

Waiting for the CDS

By P. R. Chari

The system of having a Chief of the Defence Staff would be a vast improvement on the existing dispensation.

HD-10
29/5

THE NATIONAL security conscious BJP-led NDA regime has launched more initiatives in this sphere of state activity than any Government since Independence. A short list would include the nuclear tests (May 1998); establishment of the National Security Council and its subordinate institutions (September 1998); enunciation of the Indian Nuclear Doctrine (August 1999); and completion of the 'first-ever' Strategic Defence Review (December 1999). It is another matter that this activism had unintended and unexpected results. And the jury is still out on whether India's security improved or deteriorated after the tests; whether the National Security Council has become yet another atrophying institution; and whether the Nuclear Doctrine, only a draft incidentally, and the Strategic Defence Review have been accepted.

The recommendations of the Group of Ministers (GoM) reviewing the entire national security and defence management system are the latest addition to this maelstrom of reforms. The proposal to install a Chief of the Defence Staff (CDS) is at the heart of the intended reforms. The current position is that the Cabinet Committee on Security has taken a decision to institute the CDS system, but has deferred appointment to that post. The related decisions in this regard — such as integrating the Defence Services Headquarters with the Ministry of Defence (MoD), crucial to the success of the CDS system; creating the post of a Vice-Chief of the Defence Staff (VCDS) to function as a think tank for the CDS; and establishing a tri-Service Defence Intelligence Agency that would report directly to him — are naturally still under consideration.

The reasons for delaying the appointment of the CDS are apparent. The Air Force has opined against the system. Admiral Sushil Kumar's withdrawal from the reckoning indicates the Navy's reservations. It may not be widely known, but the Service Chiefs represent the views of a collegium of their senior commanders. The Air Force and the Navy have a traditional aversion to accepting any modality under which they would feel swamped by the numerically much larger Army. In truth, the CDS or JCS (Joint Chiefs of Staff) systems have worked successfully in western de-

mocracies because their armed forces are roughly equal in size. For instance, the four Services — Army, Navy, Air Force and Marines — in the United States, with its maritime geo-political configuration, are numerically almost similar, making the problem of working the JCS system easy. But, countries with continental geo-political structures such as China or Russia display the preeminence of the Army over other Services.

India is a subcontinental state, and there are historical reasons, rooted in the organisational structure of the British Indian Army, why the Army has prevailed over the other two Services. Before Independence, the Commander-in-Chief dominated the defence apparatus as executive head of the armed forces and member of the Viceroy's Council. He was the administrative and executive head of the Royal Indian Navy and the Royal Indian Air Force, apart from an ineffective Defence Department. Obviously, this colonial system could have not survived after Independence and the ushering in of parliamentary democracy in India. Hence, the post-Independence period witnessed the creation of separate Commanders-in-Chief for the Navy and the Air Force, and a MoD to advise the Defence Minister. Later, their appellation was changed to Chiefs of Staff.

The separation of the Services Headquarters from the MoD within this historical process led to the Service Chiefs becoming theatre commanders of their respective Services, but not the chief advisers to the Government on service matters. This was their own voluntary choice. Proposals emanating from Services Headquarters run the gauntlet of the hierarchies of the MoD, leading to inordinate delays and frustration all around. An often-heard complaint in the Services Headquarters is that they have become "attached offices" of the MoD, and that the scheming civilians have ensured that what obtains is bureaucratic, and not political (read Ministers unassisted by civilians) control, over the Services in India. What is never heard is the role of the Services in creating

this plight for themselves.

The present system has affected decision-making in the MoD and Services Headquarters. There can be little doubt that the CDS system would be a vast improvement on the existing dispensation, whatever the reservations in the Navy, the Air Force and the MoD. As envisaged by the GoM's Report, the CDS would tender single-point advice to the Cabinet regarding the three Services, head the command to be established for exercising control over the nuclear forces, have the tri-Service Defence Intelligence Agency reporting to him, and be the authority to implement the reform of the defence apparatus. In these endeavors the CDS would be assisted by the VCDS.

However, the historical evolution of the defence apparatus since Independence has failed to exorcise several ghosts that linger in South Block. The Navy and the Air Force continue to suspect they will be relegated by the Army to the role of "support services", which is heightened by open expressions of the view that only the Army can hold territory and that the other two Services only assist it to perform this definitive role. And the generalist civilian officers in the MoD, manning its posts for short periods on the tenure principle, are too unsure of themselves; hence they are wary of any changes that might result in the domination of the MoD by the CDS system. Skilful political management is required to allay these fears.

There are also too many other loose ends that need tying up, and genuine questions that need serious answers if the CDS system is to gain credibility and find acceptance. Five such issues can be briefly formulated. First, what would be the relationship of the CDS with the MoD, to be headed by a Principal Defence Secretary, in an integrated defence set up? Second, what would be his equation with the three Service Chiefs — coordinator, superior, foremost among equals? In a hierarchical structure such as the armed forces this is an issue of crucial importance. Third, what would be the nature of his relationship

with the Defence Minister and the Prime Minister? Naturally, he should have easy access to them. What about the three Service Chiefs? Could they represent their differences with the CDS to these personages? Fourth, who will be responsible for attending to parliamentary work — especially in matters relating to the exclusive jurisdiction of the CDS, such as nuclear issues? Fifth, the CDS's control over the nuclear forces presupposes the weaponisation and deployment of India's nuclear weaponry. Is this on the anvil? For that matter, can conventional and nuclear issues be separated in an operational situation?

Despite these and other doubts that can be raised, instituting the CDS system is a long overdue measure of reform. Given the reality, however, that two of the three Services and the MoD are, and always have been, lukewarm supporters of this concept, what can the Government do in the circumstances? Three suggestions are offered here, besides the obvious one that the Opposition parties and the Standing Committee of Parliament on Defence must be consulted. First, more thought should be given to the manner in which the CDS would actually function. Answers are needed to the questions raised above and other related ones. The issue of a White Paper highlighting the problems involved, benefits intended, and the options available could help engender a more informed debate to gain popular acceptance.

Second, some thought should be given to alternative concepts such as a looser integration of Services Headquarters with the MoD along with a clearcut division of functions, regular access of the CDS and the Principal Defence Secretary to the Minister, and a more invigorated committee system of functioning to achieve effective coordination. Third, there is an unanswered question that arises: why must integration start from the top? Why not start it from below by integrating functional branches of Services Headquarters such as those dealing with intelligence, procurement and planning. This could impart the momentum for grappling with major issues such as the CDS system.

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

No change in stand on J&K, says Jaswant

By Seema Guha

NEW DELHI: External affairs minister Jaswant Singh on Monday said India had taken the plunge to engage Pakistan in discussions only after hard-headed calculations of the risks involved. "I approach the talks with realism. It is a long road and will need hard work and perseverance," Mr Singh said at a news conference.

Taking the opportunity to emphasise that India's position on Kashmir had not changed, he said,

"The government is bound by parliament, which has passed a resolution saying that Kashmir is an integral component of the Indian Union." He also vetoed suggestions about a referendum on Kashmir.

Asked about a meeting between Pakistan's Chief Executive Gen Pervez Musharraf and Hurriyat Conference leaders, Mr Singh said the Pakistani leader had been invited for talks with the Prime Minister, implying that a meeting between Hurriyat leaders and Gen Musharraf was not on the cards.

Repeatedly underscoring India's desire for good relations with Pakistan, he said, "India seeks friendship, reconciliation and cooperation with Pakistan. India is

clear about wanting to live in peace with Pakistan, but it is up to Islamabad to decide what kind of ties it wants with New Delhi."

After the Kargil conflict and the hijacking of an Indian Airlines plane from Kathmandu, India had launched an intensive international campaign against Pakistan, accusing it of using militants to destabilise not just Kashmir but soft targets all over India. In fact, New Delhi had refused to talk to Islamabad until the ground situation improved and Pakistan ended its support for cross-border terrorism.

When asked if Pakistan had undergone a change of heart and stopped backing terrorists, Mr Singh acknowledged that the ground situation had indeed changed. But he fell short of saying that Pakistan had totally stopped cross-border terrorism. Emphasising that the Indian government had made its own assessment and come to the conclusion that it was time to engage Pakistan in talks, he quipped, "We are not late. We feel this is the right time to talk." He also pointed out that India did not hold "absolutist positions".

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BREAKING THE ICE



Jaswant Singh

- Minister vetoes suggestions of a referendum on Kashmir
- Musharraf-PM talks unlikely to yield much
- 'Ceasefire revoked as response was not encouraging'

THE TIMES OF INDIA

29 MAY 2001

CDS: Centre yet to consult allies, Opp

STATESMAN NEWS SERVICE

NEW DELHI, May 28. — The Centre is yet to speak to its allies and the Opposition about the appointment of the chief of defence staff.

"Not yet," the defence and external affairs minister said when asked whether the consultations did take place.

Mr Jaswant Singh said there has been very little time as the Prime Minister is away and it has also not been convenient for others.

The announcement, made on 11 May after a meeting of the Cabinet committee on security, that talks would be held with the Opposition and NDA allies on the issue took people by surprise. Defence ministry sources later said some senior officials, who didn't favour the idea of a CDS, had spoken to parliamentary standing committee members to pressure the government.

They argued that had the government wanted to consult the Opposition and other leaders earlier to seek a consensus, it could have done that any time between January, when the Group of Ministers that decided on the Kargil Committee report informally agreed to have a CDS, and May, when the CCS met. Also, such a change of stance was unexpected as there is a slight difference in the composition of the GoM and the CCS.

Mr Atal Behari Vajpayee, who heads the CCS, was not a GoM member, but his principal secretary, Mr Brajesh Mishra, was. So, if the GoM had cleared it, the go-ahead from the CCS would be a formality, it was argued.

The issue about talks stem-

'INDIA NOT A TOOL'

NEW DELHI, May 28. — Rubbishing speculations that America is using India against China, external affairs minister today categorically stated that India never permitted itself to be used.

"India is not a tool to be used by one or any other", said the minister at a press conference here today. He further clarified that India's views welcoming USA's strategic security framework was not at all premature as it had shared its views on this with Russia and China.

"We have shared our view on the new security system with Russia and China and I do not think India's views on this issue could any way be termed as premature".

— SNS

med primarily from the pressure on the government by people whom Mr Singh today called "senior citizens and others and public figures," it was learnt. It's possible that a presentation on the issue would be made for them, sources said.

Mr Singh said capital investments were not made to build new, safe and modern ammunition dumps in the past years. It was only recently that the ministry cleared a Rs 280-crore project for the construction of new depots so that ammunition would not have to be kept in the open.

Asked what he had done to protest against the torture of Lieutenant Saurav Kalia and his men by Pakistani soldiers just before the Kargil war began, he said he has taken it up with Pakistan, international agencies and human rights organisations.

STATESMAN NEWS SERVICE

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L&T building part of N-submarine

SRINJOY CHOWDHURY
STATESMAN NEWS SERVICE

NEW DELHI, May 28. — Larsen and Toubro, a private sector firm, is building part of India's nuclear submarine (called the Advanced Technology Vessel) in the Hazira dockyards in Gujarat.

Even though the defence minister, Mr Jaswant Singh told reporters today he was "not aware of the ATV," top government sources and L&T officials confirmed that part of the submarine was being built by the firm. The project is supervised by the defence ministry's Defence Research and Development Organisation.

Like the defence minister, most officials are tight-lipped about the project. Asked about the work in Hazira, Vice-admiral R. Ganesh, in charge of the

ATV, said: "I cannot discuss any details about the project," while Mr K R Patta, regional manager, L&T, said: "I don't know the status," while another L&T official in Mumbai, Mr J D Patil said "he was not directly handling the programme" but by the general manager, Commander (Retd) N Nigam, who is currently out of the country.

The decision to hand over part of the ATV programme to the private sector was taken long before the Centre's decision to let in the private sector in defence production. Asked why the L&T yard at Hazira was better than the government's shipyards at Garden Reach, Mumbai, Cochin and Goa, Mr Patil said that his Rs 8,000 crore company had a lower bid than government yards. "Generally speaking," he said, his firm had a higher competence level than govern-

ment-owned yards that were well protected and worked at lower efficiency levels as they were supported by taxpayers. In comparison, L&T had operational efficiency and was able to be more productive because of "manpower control and better productivity," he added.

Asked if there were security risks considering the yard was close to the Pakistani airfields, Mr Patta said: "I am sure the defence people would have seen to that aspect."

Part of the hull of the nuclear submarine is being built in "sections" and was floated on a barge and taken to Visakhapatnam for tests, senior officials said. This was done partly because the Navy did not want the work to be monitored by Pakistan.

A nuclear-submarine is fuelled by nuclear power and the energy comes from

its nuclear reactor. This submarine, partly based on a Russian design, will be able to fire nuclear-tipped ballistic and cruise missiles. The ATV's reactor is being built by the Department of Atomic Energy and has not been fitted into the hull as yet.

Just when the ATV will be ready is not certain though the original date was 2007. But there are reports of delays and it could be ready by 2010. Today, the defence minister did not react to a question about the DRDO asking Russia for help.

Several years ago, there was some friction between the Navy and the DRDO about the submarine. The Navy wanted a white paper on the project which, it said, had been delayed. About Rs 2,500 crore may have been spent on the project, it has been reported.

THE STATESMAN

28 MAY 2001

Rs 280-cr grant sanctioned to modernise ammo depots

HT Correspondent
New Delhi, May 28

AN EMERGENCY grant of Rs 280 crore has been made to the Ministry of Defence for modernising ammunition depots.

The move comes after a series of fires which have destroyed an arsenal worth crores of rupees and compromised the combat potential of the Army. The last broke out last week at a depot in Suratgarh, Rajasthan.

Announcing this at a press conference here today, Defence and External Affairs Minister Jaswant Singh said the money was made available after the inquiry into the Bharatpur depot fire.

"This has been an area of

great neglect, marked by an absence of capital investment in modernising ammunition depots and making them fire-resistant," he said. "The requirements outstripped our infrastructural capabilities, resulting in fires."

The Army has consistently been attributing the fires to "spontaneous combustion" because of exposure of ammunition to hot weather.

"A great deal of ammunition was stored in the open," Singh said. "The progress in construction, for storing ammunition indoors at ammunition depots, has been encouraging."

"There had been no significant investment in the army in the last 30 years to build fire-resistant ammunition depots," he

said.

Mr Singh made these remarks at his first joint press conference as Minister for Defence and External Affairs to explain foreign policy and defence-related initiatives under his stewardship of the two ministries.

He will visit Moscow on June 3 to attend the first meeting of the Indo-Russian Inter-Governmental Commission for Military and Technical Cooperation. Mr Singh is the co-chairman of the Commission.

He refused to comment on reports that India was seeking Russian assistance in building its nuclear submarine under the Advance Technology Vehicle (ATV) Project. "I'm not aware of any such project," he said.

THE HINDUSTAN TIMES

29 MAY 2001

Missile launcher ready...

viable and credible "second strike" capability to inflict "unacceptable damage" to an attacking enemy. It is a matter of recognised strategic principle that a viable and credible second nuclear strike capability is vested with sea-launched, in particular nuclear-propelled submarine-launched missiles, because they are difficult to track down using air or surface-launched enemy missiles.

The Indian Government has consistently denied the existence of both the ATV project and the development of the SLBM Sagarika with a range of about 300 km.

"Even today, no one is about to admit to the project. However, once the underwater missile test takes place in September, it will be there for the whole world to see," the source said.

Sagarika developed by the Defence Research and Development

Organisation (DRDO), needs to have a nuclear-powered submarine, for conventional diesel-powered submarines do not have the logistics and manoeuvrability to launch the missile from underwater.

This means that despite its long and chequered history, the indigenously designed ATV Project is well on course since the ATV and Sagarika complement each other.

This correspondent talked to AK Anand, director, reactor project group of the Bhabha Atomic Research Centre (BARC), Anand refused to either confirm or deny it. However, on a recent visit to MAPS (Madras Atomic Power Station) and IGCAR (Indira Gandhi Centre for Atomic Research) sources at Kalpakkam confirmed to this correspondent that the nuclear reactor for the submarine was being fabricated there.

Russia bails out India's missile programme

THE nuclear submarine still seems to be facing problems and the Russians seem to have stepped in to bail India out, though at a heavy price.

Estimated to have cost the national exchequer a sum in excess of Rs 2,500 crore till date, the nuclear submarine project which started some time in 1971 has had lots of problems essentially related to the design of the submarine hull and the reactor it is supposed to house.

