defence allocation in many years. Mr. Mulayam Singh Yadav, former Defence Minister, was an exception who remained unsatisfied and preferred a Rs. 82,000-crore defence budget! There is, however, an unmistakable sentiment of concern that defence should cost so much. Pakistan has wondered about the size of the budget and the intentions behind it. The United States is reportedly dissatisfied about the size of the outlay and anxious about its impact on existing tensions in the sub-continent. There is also justifiable disappointment that allocations to social sectors have been frugal if not criminally deficient. The question of what is being defended at such high costs is a natural outcome of this budget.

It is useful to go over Mr. Yashwant Sinha's elaboration on the budget. In his address at the national seminar organised by FICCI the day after the budget, the Minister explained the relationship which exists between defence and the fiscal deficit. He argued that the proposed fiscal deficit of 5.1 per cent was dictated amongst others by security considerations. He added that if he had kept the defence budget at last year's level, he would have brought down the fiscal deficit by 0.6 per cent. He went on to say that this would not have been in the national interest. In a live webcast the Minister averred that the Kargil expenditure would take up the entire amount he is mopping up. The increase in the defence budget is limited to 0.4 per cent. The 2.7 per cent of GDP allocation for defence is one of the lowest in the world.

Reducing the defence expenditure is a long standing demand. The arguments of guns vs butter, of swords vs ploughshares are not new. Adam Smith said that civilised nations would rely on a militia for defence at their peril. Nations need armies. Since armies are expensive, a national effort is needed to find the large amounts involved. Defence, according to him, was a common good. Smith also added a caveat that to afford defence, the nation must be an opulent one. Ricardo took the position that Governments should be

restrained from embarking on costly wars at public expense. Neither Smith nor Ricardo imagined that countries with huge fiscal deficits, and which keep social peace through unaffordable subsidies, would also keep large armies and wage wars. The economist asks what additional security can be had for every extra rupee. The defence forces rightly question, how much security is good enough?

The answer to the latter question rests with the political leadership. It has not preferred to answer it, since India became independent. Flawed economic, social and foreign policies have created a wide range of internal and external threats to India's security. The police and paramilitary forces cannot, however, manage in-

ternal security and require the military to do the job. The military's size and costs go up, if it is manage both internal and external threats. The Navy and the Air Force also require huge capital outlays. Militaries in most countries are downsizing by taking recourse to technology. In India, they continue to be manpower dependent. No wonder that the bulk of the budget goes to salaries. The inefficiencies of the bloated and ever-increasing paramilitary forces are also being borne through a large military manpower. It is important that the need for a large defence apparatus is brought down, if the budget is to be reduced. That can only happen if the outlook on what constitutes security is changed.

Security lies, to use Adam Smith's phrase, in the nation being opulent. It is apparent that there can be no national defence without national wealth. The route to national opulence, growth and development lies in sound fiscal and monetary policies. Reducing defence expenditure can only be of marginal use. The value of reductions in defence expenditure can be reasonably correctly assessed, if defence expenditure is reduced by half, it would release about 1.5 per cent

of the GDP in the financial mainstream. In the proposed budget, this would amount to Rs. 30,000 crores. This is not a particularly large amount. It is unlikely to make such a difference either to the fiscal deficit or to other allocations. An average defence person would argue that the numerous financial scams may have amounted to more! However, the amount can make a qualitative difference, wholly out of proportion to the sums involved, in improving defence preparedness. On the other hand, PSU disinvestment alone is capable of reducing the total fiscal deficit by half.

India's security environment in the foreseeable future is unlikely to improve. Internal political strife and armed, if not military, external threats are likely to get enhanced. The other and more important dimensions of national security, eg: energy, food, human resource security in terms of education, employment, health, the security of individual citizen, are all about to come up front as priority areas. Defence needs are also unlikely to come down without major political initiatives in the region. Defence costs will, therefore, continue and may even rise.

Therefore, if defence allocation as a percentage of GDP must rise, national GDP should also go up. The choice is clear enough. It is to accelerate economic growth by not allowing policies to be held hostage by vested interests. The choice is between national and vested interests and not between defence and development. The choice is also between issues of national and political economy. Allocation of funds is only part of the challenge of meeting the nation's defence needs. The ability to effectively use the funds is the more important need. The last ten or more years have seen defence budgets which have been almost static in real money value terms. The defence services have consistently complained of inadequate funds. Yet there is hardly a year in which they have been able to fully spend

the amount allotted to them. The Chief of the Army Staff recently lamented that complex and tedious procedures make it difficult for the services to first get the allotted moneys released, and then to have them spent. Money not spent in one year does not get carried over and is lost to the defence forces. The big budget now presented involves much larger sums. There is no knowing how much of it will remain unreleased and unused. These built in inefficiencies need to be speedily done away with. Defence investments have to be based on long term planning.

An annual defence budget is the worst possible way to plan for national defence. The defence forces, even more than other Ministries and departments, need to broadly know what funds will come their way at least for five years to come. They can then economise on force restructuring, system acquisition, training, logistic repositioning, war inventories and personnel policies. The current system of annual budgets leaves the defence forces gasping for fiscal breath every financial year. They can neither anticipate the gains nor plan for the losses. Other Ministries can cope with such uncertainties because they are providing good or bad service. The defence forces fight war, where they either win or the nation is defeated.

India's defence management badly requires restructuring of higher defence organisation. The Subrahmanyam Committee, set to look into the Kargil episode, has recommended it. Before that, the Arun Singh Committee had made a comprehensive, and eminently sensible set of recommendations, to improve the defence management process. The Defence Minister had promised that he would bring about the much-needed integration of the defence services with the Ministry of Defence. This would greatly improve efficiency and bring about economy, but none of it is in sight.

Effective security cannot be had by merely presenting a bigger defence budget. It requires effective defence finance procedures which in turn needs integrated defence planning organisations. It is now up to the Government to introduce the structural changes needed by the circumstances.

*Allocation of funds is only part of the challenge of meeting the nation's defence needs. The ability to effectively use the funds is the more important need.*

# Massacre meant to scare J&K minorities: Advani

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA  
NEW DELHI, MARCH 21

HOME Minister L K Advani on Tuesday described as "grim tragedy" the massacre of 35 Sikhs by militants in Jammu and Kashmir saying there appeared to be a 'deliberate design' to 'cleanse' the valley of all minorities. It was not a random kind of killing but there was a "deliberate design" behind it, he told reporters here.

"Till now, the militants had targeted the Hindu community and had tried to see that the Kashmir valley is cleansed of this particular community. Now the objective seems to be to see that the Sikh also begin the process of migration," he said.

The home Minister said the design of the militants must be recognised and that the government was conscious of it. Two ministers have been deputed to visit the spot, he said, adding the Governor and Jammu and Kashmir Chief Minister Farooq Abdullah, who were in the capital, would also be rushing there. Abdullah discussed the security situation in

J&K with Advani. In a telephonic conversation, the two discussed security measures to be taken after the carnage in the Jammu region as the incident could have its repercussions, official sources said. A home ministry team accompanied by urban employment minister S S Dhindsa will be visiting the affected area, the sources said. They will be accompanied by state police chief Gurbachan Jagat and legislative council vice-chairman Harbans Singh from Jammu.

The Chief Minister, accompanied by his Punjab counterpart Prakash Singh Badal, will also visit the area after attending the lunch hosted by Prime Minister Atal Behari Vajpayee in honour of United States President Bill Clinton. A high-level meeting is also scheduled to be held in Jammu, the winter capital of the state, with a view to tighten the security in the city following reports of heightened tension. Meanwhile, the sources said, a state-sponsored bandh was likely to be observed in J&K on Wednesday to mourn the latest killings.

President K R Narayanan condemned the massacre and ex-

pressed hope that it would open the world's eyes to the 'sordidness' of terrorism. He described the massacre as "yet another vile example of cross-border terrorism".

In a statement here, Narayanan said, "even as I extend my sympathy to the next of kin of those killed, let me express the hope that this latest instance will open the world's eyes to the sordidness of terrorism which does not mind spilling innocent blood in order to coerce civil society and make an impact on the world."

The killing of 35 Sikhs on Monday night is the biggest and third major massacre in the state since the return of popular rule under Farooq Abdullah in 1996. After the Abdullah ministry assumed power in October 1996, seven Kashmiri Pandits fell prey to militants' bullets at Sangrampura in Budgam district of central Kashmir on March 20, 1997.

This was followed by a massacre of 25 Kashmiri Pandits at Wandhama in the periphery of Srinagar city and the home constituency of Abdullah on the intervening night of January 25 and 26, 1998.

INDIAN EXPRESS

22 MAR 2000

5 KILLED IN NORTH KASHMIR ENCOUNTER

# Gunbattle with militants holed up in mosque ends

SRINAGAR, MARCH 26. The twenty-hour-long encounter between militants holed up inside a mosque and the Rashtriya Rifles at Handwara in north Kashmir came to an end tonight with the killing of all the three Lashker-e-Taiba ultras.

Police said an Army Major and a Jawan were killed and another Jawan was injured in the clash. A Defence Ministry spokesman told UNI late on Sunday night that the troops had killed all the three militants who had been hiding in the mosque since last evening at Handwara. The spokesman said one Pika gun and two AK rifles were recovered from the slain militants. The operation was conducted without the troops entering the mosque, he said. — UNI

**Our Srinagar Correspondent** earlier reported:

Police sources said the militants, mostly foreigners, entered



A view of the mosque in Doodipra village, 80 km north of Srinagar, in which militants were holed up since Saturday. — AP



Soldiers, who have surrounded the mosque, seen taking positions on Sunday. — AP

the mosque last evening and took positions. On receiving information, the security forces comprising the Army, the SOG and local police cordoned off the mosque and asked the militants surrender.

However, they did not agree and fired on the troops, killing Major Ravindra and a jawan, and injuring several others. The IGP, Kashmir zone, Dr. Ashok Bhan, said the mosque suffered considerable damage.

Additional troops were called in from nearby camps to help flush out the militants. The sources said the militants had a lot of arms and ammunition while the security forces were hampered by fears of damage being caused to the mosque. According to an unconfirmed report, the militants had taken hostage some civilians who went to the mosque to offer prayers.

PTI reports:

In other incidents, five militants and an Army jawan were killed and four wounded in the State since last evening, while

militants attacked the house of a Lok Dal leader, an official spokesman said.

Two unidentified militants were killed in an encounter with police and Border Security Force personnel at Sathu-Kinihama in Nowgam area on the outskirts of Srinagar today.

An AK assault rifle, a Chinese pistol, two grenades and ammunition were recovered from the slain militants. The security forces shot dead a militant at Budnar village in Baramulla district of north Kashmir last night.

The State unit president of the Lok Dal, Mr. Bashir Ahmad, escaped unhurt in a militant attack at his house in Pulwama district. The police posted outside repulsed the attack.

Police also repulsed twin militant attacks on a police station and arrested three militants.

The militants fired four rockets and hurled grenades, followed by firing at a police station, in Pattan in Baramulla district last night and early today. Police and CRPF personnel repulsed the attacks, the spokesman said.

Army troops shot dead a militant in the Manasbal area on the outskirts of Srinagar last evening. The deceased was identified as Mohammad Yousuf Malla of the banned Hizbul Mujahideen.

Another militant was gunned down by security forces in the frontier district of Kupwara yesterday. An Army personnel was wounded in the shootout, the spokesman said.

A jawan lost his life and another was wounded when the militants ambushed a Rashtriya Rifles patrol party at Nowgam near the Line of Control in the Baramulla sector last night, official sources said.

The troops returned the fire but the militants fled. The deceased was identified as Lance Naik Mohammad Junaid, they said.

## Pak. shelling

Six Army personnel, including an officer, were injured in heavy shelling by Pakistani troops from across the LoC in Jhangar area of the Nowshera sector in the Jammu division since Saturday, official reports said.

# Major, four others killed in siege of J&K mosque

UNITED NEWS OF INDIA &  
PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

SRINAGAR, March 26. — A 20-hour-long encounter between Lashkar-e-Tayyiba militants holed up inside a mosque at Handwar and the Rashtriya Rifles ended late tonight with the death of all three militants.