The problem was in integrating the pressurised water reactor (PWR) to fit into the space available within the submarine hull. Sources say these problems have now been overcome.

Independent observers of the project, however, still doubt whether the miniaturisation of the pressurised water reactor (PWR) was successfully achieved. The BARC had shelved three designs because of the scientific objections of a former Naval Commander and nuclear scientist B K Subbarao who was part of the Naval team set up to look into the design feasibility. He was later incarcerated as a spy till the courts exonerated him. A fourth design also did not meet the specifications of the Navy.

Earlier, India had obtained on lease the INS Chakra, a 670A Skat class (in Nato parlance Charlie-I) submarine, with the intention of reverse engineering its PWR. The Russians however did not allow the

Indian underwater missile launcher is ready for trials

■ It simulates conditions to launch a missile from a N-sub

D N MOORTHY
MUMBAI, MAY 28

ON the floors of the workshop of a well-known public limited company at Hazira, Project 78 (P78) is getting ready. The engineering works are complete and minor electrical wiring remain to be completed, a task which, according to sources, is scheduled to be finished by the end of the month and formally handed over to the Navy for tests.

P78 is not just another engineering project. It is India's underwater test missile launcher almost entirely indigenously designed and fabricated. It simulates the necessary conditions to launch a cruise or a ballistic missile from a nuclear-powered submarine. In the present instance, P78 is the first crucial step towards strategic weaponisation, since it is being geared to launch a missile tipped with a nuclear warhead.

The missile for which the launcher is being readied is the mysterious Sagarika, first thought to be a cruise missile but now, again according to sources, virtually confirmed to be a ballistic missile. A cruise missile is a low-trajectory missile guided to its destination by an on-board computer. The ballistic missile has a high trajectory and transcends the atmosphere to re-enter from above the targeted site.

Sources say that Sagarika will come in both versions — cruise and ballistic. It is, however, confirmed to be an advanced clone of the naval version of the Prithvi series. Prithvi-I is land-based, II is air-launched and III, sea launched. The difference is that Sagarika is designed exclusively for being launched from a submarine, hence is an SLBM (SLCM is a cruise missile).

The missile for which the launcher is being readied is the mysterious Sagarika, first thought to be a cruise missile, but now virtually confirmed to be a ballistic missile

The state of development of the SLBM/SLCM could not be confirmed but what could be confirmed was the targeted date for the test launch of the missile itself. A highly placed source directly involved with India's prestigious, albeit long-suffering, advanced technology vessel project (ATV Project) — a euphemism for the indigenously being-developed nuclear submarine — disclosed to *The Indian Express* that Sagarika will have its first underwater flight test in September 2001. According to a retired Naval intelligence source, this means Sagarika is already ready

and waiting for tests or in a very advanced state of completion. That is why the frenetic activity to have the P78 underwater missile launcher delivered to the Navy before April 2001 makes sense.

The revelation assumes significance since it is the first solid and tangible fulfilment of the aim of the ambitious draft Indian nuclear doctrine to possess a

CONTINUED ON PAGE 2

Ammo depot fire: Gehlot slams Army

STATESMAN NEWS SERVICE

JAIPUR, May 25. — The Gujarat chief minister has written to Mr Atal Behari Vajpayee accusing the Army of being apathetic in dealing with the Suratgarh ammunition depot fire.

Mr Ashok Gehlot also alleged there was total lack of communication between the Army top brass and officers on the field after the fire broke out.

The Army didn't take the local administration into confidence in tackling the fire, he alleged. "We received no official information from the local Army authorities or from the defence ministry, yet the state government took all necessary steps to contain the situation."

Mr Gehlot claimed it was the state government which made all the arrangements to move people staying around the depot to safer areas. He sought monetary compensation for the affected people.

Rs 20-CRORE LOSS

BIKANER, May 25. — Six hundred tonnes of ammunition, worth Rs 20 crore-Rs 22 crore has been destroyed in the blaze at Suratgarh depot, Army officers said.

The blaze was extinguished at 4 a.m. today, 16 hours after the fire-fighting operation started. — UNI

Expressing concern over the recurrence of fire accidents at ammunition depots, Mr Gehlot questioned the Army's safety measures.

He urged the Mr Vajpayee to disclose the findings of the inquiry into the last year's Bharatpur ammunition depot fire, which destroyed ammunition worth Rs 1,200 crore. "We have no information regarding what had happened after the Bharatpur incident. Local people are still disturbed about the mat-

ter. They have received no real compensation for the financial losses suffered by them... There are sufficient grounds to take the matter very seriously and carry out investigations..."

Shortcomings: The Army vice-chief, Lt-Gen Vijay Oberoi, said "weaknesses" in the terms of shortages of funds, lack of other resources were responsible for the lack of better ammunition storage facilities, a report from Delhi adds.

Ruling out sabotage at the Suratgarh depot, he said "excess heat" had led to "spontaneous" explosions.

He spoke about the need for permanent structures. In some sub-depots, the ammunition is stored in the open. There "was no money" to build permanent structures, he said.

A court of inquiry has been ordered and the findings will be made public soon, Lt-Gen Oberoi said.

THE STATESMAN

10 MAY 1974

Major fire in ammunition depot

By Our Staff Correspondent

JAIPUR, MAY 24. A devastating fire broke out today in a forward Army ammunition depot at Birdhwal, 20 km from Suratgarh town in Sriganganagar district near the international border in Rajasthan. According to reports reaching here, there was thick smoke and loud explosions were heard as far away as Suratgarh.

According to reports received here tonight, three Army officers were injured in the blasts caused by the fire. They have been admitted to Military Hospital in Suratgarh Cantonment. Police said there were no reports of any civilian casualties so far. The Army has ordered a court of inquiry into the fire.

Preliminary assessment of the situation has indicated the possibility of "spontaneous combustion" being the reason for the fire, which broke out around 11 a.m. The ammunition generally is kept in the open and is exposed to high temperatures during summer, which might trigger combustion. Earlier also this was stated to be the cause of the huge fire in the Bharatpur ordnance depot. The Army has cor-



done off the entire area falling in a 20-km radius around the dump in Suratgarh Cantonment.

The depot — one of the largest in Rajasthan — stores heavy and medium ammunition, including rockets, missiles and tank shells.

The area was the scene of the Army's recent "Poorna Vijay" exercises. A fire of this kind in the area, adjacent to Mahajan Range, would not only undermine the morale of the country's strike corps but might also prove dangerous for Rajasthan's first super-thermal power project coming up nearby. The State has high stakes in the 650-MW power project.

The State Home Secretary, Mr. R.K. Nayar, told *The Hindu* that

people in about 10 villages surrounding Birdhwal were being evacuated. Nearly 1,500 people have fled to Suratgarh in panic. The Army has sealed the Sriganganagar-Bikaner National Highway No. 15 to prevent any damage by projectiles that might hit the ground. Traffic has been stopped on the Bikaner-Bathinda railway route that passes at a distance of 4 km from the depot.

A number of fire engines, which rushed to the spot from Bikaner, Suratgarh and Hanumangarh, were fighting the blaze on a war-footing till late in the evening. The fire tenders included those of the Army and the Air Force while some of them had been called in from neighbouring Punjab.

A similar fire at the Army's central ammunition depot in Bharatpur in eastern Rajasthan last year had destroyed nearly 900 tonnes of ammunition worth Rs. 1,200 crores.

Today's fire is the third major one within the past one year. After Bharatpur, 427 tonnes of armament were destroyed in a fire at a forward ammunition depot in Pathankot. Both the incidents are being probed by courts of inquiry instituted by the Army.

THE HINDU

25 MAY 1971

Ammo depot fire kills jawan

HT Correspondent
Suratgarh, May 24

A BIG fire broke out at the army ordnance sub-depot at Birdhwal, 20 km from Suratgarh town near the international border in Rajasthan on Thursday.

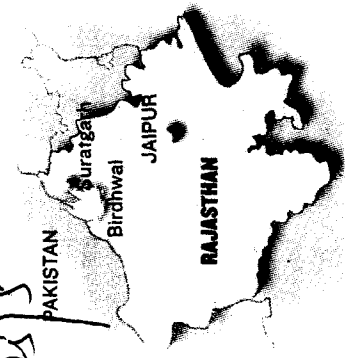
A jawan, who was on sentry duty at the ammunition dump, died. Two others were wounded.

Large stocks of heavy and medium tank shells, missiles and rockets were destroyed in the fire that started around 12 noon.

The depot—or whatever is left of it—lies in the area where the Indian Army had recently conducted Operation Purna Vijay military exercises. The cause of the fire is not yet known.

T-55 and T-72 tanks, that were stationed at the depot, are believed to have been destroyed. Army and Intelligence sources said that the depot was a sourcing point for the army's strike corps. Because of the recent military exercises, the concentration of armour and ammunition was especially heavy at the site.

Intelligence sources said though the fire broke out in one corner of the depot, it then spread. Artillery shells were raining over villages located as far as 4 km from the depot. Though, several fire tenders have been deployed, their chances of getting close to the fire are remote.



According to the District Collector of Ganganagar, Kiran Soni Gupta, nine villages near the depot have been evacuated. The army has cordoned off an area of 2 km around the depot and has made an aerial survey to take stock of the situation. The Ganganagar-Bikaner National Highway No. 15 in the vicinity is also off-limits. This is the third major fire at an ammunition depot in the recent past.

Last April, nearly 900 tonnes of ammunition worth Rs1,200 crore were destroyed at the Central Ammunition Depot in Bharatpur. Almost 427 tonnes of armaments were destroyed in a depot near Pathankot in April this year.

According to Indian Army sources in Jodhpur, a court of inquiry has been constituted by the Western Command to look into the incident.



Director General of Police Dinesh Vajpai (left) greets city police chief Sujoy Chakraborty at Lalbazar on Thursday.

Top cop challenges Vajpai posting

HT Correspondent
Kolkata, May 24

IN A potential loss of face for the State Government, a top cop has decided to move court against Dinesh Vajpai's appointment as the Director-General of Police & Inspector-General of Police.

Director-General of Police (Home Guard) Manas Chakraborty said today that he would seek justice as his rightful claim to the post had been ignored. Vajpai's appointment, Chakraborty told *Hindustan Times* was in vio-

lation of a Supreme Court directive in the C Dinakar case.

The SC, Chakraborty said, had observed that the DGP & IGP of a State should be appointed from among officers of the same rank.

The State has three cops of the DGP rank. Chakraborty, promoted as DGP (Training) on December 1, 1997 and transferred later to his present post of DG (Home Guard) on February 28, is the senior-most. The others are KP Banopadhyay, DG (Training) and RC Sharma DG (Intelligence Branch). Chakraborty's point is that if

someone must be made DGP & IGP, he has to be from among the three. He is against the idea that someone of the Additional DG's rank should be promoted to the senior most DG's post. Vajpai was an officer of the ADG rank.

Chakraborty, working as a DG for the past three and a half years, had been empanelled for the DG's post after clearance from the Centre in 1998. He did not say if he would approach the CAT, or appeal the decision in a court of law. "I am discussing the matter with my lawyers."

ASHOK NATH DEY/HINDUSTAN TIMES

Defence revamp: Officials can still call the shots

Vishal Thapar
New Delhi, May 24

THE INDIAN bureaucracy has lost none of its relevance in the proposed restructuring of higher defence management. In fact, it has emerged more powerful in the suggested revamp which is intended to give the armed forces greater participation in defence management.

The overhaul was recommended by a Group of Ministers (GOM) reviewing the national security system. Central to the revamp is the integration of the Defence Services Headquarters with the Ministry of Defence and the creation of the post of Chief of Defence Staff (CDS).

India is the only country where the Army, Navy and Air Force Headquarters are treated as 'attached offices' of the Ministry of Defence and not an integral part of it. "Service Headquarters may be designated as Integrated Headquarters of the Ministry of Defence," say the GOM recommendations, which were made public today.

It goes on to anoint the proposed CDS, who will be a four-star officer drawn from one of the three armed forces, as the 'Principal Military Adviser' to the government.

The report hastens to add that there is "no dilution in the role of the Defence Secretary as the Prin-

cipal Defence Advisor to the Defence Minister... and he should be officially designated (as such)". The measure is intended to 'unequivocally' reinforce the importance of the Defence Secretary in civilian and military hierarchies.

"The Defence Secretary will function as Principal Defence Advisor to the Defence Minister in a manner similar to the role to be performed by the CDS as the Principal Military Advisor. Both will enjoy an equivalent status in terms of their working relationship as distinct from the Warrant of Precedence," the report says.

"Similarly, the Defence Secretary must enjoy an equivalent status vis-a-vis the Chiefs of Staff," it adds. In the Warrant of Precedence, the Service Chiefs are senior to the Defence Secretary.

Even with the mandate of providing single-point military advice to the government, the CDS won't be quite the supercrat in uniform. The report categorically denies the CDS operational control over the strategic (nuclear) forces.

Also, the Procurement Board for defence equipment will function under the Defence Secretary, who will continue to control the purse strings.

It makes a case for higher financial powers delegated to the Defence Minister and the Finance Minister for making speedy purchases.

THE HINDUSTAN TIMES

25 MAY 2001

Rajasthan ammo depot fire kills one

STATESMAN NEWS SERVICE & UNI

591 25/5

JAIPUR, May 24. — One soldier was killed and five were injured after a major fire broke out at the Indian Army ammunition depot in Bardhwal, near Suratgarh this afternoon. Ammunition worth several crores was destroyed.

The injured have been admitted to the Army hospital in Suratgarh.

There was a loud explosion which could be heard in Suratgarh. The Army sealed off the area and people from nearby villages were evacuated to near-by towns. Nearly 1,500 people had reached Suratgarh and arrangements were being made for their stay there, sources said.

The cause of the fire, which broke out around 1 p.m., is not yet known. The explosions could be heard every two minutes, officials said. Twelve fire tenders from Suratgarh, Ganganagar and Hanumangarh, and a few from the Army and the Air Force were pressed into service. Fire tenders from Punjab also have also been requisitioned. The fire has not been put out completely.

Senior Army officials, the Ganganagar district collector and the SP were supervising the rescue and fire-fighting operations, sources said.

Trains on the Bikaner-Bhatinda section were stopped at Suratgarh, Mahajan and Hanumangarh stations, while traffic on NH-15 was diverted to Mahajan and Lunkarnsar areas. Smaller roads in the region were also closed to traffic.

According to preliminary estimates, ammunition worth crores have been lost. The depot contained ammunition which could hit in the range of 30 to 100 km. However, the Army authorities could not confirm this. Ammunition was stored in the depot during the recent Army exercise, Poorna Vijay, along the Western border.

This is the third major fire in Army ammunition depots in one year. In the Bharatpur ammunition depot fire, the Army suffered a loss of Rs 1,200 crore. The fire at Pathankot depot few months ago destroyed ammunition worth Rs 1,500 crore.

THE STATESMAN

4 0 MAY 2001

Collectors should monitor foreign funds'

STATESMAN NEWS SERVICE

NEW DELHI, May 23. — The Group of Ministers on reforming the national security system has favoured early empowerment to the district collectors for registration and monitoring of the recipients of foreign contributions.

Though the government has mooted a proposal in this regard, the GoM has also suggested that the banks be involved as an independent channel of data collection and monitoring.

In order to ensure effective administration of Foreign Contribution Regulation Act and the Indo-Pak Visa agreement, 1974, it suggested that the foreign division of the MHA as well as the Bureau of Immigration should be headed by the same officer. It also felt that the officers from income tax, banking revenue intel-

ligence, enforcement, IB, should also be taken in the Bureau of Immigration.

Stressing the need for immediate revamping of the criminal justice system, including making use of the Evidence Act and the Cr-PC by the trial courts, it suggested modifications in the existing procedure for stay of proceedings in a court.

The GoM, submitting its report today, said that "urgent action be taken to empower the local bodies to adjudicate on cases of a simple nature" and suggested that an action plan be prepared by the Inter-State Council for time-bound implementation.

Though a proposal to amend section 438 of the Cr-PC, dealing with anticipatory bail, along with other amendments, has been approved by the parliamentary standing committee on home affairs, the

GoM has asked the home ministry to pursue it in a time-bound manner to ensure its early amendments.

"Parole should be granted only on the merit of each case and police should be given advance information about the decision to release a person on parole," the report stated. It said: "As the burking of crime contributes to corruption in police, therefore, free registration of cases should be encouraged and any dereliction should attract stringent punishment."

It also suggested setting up of organised crime units in all states. The GoM felt that an action plan, with the consultation of the ministry of external affairs, to counter the organised crime.

It also favoured improvement in the Narcotics Control Bureau to curb drug trafficking, organised crime and terrorism.

BRAJESH ROLE QUESTIONED

NEW DELHI, May 23. — The Congress today questioned the continuation of Mr Brajesh Mishra as the national security adviser to the government.

"The job of the NSA requires utmost attention and involvement", Mr S Jai-pal Reddy observed. "How can Mr Mishra who is also the principal secretary to the Prime Minister do justice to the office which involves the security of the nation?" he asked.

Mr Reddy also quoted the Subramaniam Committee report which has suggested a full time National Security Adviser.

"Only a superman can perform the job of the NSA while being the principal secretary to the Prime Minister."

— SNS

THE STATESMAN

9 MAY 2000

Security reforms to give Centre more teeth

HT Correspondent
New Delhi, May 23

IF THE Group of Ministers on "Reforming the National Security System" has its way, the Centre will be able to deploy forces in States without their concurrence.

Home Minister LK Advani, who heads the GOM, released the Group's report here today. Prime Minister Atal Bihari Vajpayee formed the GOM in April last year to review the security system in the aftermath of the Kargil crisis.

The GOM's report, which

could have a significant bearing on the nation's federal polity, has expressed concern over erosion of the Centre's authority in tackling threats to internal security. It has recommended strengthening of emergency provisions under Articles 352 and 359 and "proactive" use of the provisions of Article 355, which makes it incumbent on the Union Government to protect every State against internal disturbances.

The GOM has suggested that a legislation be introduced to empower the Centre to suo motu deploy forces in States, if the situation so demands. Such a legis-

lation would identify circumstances requiring direct Central intervention.

However, the GOM has suggested that the recommendation be referred to the Inter-State Council for a detailed study. Apparently wary of the controversy that this proposal could generate among NDA allies, it has added yet another safety clause by recommending that the proposal be discussed with all political parties for a consensus decision.

The GOM has also proposed that the issue of strengthening Articles 352 and 359 should be referred to the Law Commission.

This, the ministers felt, was imperative to ensure that such an exercise did not run counter to the "spirit of democracy and federalism" which guided the Constitution. Advani said the recommendations would be implemented by the end of this year. Asked whether Kargil, Kandahar and the recent Indo-Bangladeshi border incidents reflected a weakened security system, Advani said the security mechanism has to be viewed in totality and not assessed on the basis of isolated incidents.

Related report on Page 9

THURSDAY, MAY 24, 2001

THE CDS APPOINTMENT

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THE APPOINTMENT OF the country's first Chief of Defence Staff (CDS) has been marred by unfortunate controversy. The difficulty faced by the Vajpayee Government in naming someone for the post has stemmed from two causes. First, less than dignified behaviour which lent the impression that there was a scramble for the job. And second, a tendency to view matters from the narrow standpoint of one or another armed force rather than in a broad and integrated manner. The reported decision of the Chief of the Naval Staff, Admiral Sushil Kumar, to withdraw from the 'race' has made the Government's task of selecting a CDS less problematic. Although there were reservations about Admiral Kumar's suitability for the job, he would have been difficult to ignore given his seniority over the heads of the other two armed forces. But it remains to be seen how the Government will deal with the Indian Air Force (IAF), a section of which appears uncomfortable with the very concept of a CDS, partly because of the apprehension that such a post will diminish its status as the front-line armed service in the new technology-based military environment.

The concept of a CDS emerged from the Government's resolve to review the national security system in its entirety following the Kargil conflict. It was one of many wide-ranging recommendations of the task force headed by Mr. Arun Singh which was set up to examine the existing organisation and structure and recommend measures to improve the management of the country's defence. The CDS, who will serve as the operational head of the nuclear forces, is expected to integrate command and control of the three wings of the armed services and to act as the single-point military adviser to the political executive. The CDS concept exists, in one form or another, in many countries. It was envisaged in order to promote "jointness" in the

armed services, to encourage a much needed tri-services view on defence matters in the new nuclearised environment. Ironically, the very post which was designed to promote this "jointness" has become the focus of an unfortunate disagreement, demonstrating the lack of a tri-services culture and creating the impression that there is an unseemly squabble among the armed forces to capture the post.

It now seems clear that the Government's first choice for the job is the Army Chief, General S. Padmanabhan, but it will have to deal firmly with the IAF, sections of which are unhappy over the creation of a CDS post and which feel that the IAF is the natural frontrunner given that it is the only force capable of delivering nuclear strikes at this juncture. It is not clear how the Government will tackle the difficulties that have cropped up in making the appointment. There can be endless arguments about the advisability of having a CDS and about which armed force should enjoy a special status in strategic commands. The point, however, is that the Cabinet Committee on Security has taken a decision to create such a post and the Government will only end up looking weak and ineffective if it delays making the appointment for much longer. The appointment of a CDS is a part of a large-scale restructuring of the management of the defence establishment and must be viewed in its totality. It is only after a CDS is appointed that command, control and intelligence aspects of the country's nuclear deterrent can be fully addressed and developed. The CDS will become a focal point for bringing about the restructuring recommended by the task forces which will need some years to undertake. Against this background, it is inadvisable to indefinitely postpone an appointment which has implications for both the country's strategic objectives and security system.

THE HINDU

24 MAY 2001

GoM wants Central Intelligence agencies upgraded

STATESMAN NEWS SERVICE

NEW DELHI, May 23. — The Group of Ministers on reforming the national security system has suggested, in its report, upgradation of the Central intelligence agencies, notably the Intelligence Bureau and the intelligence apparatus in the states. The GoM has strongly opposed deployment of border security forces to deal with internal law and order, including counter insurgency operations, for "effective" internal security management in the country.

The GoM, led by Mr LK Advani, who had made the report public, said: "Internal security disorders can't be effectively managed unless Central in-

telligence agencies provide timely operational intelligence to enable security forces to launch operations."

It felt that lack of institutionalised arrangements for sharing and coordination of intelligence at various levels and particularly at the field level was a primary weakness in proper management of borders.

"The present tendency on the part of each agency to guard its turf, even at the cost of compromising national security interests, needs to be deprecated and put down firmly," the report said.

Disapproving of deployment of border guarding forces to deal with internal disturbances, law and order duties and counter-insurgency operations, it said:

ST-8 MS
"Withdrawal of border guarding forces for such duties limits their capabilities to guard the borders effectively."

"While there might be exceptional circumstances where it might be necessary to utilise the services of border guarding forces for performing law and order/counter-insurgency duties, as a rule, these forces shouldn't be withdrawn from the borders," the report said, advocating "one border, one force" principle to enforce greater accountability.

"At present, there are instances of more than one force working on the same border and the questions of conflicting command and control have been raised frequently."

Multiplicity of forces on the same bor-

der has led to a lack of accountability on the part of the forces, it said.

The report, which dwelt at length on border management, also recommended creation of a separate department of border management within the ministry of home affairs under the overall charge of the home secretary.

Expressing concern that illegal migration from across the borders has continued unabated for over five decades, the report stated: "We have yet to fully wake up to the implications of the unchecked immigration for the national security". Noting that today India has about 15 million

Bangladeshis, 2.2 million Nepalese, 70,000 Sri Lankan Tamils and about

100,000 Tibetan migrants, it said: "There is an all-round failure in India to come to grips with the problem of illegal immigration".

Demographic changes have already been brought about in the border belts of West Bengal, several districts in Bihar, Assam, Tripura, and Meghalaya because of large-scale illegal migration, it said.

"Unfortunately, action on this subject invariably assumes communal overtones with political parties taking pot vote banks," the report said adding that the massive illegal immigration posed a grave danger to the country's security, social harmony and economic well-being.

THE STATESMAN

4 MAY 2001

'Brajesh will continue to hold dual charge'

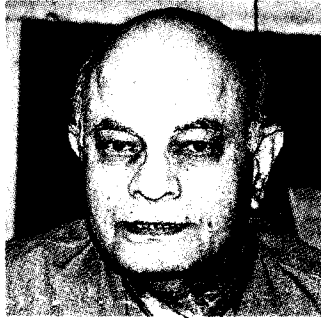
By Our Special Correspondent

NEW DELHI, MAY 23. The Government today clarified that the Principal Secretary to the Prime Minister, Mr. Brajesh Mishra, would continue as the National Security Adviser in the foreseeable future.

According to the Defence Minister, Mr. Jaswant Singh, the National Security Council to which the National Security Adviser belongs is still in its "formative stage." "The Prime Minister is in charge of the NSC and it is best at this stage that the Principal Secretary continues as NSA," he said.

Mr. Singh made these observations in the presence of the Home Minister, Mr. L. K. Advani, and the Finance Minister, Mr. Yashwant Sinha, after the release of the 135-page report of the Group of Ministers on reforming the national security system.

Asked to comment on the delay in appointing the Chief of Defence Staff (CDS) as the Government's principal military adviser, Mr. Advani said a decision



would be taken "soon".

Responding to reports about the Chief of the Naval Staff withdrawing from the race for the CDS, Mr. Singh said Admiral Sushil Kumar had done so with an eye on improving the functioning of the inter-services Chief of Staff Committee (COSC). The letter by Admiral Kumar, who headed the COSC, was therefore neither a response to "the deferment of the decision on CDS" nor a result of his reported differences with the Indian Air Force. His action was "truly democratic" and the Government appreciated it.

IAF chief denial: Page 13

THE HINDU

24 MAY 2001

DEFENCE

(continued from page 1)

it was felt the decision be deferred till the Prime Minister discussed it with other political leaders. Some leaders have said the CDS system could create difficulties.

A detailed paper on the CDS, his powers, relations with the Services chiefs, tenure and the manner of appointment too would be made available to the political leaders, the defence minister said.

Mr Singh was at pains to dispel the impression that the Air Force had "objected" or "protested" to a CDS. But as a disciplined Services arm it also completely accepted the recommendations.

Nor did he see much scope for dispute in the Navy Chief having opted out of the running for the CDS's post. Describing Admiral Sushil Kumar's action as "truly democratic", Mr Singh said the Admiral had stepped aside not out of any defiance, but to enable him (as Chairman of the Chiefs of Staff Committee) to "better implement" the recommendations.

Dealing with a somewhat unrelated matter, Mr Singh defended the Prime Minister's principal secretary serving as the national security adviser too. The National Security Council was still in a formative stage so the two-in-one post was warranted. Once the NSC found its feet and its slot in the overall system the posts would obviously be bifurcated.

Both Mr Advani and Mr Singh saw few difficulties arising in the implementation of the GoM's recommendations because at the proposal stage each of them had been processed by the nodal ministry. Only after that had they been formally recommended.

The implementation of the recommendations pertaining to internal security and the management of land and marine borders would be done "in conjunction with the state governments," Mr Advani said.

THE STATESMAN

24 MAY 2001

RSS happy, Cong plays safe, CPM hails 'right move'

STATESMAN NEWS SERVICE

NEW DELHI, May 23. - The RSS is pleased with the decision to call off the ceasefire in Jammu and Kashmir. It had opposed the decision right from the beginning. However, some RSS leaders had reservations about the decision to invite General Pervez Musharraf to New Delhi for talks.

Even the BJP opposed the second decision while welcoming the first. Senior BJP leader Mr JP Mathur said it was now for Pakistan's CEO to accept the invitation in the context of India's condition that talks could be held only in a peaceful atmosphere. Peace can only be achieved when Pakistan stops cross-border terrorism, he said, adding that India had never avoided talks.

The BJP and RSS believe that bilateral talks with Pakistan are possible only when it creates an atmosphere conducive to discussions. Calling off the ceasefire was an admission that normalcy was not

returning to the valley, a BJP leader said.

Mr Mathur said the ceasefire had lost relevance due to the attitude of the leaders of the Hurriyat and some other terrorist groups, based in India.

The Congress tonight played it safe on the government's decision to call of the ceasefire in Jammu and Kashmir and the invitation to General Musharraf to come to New Delhi for talks. However, the CPI-M general-secretary, Mr Harkishen Singh Surjeet, was quick to welcome the decision as a forward move in the peace initiative.

When contacted by **The Statesman**, the Congress spokesman, Mr Jaipal Reddy, preferred to be diplomatic. "In all these matters (on the Kashmir front), the government is in possession of the reports and other inputs and has taken a decision in its wisdom.

"The Congress party has been adopting a non-partisan attitude on peace initiatives and has been generally supportive of the government's decisions,"

he said.

However, he pointed out that "this time the government did not take the Opposition parties into confidence".

Mrs Sonia Gandhi, according to some party sources, will hold a meeting of senior leaders to have a thorough assessment of the decision and to articulate the party's view in a broad manner. The fact that J&K is set to go to polls soon also will add to the delicacy of the issue for the Congress.

On the other hand Mr Surjeet was forthcoming in welcoming the decision. He said: "The decision to invite Gen Musharraf is a right step towards the peace process".

He said the government's earlier stand that talks with Pakistan would not be resumed until that country stopped aiding cross-border terrorism, had given the Pakistan leader a chance to complain to the world that India had slammed the door on peace talks.

Today's decision will, he felt, help India regain the advantage on that front.



Children beat the heat at the Boat Club, near India Gate, New Delhi, on Wednesday. - AP/PTI

THE STATESMAN

24 MAY 2001

Delhi mulls tougher Emergency laws

FROM CHANDAN NANDY

New Delhi, May 28: The Vajpayee government proposes to "strengthen" the Emergency provisions of the Constitution to deal with the "grave threats" to internal security, the report of the Group of Ministers on national security has said.

The Centre's "capability" to deal with "situations caused by grave threats to the country's internal security, which has eroded over the years, should flow from the Constitution", the report said, making it clear that the Vajpayee regime is prepared to give more teeth to the Emergency provisions.

The report of the L.K. Advani-led ministerial group, all but one of whose recommendations were accepted by the Cabinet Committee on Security was made public today.

The government also intends to bring in a legislation in respect of Article 355 of the Constitution, which entrusts the Centre with the responsibility to protect the state against internal disturbances. The Centre is also planning to revive the concept of a federal law enforcement agency, earlier opposed by the state governments. They will again be "approached" on the matter.

The government seeks to "strengthen" Article 352 and Article 359, which were amended several years ago with the phrase "internal disturbance" changed to "armed rebellion".

According to the amended version, the Centre can declare a state of emergency in the country in the event of an "armed rebellion".

The government feels that another "way" to deal with threats to internal security is by "exploiting the vast untapped constitutional potential between the power to issue directives under Articles 256 and 257 and the power to proclaim Emergency under Article 352 on the other".

Providing the basis for the use of Articles 256, 257 and 352, the report says the "source of this potential lies in Article 355 which

casts upon the Union the responsibility to protect every state against internal disturbance and to ensure that the government of every state is carried on in accordance with the provisions of the Constitution".

Ever since 1998, the Vajpayee government has wanted to bring about a legislation to intervene in the law and order situation in the states although law and order and police are state subjects. In June last year, the government had to give up its objective of amending Article 355 under pressure from state governments.