Major Ravindran and a jawan were also killed and another jawan injured in the clash, police said.

Troops killed all three militants who were hiding in the mosque since last evening, a Defence ministry spokesman said. The operation was conducted without the troops entering the mosque, he added.

Three firearms including two AK rifles were seized from the slain militants.

The militants, earlier, rejected an offer by Muslim clerics to surrender and fired at the troops.

An explosion was heard this evening from the mosque.

The militants fired intermittently at the Army personnel who surrounded the place of worship and nearby houses, an official spokesman said.

As the troops tightened their cordon around the mosque and nearby houses early today, the militants resorted to heavy firing, forcing the security personnel to retaliate in self-defence.

The militants were killed when they tried to escape from the mosque.

Last evening, the militants took shelter in the mosque after a combing operation in Check-e-Dedikote village of Kupwara district, 90 km from here, where they had sought cover.

Security forces cordoned off

the area and sealed all escape routes from Check-e-Dedikote.

A jawan was killed as the cornered militants fired at the troops.

On being chased, the militants fled to Handwar and hid in the mosque. Some of them had also forced their way into nearby houses.

From the beginning, Brigadier RK Karwal, in-charge of the operation, had ruled out storming of the mosque.

The troops acted with utmost restraint to avoid destruction of the shrine, he said.

"The militants have limited ammunition which is soon going to be exhausted and we are waiting for them to surrender," Brig. Karwal said earlier in the evening.

The militants constantly fired at the troops from the windows of the mosque but the soldiers remained judicious in retaliation in spite of having suffered casualties, the Brigadier said.

"The primary aim of the low-key operation," according to an Army statement, "was to maintain the sanctity of the holy place and ensure minimal damage to it."

In a separate incident, militants injured two persons in the Valley during the past 24 hours.

**5 militants killed:** Five militants and an Armyman were killed and four wounded since last evening when militants attacked the house of a Lok Dal leader.

Two unidentified militants were killed in a raid by police and Border Security Force at Sathu-Kinihama in Nowgam today.

■ Photograph on page 8

# Advani's visit fails to instil confidence in Valley

*ADVN Sec*

**Arun Joshi**  
Jammu, March 27

THE VISIT of Union Home Minister Lal Krishan Advani and his assurances in Jammu and Kashmir on Sunday have brought no hope to the religious minorities in the state that is in grip of unprecedented spell of violence and bloodshed for the past 11 years.

Mr. Advani's usual claim that pro-active policy was paying big dividends and Pakistan was getting increasingly isolated on the issue of cross-border terrorism offered no consolation to the people here. If the mood of the villagers at

Chatti Singhpora which he visited six days after the massacre of 36 Sikhs was any indication, Advani's words on security for Sikhs in Kashmir were treated with scepticism and the villagers were in no mood to bet their lives on the Home Minister's assurances.

Mr Advani was reminded of his promises to improve the security situation in the aftermath of the massacre of Hindus in Doda and Udhampur in early part of 1998. But the result of his announcements was that there were more massacres with greater intensity not only in Doda but also in the neighbouring Himachal Pradesh's Chamba district. The massacre of



36 Sikhs has filled the Sikh community in the state with dread and fear and those living in the Valley are seriously weighing options to migrate. Neither are the assur-

ances of the Government trusted nor the pledges of their security coming from other quarters.

Kashmir observers feel that Mr. Advani who had set the return of Kashmiri Hindus to the Valley as a fixed condition for the restoration of normalcy in Kashmir, is now confronted with a situation where Sikhs are contemplating migration seriously. The fact of the matter as observers point out is that Advani's pro-active policy had no defined contours nor any flesh in it and as a result this has only brought more violence and bloodshed in Jammu and Kashmir.

There are two major problems that the Union Home Ministry fails to understand, believe these observers. First, there is a focus on containing the fast spreading violence in Jammu and Kashmir through military means. It is either in terms of more troops or arming the villagers. The other causes that breed this conflict are being completely overlooked.

What is leading to the increased violence in Kashmir is the increased infiltration from across the border. There are more than 2,500 militants, a vast majority of them foreigners, who have entered into Jammu and Kashmir. This threat is likely to escalate further with the snows melting in the mountains.

# LoC restraint caused huge Kargil loss: govt

AUNGHITA MOJUMDAR  
STATESMAN NEWS SERVICE

NEW DELHI, March 27. — In the first official acknowledgement of the reasons for the high casualties suffered by the Indian forces during the Kargil operations, the government has said this was the result of India's restraint and the decision not to cross the LoC.

Already widely accepted by diplomatic and military experts, this aspect is confirmed in the annual report of the external affairs ministry which states: "Throughout its

55-1 28/3 9-D & N Security  
military operation, India acted with unparalleled restraint and scrupulously observed the LoC sanctity, resulting in unusually high casualties for

■ **Editorial: Clinton agrees, page 6**

our armed forces, which is a tribute to their discipline and valour."

The restraint has been posited as one of the factors for the international support for its position during Kargil. The report also states: "India's mature and restrained

response to the threats to its security underscored once again its role as a factor of stability and balance in Asia. In view of the relentless progress of Indian forces on the ground, Pakistan had no option but to come to an arrangement for withdrawing its troops to its own side of the LoC."

In assessing the coup in Pakistan, the report points for the first time its security implications for India, stating the coup had brought "further security concerns that have to

■ **See KARGIL: page 10**

## KARGIL:

(Continued from page 1)

be taken into account".

The success in securing international support during the Kargil war emerges this year as one of the major achievements of Indian diplomacy, contrasting with the hopes of peace expressed in last year's report.

The focus in the 1999-2000 report on Pakistan's betrayal is at variance with last year's expectations of an improvement in relations following the Lahore Declaration. The agreement between the two Prime Ministers last year "on the need to combat terrorism in all its forms and manifestations" has changed this year into India's battle against Pakistan-sponsored terrorism.

Kargil, the hijacking and the coup have been identified as events which disturbed the process of peace and development in the region.

While identifying South Asia as a region of tremendous opportunity, the report points to Pakistan's role in undermining development as "unnecessary brakes" have been put on the process of economic and social development by the use of terrorism as an instrument of State policy by Pakistan, residual reservations about greater economic intercourse and integration, "the inability of democracy to take root in some societies" as well as "untenable territorial claims".

Dwelling on the steps taken by India to build relations with Pakistan, the report says the premeditated aggression and armed intrusion in Kargil by Pakistan shattered the endeavours, with India's initiatives negated by Pakistan's actions, revealing its abiding hostility towards India.

In assessing the future of Indo-Pak relations, the report iterates the government's well-known position that Pakistan needs to restore mutual trust and confidence through concrete and tangible action, including the cessation of cross-border terrorism and hostile propaganda against India.

The report says: "These are not pre-conditions but the very ingredients to foster proper environment for a meaningful interaction between the two countries."

On relations with the USA, the report notes the increased dialogue and engagement on a broad range of bilateral, regional and international issues besides the continuation of the ongoing dialogue on security and non-proliferation issues.

It identifies regional developments, particularly Pakistan's armed intrusion in Kargil, the coup in Pakistan, the evolving situation in Afghanistan and the problem of terrorism as important elements of the constructive dialogue with the USA.

On relations with China, the report does not reflect any of the upswings and downturns in the bilateral relations, delineating, instead, the number of meetings blandly.

However, an important development that comes through in the annual report is the restoration of bilateral ties with several countries, overcoming the setback of Pokh-ran. These include Japan, Australia, Europe and Canada.

Enhanced relations with the Gulf countries also finds mention, with the report focusing on strengthened relations with them.

THE STATESMAN

28 MAR 2000

# DEFENCE NEEDS

## Bureaucratic Hurdles Must be Removed

**I**N the steepest hike in defence allocation ever, Finance Minister Yashwant Sinha raised the allocation almost by Rs 13,000 crore to Rs 58,587 crore for modernisation of the Armed Forces to meet the post-Kargil challenges. The defence budget for 2000-2001 continued to be marginally below the prescribed three per cent of the GDP at about 2.8 per cent. For the last several years, the government has been spending 2.3 per cent of the GDP on defence, leading to the decline in real terms in defence expenditure. A predictably steep rise in the pensions and payments towards war injury during Kargil conflict, and a big rise in allocations for Army "stores", made it necessary for the finance minister to increase allocation in the defence budget.

The budget for 2000-2001 has doubled the defence expenditure of Rs 29,505 crore five years ago. The defence forces had been demanding the hike keeping in view of the need for state-of-the-art military hardware for the three services and the electronic surveillance system. The Kargil review committee headed by National Security Council convener, Mr K Subrahmanyam, said that a number of experts had suggested that the budgetary constraints had affected the process of modernisation.

### KARGIL

It said modernisation meant equipping infantry with superior lightweight weapons, equipment and clothing suited to the threats they face in the high altitudes. Defence needs have grown further after the Kargil conflict which highlighted the inadequacies in surveillance capability, particularly through satellite imagery. It recommended immediate acquisition of high altitude Unmanned Ariel Vehicles (UAVs) with night vision and thermal imaging capabilities. It also said that there was urgent need for communication interception equipment and satellite imagery capability of world standards.

The Army, which suffered considerable losses during the May-July 1999 Kargil operations owing to the paucity of advanced technology weapons, has been allocated Rs 28,939.14 crore, more than Rs 5,000 crore over the last year. The additional burden of deployment of troops in the high altitude Kargil sector will be met by an allocation of Rs 1,800 crore.

By PK VASUDEVA

The Army will be able to acquire T-90 tanks, weapons locating radars, self-propelled guns and multi-barrel rocket launchers. It will also be acquiring UAVs and electronic warfare system.

"Stores" is the head under which ammunition for training and war, fuel oil and lubricants (FOL) expenses, maintenance spares, etc., are bunched. In the past, inadequate funding for stores has led to reduced serviceability and unrealistic training regimes leading to low preparedness for war.

The Army is usually a big sufferer on this account.

*The author is Senior Research Fellow, Strategic Research Centre, Chandigarh.*

Ammunition, which is wasted during training and war, is computed under the war wastage rates (WWR) fund. This wastage is expected to be made good, but shortages have been continuing for the past several years, leading to telescoped training.

This year, a hefty allocation of Rs 11,012.20 crore over a budget estimate of Rs 7,893.28 crore last year for stores suggests that the shortfall in ammunition reserves might be

corrected this year. Capital allocations for the Army also show a big increase. For aircraft and aero-engines, the Army has been allocated Rs 518 crore in this budget while its budget last year was Rs 189.86 crore.

Similarly heavy and medium vehicles to be purchased by the Army have been allocated Rs 440.32 crore which is roughly double the amount sanctioned in the last budget.

Large allocations have also been made for Air Force stores. After the IAF lost two Mirages 2000 during the Kargil operations, and after losing several MiG 21s to bird hits, the combat capability of the IAF has been severely affected. The Indian Air Force too has an additional Rs 1,736.30 crore — Rs 7,896.03 crore as compared to Rs 6,159.73 crore and a capital outlay of Rs 4,502 crore. The IAF plans to acquire 60 advance jet trainers (AJT), Mirage 2000 fighters and other modern equipment.

### DEPLETION

A glaring lacuna in the budget is the low allocation to the Indian Navy. There has been a serious depletion of strength: from 134 ships today, the number may go down to 80 by 2007 because of lack of any perspective planning.

The money allocated for capital expenditure for the Navy is disappointing. The Cinderella of the Armed Forces has been allocated Rs 1,610 crore for stores.

The capital allocation is about Rs 4,500 crore. The 10th Finance Commission had recommended an annual capital allocation alone of Rs 6,000 crore for the Navy considering the maritime threats to India's defence.

How will the Navy fulfil its requirements? It hopes to go ahead with acquisitions like Russian Admiral Gorshakov aircraft carrier, the replacement of INS Vikrant, modernisation of the existing fleet and getting new electronic warfare equipment with the Rs 443.51 crore increase apart from a Rs 682.50 crore increase in capital outlay. It also needs nuclear submarines to counter nuclear maritime threat.

The sharp increase in the defence outlay to the extent of 28.2 per cent over the last year's budget estimates has been widely commented upon within and outside India. While criticism from abroad especially from the USA and Pakistan is understandable, domestic criticism is reflection of the failure of government, the Army and the intelligence agencies in explaining the need for this increase in expenditure.