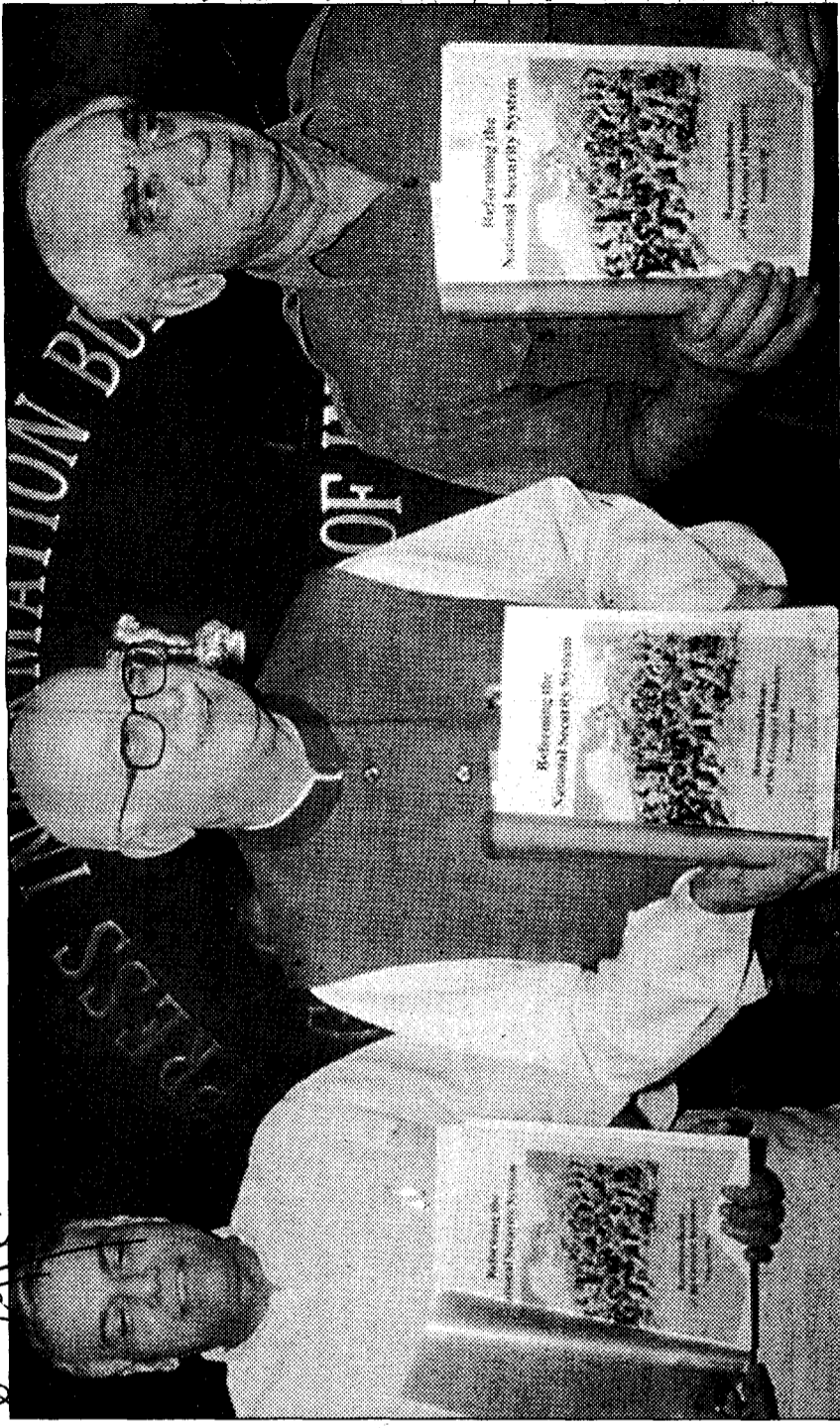
To accomplish the task of "protecting" the states from internal disturbance, the Centre has revived the issue. The report suggests "supporting legislation" with regard to Article 355 which will cover:

- Suo motu deployment of Central forces if the situation in the states so demands. The legislation will spell out situations in which such deployment may take place as also its consequences.
- The legislation will define the powers, jurisdiction, privileges and liabilities of the Central forces after being deployed.

- It will specify situations "constituted" as failure/breakdown of constitutional machinery in a state in which the Centre can intervene to advise or direct a state government. Violation of these advisories or directions would invite action under Article 365 and Article 362.

These amendments to Articles 352, 359 and 355 will not be undertaken rightaway. As for bringing in "suitable" changes in Article 355, the government will entrust the matter to the Inter-State Council. A small group of council members will be set up to "examine" the issue.

All political parties will also be consulted before a decision is taken. On "strengthening" Articles 352 and 359, the government proposes to make a "comprehensive reference" to the Law Commission "without compromising the spirit of democracy and federalism which guides the Constitution".



Finance minister Yashwant Sinha, home minister L.K. Advani and defence minister Jaswant Singh release the report on national security system in Delhi on Wednesday. Picture by Prem Singh

BJP hardliners one up on Kashmir

FROM RADHIKA RAMAESHAN

New Delhi, May 23: Atal Bihari Vajpayee may have neutralised the pressure from the RSS on the economic front, but Kashmir has turned out to be a different ball-game.

The decision to call off the ceasefire, despite reiterations from various government quarters that it was set to be extended after May 31, shows that from now on the Sangh and BJP hardliners will have a say in the Centre's Kashmir policy.

Home minister L.K. Advani, who — along with K.C. Pant, the Centre's peace negotiator in the embattled state — has virtually taken over charge of Kashmir affairs, mirrored the sentiments of this section in Monday's NDA coordination committee meeting.

NDA sources said Advani, while briefing the members, gave the distinct impression that he was not in favour of extending the ceasefire even as defence and external affairs minister Jaswant Singh indicated the contrary. Advani had the last word.

A statement given by BJP president K. Jana Krishnamurthi tonight reflected the party's aggressive mood — he termed the decision a "bold one in line with the mood of the people".

"The government has come to the right decision by calling off the ceasefire in as much as the unilateral declaration of the ceasefire for the past few months has not yielded the expected results," Krishnamurthi said.

From the hardliners' point of view, a turnaround in the government's "moderate" approach towards Kashmir — as borne out by the repeated ceasefire extensions — was impera-

tive for two reasons. The immediate one was the Uttar Pradesh Assembly elections as its outcome, BJP sources said, would influence the survival of the Vajpayee government.

The sources said the Centre's policies, both on economic and security fronts, had not gelled with hardliners.

"We have to make a bold statement on some aspect of our ideology. If the government cannot reverse the liberalisation policy, it should then flex its muscles on Kashmir," said a source.

Vajpayee's decision to invite Pakistan ruler Pervez Musharraf for talks has also cast a damper on the BJP's spirits. "It could undo some of the positive effect of today's decision," said sources. "We only hope Musharraf would turn down the invitation on the ground that the ceasefire was called off."

Defence changes on the cards

STATESMAN NEWS SERVICE

NEW DELHI, May 23. — Significant changes in the higher defence management system, except naming a Chief of Defence Staff, will be effected by the end of this year. No "time-table" has been framed for the political consultations on a CDS.

An implementation cell, created in the defence ministry, will oversee the recommendations of the Group of Ministers on "Reforming the National Security System," Mr Jaswant Singh said here today. A series of committees too have been formed to implement specific recommendations.

The GoM report was formally released this morning by its chairman, Mr LK Advani, at a press conference where two more ministers, Mr Singh and Mr Yashwant Sinha were present. The fourth GoM member, Mr George Fernandes, resigned as the defence minister after the Tehelka expose.

The Centre has already accepted all the recommendations, except on a CDS, for which it feels political consultations are advisable. Hence, today's media exercise was essentially the formality of "going public."

The GoM's report will be sent to all political parties' leaders immediately, and then circulated among a wider group of people, the home minister said.

The version released today had several omissions from the GoM document presented the Centre. Mr Advani said some points were deleted on Intelligence agencies' advice, though the ministers had accepted it with some reservations.

Those deleted parts pointed to specific shortcomings that people inimical to the country's security could have exploited, the Intelligence agencies had said. A few other omissions pertained to observations that could have had adverse diplomatic implications. A similar deletion-exercise had been carried out before the Kargil Review Committee was circulated.

Referring to the somewhat controversial CDS issue, Mr Advani said because it entailed a "radical change" in the defence system,

■ See DEFENCE: page 8

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Security Counsel

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The Vajpayee government deserves praise for its workmanlike overhaul of the national security apparatus. After the traumas of Kargil and Kandhahar, such an exercise was overdue. To its credit, the government reacted with considerable level-headedness: first determining what went wrong, and then undertaking a process of ensuring that it does not happen again. After a year-long exercise by a group of ministers (GOM) headed by home minister L K Advani, the government has approved a report to conduct the most comprehensive systemic overhaul of the country's national security apparatus since Independence. To ensure that the effort is not consigned to bureaucratic cold storage, it has made public the report, although in a sanitised form. Some important measures include the establishment of an Intelligence Coordination Group (ICG), a defence perspective plan backed by a defence procurement board and a joint services Defence Intelligence Agency. Given the normal pace of government and the sweep of the proposed reforms, it is difficult to believe that the exercise was begun just a little over a year ago, in April 2000, when Prime Minister Vajpayee set up the committee to suggest measures to restructure the national security system in the wake of the Kargil war. But as Mr Advani himself is the first to admit, the bulk of the hard work was done by the four specialist task forces on defence management, internal security, border management and intelligence.

What distinguishes the report from earlier efforts is the attention that has been given to this vital area by the political leadership of the country. Mr Advani, finance minister Yashwant Sinha and defence and external affairs ministers Jaswant Singh and George Fernandes had as many as 27 meetings to consider the recommendations. Then, along with the prime minister, they donned the mantle of the Cabinet Committee on Security Affairs to pass all the proposals, barring one, thus providing the necessary mandate to the process. The traditionally anti-change bureaucracy was sidelined. Having said this, it is necessary to point out some shortcomings. First, the government has balked at appointing a Chief of Defence Staff, a position that will be critical if the reforms relating to defence management are to work. The excuse that additional political consultations are needed appears lame. However, having delivered so much so far, it would only be fair to take the government at its word and hope that the process continues, despite the minor detour. Second, and perhaps more important, some 24 pages of the 137-page report relating to the intelligence apparatus have been deleted. Mr Advani was candid in explaining that this was done at the urging of the intelligence agencies who did not want their adversarial counterparts to learn about their weaknesses. But this is a cop-out. Intelligence failures have been central to the country's national security problems for the past 50 years, a point underlined by the Kargil affair. Mr Advani and his colleagues needed to have been more forthcoming on what they have done in this area. By providing a little more information on the country's reformed intelligence apparatus, the government would have provided reassurance to the public, as well as served a warning to those who wish the country ill.

THE TIMES OF INDIA

24 MAY 2001

HD-1 CCS TO TAKE STOCK TODAY 2015

Ceasefire extension imminent

By Harish Khare

NEW DELHI, MAY 22. The Cabinet Committee on Security is scheduled to meet tomorrow to take a view on the extension of the ceasefire in Kashmir. Indications are that the Centre would persist with its peace strategy and extend the ceasefire, which is to expire at the end of May.

The ceasefire was conceptualised as part of a larger strategy of peace offensive, and the initiative for this was largely seen to have come from the Prime Minister's Office. However, the ceasefire failed to yield political results because of stiff and unyielding opposition from the Union Home Ministry on the matter of allowing an All-Party Hurriyat Conference delegation to visit Pakistan.

Since the last three-month extension, announced in February, the Centre has named Mr. K.C. Pant as the designated interlocutor with the groups and individuals in Kashmir. The Pant mission, intended to carry forward the peace process, has made a fitful start. But the very logic of the mission almost mandates an extension of the ceasefire.

However, the CCS would have the benefit of the assessment of the Advani-Jaswant duo that had

visited Srinagar last week and heard for itself perceptions of the ground situation as seen by different security agencies. According to various officials involved with "managing" the Kashmir situation, a mere extension of the ceasefire would be of little use. As it is, in practice the ceasefire has collapsed because the militants never reciprocated the Centre's

the political mood in the Valley has turned hostile towards New Delhi and is more pro-Pakistan than it was probably six months ago. Yesterday, for example, at a function to mark the death anniversary of Mirwaiz Mohammad Farooq, pro-Pakistan and pro-Lashkar-e-Taiba slogans were raised. The JKLF representative was not even allowed to address the gathering. Prof. Abdul Gani Bhat, chairman of the APHC, was made to cut short his speech.

JKDFP office attacked

SRINAGAR, MAY 22. Unidentified militants today lobbed a grenade on the headquarters of the Jammu and Kashmir Democratic Freedom Party which has initiated a move to hold talks with the Centre on the Kashmir issue. However, no one was injured in the attack, the third since the JKDFP chief, Mr. Shabir Shah, initiated the talks move a week ago. — PTI

The second fact that the CCS will have to ponder is the continuing requirement that the people in Kashmir should have a degree of trust and faith in the words and promises of the 'Delhi durbar'. The Prime Minister continues to enjoy a high degree of credibility, though he is increasingly seen as being hemmed in by difficult ministerial colleagues.

The expected "extension" decision, according to various analysts, would have to take a holistic view of the situation. Not only the militants in the Valley, their masters across the border, the ISI establishment, and the military regime, but the security forces too would be looking for a clear-cut perspective as to where the Centre stands.

restraint, and in the last two months the security forces, too, have pro-actively been taking care of the militants.

The CCS would have to address two contradictory facts. First, that

THE HINDU

23 MAY 2011

Appointment of CDS brooks no delay

119-14
238/5
By Inder Malhotra

NEW DELHI, MAY 22. Never before since Independence has such a comprehensive and largely wholesome reform of the national security system been approved and introduced so speedily as during the last fortnight. No fewer than 23 recommendations, rooted in the Kargil Committee's report and processed by four separate task forces first and then by a Group of Ministers (GoM) have been accepted. These are wide in range and in some cases innovative in nature.

Sadly, however, none of these and related measures has caught the public's attention, leave alone imagination. For the simple reason that they have been completely overshadowed by the sudden postponement, literally at the last minute, of a decision on the key recommendation that India, too, should have the institution of Chief of Defence Staff (CDS). All concerned had known fully that the Air Force was vehemently opposed to the idea of a CDS, and some others also didn't favour it. In fact, the head of the task force on higher defence management, Mr. Arun Singh, had convened a meeting of all former Service Chiefs, presided over by Field-Marshal Sam Manekshaw. At it, every single former Air Chief opposed the concept of the CDS. All former Army Chiefs had supported it strongly, and some had insisted that the CDS must always be from the Army.

The latter part of their plea was, of course, laughed out. But after taking everything into account, the GoM, headed by the Union Home Minister, Mr. L.K. Advani, had endorsed the proposal for the appointment of a CDS. The impression that India's first CDS would soon be in the saddle became much the stronger because of repeated media reports, contradicted by no one in authority, that Admiral Sushil Kumar, currently

Chief of Naval Staff and Chairman, Chiefs of Staff Committee, would get this job.

On the day of decision, May 11, when the Cabinet Committee on Security (CCS) approved all other proposals of the GoM except the one on the CDS, the strategic community and the cognoscenti were both surprised and shocked. Nobody explained the reasons for keeping the decision in abeyance, virulent rumours and muddying of waters inevitably followed. What has happened since then has worsened rather than improved things. Admiral Kumar's private and confidential letter to the Defence and External Affairs Minister, Mr. Jaswant Singh, bowing out of the race for the CDS's post, though appreciated by some in the Government, has been interpreted by others as "needless" at best and a "deliberate pressure tactic" at worst. No wonder the

CAPITAL TALK

talk of the town focuses on "the mess about the CDS".

Careful inquiries reveal that the decision to defer the decision was that of the Prime Minister, Mr. Atal Behari Vajpayee. After all, he is the only member of the CCS not to be on the GoM. Mr. Vajpayee was reportedly "appalled" by the extent of bad blood and foul atmosphere that had been created already and could get exacerbated if the proposal was implemented immediately.

Even so, the Prime Minister did not take a decision off-the-cuff. According to sources close to him, he consulted several individuals whose judgment he respects. The voice most influential in this connection is reported to be that of Mr. R. Venkataraman, a former President as well as an outstanding former Defence Minister.

However, when all is said and

done, the appointment of a CDS cannot be delayed for too long. The GoM's own rationale for this is compelling. In its words, this institution is necessary to promote "jointness" (sic) in the armed forces, to enhance the efficacy of inter-Services planning; to provide "single-point military advice to the civil political executive," and to exercise "administrative control over India's Strategic (Nuclear) Forces Command."

It is a pity that a very relevant portion of the K. Subrahmanyam Committee's report on Kargil was expunged from its published version; its publication would have hammered home the need for integrated Army-Air Force planning for all eventualities. At the time of Kargil, the Army asked for air support almost immediately on May 8, 1999. To its credit, the IAF started ferrying the troops to bleak heights by helicopter at once. But there was no way it could use the same small choppers as helicopter gunships at those altitudes. Nor could it accept the suggestion of putting rocket pods on MI-17 helicopters because of their size and consequent vulnerability.

Even when arrangements for air war had been completed, some rehearsals were necessary. Furthermore, there was the danger of escalation. To guard against it, the relevant Army and Air commands had to be put on full alert and both the Naval Commands mobilised in the upper Arabian Sea. This accounts for the 16-day interval between the start of the Kargil war and the use of the air force. The kind of long-term advance planning envisaged under the CDS system would have avoided the hiatus.

It can therefore be safely assumed that a CDS would be appointed in due course but not before early next year. The idea is to let things cool down and two of the main actors in the drama retire at the end of 2001.

~~THE HIND~~

21 MAY 2001

AD-7

NAVY CHIEF 'OPTS' OUT OF RACE

Govt. in a bind over naming CDS

By Atul Aneja 21/5

NEW DELHI, MAY 20. Sharp differences between the Indian Air Force and the Navy are holding back the revamp of the defence apparatus.

The rift appeared after the Government began debating the appointment of a Chief of Defence Staff. In the Government's view, the CDS would head the country's nuclear forces and also serve as its principal military adviser.

As the senior-most officer in the three services, the Chief of the Naval Staff, Admiral Sushil Kumar, appeared to be the frontrunner for the post. The IAF, however, reportedly opposed this which may have been a factor in the Government deciding to keep the appointment of the CDS in abeyance, sources say. Admiral Kumar has subsequently withdrawn from the race and has written a letter to the Defence Minister in this regard.

Notwithstanding the IAF's reservations, there have been nagging doubts in the Government about Admiral Kumar's suitability. Decision-makers may not have been entirely convinced about his familiarity with nuclear issues, which could have been one of the reasons for keeping the post vacant, sources say.

The post may have been kept unfilled on two other counts.

First, the Government may be still deliberating on the question of Admiral Kumar's tenure and the fallout in case he was made CDS. Admiral Kumar will retire in December-end, in case the CDS post is kept "co-terminus" with his present position. That may not upset the government's plans about its future military hierarchy. The Army Chief, General S. Padmanabhan, who apparently enjoys the Prime Minister's confidence, will be the senior-most officer in the three services by January 2002. But, Admiral Kumar may be in the saddle for another two years after December 31 in case his position as naval chief and appointment as CDS is kept de-linked. The fallout of such an eventuality would be completely unpredictable.

Second, the Government may have found it hard to ignore the circumstances under which Admiral Kumar was made Navy Chief. Its negative repercussions may aggravate in case he is "rewarded" with the CDS post. By squabbling over the post, neither the IAF nor the Navy's media managers have covered themselves with glory.

The IAF response to the Government's proposals related to higher defence management, including the creation of the post of CDS, has been reactive. The IAF initially opposed any changes saying the existing sys-

tem was adequate. Analysts say the IAF feared changes in the military command may undermine its status. The bottomline of the argument appeared to be that the IAF alone understood how to use airpower effectively and hence, its functional insularity was necessary.

The IAF's position, however, has subsequently evolved. With the Government determined to carry forward defence reforms, the IAF has shifted its focus to the appointment of the CDS. It apparently feels it alone has the assets for delivering a nuclear strike and therefore forms the core of the country's existing minimum nuclear deterrent. Besides, air forces, in general, have enjoyed an elevated status in strategic commands such as the United States.

The Government is likely to find fault with the IAF's logic. For instance, in the not-so-distant future the IAF may not be the only one with nuclear assets. The Russian TU-22 strategic bombers are expected to go to the Navy. With its last test validating its design, the serial production of the nuclear-tipped Agni missiles is also not far away.

The Government's dilemma in selecting a CDS lies in finding a non-controversial officer of the right seniority who has a proven grasp for exerting tri-service leadership.

71 MAY 2002

THE HINDU



GUEST COLUMN | Gen (Retd.) VP Matik

INTEGRATE, OR DISINTEGRATE

The chief of defence staff and his headquarters must be a part of the defence ministry and not another department under it

Nations which fail to develop a balanced pattern of civil-military relations squander their resources and run incalculable risks
— Huntington



8-8
W.S

Such a situation enables the MOD to put on the mantle of a super service headquarter. Imagine the consequences of such a situation in the current military and nuclearised environment!

No real power

ANOTHER drawback of the COSC is that the powers of this body are largely recommendatory in nature. It often does not have the authority to implement even a consensus decision. The last comprehensive capabilities and mission directive for the Services was written years ago, when R Venkataraman was the Defence Minister. By and large, it is every Chief fending for himself and fighting his own battle on vital issues. We have single service doctrines but there is no defence doctrine—a cart before the horse situation! Look at our historical record: In 1947-48, the Air Force was used primarily for air lift and transport support. In 1962, despite asset superiority, it was not employed against the Chinese. In 1965, the Air Force participated but the then Air Chief complained that he was not being kept abreast of developments. The coordination was better in 1971—because we had the initiative and ample preparation time. Yet, after the war, late Air Chief Marshal PC Lal expressed unhappiness about coordination with other two services.

There is a consensus in the security and strategic community that by keeping the defence services as departments of the MOD and ensuring that service officers are not posted in the ministry, we have a bureaucratic control over the military, and not political control as is the case in all democratic nations.

The defence services are not an integral part of the policies formulation and decision making echelons of the Government. The head of the DRDO is part of the Government but the Chiefs are not. The former enjoys more authority in planning, procurements and to manage his establishment than a Chief does. Some years ago, for instance, the DRDO declared that we had chemical weapons in our army, but the

Service Chiefs were not even aware of it. The services today are much like the PSUs, perhaps enjoying even lesser autonomy than them in financial or personnel matters.

I have no doubt that the existing defence structure promotes single service interests, at a time when the world has moved way ahead in the science of warfare. We must have the CDS and his headquarters as part of the MOD—a flat structure and not one more department under it

COMRADES AT ODDS: Every Chief is fending for himself and fighting his own battle

Let me state what we expect from these changes, in the order of priority, and then try and explain the rationale. The changes expected are:

- Integration of the MOD so that it can facilitate preparation of defence policy, planning and management. This has become necessary because in spite of several changes in the strategic environment, there has been no policy statement or a white paper on defence for decades.
- Establishment of an elaborate joint services setup within the MOD in keeping with the needs of the country and as per emerging trends on security and warfare.
- Have a permanent incumbent to head the above-mentioned set up in place of the Chairman, Chief of Staff Committee (COSC) as at present.

Constantly changing needs
WARFARE is a dynamic activity, perhaps more than most other activities. (General

of the COSC has been less than satisfactory. In theory, the COSC serves as the highest professional advisory body on military matters to the Defence Minister and the CCS. However, in practice it is limited to advice on strategic matters only and that too mostly on single service basis. All written recommendations of the COSC are vetted/filtered by the civilian staff of the MOD. Service Chiefs do not have adequate decision making authority.

The COSC is expected to resolve inter-service matters and refer to the MOD only those issues that are intractable. But the success rate in this regard is severely circumscribed by the inability to achieve consensus on major issues. There is an inevitable temptation to shelve contentious issues. Each service tends to lobby by itself, some even overstating its case to serve its short-term interests. Consequently, issues of evolving *inter se* priorities remain compellingly unresolved for years and decades.

Decision on extending J&K truce soon, says Advani

The Times of India News Service

SRINAGAR: Union home minister L.K. Advani said on Saturday that the cabinet sub-committee on security would soon take a decision on extending the ceasefire in Jammu and Kashmir.

Mr Advani and defence minister Jaswant Singh arrived here earlier in the day to assess the security situation and attend a meeting of the unified command. The ministers are expected to submit their report to the cabinet sub-committee before May 27.

Talking to reporters after the three-hour meeting, Mr Advani said the cabinet sub-committee would also consider measures to be taken for heralding peace as well as for ensuring the security of the people living in the border areas of the state.

Meanwhile, chief of the Democratic Freedom Party Shabir Ahmad Shah, who has favoured talks with the Centre, has deputed two party members to meet the Pakistani high commissioner in Delhi to deliver a letter for Pakistani military ruler Gen Pervez Musharraf.

The two-member delegation, com-

prising Mohammad Abdullah Fari and Saleem Geelani, will leave for Delhi on Sunday. They are expected to convey Mr Shah's feelings about the Kashmir problem to the Pakistani envoy besides delivering the letter addressed to Gen Musharraf, according to a DFP spokesman.

Asked whether he was satisfied with the peace process, Mr Advani described it as a sound and correct decision. He did not agree with a reporter that the initiative had been a non-starter. To a question on the extension of the ceasefire, the home minister said it was not

possible for him to speculate on it as the cabinet sub-committee would meet soon to take a decision. The meeting assumes significance as both the home and defence ministers attended it for the first time. Mr Advani said he and Mr Singh got valuable inputs and feedback at Saturday's meeting that would enable the Centre to take a correct decision and in a manner designed to achieve the objectives of peace and security in the state. The inputs would help in deciding how to go further in pursuit of peace.

THE TIMES OF INDIA

20 MAY 2001

Advani, Jaswant to review J&K situation

By Harish Khare ¹⁸⁷⁵ HD-1

NEW DELHI, MAY 17. The Union Home Minister, Mr. L.K. Advani, and the Defence Minister, Mr. Jaswant Singh, are scheduled to visit Srinagar on May 19 to attend a meeting of the "unified headquarters". This visit would have a serious bearing on the future of the Prime Minister's "peace strategy" in Jammu and Kashmir, where the current phase of ceasefire comes to an end on May 31.

The "unified headquarters" is the forum where the civilian leadership and security forces coordinate anti-insurgency activities. The Chief Minister of Jammu and Kashmir, Dr. Farooq Abdullah, generally presides over it; but, on Saturday Mr. Advani would be in chair. The visitors from New Delhi would hear the perceptions and facts "on the ground."

Speculation over PMO role

The proposed Advani-Jaswant foray has already sparked speculation whether the Prime Minister's Office had ceded the initiative over the Kashmir policy. It has been generally assumed that ever since the Hurriyat leaders were released from jail about a year ago, the PMO had called most of the policy shots.

When the current extension in ceasefire was announced by the Prime Minister in the Lok Sabha on February 22, the expectation was that the three-month period would be used to achieve a breakthrough in starting a peace dialogue as well as to overcome Mr. Advani's cultivated contrariness.

Unfortunately, the Vajpayee Government got mired in a number of controversies, including the Tehelka expose. The PMO itself came under attack, from within the Sangh Parivar and without. Now, after the drubbing the BJP and its allies have received in the recent elections, Mr. Vajpayee has no option but to enlist Mr. Advani's help in coping with the Parivar.

The Sangh Parivar has remained unenthusiastic about the ceasefire, and is inclined to believe that the militants and jehadis must be shown their place. Mr. Advani has let it be known that he was not in tune with the Prime Minister's Kashmir strategy, though as a team player he did go along with it.

Meanwhile, militant outfits remain unappreciative of the peace initiatives. Since the militants have not reciprocated, the security agencies have been constrained to openly engage the militants in a proactive manner in the last six weeks. In effect, there is no ceasefire on the ground.

On the other hand, the Hurriyat Conference leaders, particularly Syed Geelani, have been making much propaganda out of the situation, accusing security forces of custodial deaths, calling the ceasefire a farce and the Vajpayee Government insincere in its intention.

It is in this context that the immediate and long-term future of the K.C. Pant mission would get determined. Mr. Pant's visit to Jammu and Kashmir on May 22 would depend on the outcome of the Advani-Jaswant meditation.

Minister on ceasefire: Page 13

Navy chief says no to CDS

SRINJOY CHOWDHURY
STATESMAN NEWS SERVICE

NEW DELHI, May 18. — The Navy chief, Admiral Sushil Kumar, doesn't want to be considered for the chief of defence staff's post.

Senior officials told *The Statesman* that Admiral Kumar, front-runner for the post, had informed the Centre about his decision. The infighting in public over the post has disappointed him, prompting him to step aside.

But Admiral Kumar has told the Centre that he is all for the creation of the CDS post and would work to help build the system recommended by the Group of Ministers.

Admiral Kumar's decision has surprised the government and higher Services officers. The GoM, led by Mr LK Advani, had earlier this year decided to have a CDS, who would be a "one-point" adviser to the government and would head the nuclear forces and strategic Intelligence machinery, though the Air Force had objected to it.

Admiral Kumar is the most senior among the three Services chiefs. He was considered the

likely choice, and senior officials had then privately suggested that he could be the first CDS.

Among those opposed to a CDS is Air Chief Marshal AY Tipnis. At a meeting organised by the defence ministry, he had told senior editors that he felt the present system of a Chief of Staff Committee was working quite well. Also, he has been saying the IAF should be responsible for nuclear weapons, for the other Services lacked the delivery systems.

The IAF chief felt if the CDS was from one of the Services, he would "push" his command. On the contrary, the advice from three chiefs would be balanced. The Army had largely welcomed the idea of a CDS, though there were some who felt he should not be from the smallest force, the Navy.

But despite the oppositions, the Cabinet Committee on Security was expected to clear the CDS post at its last meeting. For, the GoM's composition and the CCS's are roughly the same. Only, the Prime Minister heads the CCS, while his principal secretary, Mr, Brajesh Mishra, is part of the GoM. It was thought a Cabinet clearance would be a formality.

THE STATESMAN

19 MAY 2011

ARMY REPORT ON TEHELKA EXPOSE SUBMITTED

Five officers may face disciplinary action

1875
1875

By Atul Aneja

NEW DELHI, MAY 17. The Army is debating the follow-up action against key officers accused in the Tehelka pay-off scandal after an internal inquiry submitted its report on Monday.

After the submission of the report to the Western Army Command chief, Lt. General S.S. Sangra, the Army is deliberating suitable follow-up action. The court of inquiry, headed by Lt. General S.K. Jain, mainly probed allegations of corruption levelled by the web portal tehelka.com against five serving officers — Major General P.S.K. Choudhary, Lt. General M.S. Ahluwalia, Brigadier Iqbal Singh, Colonel Anil Sehgal and Lt. Colonel Sharma.

The Army can now exercise either of two options. It can, for instance, consider initiating criminal proceedings against the accused on charges of corruption. But it can also consider stringent disciplinary action including dismissal from service of the officers on

grounds that each of the accused behaved in a manner "unbecoming of an officer". This is possible under the existing service and conduct rules.

It may also find it difficult to take legal action and invoke criminal proceedings by ordering a General Court Marshal (GCM) against the accused. Highly-placed sources in the Government say the inquiry has found it difficult to establish corruption charges against the accused, except in the case of Maj. Gen. P.S.K. Choudhary, who admitted receiving a bribe by the undercover team before a private television channel. The remaining accused are said to have denied indulging in any corrupt deal. In fact, one of the officers, according to the sources, told the inquiry commission that the spy camera of the Tehelka team only made selective recordings. While it showed him receiving the money, it did not record that he had immediately returned it.

On the contrary, the Army may find it easier

to take disciplinary action against the accused on administrative grounds. It had been established that the accused violated service norms by clandestinely meeting the Tehelka team in a hotel, sources said. This act, which under existing rules is "unbecoming of an officer", can alone attract dismissal from service. The Army, in fact, may find it prudent to follow this course.

The sources said the Army might indeed hesitate to initiate a court martial proceedings on yet another count. Since the accused officers are also likely to be examined by the Justice K. Venkataswami commission appointed by the Central Government, it is hesitating to follow a course of action which may be overridden by the latter subsequently.

As of now, the legal branch of the Army is likely to record the "summary of evidence" on the basis of the report. A decision on appropriate disciplinary or legal action is expected to be taken later.

9-D & N Search

BSF to resume fencing in Jammu

10-17

By Our Special Correspondent

NEW DELHI, MAY 17. The Government has decided to resume fencing and flood lighting on the international border in Jammu. The work of erecting fencing and flood lighting along the Indo-Pak international border in Jammu by the Border Security Force (BSF) has been on since January 14 last year.

In the first phase work along 16 km on the international border was taken up. The BSF is expected to complete another 60 km of fencing and flood lighting during the current financial year, a Home Ministry spokesman said here today. While the length of the Line

of Control (LoC) in Jammu and Kashmir is 778 km, the international border runs up to 198 km, of which 5.8 km has already been fenced at a cost of Rs. 5.80 crores.

During the bi-annual meeting between the BSF and Pakistan Rangers in Jalandhar from May 9 to 12, issues relating to trans-border terrorism, border-crossing by cattle and smuggling came up for discussion. The BSF reiterated that it had the right to construct any defence structure that may be required to stop infiltration or smuggling across the border.

The Pakistani delegation insisted that the area in question in Jammu was disputed territory and any activity by the BSF would

be resisted. The Indian delegation maintained that the area was part of India and fencing within Indian territory would continue.

Pak. calls it deplorable

By B. Muralidhar Reddy

ISLAMABAD, MAY 17. Pakistan has said that the latest Indian announcement that it would continue fencing the international boundary was a highly regrettable. Quoting officials in the Foreign Office the Urdu daily, *Jang*, reported that the decision was 'deplorable evidence' of India's promise-breaking attitude, as on-

ly four days back India had agreed to maintain the status quo on the "working boundary". The reference obviously is to the reported agreement reached at the meeting in Jalandhar between the BSF and the Pakistan Rangers.

The expression "working boundary" used by Pakistan was resented by the Indian Government.

In its report the *Jang* has said that Pakistan would never allow India either to change the status of the "working boundary" or fence the border at any level. They said that through fencing, India wanted to convert the "disputed boundary" along the "disputed area of the occupied Kashmir" into international border.