The grit and determination of our young officers and jawans and quick and sound operational planning enabled India to throw out the Pakistani intruders but it revealed a shocking state of affairs in regard to defence preparedness. The casualties could have been avoided, if the Army had received proper equipment and winter clothing in time. Compared to the Indian troops, the Pakistanis were better equipped and had more firepower.

The grim reality is that the political and bureaucratic leadership failed to have a correct and comprehensive understanding to the threat the country faced through Pakistan's nuclear strategy, the sustained proxy war and widespread terrorism. The Indian leadership has been downsizing the defence budget drastically every year without downsizing the Army significantly.

### INSURGENCY

The burden of insurgency as well as the external security threat remained with the Army. Without developing a total integrated strategy to deal with the Pakistani threat, the Indian leadership went on pushing in more Army and paramilitary forces into Kashmir in a proxy war of attrition.

With every year of non-replenishment, the stockpiles dwindled. Even if the defence budget is pushed to 2.8 per cent of the GDP and maintained for next five years, it will be difficult to sustain defence modernisation at a satisfactory pace. Out of this budget 75 per cent is spent on pay and allowances and Rs 8,000 crore on the pension package. The balance will not be sufficient for purchases.

The time has come for the Indian leadership to integrate MoD with the service headquarters and involve the service chiefs in the decision-making process. There should be better coordination between the MoD and the MoH for deployment of troops and paramilitary forces under a unified command. The Indian political leadership has to develop a comprehensive strategy with the help of service chiefs to defeat Pakistani terrorism against India without escalation and at the most economical cost.

This calls for long-term strategic planning because Pakistan has already evolved one by formulating a Nuclear Command, deployment of ex-servicemen along the LoC and by training and sending militants into India through the porous borders. The bureaucratic hurdles should be removed and the forces properly equipped without anyone getting involved in any kick-backs or scams.

# No extraneous factors in Kalkat appointment, SC told

OUR LEGAL CORRESPONDENT  
STATESMAN NEWS SERVICE

NEW DELHI, Feb. 2. — The Attorney-General, Mr Soli J Sorabjee, today submitted before the Supreme Court that the court cannot sit in appeal over the decision of the appointing authority (ACC) which appointed Lt-Gen. HRS Kalkat to the post of General Officer Commanding-in-Chief of Eastern Command.

Mr Sorabjee contended before a three-judge Bench comprising the Chief Justice, Dr A S Anand, Mr Justice S Rajendra Babu and Mr Justice Doraiswami Raju that no relevant factor had been ignored while appointing Mr Kalkat and no extraneous factors were taken into consideration.

Appearing on behalf of the Union of India, during the hearing of two civil appeals filed by Union of India against Rajendra Singh Kadyan (whose challenge to Kalkat's appointment was allowed by Delhi High Court in the impugned judgment) and by Lt-Gen. Kalkat against Kadyan, Mr Sorabjee submitted that the weight attached to each of the factors is a matter to be decided by the appointing authority.

He said gradation in such posts, which are selection posts, is primarily based on the merit of the officer which is to be considered by the appointing authority. The criteria, he said, for selection of an army commander are laid down in two policy circulars. The first circular (dated 21 October 1986) stipulates the officer should be "fit in every respect" — he should have a minimum of two years before retirement from the date of appointment as army commander.

The second policy circular (dated 18 November 1996) lays down that: a) the officer should have commanded a corps for at least one year to become eligible for appointment as army commander; and b) no waiver in this stipulation will be allowed without prior concurrence of the gov-

ernment.

The Chief Justice sought clarification about the procedure followed by the appointing authority when it decides the fitness of the officer. The Attorney-General explained that the fitness aspect included the suitability to the post of this nature and character.

He referred to the impugned high court judgment and to the assessment made of both the officers. He said in the case of the respondent Kadyan, who was granted waiver by the government, even if the period of waiver was added, he still could not be considered because his assessment said he needed to be more aggressive and bold. On the other hand, Kalkat was considered to have instruction ability and other qualities. He stressed that all factors were considered by the appointing authority. Though Kalkat was marginally junior, technically Kadyan was not eligible even if the waiver was considered.

Mr Sorabjee explained the meaning of eligibility as being legally qualified and fit to be chosen. When the Chief Justice asked about the level at which both officers were on the promotion panel, he said both were on the promotion panel up to the rank of Lt-Gen. (He clarified that this information is subject to checking from the records.)

"It is a hypothetical case if an officer is required to discharge field duty, and according to the record he has avoided the field duty on one or the other pretext. Then his non-consideration for the post is fair but on the other hand the appointing authority also has to consider how the officer has performed in his field duty. For that matter the appointing authority should have knowledge about the matters it is considering," the Chief Justice observed.

The Attorney-General said it is to be seen whether that factor was considered or it was in existence at all or if considered what weight was attached to it.

The hearing was deferred till tomorrow.



# Life term for Bleach & 5 Latvians

STATESMAN NEWS SERVICE

CALCUTTA, Feb. 2. — British national Peter Bleach and five Latvians accused in the Purulia armsdrop case were today sentenced to life-imprisonment by the Fourth City Civil and Sessions Court.

The sentence followed Monday's conviction of Bleach and the five members of the crew — Igor Timmerman, Igor Moskvitin, Oleg Gaidach, Alexander Klichin and Evgueny Antimenko — for "aiding and abetting" a conspiracy to wage war against India.

The six dropped a huge cache of arms and ammunition, including AK-47 and AK-56 rifles, anti-tank grenades and rocket-launchers, from a Russian AN-26 aircraft on the villages of Jhalda, Ghatanga,

Belamu, Maramu and Beradi in Purulia district after dusk on 17 December, 1995.

Bleach and the five Latvians said after the judgment that they would move Calcutta High Court against the sentence. If needed, he would go the Supreme Court too, said Bleach, but added that he would plead his own case as he did not have any money.

The judge, Mr PK Biswas, also imposed a Rs 60,000-fine on each of the six. Delivering the sentence, he said the convicts were involved in an "international conspiracy" aimed at overthrowing the state government by helping insurgents with arms.

The case was one of the "rarest of rare", Mr Biswas said, adding that it was the first time India was faced with a "concerted

design" to disrupt law and order. "The convicts do not deserve sympathy or leniency."

The six convicted pleaded not guilty. Bleach denied that he had conspired against India while Antimenko said he "respected" India since his "schooldays". He said he had suffered two heart-attacks in four years and that his health had broken down during the course of the trial.

Klichin said he harboured a "friendly attitude" towards India and the trial had failed to change this. He also told the judge that his wife was forced to sell their property to support herself, their children and his mother.

Gaidach also told the judge about his family's problems in Latvia in his absence, while Moskvitin — suffering from

tuberculosis — spoke of his illness. "Punishment will be like death and I don't think I deserve any."

Timmerman emphasised on how the six had cooperated with the CBI and told the court that he did not violate the law of the land.

The court had, however, acquitted Vinay Singh, a member of the Ananda Marga. The organisation, in a statement, lambasted the CBI for "falsely implicating Singh."

Some of the airdropped arms were still with CPI-M goons, Ananda Marga alleged, and said it would bring to the notice of the Prime Minister and the Union Home Minister the CBI's "mala fide attempts" to "denigrate" it.

■ Photograph on page 8

THE STATESMAN

- 3 FEB 2000

# Navy begins joint exercises with France

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE  
NEW DELHI, FEB 3

96-9  
THE Navy will soon acquire the warship INS Brahmaputra, tanker INS Aditya and submarine INS Sindhusastra, Chief of the Naval Staff Admiral Sushil Kumar announced on Wednesday. The Navy also began joint exercises with the French Navy in the Arabian Sea Springex 2000 on Wednesday.

Elaborating on the naval doctrine of prevention of war with sharp combat capabilities and conventional deterrence, Admiral Kumar said that the Navy would put

these doctrines to test now. "Preventive deterrence means preventing anybody from creating trouble and that we intend doing by our active presence and vigil. This is more relevant than nuclear deterrence," he added.

Earlier, Naval Headquarters announced the beginning of a major exercise where both the eastern and the western fleets would participate. "More than 45 ships, submarines and a number of aircraft including the state-of-the-art Su-30s, Jaguars and MiG-29 aircraft of the Indian Air Force will participate in the exercise," Rear Admiral SCS Bangara, said.

The French navy will participate with one squadron, including an aircraft carrier, tanker and destroyer. 9-0/11/2000

This, the Navy said, was essential since the Indian Navy will know more about its drawbacks and areas where it could improve when it interacted with modern navies of the world.

Vice Admiral Madhvendra Singh, Commander-in-Chief of the Western Naval Command, held a briefing about the forthcoming first international fleet review where at least 70 countries are expected to participate. The event will be held in February 2001,

when the navies will showcase the best of their capabilities at the Gateway of India in Mumbai. Singh also said that an impressive fly past and a parade would be organised for the first time at Marine Drive for the people to see the powers of the Navy.

The focus of the Navy in the coming years would be to project itself as a powerful, modern and state-of-the-art force in the region. "The aim is to showcase India's maritime potential and in many ways the message of maritime diplomacy," Admiral Kumar added. The exercise will end in April.

INDIAN EXPRESS

- 4 FEB 2000

PM defers decision on tabling report

# Military block to Kargil disclosure

FROM CHANDAN NANDY

New Delhi, Feb. 3: The three service chiefs today argued against making public the Subrahmanyam committee report on what led to the Kargil incursions.

Faced with stiff opposition from the defence heads and senior bureaucrats at a meeting of the Cabinet Committee on Security this evening, the government put off a decision on whether it would table the report in Parliament.

Both the Prime Minister and the home minister are believed to be in favour of placing the document in the Lok Sabha. But the service chiefs — Gen. V.P. Malik, Air Marshal A. Y. Tipnis and Admiral Sushil Kumar — made out a strong case for keeping the document under wraps.

They pointed out that operational secrets like troop deployment along the Line of Control would be disclosed if the report was bared for all to see.

Although Indian forces have since plugged loopholes along the frontier, troop management along the LoC has not been altered completely.

The air force argued that its fighter planes would be exposed if

the report were to be made public.

The strongest dissenting note came from the army, which has been under fire for lax patrolling that allowed the Pakistani intruders to capture the icy heights. Questions have also been raised as to how the military establishment misread intelligence reports on the Pakistani plan.

In its report, running into nearly 2,000 pages along with "sensitive" attachments, the committee advised the government not to make public the findings and recommendations on the steps to be taken to strengthen security in the region.

But the panel's chairman, K. Subrahmanyam, later clarified that it was up to the government to decide whether the report would be thrown open, either in full or in part.

The service chiefs stressed on the point that the recommendations would become meaningless if they were made public. The officers argued that by laying bare defence plans, the government would make the enemy's task easier.

If the recommendations are to be taken seriously, the three defence bosses said, the document would have to be kept confidential.

Both Atal Behari Vajpayee and L.K. Advani had decided on placing the report in Parliament as it did not affix responsibility on individuals and the government was not shown in a poor light.

The thrust of the report was on "systemic" failures that are a legacy inherited by the BJP government which had been in power for only a year. The two leaders were confident that they could counter the Opposition in both Houses.

The army has made an independent inquiry into the Kargil bungling. But like all other army reports, this, too, will not be made public.

The report is understood to have blamed Brig. Surinder Singh, then in charge of the Kargil sector. The officer had triggered a controversy by charging his superiors with ignoring his warnings on a possible incursion.

Maj. Gen. V.S. Budhwar, the brigadier's boss when the war broke out, has been held partially responsible.

After the 1962 war with China, the army had blocked the publication of the Henderson Brookes report that had inquired into what led to the Indian defeat.

THE TELEGRAPH

- 4 FEB 2000

Cost includes 'handling charges' for IC 814 and two other IA aircraft, with food, clean-up

# Taliban sends \$100,000 hijack parking bill

JYOTI MALHOTRA  
NEW DELHI, FEB 4

THE Taliban is believed to have sent a bill of approximately \$100,000 to India, towards "handling charges" for servicing IC-814 and the two other Indian planes that arrived at Kandahar International airport during the week of December 25-31.