THE HINDU

18 MAY 2001

India's effort to promote security in Bay of Bengal

By Atul Aneja

NEW DELHI, MAY 17. Aware of the high economic and political stakes involved, India is making a vigorous effort to promote stability in the strategic Bay of Bengal area. According to highly-placed government sources, India is making a special effort to ensure that the commercial shipping lanes in the Bay of Bengal which head towards the Strait of Malacca remain safe. The Strait of Malacca is the narrow passage which takes ships into the South-East Asia's commercial heartland. The strait which funnels through Indonesia and Malaysia is a principle artery at the heart of east-west trade.

Its strategic importance is obvious, for a denial of access to the Malacca straits can seriously impede international trade. Not surprisingly, India is exploring ways to ensure that the entry to this strait is kept open at all times and circumstances. New Delhi is, therefore, trying to ensure that all the three possible channels from its waters which converge towards the Malacca strait are kept open.

The 10 degree channel is one such passage. This deep sea channel divides the Andaman islands from the Nicobar group, and is one of the principle gateways to the Malacca strait.

The Malacca strait can also be accessed through the six degree channel defined by Indira Point, the southernmost tip of the Nicobar group and Banda Aceh in Indonesia. Yet another route lies between the mouth of the Irrawady in Myanmar and the northern edge of the Andamans.

India has decided in principle to set up a tri-service Far Eastern Command in the Andamans and Nicobar. That would mean that more armed forces personnel will be available for a division which is approximately one-third the size of a command currently deployed in the Andamans. Keeping a watch over the sea lanes will be the key objective of this command. All the three services will participate in this surveillance exercise, but the role of the Navy and the Indian Air Force (IAF) is likely to be enhanced. Port Blair and the Car Nicobar islands have been identified as the key launch pads. In fact, the IAF has decided to establish a full-fledged air base in the Car Nicobar islands from where strike as well as air defence missions can be launched.

Naval aircraft will also keep a watch over the sea. The Navy's TU-142 maritime surveillance planes currently fly regularly from Arakkonam in Tamil Nadu for surveillance. Their reach, however, will be enhanced if they can operate from India's island territories of the Andamans and Nicobar. Sources, however, point out that the induction of a new aircraft carrier will greatly enhance India's surveillance capability in this zone.

Three key objectives appear to have guided India's decision to enhance its military profile in the Bay of Bengal.

First, India has taken a policy decision to reach out to the neighbouring south-east Asia. Besides trade, India views countries such as Myanmar, Bangladesh and Vietnam, which are rich either in gas, oil or both, as part of its future energy security calculus. India also sees the development of its north-east region integrated to the larger sub-regional cooperation involving its eastern neighbours.

Not surprisingly, India is promoting the Bay of Bengal Grouping which also involves Bangladesh, Sri Lanka, Myanmar and Thailand (BIMSTEC). Besides, it is considering acquiring greater physical access in the region by carving out new land routes, especially through Myanmar.

Possible competition from the Chinese in the Bay of Bengal has also prodded India's interest in this area. Indian defence planners are carefully observing the security spin-off of China's great western development plan. That involves the development of its Yunnan province. With Kunming, Yunnan's capital, as the region's transport and energy hub, China is now developing land corridors, airports and river ports in all directions, including the South.

Specifically, with Myanmar as the focus, the Chinese are also trying to reach to the Irrawady river as the gateway to the Bay of Bengal. Aware of this development, India is attempting to acquire some strategic space in Myanmar and the recent inauguration of road from Manipur towards Mandalay in Myanmar appears to be a step in this direction.

By-enhancing its profile not far from the Malacca straits, India is also looking for drawing diplomatic advantages from other import dependent trading nations, such as Japan, which have a stake in ensuring the stability of the sea lanes of the Bay of Bengal.

Centre to decide on J&K ceasefire by month-end

Our Political Bureau

NEW DELHI 17 MAY

THE CENTRE will decide on extension of the six-month-old ceasefire in Jammu and Kashmir after Union home minister L.K. Advani and defence minister Jaswant Sinha take stock of the situation in the state during their visit to Srinagar on May 19. Sources in the government said the security agencies' opposition to its continuation will guide the reflexes of the Cabinet Committee on Security (CCS), which will meet here after the visit of the two ministers.

The CCS is expected to finalise its decision by May 22, as the Prime Minister is scheduled to leave for Manali the next day for a week-long vacation. The current phase of the ceasefire is due to expire on May 31.

The security agencies, which have been proactively dealing with the secessionist elements, are of the view that the ceasefire initiative has not really made any tangible difference on the ground. It is felt that since they have to take stern action against militant groups, it will be seen as a "dis-

honest move," fittering away the earlier goodwill in international capitals.

A section of the government feels that India still has the upper hand, as it has stood by the ceasefire for the past six months. It is only in the past few weeks that heightened attacks from the militant groups have forced it to reciprocate against the secessionist elements, who have managed to use the ceasefire period to snap the government's counter-insurgency networks and opened bases in different parts of the Valley. The security agencies are of the view that the situation has become untenable and only a proactive action from its side can quell trouble in the Valley.

Minister of state (home) I.D. Swami, however, struck a different line and said that continuation of the ceasefire was needed for ensuring peace in the Valley. "The Centre has already appointed its interlocutor K.C. Pant to hold a dialogue with various groups in Kashmir. Some of these groups have responded positively to the offer of talks. Therefore, the ceasefire should be extended," he said.

The Economic Times

18 MAY 2001

...ectors often with elections rather than help her.

HT-8 14/5

National security in focus

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THE GOVERNMENT has announced an extensive and far-reaching reorganisation of the country's security structures. These include the integration of the service headquarters with the defence ministry. Some of the other features are the creation of a unified Defence Intelligence Agency (DIA) in place of the separate intelligence directorates of the three services, and also the formation of an Intelligence Coordination Group (ICG), a long overdue reform intended to facilitate the pooling of intelligence assessments of the military as well as the civilian snooping services. In the absence of this, internal rivalry among the various intelligence agencies had tended to delay crucial inputs being made available to the political executive, sometimes with frightening consequences as the country learnt at the time of the Kargil conflict.

By and large the changes appear positive, as the management of security establishments the world over needs updating from time to time in the light of experience and the emergence of qualitatively new requirements. Changes of the magnitude just announced have not been made in the country before. The creation of a Defence Procurement Board (DPB) and the Technology Coordination Group (TCG),

which will concern itself with strategic acquisitions, is also welcome. While announcing these reforms, the government has been wise to heed the voices of caution and kept in abeyance its proposal to create the position of Chief of Defence Staff (CDS). It now says it will interact with political parties across the board, though the spirit of democratic consultation may be better served if the issue were brought before parliamentary committees for debate, as happens in such cases in the major democracies.

The question is an important one, as the proposed CDS is projected to be the sole source of military advice to the Prime Minister, besides being the head of the prospective tri-services nuclear command. Given this thinking in official quarters, the relationship between the CDS and the service chiefs will need to be more meaningfully defined. It is also not clear if the national security advisor (NSA) will be burdened with the additional responsibility of heading the prospective ICG, for this raises the risks of over-centralisation. The question of the interface between the services and the civilian bureaucracy, a subject of considerable bitterness, also calls for a more sophisticated elaboration.

THE HINDUSTAN TIMES

4 MAY 2001

Security reforms put cart before horse

Jay Raina
New Delhi, May 13

HC-9
14/5
9-DB N Security

THE NDA Government's slew of reforms in the national security system is a mix of verbose enunciations and a few freshly painted quick-fix prescriptions.

In defence management, the Service Headquarters is to be integrated with the Ministry of Defence to upgrade its position from the existing status of "Attached Offices". The move is designed to ensure progressive decentralisation and also delegation of powers to the Service Headquarters.

However, in the absence of a Chief of the Defence Staff (CDS), the integration of the Service Headquarters may be notional. Experts have already labelled as putting the horse behind the cart.

For instance, if the Government fails to reach a political consensus leading to further delay in the contentious appointment of a CDS, the existing

Chiefs of Staff Committee headed by the Navy Chief Admiral Sushil Kumar as chairman may not be able to achieve the desired objectives of decentralisation.

The present dispensation does not provide for a well-defined role of the chairman of the committee, notwithstanding, the ambiguity vis-à-vis his powers.

The three Services have generally been critical of the Defence Ministry's sloth bureaucratic apparatus in clearing files especially those related to procurement of urgently needed armaments and ancillaries. However, all such complaints are expected to be minimised with the creation of a Defence Procurement Board (DPB).

Even as the structure of the proposed DPB has not yet been made public, it is expected to handle the entire gamut of major procurement functions so as to promote a higher degree of professionalism and cost-effectiveness.

As regards internal security, the reforms envisage rejuvenation of State Police forces apart from the modernisation and restructuring of the Central Para-military forces (CPMFs). There is nothing new in the proposition. It is like old wine in a new bottle. However, the prescription, though put forth umpteen times, is apparently impractical.

The reforms speak of reverting each CPMF to its original role. This requires deployment of the Border Security forces (BSF) and the Indo-Tibetan Border Police (ITBP) along the vast borders and delinking their functions from additional charge such as checking smuggling, maintenance of law and order and undertaking counter-insurgency operations in the non-border mainland areas.

Can the Centre afford to withdraw BSF from the counter-insurgency operations in the crucial militancy-hit Jammu and

Kashmir and other North-Eastern States? Where from will the replacements come?

The 24-point reform plan also reiterates Government's intention to revamp the criminal justice system. The move has been on the anvil over the last many years with several reports of Police Reform Commissions including the latest Padmanabhaiah Committee recommending the desired changes.

The Government's failure to enact the prevention of terrorism law notwithstanding, it has achieved precious little in terms of amending several obsolete provisions of the IPC and CrPC apart from the evidence Act.

As regards the inclusion of L K Advani's pet project of issuing multi-purpose national identify cards (MPNIC) in the reform package, the Centre's dismal record in its implementation over the past few years hardly evokes any kind of optimism.

THE HINDUSTAN TIMES

14 MAY 2001

Defence 'super-bodies' in pipeline

FROM CHANDAN NANDY

New Delhi, May 13: The government is set to create an Intelligence Coordination Group (ICG), a Defence Intelligence Agency (DIA) and a Technology Coordination Group (TCG).

Barring the DIA, the other groups will be headed by the national security advisor making him a super-intelligence chief.

But the vital issue that the government chose to skirt is accountability of the secret services to the legislature.

Security experts believe that "unless or until there is a degree of parliamentary oversight, the intelligence agencies and the super-bodies that are being proposed to be created will not be efficient enough".

"Accountability is the key to better performance of the secret services which worldwide are prone to cover up their failures on the grounds that transparency would jeopardise national security," a former intelligence chief said.

The Cabinet Committee on Security (CCS) is of the view that the ICG will exercise "systemic oversight" on intelligence organisations and their functioning.

The ICG will be chaired by the national security adviser — in this case Brajesh Mishra — and represented by chiefs of the Re-

search and Analysis Wing (RAW), Intelligence Bureau, DIA and other agencies involved in the collection and collation of intelligence.

It will meet every month to study the assessment of the National Security Council, other intelligence agencies and sensitive ministries on national security issues.

Another issue that has gone unaddressed is the revamp and overhaul of intelligence agencies.

The men involved in the production and analysis of intelligence will remain the same. Security experts believe that Kargil happened because of failure on the part of all agencies concerned. There were some inputs, but the secret services and the army failed to follow up on this information.

"No matter how grand the government's plans are to infuse coordination and efficiency, unless a thorough revamping of the services is carried out, the result at the end of it would be post-event intelligence. The need of the hour is strategic intelligence, based on which threat assessments could be prepared well in advance. Besides, analysis of intelligence should be strengthened," a retired senior Intelligence Bureau official said.

The plan to have a TCG suggests the government wants an or-



An army T-75 tank engages in minesweeping exercises in the Thar desert during Operation Pootna Vijay, as part of the five-day war games near the Indo-Pak border. (AFP)

ganisation which will handle technical intelligence (TECHINT). But it is a far cry from the proposed agency on the lines of the American National Security Agency, which is indisputably the best

TECHINT-gathering organisation, matched to some degree by the British Government Communications Headquarters. It is learnt that the TCG will coordinate and regulate plans for ac-

quisition of state-of-the-art and strategic facilities and equipment by the intelligence agencies and examine issues relating to the allocation of funds for this purpose. What has not been announced by

the CCS is that the intelligence bureau's scope of operations has been widened.

The internal intelligence agency will now be given powers to perform counter-intelligence activities relating to the "near abroad", meaning the neighbouring countries, a job so far being done by RAW.

The defence services have something at last to cheer about. The government would like to have a DIA on the pattern of the American and the Israeli Ambron models which, however, have not been too successful.

Security experts believe that in the Indian context, where there is a Cabinet system and a civilian power structure, it is "not advisable" to over-empower the military establishment.

The idea is to promote greater integration of intelligence collected by the three intelligence directorates of the armed forces and to bring in "a sense of jointness" in the services.

The DIA will function as the principal military intelligence adviser to the defence minister, the proposed Chief of Defence Staff and the defence secretary. But will he be answerable to the national security adviser?

There are doubts whether that will end inter-services rivalry or turf tussles between defence and civilian intelligence agencies.

Apex body to plug Intelligence holes

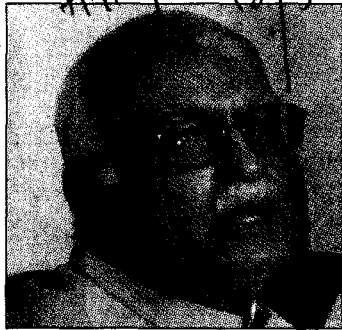
New Delhi, May 12

IN A major move to bolster the country's intelligence apparatus, an Intelligence Co-ordination Group is being set up to look after the "systemic intelligence oversight" at the apex level, while key technical agencies, now with the military, would function under the control of the proposed Defence Intelligence Agency.

As part of the national security system reforms, ICG would be presided over by the National Security Advisor and would include the Cabinet Secretary and chiefs of RAW, Intelligence Bureau, DIA and other agencies.

DIA is being created to promote greater integration of intelligence collected by the three intelligence directorates of the armed forces and to bring in "a sense of cooperation" in the services.

These far-reaching decisions were approved by the Cabinet Committee on Security, chaired by the Prime Minister last night,



LK ADVANI

which accepted all the 24 recommendations of the group of ministers on national security barring the establishment of the post of Chief of Defence Staff.

"Major technical intelligence agencies, currently under the military, like DIPAC and the signals directorate of the armed forces, would function under the DIA's control," according to Home Minister L K Advani, who along with Defence Minister

Jaswant Singh and Finance Minister Yashwant Sinha, attended the CCS meeting.

The DIA chief, Advani said, would act as the principal military intelligence advisor to the Defence Minister, the proposed post of CDS and the Defence Secretary.

The ICG would meet monthly to consider the assessments of the National Security Council Secretariat's as well as those emanating from other ministries and agencies on any issue relating to national security. This apex intelligence body would deal with allocation of resources to various intelligence agencies and consider annual reviews on the quality of inputs sent by them.

The ICG will oversee the functioning of intelligence agencies and examine national estimates and forecasts, besides approving the annual tasking for intelligence collection by agencies.

The CCS approved the creation of a Technology Co-ordination Group, to be chaired by the

National Security Advisor, which would co-ordinate and regulate plans for acquisition of all new, costly and major strategic facilities and equipment by the intelligence agencies and examine issues relating to allocation of funds for this purpose.

The CCS decided to reinvigorate the Economic Intelligence Council (EIC), revamped in 1997, to bring about improved co-ordination between various agencies and departments under the Finance Ministry.

"In view of the linkages between economic offences and terrorist-related threats to national security, the mandate of the EIC will be appropriately broadened," Advani said.

A compact working group under the chairmanship of the Revenue Secretary would be set up to co-ordinate the working of regional EICs, monitor progress on action taken and examine intelligence assessments by agencies.

PTI

THE HINDUSTAN TIMES

13 MAY 2001

518 HQ: 1715
(Continued from page 1)

process of inter-service and intra-service prioritisation. Other decisions by the CCS include:

■ Establishing a Technology Coordination Group headed by the National Security Advisor to decide on major decisions regarding the acquisition of equipment of all intelligence agencies.

■ A National Technical Facilities Organisation would decide on plans of facilities of the intelligence agencies that would cost more than Rs 3 crore and place it before the TCG for a final clearance.

■ The Economic Intelligence Council, revamped in 1997, would look to improve coordination between the finance ministry's intelligence and enforcement agencies as economic crimes are increasing.

It would also mean better information analysis. Mr Advani said: "The government should develop the capability to monitor all open information in print and on electronic media and the worldwide web and the product should be shared with all interested agencies and departments concerned."

■ A National Defence University for long-term defence and strategic studies.

Finally, there will be major changes in the structure and activities of the police and paramilitary forces. They would be given more money, better training and research facilities.

Mr Advani said the central paramilitary forces would also be modernised and restructured and nine training centres would be made into "centres of excellence".

There would be a National Service for the Youth and a larger National Cadet Corps. The Border Security Force would continue to man the borders and it would not be withdrawn for other duties like internal security.

Also, the legal system would be reworked with a review of the Indian Penal Code, the Criminal Procedure Code and a new anti-terrorism law.

THE STATESMAN

2000

Chief of defence staff issue deferred

Common HQ for armed forces

STATESMAN NEWS SERVICE

NEW DELHI, May 11. — The armed forces' three headquarters will be integrated and an Intelligence coordination group (ICG) and defence Intelligence agency (DIA) set up to bolster the national security apparatus, the Cabinet Committee on Security decided tonight.

But the CCS today didn't discuss the appointment of a chief of defence staff. It will take up the issue after consulting Opposition parties and NDA partners, Mr LK Advani said in the presence of the defence and finance ministers.

"The Services headquarters will be (an) integrated headquarters of the ministry of defence rather than attached officers," the home minister told reporters after a two-hour meeting, where all recommendations of the Group of Ministers on National Security were accepted.

It is still not clear what the new intelligence agencies will do but it appears that the various intelligence agencies attached to the home and finance ministries and also the Prime Minister's Office will keep more in touch with each other. The previous Joint Intelligence Agency, it was said, was not powerful enough and the ICG, headed by the National Security Advisor, will have more teeth.

The chiefs of the Research and Analysis Wing and the Defence Intelligence Agency, which would lead to more cooperation between the intelligence wings of the three

services and could be a more analytical organisation unless they are given more resources, would form part of the ICG. The ICG could meet every month to discuss the assessments of the ministries and national security agencies. It is perhaps appropriate that so many changes have been made in the national intelligence apparatus. For, it was intelligence failure that caused so many problems in Kargil in 1999.

The cooperation between the three intelligence units of the three services is part of the closer ties between the three service headquarters. Joint planning has been an issue and a major requirement in modern warfare. The tri-services command that may be created in the Andamans is one indication of this integration Mr Advani talked about today. The integration, Mr Advani said, will ensure the service HQs have more powers in the long term.

The CCS also decided on a Defence Procurement Board. It will look at all acquisitions and prepare a long-term plan. The board could also reduce the arguments between services about equipment and prioritise needs over 15-20 years. The three services would need to cooperate with each other along with the ministry to produce the defence perspective plan (DPP).

As Mr Advani said, the DPP would be based on a thorough

■ See HQ: page 8

THE STATESMAN

12 MAY 2001

Decision on CDS kept in abeyance

By Our Special Correspondent

NEW DELHI, MAY 11. The Cabinet Committee on Security (CCS) tonight decided to create an integrated headquarters for the defence services and defence intelligence agency while it kept in abeyance the decision on the creation of the crucial post of the Chief of Defence Staff (CDS).

The CCS meeting chaired by the Prime Minister, Mr. Atal Behari Vajpayee, accepted the report of the Group of Ministers (GoM) on "Reforming the National Security System" which, among other things, recommended the creation of the CDS.

Briefing correspondents, the Union Home Minister, Mr. L.K. Advani, said it was decided to consider the creation of the CDS post after the Government consulted various political parties. The External Affairs Minister, Mr. Jaswant Singh, and the Finance Minister, Mr. Yashwant Sinha, who were part of the GoM were present.

The creation of the CDS was recommended to promote 'jointness' in the armed forces to enhance the

efficacy of planning and to provide a single-point military advice to the civil political executive.

It would exercise administrative control over the Strategic Forces Command as well as the joint Andaman and Nicobar Command.

The recommendations were under four heads — intelligence apparatus, defence management, internal security and border management — and were drawn from reports of task forces set up by the GoM in April, 2000, when it was asked by the Prime Minister to review the national security system in its entirety, in particular to consider the recommendations of the Kargil Review Committee and formulate specific proposals.

Among the recommendations accepted was to make the Service Headquarters the Intergrated Headquarters of the Defence Ministry rather than "Attached Offices". "There will thereby be progressive decentralisation of decision-making and delegation of powers to Service headquarters," the highlights of the report released tonight said.

The creation of a Defence Pro-

urement Board, a holistic and integrated defence perspective plan, establishment of a National Defence University were among the other recommendations under defence management.

On the intelligence front, it recommended the setting up of an intelligence coordination group at the apex level, technology coordination group, national technical facilities organisation, defence intelligence agency, re-invigoration of the economic intelligence council, and also achieving the ability to develop capability to monitor all open information.

Rejuvenation of State police forces, strengthening of Central Paramilitary Forces, working out precise modalities by the Ministry of Youth Affairs and Sports for a proposal for national service for the youth and developing a proposal for expanding the NCC and service in the Territorial Army by the Defence Ministry, upgrading of the efficacy of the Civil Defence Organisation and a revamp of the criminal justice system are part of the recommendations on internal security.

SECRET

12 MAY 2001

No Defence chief just yet

HT Correspondent
New Delhi, May 11

THE GOVERNMENT today shelved a decision on creating the post of a Chief of Defence Staff (CDS), but accepted all major recommendations of the Group of Ministers (GoM) on national security reforms.

The recommendations were based on reports of the four Task Forces formed earlier as a follow-up to the Kargil Review Committee report.

Among the key recommendations accepted were: creation of

an intelligence co-ordination group (ICG) for systematic intelligence oversight at the apex level, formation of a technology co-ordination group (TCG) to co-ordinate and regulate plans for acquisition of all new, costly, major strategic facilities/equipment by the intelligence agencies, and creation of a defence intelligence agency (DIA) and a defence procurement board (DPB) to undertake the entire gamut of major procurement functions in order to promote a higher degree of professionalism and cost-effectiveness.

The Government will also create a new national technical facilities organisation (NTFO) to plan, design and operate any new strategic and expensive facilities as approved by the TCG.

The decisions were okayed here this evening at a marathon meeting of the Cabinet Committee on Security (CCS) chaired by Prime Minister Atal Bihari Vajpayee. The meeting was attended by the Ministers of Home, Defence and Finance apart from the Planning Commission Deputy Chairman.

Briefing the media, Home Min-

ister L. K. Advani, who also chaired the GoM, said the CCS had opted to take a final decision on creating the post of a CDS after wider consultations among NDA partners as also with Opposition parties.

"Several political parties have already written to the Prime Minister over the CDS issue, demanding broad-based discussions before arriving at decision on the contentious issue," Advani said, announcing the Government's intention to shelve the GoM proposal for the time being.

THE HINDU

12 MAY 2001

PM, Jaswant slam DRDO

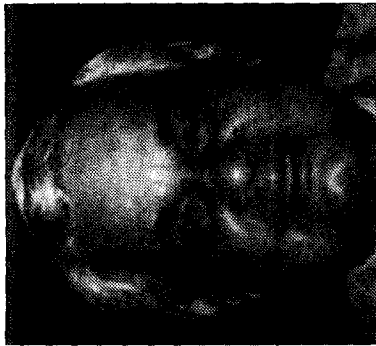
STATESMAN NEWS SERVICE

NEW DELHI, May 11. — Mr Atal Behari Vajpayee and Mr Jaswant Singh have criticised the Defence Research and Development Organisation for failing to ready weapons systems on time.

The delays may have hurt defence preparedness to some extent and led to arms imports in some cases but the criticism at a function to honour DRDO scientists was perhaps unexpected.

"Implementation delays can undermine the effectiveness of weapons systems, rendering them obsolete even at induction," the Prime Minister said, adding that infrastructural and import problems were partly responsible. He could have been talking about one version of the Trishul, an anti-aircraft missile, which the Navy feels is so inferior that it purchased the Israeli Barak missile.

The Prime Minister also asked the DRDO to be in "close touch"



Mr Atal Behari Vajpayee

with the armed forces, saying that designs could be upgraded. If the DRDO did stay in touch, he said, it would mean "better planning of defence management and weapons systems most relevant to military needs."

The defence minister was even more critical, pointing out that "DRDO programmes have had their share of problems" and some have suffered "unacceptable time overruns." Virtually e-

very project has had huge costs and time overruns. This includes prestigious projects like the Arjun tank, the light combat aircraft and the Aakash, Trishul and Nag missiles.

The defence minister felt that "due allowance may not earlier have been given...while estimating time for the projects." He said he would expect the DRDO to assess and control time schedules more effectively, adding that it should stop programmes that have "outlived their relevance in terms of requirements and technological contemporariness."

Mr Singh had a few suggestions. Instead of creating a "perfect system" initially, he called for "continuous and progressive development" and also for modernising laboratories. "Our defence technology institutions (must) make better use of modern techniques."

He admitted that imports were not the solution and there was no alternative to self-reliance



Mr Jaswant Singh

and said the DRDO's "performances, strengths and weaknesses" had a bearing on a much wider canvas and not just the capabilities of the armed forces. He felt that foreign policy could not be delinked from defence capabilities.

There was also some implied criticism in Mr Singh's speech. For instance, he said he expected the Air Force, the DRDO and department of defence pro-

duction "to work as a whole." He probably would not have said so if they were working together.

Even the scientific advisor to the defence minister, Dr VK Atre, admitted that "there have been delays in several major programmes" and attributed them to technological problems, poor components and device base, limited infrastructure and optimistic estimation of time frames. He said he had taken steps to curb delays and said programmes were now better managed.

While the DRDO says the armed forces expect too much too soon, the Army made one particular case about delays during the Kargil War. It said when USA offered the gun-locating radar, the scientific advisor, Dr APJ Abdul Kalam blocked the purchase saying that the Rajendra radar could be modified. Today, two years after the war, work on the gun-locating radar is still on.

Defence Inc 11-10

Opening up the defence production sector to private industry and permitting 26 per cent foreign direct investment constitute inevitable administrative recognition of emerging ground realities. The public sector defence industries are simply not equipped to produce the weapons and equipment needed for the future, especially given that revolutionary developments are underway in military affairs. More and more intricate electronics and information technologies are going to be the things of the future. Further all over the world — except in the US which because of the size of its forces can command the overseas markets — defence industries are coming together to cooperate in design, development and production of equipment with increasing sophistication, accuracy and lethality at ever climbing unit costs. Contrary to popular impression, self-reliance in defence does not mean that the country should produce every item of requirement for the armed forces within its borders, especially within the defence public sector undertakings. Self-reliance is about undertaking defensive operations against various categories of threats without the risk of being unduly hampered by supply embargoes of other equipment-supplying countries. In the coming decades it is hardly likely any country in the world, other than the US, will be in a position to design, develop and produce all its equipment within its own factories. While India will have to concentrate on the production of its own missiles, electronic surveillance systems and software for defence-related IT products, the country should try to seek avenues for co-production of weapons, subsystems manufacture for other countries to carry out cost reductions, and other kinds of participation with major weapons and equipment manufacturing consortia in advanced countries. For that purpose the opening of the FDI door is essential.

It will be difficult for any private sector firm to devote itself exclusively for defence production because of the extremely fluctuating demands of the market. Most of the western defence industries combine manufacture of sophisticated civil products and defence equipment with the development of technologies in both sectors. The Airbus Industrie legitimately complains that Boeing's civil aircraft R & D is indirectly subsidised by military R & D funded by the US armed forces. Our private sector must understand that defence industry is profitable only when the firms undertake product improvement and new designs and that the bane of our ordnance factories is their culture of licensed manufacture. Perhaps the first step our private sector must undertake is to seek sub-contracts from foreign defence multinationals in order to encourage their investments in India in due course. The ministry of defence, especially the Defence Research and Development Organisation, should guide our private sector about the areas to which they should pay attention in the coming decades. At present such forward-looking planning on equipment and technologies is not available in this country. In advanced countries the defence industry takes intense interest in strategic affairs to enable them to develop new ideas and concepts in equipment development. This country is yet to develop such a culture of cooperative forward thinking on technologies among our armed forces, scientific community and industry. Unless our entire culture in this respect changes the newly announced reforms may just remain on paper.

THE TIMES OF INDIA

21 MAY 2001

FDI in defence opens

GM Pandora's box 11/5

By N. Vidyasagar
Business Times Bureau

NEW DELHI: The government's decision to allow 26 per cent foreign direct investment (FDI) in the defence sector has evoked a mixed response from domestic industry.

While CII termed the opening of the defence sector to private players and foreign participation a "landmark decision", its rival industry chamber, FICCI, preferred to keep quiet on the issue, although it welcomed the other announcements made by the government on Wednesday.

"A number of Indian institutions, companies and allied agencies were blacklisted in the aftermath of Pokhran II. Their status has not yet been changed," said a senior FICCI official. "We have to get their views on allowing foreign participation in the defence sector before giving our official views."

Some of the Indian agencies and companies which are placed under the U.S. export sanctions' list include Bharat Electronics Ltd, Indian Rare Earths Ltd, BARC and the Indira Gandhi Centre for Atomic Research.

Assocham, which has a predominant list of multinational companies in its fold, said the government's decision to open up the defence sector via the FDI route was good as long as the blacklisted Indian companies were allowed access in countries which had imposed a ban on them.

"We request countries like the U.S. to lift the ban they have imposed against Indian companies," said an Assocham spokesperson. "Market forces would push them to allow access to these companies," he added.

Thus far, arms and ammunition manufacture, along with allied items of defence equipment, including defence aircraft and warships, had been reserved exclusively for the public sector. This included the 39 government-owned ordnance factories, eight defence PSUs and more than 40 defence research and development laboratories.

Now, both domestic defence manufacturing industry and foreign companies (up to 26 per cent) can participate in supplying defence goods to the government through licensing by the defence ministry.

WAR GAMES

Army sees no nuclear threat

Hansera (Thar Desert), May 10

FOR THE first time, Indian armed forces personnel and war-machines were put through survival drills of nuclear, biological and chemical warfare.

The Army top brass today asserted that any immediate threat to the nation would be of a conventional nature rather than a nuclear strike.

A nuclear threat, had however, been imminent, top commanders said. A war in the region could be triggered by a notion on the part of an adversary of some advantage in a particular area which could be exploited through large scale manoeuvres elsewhere, they said.

The riposte to this would be to use India's conventional superiority by deploying newly-raised armoured groups in rapid "deep armoured thrusts" employing surprise and force multipliers to devastating effect, according to Lt-Gen Pankaj Joshi, central army commander.

He told reporters here that any future conflict would definitely have a nuclear backdrop but discounted the use of nuclear weapons. International pressure, he said, would make it extremely difficult to use such weapons.

Lt-Gen Joshi, who is the referee for the wargames, said India's nuclear strategy was defensive in nature. Asked if New Delhi had come up with the wherewithal to survive nuclear attacks, he replied: "Yes and no."

He said armed forces did not

differentiate between tactical and strategic nuclear weapons, adding that in his estimation the country's neighbourhood had not witnessed development of tactical nuclear weapons delivery system.

His top armoured commander, Maj-Gen I A Satur, leading the blitz on a notional enemy territory, said: "My mechanised columns are moving in BMPs proofed against NBC."

The general claimed to have moved his tanks, mechanised columns, heavy artillery and other force multipliers almost 190 km in six days.

"We have some equipment and we are acquiring some more sophisticated systems," Maj-Gen Satur told reporters at temporary headquarters at Kaunlasar, about 140 km southwest of Bikaner towards the international border.

Taken aback by a barrage of questions on nuclear preparedness, Gen Joshi said the biggest foe his troops had encountered during the last six days was the heat and dust storms.

"The boys and machines had to contend with temperatures soaring to 52 degrees Celsius and inside tanks and infantry combat vehicles it was even 5 to 7 degrees higher. But the soldiers and war-machines performed exceedingly well," the General said.

On the exercises, the Army commander said: "Some deficiencies had come to the fore, specially about spares."

PTI

THE HINDUSTAN TIMES

11 MAY 1981

100 P.C. FDI FOR AIRPORT PROJECTS

Defence sector opened up for private participation, FDI

By Our Special Correspondent

NEW DELHI, MAY 9. On a day when there were rumours that the Finance Minister had resigned because of Opposition from the Sangh Parivar to the liberalisation policies, the Union Cabinet took a major decision to throw open defence equipment production to the private sector with permission for foreign direct investment also.