The bill from the hardline, fundamentalist regime is believed to include charges for food as well as other services, like cleaning the aircraft, besides parking charges.

The latest bill seems to indicate that the Taliban regime is obviously aiming at ex-

tracting its pound of flesh from New Delhi. At the time the plane carrying the Indian negotiators landed in Kandahar, three days after IC-814 reached there, the air traffic controller (ATC) at Kandahar had said that handling charges would approximate \$15,000.

Later, though, External Affairs minister Jaswant Singh told journalists that the Taliban would not be charging any fees for IC-814 because the Indian passengers were their "guests."

But with the Taliban "hand" in the subsequent drama that was played out at Kandahar increasingly clear to New Delhi, Singh told a news conference in Delhi on January 1

that India's policy towards the Taliban remained "unchanged."

That is, India would continue to recognise the Northern Alliance of Burhamuddin Rabbani, with whom the Taliban is fighting a civil war for the complete control of Afghanistan.

In the subsequent days and weeks, the Taliban's position towards the hijacking as well as India, has grown increasingly stronger, with Kabul warning India some days ago not to interfere in the affairs of Pakistan.

Some political observers here feel that with India taking a much more public profile on terrorism in the last month, and in fact giving evidence of the Taliban's "complicity" in the hijacking, it became clear that New Delhi was not about to adopt a softer line to-

wards Kabul. Besides IC-814, which was parked on the tarmac of the Kandahar airport for seven days, the second plane with Indian negotiators on board was there for four days. Finally, Jaswant Singh took another aircraft to Kandahar on December 31, to escort the passengers back home.

Part of the Taliban bill is said to be for the food consumed by the hijacked passengers. In the initial days after the hijacking, the Taliban authorities had fed the passengers on board, but the food ran out soon after.

Arrangements were then made with a catering service from Islamabad to feed all the passengers as well as the Indian officials in Kandahar.

# Fernandes sets CVC on fishy arms deals trail

*Defence purchases from Rajiv era to  
Kargil come under a microscope*

By Mahendra Ved  
and Man Mohan

The Times of India News Service

NEW DELHI: In a flash move, defence minister George Fernandes on Saturday asked the Central Vigilance Commission (CVC) to investigate, through the Central Bureau of Investigation (CBI), all major defence purchases since 1985-'86, making the Rajiv Gandhi era the starting point.

Mr Fernandes spoke to CVC N. Vittal over the telephone, urging him to investigate all major defence purchases since the mid-'80s "to cleanse the procurement establishment". The CVC has been requested by Mr Fernandes to get a CBI probe conducted into the role of foreign arms dealers' middlemen and agents.

The Comptroller and Auditor General (CAG) has also been requested to conduct a special audit for the emergency purchase of weapons and ammunition for last summer's Kargil-related emergency purchases. Future acquisitions are likely to be subjected to mandatory CVC/CAG scrutiny.

Coming under scrutiny will be numerous arms deals running into billions of dollars. India's arms procurements in the last 15 years are estimated to bea whopping \$6-7 billion.

The Fernandes move comes at a time when the armed forces' modernisation programme is being undertaken with renewed vigour with the help of higher budgetary allocations. Sources said the minister had perhaps timed his move to acquire transparency for current and future purchases, coming not only from Russia, a traditional supplier, but also from countries like France, Israel, South Africa, Sweden, Spain, Bulgaria, Romania, Germany and the U.K.

Sources said the procurement programme would not be delayed by the minister's move. "On the contrary, we can face Parliament and the public boldly," said a senior official.

Defence experts are, however, wondering whether Mr Fernandes' directives can be effectively implemented given the fact that defence deals and dealers have become smart, operating from world capitals like London, Singapore, Dubai and Moscow and leaving no trace of any wrongdoing. "Nothing will come out of this exercise, which may well be a waste of time and money. What we needed, we purchased and utilised. What is the use of raking up past deals?" asked a retired official who has dealt with defence procurements.

The timing of these decisions has surprised many. "The kickbacks in the Swedish Bofors 155 mm howitzer guns did not eliminate corruption in arms deals," one of them said. "I hope the exercise does not lead to legalising corruption with a 'no objection certificate' from the CVC and CAG," he observed.

Even politicians from within the National Democratic Alliance and the opposition Congress have begun speculating about "the timing, target and motive" of Saturday's decisions, which are likely to have ramifications.

Mr Fernandes was not available after the ministry made the announcement. Reliable sources said he had been working on this move, but had not discussed it formally at the level of the Cabinet Committee on Security (CCS).

According to the announcement, the CAG is also being requested to conduct a thorough investigation into allegations of "excessive and wrong purchase of spares in the last 15 years".

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work can defend our coasts and tackle Pakistan. He warns against creating a white elephant like the Russians.

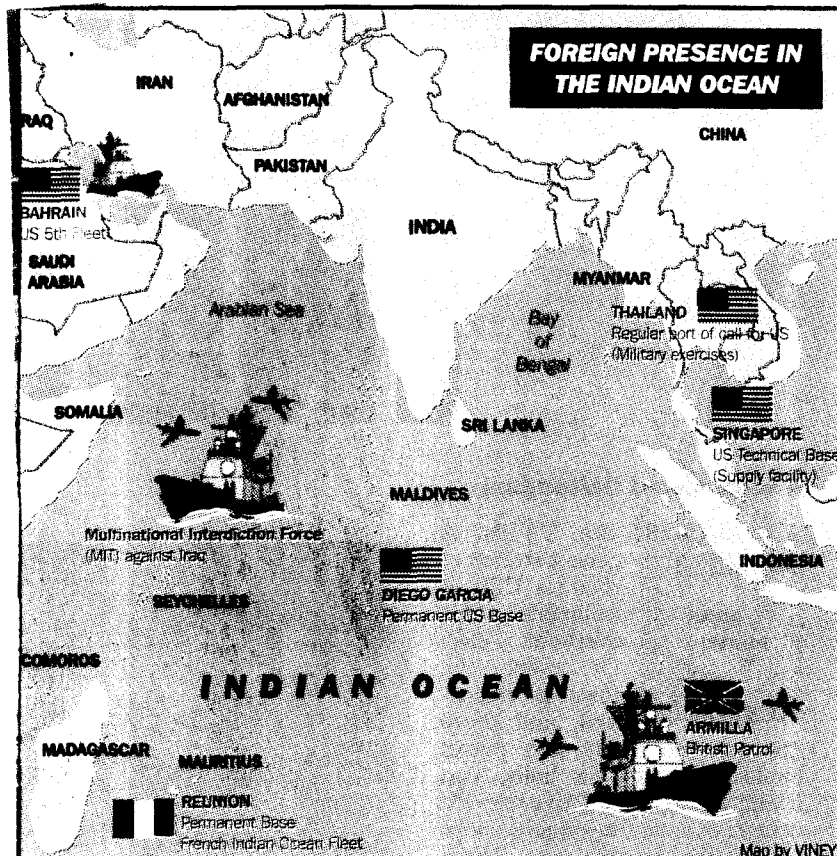
Counters naval analyst Raja Menon, "The Navy is not structured to threats, but interests. You can't let your marine approaches be dominated by someone else. We import 60 per cent of our oil. Trade is 25 per cent of our GNP. We have to protect these interests. A navy which is not blue-water has no business to be a navy."

Bhaskar too makes a strong

through the Irrawaddy river in Myanmar. "If they succeed, it'll be a very significant geo-strategic development — China will establish maritime presence in two oceans. The threshold for any major power in history has been the ability to straddle two oceans," points out Bhaskar.

Rear Admiral SCS Bangara, assistant chief of Naval Staff (Operations), says a blue-water capability will deter an "expeditionary forces." Future threats can only emanate from sea. Hence, India must have a strong navy to protect its maritime interest, including the sea lines of communication. "The preponderance of small vessels in our fleet imposes limitations of reach. Hence, we're more defensive than offensive. We have to correct this imbalance with more frigates and destroyers," he says.

Agrees Menon, "For reach,



case for an empowered Navy. Post-Cold War, he explains, the focus has shifted from the Atlantic-Pacific to the Pacific-Indian Ocean. "This is the contested space now. The most important energy source is located here, and so also the booming economies. This is the new Silk Route. All major powers want to be seen here," he contends.

The Americans and French have permanent bases, while the Multinational Interdiction Force enforces sanctions against Iraq. The British and NATO are also present.

Then, the Chinese have their eyes on the Indian Ocean. They have acquired six nuclear submarines and a Sovremenny class Russian guided missile destroyer, *Hang Zhou*. They've contracted for more.

China is working on gaining access to the Bay of Bengal

you need ships which can last a minimum of 70 days at sea. So you need a replenishment train. What's the point of having big combat ships which come gasping back after five days?"

Small ships "let the enemy come too close to the coast before we engage him," continues Menon. "This is the age when Cruise missiles are fired from 1,000 km."

A strong naval presence can lead to stability, it is argued. "Recently, India rescued a hijacked Japanese ship, *Alondra Rainbow*. This is a vast area of potential maritime cooperation," feels Roy Chaudhury.

Muses Menon, "Had the Navy got as much as the Army over the last 50 years, we would have been sailing off to California. India would have been a world power."

Well, let's say the jury is out on that.

H.F. 14

# ACTION STATIONS

THE INDIAN NAVY IS FLEXING ITS MUSCLE, REVIVING TALK OF THE BLUE-WATER CONCEPT. VISHAL THAPAR FINDS OUT WHY

**D**URING THE 1962 Sino-Indian conflict, Malaysian leader Tunku Abdul Rehman donated blood for Indian troops, and proposed an Indo-Malaysian strategic military alliance. Nice Guy India declined.

Explains Commodore Uday Naskar of the Institute of Defence Studies and Analyses (ISA): "A blue-water potential lends strategic capability to a state (like ballistic missiles). It enables a state to legitimately exercise a military presence beyond its borders."

Thirty-four years later, Asean (of which Malaysia is a key member) preferred China as a strategic partner when it floated the Asian Regional Forum. India had to beg and plead before Asean condescended to let it in, in 1999.

But will a blue-water Indian Navy destabilise the region, and cause disquiet like in the Eighties when it was first mooted?

Observers say this proves India's geopolitical irrelevance despite its nuclear status.

"The consternation was because India did not give good reason for it," says IDSA naval specialist Rahul Roy Chaudhury. "We took a nuclear sub (*Chakra*) on lease from Russia in 1988, the aircraft carrier *Viraat* in 1987, and also started building a naval air base. We incredibly kept insisting our budget had not increased."

Now, India is flexing its military muscle. To underline its presence in its own backyard — the Indian Ocean — the Indian Navy is currently conducting exercises in the Arabian Sea along with France. It is the first joint exercise with a Western power after Pokharan-II.

But it is not enough to have strategic capability. One must know how to exploit it. For example, Saudi Arabia acquired 80 CSS2 ballistic missiles (range 2,500 km) from China in 1986-87. But this did not prevent Saddam Hussein from invading Kuwait in 1990 and threatening the Saudis.

Naval Chief Sushil Kumar has also announced India's first International Fleet Review at Mumbai next year. The intention is to demonstrate India's "potential" as a blue-water Navy. (One which is able to operate far from its shores for long durations without land support.)

Similarly, have India's nuclear weapons given it any relief from terrorism? Could they prevent the Kargil invasion? Has India's military superiority over Pakistan translated into long-term advantage, peace and stability?

The exercises are an annual affair, but this year coincide with a rash of acquisitions:

- *Sindhushastra*, a missile-capable Russian-built submarine
- *INS Mumbai*, the third in a series of Delhi class destroyers
- *INS Brahmaputra*, a frigate
- *INS Aditya*, a tanker

In the pipeline are:

- Brahmaputra class frigates *Beas* (2001) and *Betwa* (2002)
- Three Russian 1135.6 frigates (2002).

Besides, the Godavari class is being upgraded, a 30-year plan to build 24 submarines has been approved, and another to build a nuclear submarine is in an advanced stage. Four submarines are to be sent for a missile refit.

The acquisition of aircraft carrier *Admiral Gorshkov* appears imminent along with its complement of aircraft. Clearance has been given for the building of another aircraft carrier, the Air Defence Ship, at Cochin.

The Navy visualises a fleet of three aircraft carriers, 32 destroyers and frigates, four nuclear submarines, and three tankers. Currently, India is without an aircraft carrier or nuclear submarine, and has eight destroyers and 13 frigates.

Why is the Navy being so ambitious?

Also, such a presence is relevant only if there is a politico-diplomatic objective. This is why foreign policy expert Kanti Bajpai is against the blue-water concept. "What's the mission?" he asks. "We do not have allies to protect. There's consensus that the shipping lanes be kept open. In case there's a blockade, we can join other powers in the region."

Conversely, says Bajpai, if a major power — say the US — shuts off access to India, can our Navy realistically take it on? In any case, why should the US want to strangle us?

Bajpai says the existing frame-

THE HINDUSTAN TIMES

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P.T.O.

# PROTEST TOO MUCH!

## Defence Ministry moves provoke questions

IT is not too clear what caused the Defence Minister, George Fernandes, to dump this excessive load of investigation on the under-equipped CVC and the CAG; they are to look into all major defence deals since 1985/86. The cut-off date includes both the HDW submarine deal and the Bofors scandal. The submarine deal has never been properly probed and the Bofors case has been sidelined, interfered with, suppressed and all but lost by interference at the level of successive prime ministers and has only now come into its own with the filing of the first charge-sheet. As reports in this newspaper have suggested, corruption is not only in huge deals, it merely makes it easier. A lot of money is allegedly made in orders for spare parts — large quantities, repeated orders, heavy costs and generous kickbacks. It is also reported that literally there are hundreds of cases, guaranteed to play merry hell into the limited resources of the two respected organisations named. The questions — why and why now — will not go away.

One reason that suggests itself is that George Fernandes's ministry has been bombarded with allegations of cozy deals and this move will silence critics. Whether it will do any good is a different matter altogether. The name of an admiral, long retired, who has made no secret of his acting for overseas arms suppliers has been around for a long time and there is also the thought that he and his son are above board agents, not touts. More recently an air force officer has been named, allegedly involved in drugs as well as suspect defence deals. There may be other reasons. Sonia's Congress party have been rather liberal with allegations, no doubt to cover the increasingly embarrassing revelations in the Bofors case. This move will force them on the defensive. Other considerations may also be at work, there is no need to list them all.

Two points can be made at once. One, the CAG did do a very informative report on Bofors, if it had been acted upon in time, progress would have been better and faster. The CVC is in limbo. N Vittal has earned an enviable reputation for himself but this is in spite of the handicaps under which he functions, not because of them. The statute setting up his office in accordance with the full bench judgment of the Supreme Court of 18 December, 1997, has had a chequered history. The draft of the legislation so carefully prepared by the Law Commission was suppressed by a determined bureaucracy with their own protection uppermost in mind; they lied to a committee of the Cabinet, reduced the ambit of the legislation, varied the composition of the Central Vigilance Commission and presented their own version of the draft legislation despite protests from Ram Jethmalani who headed the cabinet committee. An Ordinance to give effect to the attenuated version of the Bill was promulgated, it was allowed to lapse, a fresh Ordinance was again introduced, it lapsed again with the result that the CVC functions without adequate legislation to back him. The least that should be done is to go back to the Law Commission draft and enact legislation which will make sure that all executive actions of the Union Government will be under the scanner, not merely those which fit the narrow definitions of the Prevention of Corruption Act.

The other point is self-evident. The need is to enforce the law, not set up committees or make special references to special agencies. Got the message, everybody!

THE STATESMAN

- 9 FEB 2000



# Subrahmanyam panel for revamp of intelligence system

By Atul Aneja

NEW DELHI, FEB. 8. The Subrahmanyam committee report on Kargil intrusions, which is likely to be tabled in Parliament later this month, has recommended a revamp of the national intelligence network.

According to Government sources, the panel's 18 volume report is "future oriented" and focuses on ways to strengthen the country's intelligence setup. One volume is devoted to concrete steps which need to be adopted in this exercise. The rest are mainly a record of interviews reproduced in a question-answer form. Without going into detailed analysis, each of these volumes separately records the role of the services, intelligence agencies and others involved in the Kargil conflict.

The sources said that the report did not go into such specifics as "fixing responsibility" for the "security lapses" which led to the intrusions. Its thrust, on the contrary, was on advocating steps to beef up national security in the backdrop of the Kargil war. A separate volume is devoted to public opinion, which the cross-border intrusion by Pakistan generated.

The panel has taken considerable effort to point out deficiencies in the national technical infrastructure for intelligence gathering. Technical shortcomings, it says, discouraged follow-ups on "stray intelligence leads" which may have otherwise helped reveal the Pakistani gameplan in time.

For instance, the unavailability of suitable equipment for intercepting communication at high-altitudes may have prevented corroboration of inputs which "human sources" such as local people as well as reports of field commanders may have provided.

Pointing out that field inputs alone were not enough to give a macro-picture of the enemy's intent, the report advocates upgradation of the national technical means by inducting sophisticated equipment for electronic intelligence and surveillance.

Analysts pointed out that such equipment could include high-resolution satellite imagery, aerial sensors such as synthetic aperture radars which can look beyond cloud cover, remotely piloted vehicles and a host of night vision devices.

The panel also focuses on the need for adequately

marshaling human resources, which are required for analysing information. Consequently, it talks about positioning analysts at every nodal stage of intelligence gathering. Once the information is processed, operational tasks can be prioritised accordingly. But this is possible only if a trained pool of experts, specialising in all aspects of intelligence gathering and dissemination is created.

The committee has paid considerable attention to improving coordination between multiple agencies which handle intelligence by recommending their closer link-up with a nodal set-up. Not surprisingly, the role of the Joint Intelligence Committee, which is represented by most of the military and civil intelligence agencies, its empowerment and restructuring has come in for special attention.

The importance of the JIC as the hub of the intelligence chain is further enhanced because it functions as the secretariat to the apex National Security Council (NSC).

Sensitive information, which goes into specific details, is likely to be deleted from the report when tabled before Parliament, the sources observed.

## George reviews defence probe

Delhi 8 Feb 2000  
STATESMAN NEWS SERVICE

NEW DELHI, Feb. 8. — The defence minister, Mr George Fernandes, today reviewed with his ministry officials action taken in pursuance of his directive to have various defence purchases probed by the Central Vigilance Commission and Comptroller and Auditor General.

While officials did not reveal the details of the meeting, they said relevant information were being sent to those agencies.

The "major" purchases — the yardstick for which is yet to be stated — would be referred to the CVC, while deals for spares and low-value contracts would be examined by the CAG.

The purchases made on a priority basis for boosting India operations in the Kargil war would also be scrutinised by the CAG, officials said.

Rejecting the view that decision-taking process would be stalled by the minister's action, officials said under consideration was an institutionalised arrangement by which all purchase deals would be referred to the CVC or CAG within a specified period of their being finalised. There'd be no prior examination of the contracts by those agencies.

THE STATESMAN

9 FEB 2000

# George broom misses dirtier spots

STATESMAN NEWS SERVICE 59-1 872

NEW DELHI, Feb. 7. — Action has begun in the Ministry of Defence to collect files pertaining to the various purchases that will be referred to the Central Vigilance Commission or the Comptroller and Auditor General. Speculation, however, persists about the efficacy of Mr George Fernandes' cleansing crusade. Particularly if it was limited to only the high-profile deals.

9- D 4 M *S. S. S. S. S.*  
With the minister away on an election tour, no official comment was available here today on the number of cases that were likely to be referred to the scrutinising agencies, or what benchmark would be set for selecting the "major procurement decisions" that he wants examined.

Reacting sharply to suggestions that there were political motives to the move, officials explained that the cut-off year had been set at 1985-86

NEW DELHI, Feb. 7. — This is an old yarn, so Mr George Fernandes must have heard it.

Some 25 years ago, an IAF officer was posted to a corps headquarters to ensure inter-service coordination in operations and training. On his first evening in the olive-green environment, the man in blue walked into the bar and ordered a drink. The bartender politely told him to move to a smaller one down the hall, which served men of his rank.

As the officer savoured his first sip there, he wondered if his pocket would hold out — it was the hallowed elixir of the Highlands. But he couldn't let the Air Force down, so he stood his Army mates a round and offered to sign the

because it was then that agents were banned from involvement in arms contracts. The minister had discussed various aspects with the defence secretary before making an announcement a couple of days ago, it was pointed out.

The Central Vigilance Commission,

## STEALTH TACTICS: QUIET FLOWS THE WINE

bill. No such indecencies were practised there, the bartender educated him.

Later, when he broke through the inter-service barrier, the IAF man learnt that every year a small exercise involving tanks and heavy vehicles was mounted — but only on paper. The money meant for compensating farmers for damage to their fields ensured that the Scotch kept flowing.

The IAF man's conscience stopped pricking when he graduated to the knowledge that it was really an operation involving camouflage and stealth tactics. The auditors and *babus* never suspected that there was transparent truth in the billings for "Exercise Whisky"! — SNS

CAG, it too was awaiting a formal communication from the MoD. A defence-audit branch exists in the CAG apparatus which would have already examined most of the deals, now a review was the most likely route that would be taken.

Questions were being raised in

defence circles this evening on whether the CVC and CAG were adequately equipped to deal with the probes. The number of purchase decisions — depending on what the MoD would classify as major — could run into three figures, to that must be added the string of matters that had been mentioned during the Rajya Sabha debate of 23 December, as well those listed by a naval officer in his writ petition.

Apart from the sheer weight of numbers, the ability of the investigating agencies to identify the irregularities into highly technical arms contracts was also being queried. Officers who had first-hand experience of the acquisition process felt that if Mr Fernandes picked a team of trustworthy military/civilian officials to make such identifications the cleansing that he desired might be facilitated.

■ See GEORGE: page 6

# GEORGE:

(Continued from page 1)

No permanent gains, political capital apart, would accrue if the probes were limited to the high-profile deals about which doubts had been raised in the media and elsewhere. Corruption was more rampant in the acquisition of spares, what were deemed routine supplies, construction contracts etc., said those experienced officers.

"Everybody talks about Bofors, the HDW submarines and perhaps the Su-30 jets and some of post-Kargil purchases, but there have been unpublicised scandals in the acquisition of radars, signalling, and electronic intelligence equipment too."

That deals for spare parts were probably more "lucrative" than new acquisitions was an opinion voiced by several officers who obviously cannot be named.

As those purchases came under the revenue-expenditure head, they were seldom scrutinised in depth, and the value of each contract would appear small.

Yet since the procurements continued for years the kick-backs amounted to a penalty shoot-out with an incapacitated goalkeeper.

The period immediately after the Soviet collapse had seen agents flourish.

Also collapsed had been the military-industry complex, and the supply line for spares, upon which the India forces were critically dependent, dried up.

The situation was desperate, and a number of agents sprung up offering to arrange supplies from a host of East European countries. They could not be shunned — despite the policy pontifications — and some would appear to have taken firm root.

Those associated with the indigenous defence production effort (at both the research and manufacture levels) have long complained that the forces rejected their products for minor flaws, but accepted foreign products that were not vastly superior. Was something not fishy?

Why talk of corruption only in foreign deals, asked the officers who had hands-on experience. There was money to be made, and was being made, in domestic deals.

Not just in regard to expensive or sophisticated equipment but even when it came down to rations, uniforms, blankets, boots.

Here the scam often centred around accepting material not of specified standards. The volume of orders were massive, a seemingly small "cut" bled the exchequer.

Mr Fernandes' action would probably stifle the criticism — allegedly motivated — over deals in the pipeline, or blunt the charge that a mad-buying spree had followed Kargil. But if a comprehensive clean-up was to result, the start would have to be at the lowest level, several officers insisted.

A retired General suggested that the defence minister begin by querying a situation in which more officers awaiting commissioning were opting for the support services in preference to the combat wings of the forces.

THE STATESMAN

- 8 FEB 2000

# Masood Azhar held: Report

Karachi, February 9 1999

PAKISTANI AUTHORITIES have detained Masood Azhar, one of three militants freed in exchange for the hostages of the hijacked Indian Airlines plane in December, a newspaper said today.

Azhar was taken into protective custody on Sunday, shortly after he launched a new Kashmiri militant group, Karachi-based newspaper Dawn said.

There was no independent confirmation of the report and the Interior Ministry refused to deny or confirm the story.

It follows calls by the United States for a crackdown on militants and the omission of Pakistan from a planned South Asian visit by President Bill Clinton in March.

Azhar was one of three militants freed by India in exchange for more than 150 hostages held for eight days on a Indian Airlines plane, which was taken to



Kandahar in southern Afghanistan.

The hijackers disappeared after the swap.

Azhar's arrest follows US expression of concern over the activities of the group suspected of carrying out the hijack — Harkat-ul-Mujahideen. That concern was relayed to Pakistan's military rule General Pervez Musharraf, by US Assistant Secretary of State Karl

Inderfurth, who last month became the highest-ranking official to visit Pakistan since October's military coup.

Mr Inderfurth publicly pressed Pakistan to use its influence with Afghanistan's Taliban movement to get the extradition or expulsion of Saudi-born Osama Bin Laden, who is living in hiding as a Taliban "guest."

Musharraf, who deposed Prime Minister Nawaz Sharif in the bloodless October take-over, has said that the issue is up to the Taliban government, which is recognised by only Pakistan, Saudi Arabia and the United Arab Emirates, but diplomats say no country has as much influence on Afghanistan as Pakistani has.

Musharraf has urged Mr Clinton to include Pakistan on his itinerary but Washington has made no public provision so far.

But there has been speculation that the US leader might make a brief stopover in Pakistan. (AFP)

THE HINDUSTAN TIMES  
10 FEB 2000

# Younger members may be out of NSC advisory board

By Mahendra Ved  
The Times of India News Service

NEW DELHI: The reconstituted advisory board of the National Security Council, to be announced shortly, may be without its younger members some of whom have been perceived as unpredictable in government circles. What remains may well be a group of retired government officials.

While one member was severely reprimanded for taking the line at the height of the Kargil war last summer that the Line of Control in Jammu and Kashmir was "a flexible concept", another has been seen attacking aspects of the Vajpayee government's foreign policy. Yet another criticised individual ministers, causing acute embarrassment for the government. They are unlikely to be retained. The high media profile of some has also been a sore point with the government.

Neither official sources, nor members of the board the term of which ended on last December 31, were forthcoming. The new body may be "a little more compact" was all that an official source said in response to queries.

It is learnt that the reconstituted body may be reduced from 30 to less than 20. While some names may be repeated, new entrants are likely. The file is ready, awaiting signature of Prime Minister Atal Behari Vajpayee. One source said the announcement may be made over the weekend.

The advisory board was constituted along with the National Security Council in late 1998 in keeping

with the electoral promise made by the Bharatiya Janata Party and later, the National Democratic Alliance. Its convenor was K. Subrahmanyam, noted defence analyst and included economists, media personalities and others drawn from different disciplines.

The prestigious body met during the Kargil crisis and gave inputs for the government's decision-making. However, the NSC itself did not formally meet, leading to criticism by opposition parties. The body played no discernible role during the conflict between the government and Admiral Vishnu Bhagwat, the navy chief who was sacked.

It is being argued in some quarters that an advisory body only of retired officials, both civilian and military, who have been decision-makers while they held office may not serve the original purpose for which it was constituted.

The government may thus be shutting out "non-official" opinion in an era when expertise and experience are not confined to the government elsewhere in the world. The NSCs and similar bodies in other countries freely draw talent from different sectors.

It is being recalled that after a short life-span in 1990, when it met only once, the NSC was disbanded by the Narasimha Rao government as the then premier was credited with a view that a body of retired officials could not act as "a super-cabinet" over the country's elected political leadership and should at the very best, remain advisory in nature.

THE TIMES OF INDIA

11 FEB 2000

# Full Kargil report not to be tabled

STATESMAN NEWS SERVICE

NEW DELHI, Feb. 15. — Despite the Cabinet's decision to table the Subramanyam committee's Kargil report in Parliament, the full report will not be available for public scrutiny, senior government functionaries said.

Certain parts of the report, which have strategic information on force and ammunition deployment will be held back for national security, as per the decision of the Cabinet Committee on Security.

However, senior political leaders would be taken into confidence on these "secret aspects" and would get information on demand.

According to a Union minister, the decision to place a report devoid of security-related information has been taken by the CCS itself. The decision was okayed at today's Cabinet meeting. The government does not expect any political controversy, as withholding "important security-related matters" has always been the custom.

"Even ministers who are not CCS members don't have access to the information.

*D. D. S. N. Lenin*  
The government can share the information with senior Opposition leaders on demand," he said.

In any case, it was not mandatory for the government to furnish security-related documents in Parliament. The findings on the 1962 war, for example, were not shared with MPs.

Officially, however, the government did not say what form the Subramanyam Committee report would be presented in.

The Centre was also undecided on whether to furnish an Action Taken Report along with the Kargil file.

The government's decision to place the Kargil report in Parliament confirms the impression that the committee had found little fault with the government's handling of Kargil, and instead stressed on Intelligence lapses and the Army's immediate local response.

By tabling the report, the government hopes to silence the Opposition and also show how low budgetary allocations by previous governments had led to insufficient specialised high-altitude equipment.

THE STATESMAN  
16 FEB 2000

710-1  
1672

# Army, Air Force begin exercises in Thar desert

**NEW DELHI, FEB. 15.** The Army and the Air Force have begun a major joint exercise in the Thar desert, about 100 km inside the international border, with the strike corps, elite paratroopers and frontline combat jets participating. *J. D. N. Sekhar*

The exercise, codenamed 'Operation Vijay Chakra', is being held in the Suratgarh area in the tri-junction of Punjab, Haryana and Rajasthan, with the Army's first strike corps equipped with T-72 main battle tanks and supported by mechanised infantry, practising lightning deep-penetration tactics in almost real battle conditions.

Along with the strike corps, the Army is testing its latest telecommunication equipment as well as battlefield computers. The highlight of the exercise, to be witnessed by the Defence Minister, Mr. George Fernandes, the Army Chief, Gen. V.P. Malik, and the Air Force Chief, Air Chief Marshal A.Y. Tipnis, would be attempts by Army paratroopers and Air Force transport at high-altitude parachuting from 10,000 to 12,000 feet. The paratroopers would be using specialised parachutes to attempt this high-altitude drop. The exercise entails dropping paratroopers behind "enemy lines", after which the armoured and mechanised formations would try to link up with them swiftly.

The Air Force would be fielding its front-line

MiG-29s, Mirage-2000s and ground support MiG-27s and MiG-23 jet fighters in the exercise, besides its medium-lift Il-76s and An-32s.

An Army spokesman here described the operation as a routine exercise taken up by command and corps formations every year. — PTI

## We are fully alert: Pak.

By Amit Baruah

**ISLAMABAD, FEB. 15.** Pakistan has described the Indian military exercises as 'apparently' routine at present and did not find anything 'extraordinary' about them, the ISPR Director-General, Major-General Rashid Qureshi, has said. "We are fully alert and monitoring their movements closely," the Major-General said, adding that the Pakistani military was prepared for any eventuality.

The military spokesman stated that the exercises, conducted a certain distance away from the international border and not involving very large numbers of defence personnel, did not cause any alarm. "Presently, the Indian military exercises are within their limits," he was quoted as saying. The Major-General said if Pakistan detected anything out of the ordinary taking place across the border, it would immediately take steps to "correct the balance".

THE HINDU

16 FEB 2000



# National security to be reviewed

By Atul Aneja

HD-1  
NEW DELHI, FEB. 24. The Government has decided to order a thorough review of the national security set-up in its entirety in the backdrop of the Subrahmanyam Committee report which was tabled in the Lok Sabha today. The review will be undertaken by an "appropriate body."

The K. Subrahmanyam Committee, set up in July last, has focussed attention on "preventing the recurrence of Kargil-like episodes". The shortcomings and failures in the intelligence set-up, which led to the intrusion, have been analysed. Events which led to the intrusion have also been reconstructed.

The three-member committee concluded that the intrusion by Pakistan in Kargil, which is likely to have begun in February 1999, took the entire Indian security establishment by surprise. The former Pakistani Prime Minister, Mr. Nawaz Sharif, was "at least aware" of the broad thrust of the Kargil plan when he welcomed the Prime Minister, Mr. Atal Behari Vajpayee, in Lahore.

While analysing the collective failure in Kargil, the committee has made key recommendations to revamp the national intelligence apparatus. The panel says the country's "surveillance capability", particularly through satellite imagery, is grossly in-

adequate. It advocates the examination of setting up a "national surveillance command" for handling satellite surveillance.

Remotely-Piloted Vehicles (RPVs), which are unmanned, can play an "extremely useful" role in surveillance and need to be deployed in high-altitude areas also. With night-fighting acquiring greater prominence, these RPVs should be equipped with thermal imaging sensors.

While paying special attention to the importance of electronic intelligence, the panel recommends that a new organisation, on lines of the National Security Agency (NSA) of the United States, could be set up.

The role of the Joint Intelligence Committee (JIC) as a single coordinating hub for inputs received from the military and civilian agencies, needs to be reexamined.

The Subrahmanyam Committee has stressed developing a pool of specialists for encryption and decryption of information as well as language skills. Generation of expertise in analysing leadership psyches and the involvement of think-tanks and universities for specialised studies is also advocated. Another prominent recommendation is for keeping the personnel profile of the armed forces young.

Intrusions began in February: Page 15

THE HINDU  
25 FEB 2000

## Kargil intrusion began in Feb. '99: panel report

By Our Special Correspondent

**NEW DELHI, FEB. 24.** Pakistan began its intrusion of Kargil in February 1999, but intelligence failure prevented India from detecting it till early May, the Subrahmanyam Committee report on Kargil, tabled in the Lok Sabha today, has said. Reconstructing 'Operation BADR' as described by Pakistan, the panel has concluded that reconnaissance parties of Pakistani officers began crossing the Line of Control (LoC) in late January/early February 1999.

The first line of administrative bases was established in February. But heavy snowfall in March which also saw Pakistani avalanche casualties in the Mushkoh valley meant that further forward movement by its personnel began only in April. The bulk of the intrusion took place in late April when the intruders moved two to three kilometers inside the Indian side of the LoC.

Equipped to face extreme cold and snow conditions, they moved only in gaps between Indian winter posts. Care was taken to avoid detection by surveillance sorties by Indian helicopters which flew mainly along valleys and avoided the ridges. These helicopters sorties were largely ineffective. But inputs provided by the Aviation Research Center (ARC) of the RAW were "extremely valuable."

Very heavy snowfall in March 1999, compelled the Kargil based 121 Infantry Brigade to vacate one of its 25 winter posts in South West Spur of Point 5299 in the Kaksar sector, popularly known as the Bajrang post. Winter patrols sent out by India in early April 1999 were unable to carry out their task due to adverse snow conditions.

### Shepherds role

India detected the intrusion on May 3, 1999 by "shepherds" who were occasionally retained by the Brigade Intelligence team. The patrols sent out in the next few days confirmed the presence of intruders May 7, a few weeks earlier than the time when Pakistanis had planned to disclose themselves.

The report said that the former Pakistani Prime Minister, Mr. Nawaz Sharif was aware of the broad thrust of the Kargil intrusion plan when he received the Prime Minister, Mr. A. B. Vajpayee, in Lahore. "There is no clear evidence on the basis of which to assess the nature and extent of Nawaz Sharif's involvement in the Kargil ad-

venture. The balance of probability suggests that he was fully in the picture. This is borne out by the repeated assertions of Gen. Musharraf. Those who know Nawaz Sharif personally believe that he has a limited attention span and is impatient with detail. Accordingly, it is reasonable to assume that Nawaz Sharif was at least aware of the broad thrust of the Kargil plan when he so warmly welcomed the Indian Prime Minister in Lahore."

The inability of the Intelligence Bureau (IB) to share information with the Research and Analysis Wing (RAW), the Military Intelligence and the Joint Intelligence Committee (JIC) may have been partly responsible for the inability to detect the Pakistani game-plan in Kargil. According to the report, the IB obtained some information about certain developments in the Gilgit-based Force Commander Northern Areas (FCNA) formation. While the IB conveyed its information to the Prime Minister, the Home Minister, the Cabinet Secretary, the Home Secretary and the Director General Military Operations, it was not disseminated to the Secretary (RAW), JIC and the Director General Military Intelligence (DGMI).

The Pakistanis had inducted two additional battalions in the FCNA area and two were forward deployed but remained undetected, the panel concludes. An analysis carried out by the committee on the basis of information now available shows that there were a number of changes in the troop profile of Pakistani forces in the FCNA region during 1998/early 1999. Referring to border management, the panel has concluded that a new force structure which ensures reduction, if not elimination, in the inflow of narcotics, illegal migrants, terrorists and arms needs to be evolved.

THE HINDU  
25 FEB 2000

# Kargil committee calls for security overhaul

STATESMAN NEWS SERVICE

NEW DELHI, Feb. 24. — A thorough overhaul of the national security machinery cannot be put off any longer, says the Subrahmanyam Committee that "reviewed" the Kargil intrusions.

Absolving the political leadership of culpability, the report points to shameful shortcomings in the Intelligence apparatus.

The report has effectively analysed the failures that let intruders take up positions posing grave threats but stops short of fixing specific responsibility for the lapses.

Similarly, its recommendations to prevent a recurrence are of a general nature — matters which military analysts have been speaking about for years now.

That it was not an inquiry in the conventional sense of the term has been explained by the committee in the 228-page report (in which several deletions were made on "security" grounds) that was tabled in the Lok Sabha today by the defence minister. The House was also given a statement on the action the government had initiated on the basis of the report.

If there was some disappointment in political circles that the report would provide few gun-positions from which to assault the government, it did bolster the argument of those who have been clamouring for years to take a comprehensive re-look at security management.

Perhaps alive to the possibility of criticism for being generic in its conclusions, the committee makes it clear that it "was not set up to conduct an inquiry but to examine the sequences of events and make recommendations for the future. There are many lessons that the armed forces, Intelligence agencies,

Parliament, government media and the nation as a whole must learn".

It describes its own efforts as having "sign-posted directions along the path to peace, ensuring the progress, development and stability of the nation" but has left it to government, Parliament and the nation to decide how best to build the road toward that goal.

The report, "From Surprise to Reckoning", has asserted that the intrusions "came as a complete and total surprise" to the Army, the Centre and the states, and the several Intelligence agencies. All former senior military officers

## N-PROGRAMME

NEW DELHI, Feb. 24. — Pokhran-II didn't launch India's nuclear weapons programme — it was the culmination of a process that began in 1983, the Subrahmanyam Committee report has revealed. "They were the outcome of policy consensus among Prime Ministers", the report said. — SNS

■ Details on page 8

who had deposed before it had said intrusions of that scale were "not sustainable".

The Kargil region had witnessed fierce artillery exchanges but little cross-LoC activity. That, and the nature of the terrain had created "an understandable Indian military mindset about the nature and extent of the threat in this sector".

Highlighting shortcomings in the Intelligence agencies' functioning, it said that though bits and pieces of information of what was taking place across the LoC were available, little could be deemed "actionable intelligence". And none of that was shared by the agencies, now putting the little pieces together to try and arrive at a

whole.

Emphasising better satellite imagery and greater use of unmanned aerial vehicles and interception devices, the Committee suggested bringing all communication and electronic Intelligence gathering facilities under a single organisation.

But the real failure lay in collating and analysing inputs. "There is no institutionalised mechanism for coordination or objective-oriented interaction, no mechanism for tasking the agencies, monitoring their performance, nor is there any oversight of their overall functioning."

Those were standard in most countries, where the Joint Intelligence Committee had been devalued.

Dealing with the Army's performance in Kargil, the committee did note how the proxy war had taken its toll. It had to adapt itself to deal with terrorism which disrupted its training, affected its mindset and state of readiness, diluting to some extent its postures on the frontier. But once the intrusions were detected the response was generally satisfactory.

The committee commended the use and role of the Indian Air Force in Kargil. Not only did it send out a strong signal of India's determination to beat back the intruders, it had a strong tactical influence in interdiction of supply lines, and lowering the morale of the intruders. The Navy's deployment in the northern part of Arabian Sea had a similar impact.

After dealing with a range of larger issues — higher defence management, defence funding and border managements — the committee cautioned against "falling into the trap of the 'Siachenisation' of the Kargil heights and other unheld gaps along the mountainous border".

# Kargil committee trio denies belligerent intent

STATESMAN NEWS SERVICE

NEW DELHI, Feb 25. — Escalating conflict levels was not the intention underlying the Subrahmanyam Committee's recommendation that government declare violations of the LoC and wanton terrorism "will meet with prompt retaliation in a manner, time and place of India's choosing", it was made clear here today.

"It was only a firm assertion of the right to defend ourselves", the three non-official members of the committee told a media session at the Press Club of India. How the government chose to interpret or execute that recommendation was not for the committee to spell out, said Mr BG Verghese.

It was "not acceptable" for India that its response to aggression by its adversaries led to international calls for restraint, cessation of hostilities and so on. That resulted in aggressor and victim being equated, which suited Pakistan's interests, he said.

That recommendation, Mr Verghese said, was made in the context of the committee's warning against India falling into the trap of trying to defend the entire length of its moun-

tainous frontier on a Siachen-scale. It would prove prohibitively expensive, result in troops being thinned out all along a line that would still be easy to overrun.

The deletions in the report presented to the Lok Sabha had not been made by the committee but by the government, declared its chairman, Mr K Subrahmanyam. The committee had only made deletions in the appendices to the report it had submitted (certain specifics of depositions/representations it dealt with), which were not part of the document made public.

Nothing sinister about that, he pointed out, regretting that some controversy or misunderstanding had arisen. Perhaps because this was the first time a report of the kind was being made public. In the USA, and other countries, deletions were common in security reports that were circulated.

The committee had not been tasked with fixing individual responsibilities said Mr Subrahmanyam, and he would not comment on whether action should be taken against any person. It was for government to deal with those aspects, in accordance

## ECHOES OF ANOTHER PROBE

NEW DELHI, Feb 25. — Under wraps for 37 years, the Henderson-Brooks inquiry report into the 1962 operations is being spoken about again these days, a reflection of the interest generated by the Subrahmanyam Committee's "review" of Kargil. But they cannot be compared, Mr K Subrahmanyam said here today.

It was the Army Chief of the day, not the government, who had ordered Lt Gen Henderson-Brooks and another officer to conduct that probe, he told reporters at the Press Club of India. The 1962 committee did not have access to the Intelligence Bureau, or even the Military Operations Directorate. Though not a statutory body, his group had obtained virtually all the information that was available. — SNS

with its own systems.

Asked why only the former commander of 121 Brigade had been dealt with at length, he replied that the matter concerning Brig Surinder Singh had been forwarded to the committee by Army Headquarters, the officer had also made a representation to it. Matters concerning that officer had also figured in the media, commented upon by political leaders.

While the committee had commented on the Brigadier's conducted it had not indicted him, passed no judgment or verdict, said Mr Subrahmanyam. However Lt Gen KK Hazari (retd.) also pointed out

that the officer had not done what he should have, particularly in the light of his own perceptions.

Not being provided the resources requested did not dilute the responsibility of a field commander for his area of deployment, said Gen Hazari. The Army did not function that way. "There can be no compromises or excuses in matters of responsibility."

Though the manner in which the operations were conducted did not fall within the committee's ambit, Mr Subrahmanyam said that none of the material/evidence before it suggested that the Army had sought to cross the Line of Control. Nor was there

anything to suggest that the Lahore-bus euphoria had impacted on the security effort. Inputs from all intelligence/security agencies had repeatedly stressed that the Lahore spirit had not been reflected on the ground.

The committee may not have indicted any officials but it had pointed to the shortcomings in intelligence acquisition/management, Mr Subrahmanyam said. Both RAW and the Military Intelligence Directorate had failed, particularly the former since it was responsible for assessing what was taking place externally. Military Intelligence was permitted to collect information only in the area proximate to the frontier.

Gen Hazari said that the Army did not take excessive time to counter-attack the intruders. Its initial task to contain the intrusions had been attained within a week of their detection. It then required time to get fresh troops acclimatised, build up, plan and execute counter-attacks. The intrusions had been detected on 6 May, they were contained within a week. Tololing was regained on 12 June, Operation Vijay gathered momentum thereafter.

Regarding "delays" in launching air

strikes (one of the deleted paragraphs had covered that) Mr Subrahmanyam said that initially the Army sought attacks by helicopters.

The IAF felt they would be vulnerable, professionally opted for fixed wing aircraft, but pointed out that air power could prove escalatory. After political clearance it became necessary for entire air defences on the Pak frontier to be activated before strikes were launched.

"Mr Fernandes can best answer that question" said Mr Subrahmanyam when it was pointed out that while the Defence Minister had said that the former Prime Minister of Pakistan was not aware of the Kargil operation but the committee had concluded otherwise. The committee's findings were based on hard facts.

Mr Subrahmanyam did not comment on what action would emanate from the report, others had gathered dust. But he did point out that this was the first time a report of its nature had been made public, and the government has said that the recommendations had been accepted.

## Getting a RAW deal

THREE THINGS need to be said right away about the report of the Subrahmanyam Committee. One: it is too early to make a detailed comment on a report that is so voluminous. Two: regardless of what one makes of the committee's conclusions, there is no doubt that the Government has handled the report well. It has not resorted to the mindless secrecy that usually characterises the handling of such documents and has had the courage to table the report in Parliament for the country to judge. And three: while the committee's recommendations and findings cover a whole gamut of activities, the area that is seen as requiring the most work is the sensitive area of intelligence gathering. If Mr Subrahmanyam and his colleagues are to be believed, the army performed well in repelling the Pakistani invasion of Kargil but the intelligence agencies behaved disgracefully by failing to notice that Pakistan was actively planning a new war against India.

The committee's conclusions will surprise nobody. Almost as soon as the Kargil invasion was recognised for what it really was — a Pakistani army operation and not a disorganised infiltration by assorted Mujahideen — the country has struggled to understand how so many troops could have penetrated so far into Indian territory for so long without anybody noticing. The army has offered its own explanation. It says that the Kargil terrain is so unfriendly that it was impossible for anybody to monitor the entire border region during the winter. The committee seems to have broadly accepted this position though it also discovered that — contrary to the army's initial claims — the first Pakistani troops arrived in November 1998 and many more came in February 1999. The army found out that they were there when shepherds complained of enemy intrusions in May 1999. If the army is to be forgiven for failing to notice the physical evidence of infiltration for five months, then the blame must fall on the intelligence agencies which did not even recognise that such a major military operation had been planned by the Pakistanis.

The intelligence failure had two dimensions. The first was technological. We simply do not have the technology required to detect intrusions into our territory: unmanned aerial vehicles, satellites etc. Nor do we seem to have the technology required to monitor Pakistani communications (despite the famous Musharraf tapes). The second dimension related to Humint or human interest. Apparently, the Research & Analysis Wing (RAW) and Military Intelligence (MI) do not have enough sources on the ground in Pakistan. According to the committee, RAW (and by extension MI) failed to identify five whole battalions deployed across the Line of Control and got the Pakistani order of battle completely wrong. These are serious disclosures. Presumably, the Government will now move to acquire the necessary technology. But the Humint failure is extraordinary when you consider that RAW's record on Pakistan has generally been excellent. Clearly, the department needs to do some housecleaning of its own. In particular, it should rely more on its own cadre professionals.

THE STATESMAN

26 FEB 2000

# We accepted defeat: Farooq on the hijacking episode

PRASHANT SODH  
JAMMU, FEB 26

**E**XPRESSING his grave dismay at the release of three foreign mercenaries in the Indian Airlines plane hijacking episode, Jammu and Kashmir Chief Minister Farooq Abdullah said that he "felt ashamed at what the government had done. We accepted defeat," he said. He said that rather than making it clear that we are ready to fight it out, the country sent the message that it was weak and weeping.

He also criticised the media's role during the hijacking episode saying that it had unduly projected the grief of the families whose relatives were on board

the aircraft when the country's prestige was at stake.

Abdullah was speaking on the occasion of the 2nd Amar Kapoor Memorial Lecture here on Friday. He paid glowing tributes to Amar Kapoor, describing him as a superb police officer and an excellent human being.

The Chief Minister said that the bureaucrats and politicians who had arrived at the Shimla Accord with Pakistan in 1972 would never be forgiven by the people as they had failed to thrash out the Kashmir issue then.

Maintaining that the country's participation was wrong, the Chief Minister said that blunders had been made by the country's leadership then and continue

to be committed to this day.

Throwing his weight behind those who favour a strong federal structure, Abdullah said that he envisioned the country as the "United States of India" and if this was not done the country would collapse in the manner of Russia. He said that people in different states spoke different languages and a federal structure was important for the country's long-term stability.

He said that Pakistan had never been sincere in fulfilling its obligations as part of the UN resolutions and would not do so even now. Quoting a Urdu couplet, he said that the country was facing grave challenges and people would have to rise to the occasion. Talking of Clin-

ton's visit, he said that the country should not be bothered whether he visits Pakistan or not.

In his lucid presentation on 'Low intensity war and high intensity conflicts', Prakash Singh, former Director General, BSF, said that lack of vision in the country's leadership has been responsible for the emergence of militant movements in the country. He said that the leadership had failed to gauge regional aspirations and hence, evolve a plan to deal with the problems that were likely to crop up. Quoting the example of Punjab where he dealt with insurgency, he said that police and para-military forces did not know for a long time what policy to follow in the state.

Singh held the state governments primarily responsible for the rise in militancy saying that they had failed to assert their authority and check corruption.

He said that the foremost requirement for bringing about a change in the situation in Jammu and Kashmir was to effectively check infiltration. Giving the example of Punjab, he said that militancy was contained in the state only after the fencing was erected on the border.

He also stressed the role of the Jammu and Kashmir Police in ending insurgency in the state. Referring to the series of mistakes about Jammu and Kashmir, he said that the country's response was slow in 1947. Apart from this, the case was wrongly taken to the UN and admitted under a wrong clause and a cease-fire had been accepted at the wrong time. The biggest opportunity to settle the issue, he said, was missed after the 1971 war. He was also critical of the handling of the Rubanya Sayeed kidnapping and the IA plane hijacking episodes.

Pointing to the assessment by some foreign scholars that India did not have a tradition of strategic thinking, Singh said that India's tendency to react only after the enemy had entered its territory has come to be called as the "Panipat syndrome" by experts.

Tracing the origin and handling of militant movements faced by the country since Independence, he said that

while the fifties saw Naga insurgency, the sixties saw the emergence of the militant movement in Mizoram besides the start of the Naxalite problem. Insurgency raised its head in Assam in the 70s, in Punjab in the eighties and in Kashmir in the nineties. He said that Jammu and Kashmir's was no longer a mere territorial dispute between India and Pakistan. The attempt was now to create an Islamic state there. "The struggle now is between Islamic fundamentalist forces drawn from various countries and the secular state of India," he said.

Talking of the high-intensity crime, Singh regretted that so far India had no comprehensive law to deal with organised crime.

# Defence budget needs to be increased: Vajpayee

By Our Special Correspondent

LUCKNOW, FEB. 26 The Prime Minister, Mr. A. B. Vajpayee, today hinted that despite constraints, allocations for the defence of the country had to be adequately increased. The way people, including children, donated money in the wake of Kargil conflict, showed that the nation was willing to bear the additional burden.

At a State convention of the Secondary Teachers Association here, Mr. Vajpayee said his Government had inherited a bad economic situation, which could only cause concern. But, a turn for better was being given. More than the resource crunch, as lamentable the misutilisation or non-utilisation of the allocated funds by many States. He said one State had kept funds allocated by the Centre in fixed deposit and had been using the interests accruing over it. Many others did not raise matching resource and still others misspent the exchequer's money,

on heads other than for which these were meant.

Referring to the Nobel Prize winner, Prof. Amartya Sen's observation that primary education was a prerequisite for economic development, he said the lack of education could be attributed to discernible underdevelopment in many parts of the country. Some States, which gave adequate attention to education, were now in better form of development. Uttar Pradesh should take a leaf from this reality.

He said presently he was not in a position to announce compulsory primary education in view of the stiff resource constraints. It was easier, he said, when the country had attained independence. However, he expressed hope that within a period of five years, this would become a reality. Referring to the demands of primary and secondary teachers for implementation of the Fifth Pay Commission's scale, Mr. Vajpayee said he was in support of

this, but one had to keep in mind the serious resource constraints. When other sections were being paid the Commission's scales, why exclude the primary and secondary teachers. My father himself was a teacher, Mr. Vajpayee told the gathering and he took pride in that unmindful of the fact that the salary then paid was small. Apart from compulsory education, priority should also be given to health, linking of villages with cities and potable water.

The Prime Minister urged NRIs particularly those in the U.S. to explain to the Senators about the greatness of our country, its heritage and democratic traditions.

The Chief Minister, Mr. Ram Prakash Gupta, senior State Ministers and the Union Minister for Surface Communication, Mr. Rajnath Singh, were also present on the dias. The Chairman of the reception committee was the Urban Development Minister, Mr. Lalji Tandon. Mr. Om Prakash Sharma, chief of the Association, spoke.

THE HINDU  
27 FEB 2000

# Kargil panel rues inadequate funding

STATESMAN NEWS SERVICE

NEW DELHI, Feb. 26. — Though a paucity of resources could not be deemed a direct factor for the lack of preparedness at Kargil, the Subrahmanyam Committee has concluded that, overall, "unacceptable operational voids" have resulted from inadequate funding for defence.

"It is obvious that the actual defence expenditure has been below the amount required by the forces to perform efficiently the tasks allotted to them" and the committee has observed that "available statistics reveal that the inadequacy of resources has had an adverse impact on the modernisation of the forces."

The committee's report may not have been available with the government in time to have major changes effected in the budget that Mr Yashwant Sinha will be presenting a few days hence, but the defence establishment would draw some satisfaction from the fact that now it has a publicly-released document to back up a case it has unsuccessfully pleaded in recent years. The report draws attention to

the gap between what South Block sought and what North Block provided.

In the fashion that characterises so much of its report, the committee did not go along with other defence analysts in advocating defence expenditure to be pegged at a particular percentage of GDP. That was "a task the government has to perform in close consultation with the MoD, the Services and economists." Yet its call for higher allocations were clear, if not explicitly stated.

Reviewing the allocations over the years, the committee noted that between Independence and the China war defence got a mere 1.8 per cent of GDP. The military reverses forced a change, and for the next 25 years the allocation was around 3 per cent. A significant factor in that period was India's access to Soviet military hardware on soft credit and at rates considerably lower than market prices.

The outlay peaked at 3.59 per cent of GDP in 1987-98, flickered at the 3 per cent mark for the next couple of years, but fell below that from 1990-91 onwards. It dropped to a low of 2.09 per cent in 1996-97 and increased only marginally there-

after to an estimated 2.28 per cent (budget estimate) in the current fiscal. After the mid-1980s defence expenditure has remained more or less stagnant at constant prices.

The committee did not accept the view that nuclear capability would significantly reduce the expenditure on conventional forces. Certainly not in the Indian context where a proxy war has to be fought. And now the forces are groping to come to terms with the expensive hi-tech that stamps the computer-chip generated revolution in military affairs.

In the light of those factors and the need to optimise defence expenditure, the committee has called for evolving a comprehensive security policy.

Yet it was not only the loosening of the purse strings that the Subrahmanyam Committee emphasised. Extracting the maximum value from each rupee spent on defence would require "drastic measures" such as restructuring the forces, a fresh look at manpower, training and re-training, rigorous prioritisation and focusing of resources.

THE STATESMAN  
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...giving final touches to the budget. PHOTO: Ajay Negam

# Kargil lessons likely to force a steep hike in defence outlay

HT Correspondent  
New Delhi, February 28

HT 29/2

9.03

THE VAJPAYEE Government appears all set to significantly hike the defence outlay in order to bear the financial burden of additional border deployments in the Kargil sector and the long pending modernisation of the armed forces.

While the armed forces are seeking financial allocations that amount to three per cent of the gross domestic product (GDP), highly placed sources said the hike would be around 2.8 per cent. Last year, the defence outlay was put at 2.3 per cent of the GDP.

While defence spending in fiscal 1998-99 stood around Rs 52,000 crore including the supplementary demands, the forthcoming defence budget should be around 55,000 crore with a provision for supplementary grants. It is expected that the revised budgetary figures for the forthcoming financial year should come to around Rs 60,000 crore.

The figure should account for an additional expenditure of Rs 10 crore per day, required for maintenance of posts during winter in the Kargil sector. This alone adds up to Rs 1,800 crore. Besides, the three services have drawn up their wishlists of weapons and force multipliers to be acquired as part of post-Kargil modernisation, notwithstanding the Defence Ministry's diktat to the CVC.

The Army has plans to purchase 300 highly capable T-90 missile firing tanks from Russia to counter Pakistani T-80 tanks that it purchased from Ukraine.

The force is looking for weapon locating radars from Ukraine, self-propelled guns from South Africa and Smerch multi-barrel rocket launchers from Russia.

The Army is also interested in purchasing unmanned aerial vehicles (UAVs), hi-tech surveillance equipment that allows interception of communication and electronic warfare equipment for jamming the adversary's radars and communication frequencies during war. The UAVs are crucial to the Army's modernisation plans as they can provide real time information of the tactical battlefield, deployment of enemy gun positions to aid the counter-bombardment strategy and snoop into enemy's territory.

The Army and two services urgently require top-of-the-line night vision devices so that forces can degrade enemy's war-making capabilities.

The Indian Air Force (IAF), on the other hand, has accorded highest priority to the acquisition of advanced jet trainers (AJTs). It plans to purchase 60 AJTs and the total deal may just cross one billion dollars at current prices. The Air Force also needs funds for purchasing 10 Mirage-2000 fighters from France to replenish its existing two fighter squadrons.

In tune with India's draft nuclear doctrine and "no-first-use" policy, the Navy will also have to think in terms of second-strike capability. This essentially means a nuclear powered submarine and long-range strategic bombers such as the TU-22 aircraft that Russia has put on the shelf.

# Jaswant points to Taliban's complicity in hijack episode

Our Political Bureau

NEW DELHI 28 FEBRUARY

IN THE first official government statement on the hijacking of IC-814, Mr Jaswant Singh, foreign minister, ruled out any softening in India's attitude to the Taliban, by squarely pointing to their complicity in the episode. He even defended a much criticised move of his travelling to Kandahar with the freed militants.

Making a statement in Rajya Sabha on Monday, Mr Singh said "logistical compulsions" forced him to take the freed militants in his aircraft. This move had been severely criticised because of the negative image it had sent about the Indian government. But government sources said the absence of facilities at Kandahar airport precluded the arrival of a fourth plane on the runway. "I believe my presence in Kandahar, and on board the aircraft on which the hostages returned home, provided solace to the released passengers who had been held captive for over a week."

Mr Singh answered questions about not being able to intercept the plane in Amritsar. The minister said the hijackers had forced the aircraft's engines to be kept running and making efforts to stop the aircraft would have been precarious amid information that the hijackers had begun killing the passengers.

"Precipitate action, in the ab-



CAUTION PREVAILS: An Indian soldier frisks a youth in Srinagar on Monday. It is believed that Afghan mercenaries are keeping militancy alive in Kashmir

AFP

sence of even basic information of the intentions of the hijackers, was therefore judged as being fraught with unacceptable levels of risk," Mr Singh said, adding that the government had readied national security guards in New Delhi and instructed local authorities to delay refuelling to the maximum extent possible.

He said the Taliban authorities "consistently and clearly had their sympathies with the

hijackers and their other supporters and acted accordingly" even while adopting the attitude of "correct facilitators." He even alluded to a triangular co-ordination between ISI, Taliban and the Harkat-ul-Mujahideen. The statement was a definite move away from his initial statements after the hijack where he complimented the Taliban on their role leading to speculation about how India would deal with the Taliban.