Similarly, increases in foreign investment limits in the banking sector as well as the pharmaceutical, telecom, civil aviation and real estate were approved by the Cabinet.

As per the Cabinet decision, the manufacture of ammunition and other defence-related products will now be permitted by the private sector. The justification for this decision was given by the Union Minister and Cabinet spokesman, Mr. Pramod Mahajan, who said that at present, India was importing most of its defence equipment from abroad and it was time that the domestic industry was given a chance to provide them. "As of now, we are importing bullets to rockets from private parties abroad. There should be no harm in Indian industry to manufacture them here." Consequently, the private industry can now establish whol-

ly-owned units for the production of defence items, with even a foreign direct investment (FDI) of up to 26 per cent.

Mr. Mahajan, however, said it would not be a total opening up of the defence industry sector. Private industry would have to get a licence from the Defence Ministry. The sector was being taken off the list of industries reserved for the public sector and moved to the licensable category.

The Cabinet, which met for three hours, also decided to further liberalise the FDI policy for the drugs and pharmaceuticals, telecom, banking, civil aviation, hotel and tourism, courier service and new township development sectors. In addition, for the first time, it decided to allow FDI into the fledgling mass rapid transportation sector.

In the banking sector, FDI will be allowed up to 49 per cent, inclusive of all FDI sources. Till

now, 40 per cent investment has been permitted for NRIs and 20 per cent for FDI.

In the drugs and pharma sector, the FDI limit now would be up to 100 per cent and investment would be put on the automatic route, without any disinvestment condition, except for those products that are still licensed and for bulk drugs produced by the recombinant DNA technology. Till now, 74 per cent FDI was allowed in the sector.

In civil aviation, again 100 per cent FDI would be allowed for airports, with the condition that if investment is up to 74 per cent, it would be the automatic route and if it is 100 per cent it would be through the Foreign Investment Promotion Board (FIPB).

In the telecom sector, the FDI cap is being increased from 49 per cent to 74 per cent for internet service providers with gateways, radio pagers and end-to-end

bandwidths. The investment would need FIPB approval and be subject to licence and security requirements.

For the real estate (new township) sector, 100 per cent FDI would be allowed, subject to guidelines issued by the Ministry of Urban Development, and for hotel and tourism it is being increased from 51 per cent to 100 per cent. In respect of mass rapid transit systems, where FDI is being allowed for the first time, 100 per cent will be allowed for projects in all metros. The Cabinet decided to sign the International Coffee agreement, providing for measures to achieve a reasonable balance between world supplies and the demand for coffee.

The Cabinet considered the problems being faced by coffee growers particularly on account of difficulties in getting short term loans and the demands from them for removal of export cess. The Finance Minister noted that the RBI had already issued guidelines to provide for short-term loans and assured the meeting that he would soon discuss the issue of export cess with the Commerce Minister, Mr. Murasoli Maran. Mr. Maran could not attend the meeting as he was preoccupied with electioneering in Tamil Nadu.

How much FDI for which sector

NEW DELHI, MAY 9. The important decisions on disinvestment taken today by the Union Cabinet include:

- FDI limit in telecom raised to 74 per cent from 49.
- 100 per cent FDI in mass rapid transport system in metros.
- 100 per cent FDI in courier services, hotels and tourism, development of townships, airports, pharmaceuticals. — UNI

THE HINDU

30 MAY 2000

Aliens in defence territory

FROM OUR CORRESPONDENT

New Delhi, May 9: The Atal Bihari Vajpayee government's decision to open up defence to the private sector marks a historic departure from the policy that has been in place since Independence.

No other government in the past had even contemplated letting in private participation on absolute national security concerns. Defence matters and production of military hardware have been the monopoly of the Centre. So far, it had encouraged manufacture of defence-related goods by public sector undertakings alone.

Ironically, the liberalisation comes close on the heels of Tehelka's armgate expose which had focused on the role of middlemen and private firms in corrupt defence deals.

Parliamentary affairs minister Pramod Mahajan, while announcing the Cabinet approval for 100 per cent domestic private participation in production of defence items, did not specify the goods. A decision on the list of items will be taken later after consultations with the armed forces, security experts and government agencies.

Foreign investors have also been given a toehold in the sensitive sector. Foreign direct investment up to 26 per cent will be permitted in a defence goods production venture. But, Mahajan said, this would be optional.

Though domestic private companies can have 100 per cent participation, the government will retain the right to license producers.

Mahajan said the public sector would continue to produce defence goods despite the reforms. "The modalities for producing defence items under licence would be worked out between the defence ministry and the private sec-



Jaswant Singh and army chief S. Padmanabhan watch military exercises in the Thar desert. (AFP)

tor companies," he said.

Asked if the private sector will be allowed to manufacture products ranging from bullets to rockets, Mahajan said: "This will depend on the need of the defence ministry. It will be an entirely transparent system."

He said the private sector companies could take technical assistance from abroad in manufacturing defence goods.

The decision to open up the sector, taken at a full meeting of the Cabinet chaired by Prime Minister Vajpayee, came as a surprise

to most observers.

A former army chief and defence expert said on condition of anonymity that the government's decision had "a number of implications which impinge on national security".

"Since Independence, the government has held a monopoly over defence-related production. It is understandable that imports in the defence sector, especially that of military hardware, has been taking place for quite some time.

But to open the defence sector to 100 per cent private participa-

tion would involve crucial aspects and the Centre need not have hurried through this decision," he added.

However, a group of security analysts felt that the move to free defence production would reduce corruption and allow competition.

"But it has to be seen whether Indian firms are capable of producing the kind of hardware which we have been importing so far," an expert said. "The government has to take care that security is not compromised."

Ultras trigger off blasts near PMO

and frustrate any further attempts by some anti-national elements to destabilise law and order in the national capital," he said.

However, it was not immediately clear whether a probe will be carried out into the blasts by Army authorities or police as both the areas fall within the jurisdiction of defence authorities.

Unconfirmed reports said one person had been picked by the police but there was no immediate confirmation.

Asked whether there was a security breach at the site of the first blast, Roy said, "Well, that is for the army authorities to reply but the suspect has managed to give a slip due to lax security arrangements at the gate."

This is the third incident of planting of bombs in the national capital in less than a month. Earlier, on April 10, some anti-national elements planted an IED in the parking of high-security North Block which houses Home and Finance Ministries.

This was followed by recovery of a crude bomb in a dustbin at a park in Rajiv Chowk in the heart of the capital on May two.

Yesterday, there had been two hoax calls regarding planting of bombs at two cinema halls in Connaught Place yesterday.

Ultras trigger off blasts near PMO

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA
NEW DELHI, MAY 9

SUSPECTED ultras today set off two low-intensity bombs within a gap of minutes in the high-security Sena Bhawan complex, housing the Army headquarters, and behind South Block where the Prime Minister's office (PMO) is located, embarrassing security agencies.

A Defence Ministry employee received minor injuries in one of the blasts and was admitted to hospital.

The first blast took place inside the cycle shed of a canteen in the Sena Bhawan causing injury to the person and damage to some nearby property.

The explosive material, which went off at 3 pm, was wrapped in a piece of cloth and kept on a cycle carrier, Joint Commissioner of Delhi Police Suresh Roy told reporters here.

The canteen, which caters to the staff of the Army headquarters as well as Navy and Air Force, is usually crowded between 12 pm and 4.30 pm.

The second bomb, hidden under the fallen leaves of a 'Neem' tree behind South block, which also houses Defence Ministry, ex-



An Army officer takes photos of the blast site near Army HQ - PTI

ploded three minutes later, he said.

The intensity of both the blasts was same with similar material, timer and batteries being used to detonate them, Roy said.

There were also similarities between the explosive material recovered from the parking lot of North block on April 10 and today's blasts.

However, Roy refused further comments on the blast or to point blame on any militant group.

"Let us review the situation

CONTINUED ON PAGE 2

INDIAN EXPRESS

30 MAY 1991

Private participation in defence sector approved

The Times of India News Service

NEW DELHI: The Union government on Wednesday dramatically responded to the 'Armsgate' scam, which revealed the rot in the country's defence procurement mechanism, by opening up the Indian defence industry to the private sector.

While allowing 100 per cent Indian private investment in the defence industry, the government also decided to permit 26 per cent foreign participation in private arms manufacturing ventures.

"The cabinet has decided to take the defence industry off the list of industries reserved for the public sector. Now it has been transferred to the licensable category," said Pramod Mahajan, the cabinet spokesman and minister for parliamentary affairs.

Until now, the defence industry was the exclusive field of the public sector. The government also imported arms from foreign manufacturers.

With the new announcement, Indian companies can apply for license from the defence ministry to produce arms. Mr Mahajan explained that those Indian companies requiring technology from foreign companies might need to give stakes in the Indian companies and hence a foreign direct investment of 26 per cent had been

allowed.

On the imports of arms, like the Bofors guns from Sweden, Mr Mahajan said the decision to open up the defence industry was a major departure from the earlier policy, which meant that "we had faith in the private sector of other countries".

Though the government did not spell out the criteria for giving out licenses to private sector enterprises, the concept is revolutionary in

that it brushes aside arguments put forward even by important cabinet members like Ram Naik that certain "strategic" sectors and units should continue to be the government's monopoly. Though the government had over the years sourced components and sub-assemblies from the private sector, private enterprise was reluctant to join the fray in a major way because of the government's lengthy decision-making process, quick obsolescence of defence ware, and defence budgeting. Experts feel all this will now need to be rejigged.

With around 39 ordnance factories and eight defence PSUs alone accounting for around Rs 15,000 crore of annual defence consumption, the government has opened up a huge sector for the private sector. The enormity of the decision is evident from the fact that it also includes imports of sophisticated aircraft, warships, tanks and such expensive equipment.

The government's opening up spree does not end with the defence sector. The cabinet also threw open many vital sectors like civil aviation, pharmaceuticals, real estate, mass rapid transport system (MRTS) and hotel and tourism to 100 per cent foreign direct investment, and considerably raised the foreign investment levels in telecom and banking.



THE TIMES OF INDIA

30 MAY 2001

Ammo explosion focus deflected to 'close shave'

FROM GAJINDER SINGH

Pathankot, May 1: Preliminary investigations by the army have pinpointed "spontaneous combustion triggered by extremely high temperature" as the cause of a string of explosions at an ammunition depot in Mamun cantonment on Sunday.

The fire has razed 425 tonnes of ammunition worth more than Rs 15 crore and spread panic in the region. Nearly 75 per cent of the ammunition stocked, including 122 mm and 30 mm anti-aircraft shells, was destroyed. Other ammunition, including 155 mm Bofors gun shells kept for supply to key forward lines along the border with Pakistan, was also damaged and termed "not operational".

Defence sources said the ammunition belonged to one army unit and was stored in the open. Sources in the depot said the loss would have been far greater had the ammunition not been stored in 60 separate pits.

"Had bombs been stored at one place, the devastation would have been complete. We have tens of thousands of tonnes of ammunition stored here. It would have put Bharatpur to shame," a senior army officer said.

Senior Northern Command officers visited the Mamun canton-

ment today for an on-the-spot assessment of the damage. Defence sources said the chief of staff, Northern Command, Lt. Gen. Gurpreet Singh, was among those who visited the depot. Singh was reportedly briefed about the investigations into the fire which is headed by a colonel.

Army authorities have begun collecting splinters from rooftops and have asked villagers to hand over any metal object they find.

District administration officials alleged that they were not informed about the fire till it had gone out of control. "We were kept in the dark about the fire even after the fire brigade got a call to send one engine. We gauged that the situation was dangerous only after requests for as many water tankers as available in the district," a senior official said.

Even as the army authorities continued battling the media and the civil administration's requests for information on the blaze, people living in and around the cantonment continued to shiver at the mere mention of the "Black Sunday" when "the whole sky had turned red and rained hot metal".

There was so much panic when the bombs began exploding that even patients began scampering for safety. Most of the residents and families of army person-

nel who had fled to safer places have, however, started returning.

Krishan Mehta, husband of Mamun sarpanch Sushma Mehta, recalled that children, women and even elderly people were crying when bombs began detonating.

"It is difficult to describe the situation. It is a miracle that only small bombs exploded and no one died. I have never seen people behave the way they did on Sunday night. For many of us it is like being reborn again," he said, adding that the explosions and the tremors that followed could be felt even 20 km away.

KLM International School principal Rita Raina said the moment the explosions began she rang up the police control room and the army exchange, but got no reply. She later managed to evacuate more than 100 students to nearby Madhopur in school vans.

"We returned only after assurances from the administration that the fire at the depot had been controlled. When we came back, it was still smouldering," she said.

Hardware shop owner Santok Singh said he was closing his shop when, all of a sudden, the sky lit up and the shutters shook violently. "Initially it looked like a brilliant fire show. But when it started raining splinters, I ran for my life," he added.

THE TELEGRAPH

- 2 MAY 2001

Fire near Pathankot exposes chinks in ordnance depots

A nuclear power still stores its ammo under tarpaulins, tents

The Times of India News Service
NEW DELHI/PATHANKOT: The devastating fire at the forward ammunition depot at Mamoon near Pathankot on Sunday has once again brought to the fore the "continued mishandling of ammunition" in ordnance depots across the country.

Officers at army headquarters said on Monday that more than 400 metric tonnes of ammunition, mainly 122 mm T-72 tanks and 30 mm anti-aircraft gun shells, valued at about Rs 15 crore, had been destroyed in the blaze.

A court of inquiry has been ordered into the incident. The ammunition guard at the depot has also been replaced.

"According to preliminary reports, the fire, which began at 9.20 p.m. on Sunday and continued until early Monday, was probably caused by spontaneous combustion triggered by high temperatures of more than 40 degrees Celsius in the region," an officer said.

The indications, however, point to mishandling of the destroyed ammunition which was kept in the open under a tarpaulin. Time and again, it had been pointed out that the storage procedure and security arrangements at the major ordnance depots needed to be seriously looked into.

Some experts said the management of stockpiles and storage of ammunition in the depots was shoddy. A majority of the army's ammunition depots did not have proper storage facilities, they added. "Imagine a so-called nuclear power still storing a huge amount of its ammunition under tarpaulins and tents," said one.

This has been the second major mishap in the last year.

In April last year, around 12,000 tonnes of ammunition—including surface-to-air missiles, anti-tank guided missiles and tank and artillery shells—went up in smoke at the Bharatpur ammunition depot. The Bharatpur blaze, which killed two civilians, destroyed almost 30 to 40 per cent of the operational reserves of the Southern Army Command. The damage was valued at more than Rs 370 crore.

There have been several such incidents in ordnance depots down the years. In March 1988, for instance, a fire at the Jabalpur ordnance factory and ammunition depot had caused tremendous damage.

As the fire erupted on Sunday night, blasts rocked Pathankot and its surrounding areas. Residents of the town, who have already undergone the trauma of the Indo-Pakistan wars, ran out of their homes in panic.



Villagers examine the bomb shells and splinters close to the Mamoon military station near Pathankot on Monday after a fire ravaged the ammunition depot.

THE TIMES OF INDIA

1 MAY 2001

2 Good News



Ailing, No More: Yogesh Vajpey maps how Madhya Pradesh dropped out of the roster of BIMARU states.

5 Fine Print



A K Ramanujan's unpublished scraps offer both illumination and delight, finds untiring fan Renuka Narayanan

6 India International



The US government's decision to cut down the number of H1-B visas in the coming years is bad news for Indian professionals. A report from our correspondents.



8 Rear Window

Shefalli Srinivas profiles Peter Bhatia, the executive editor of *The Oregonian* which won two Pulitzers this year
Plus: Great Ball of Fire: Courtney Walsh

India-Pak: Separated At Birth

Border: 3,310 km

Background: The bitterness lay in the Partition and grew worse after Hari Singh chose to accede Jammu and Kashmir with India. Three wars and one near-war later we are no closer to a solution than before.

Lay Of The Land: The Ceasefire Line became the Line of Control with the Simla Agreement in July 2, 1972 after the third war with Pakistan. Until the Pakistani intrusion in Kargil in 1999, barring border skirmishes, the LoC has served as a de facto border. There have been reported deals between India and Pakistani leaders — first between Nehru and Governor General Ghulam Mohammed in 1955 and then in 1972 between Indira Gandhi and Zulfikar Ali Bhutto — to declare the LoC as the border.

What's Been Happening: After the suspension of armed hostilities between India and Pakistan on January 1, 1949, the Ceasefire Line came into being with the Karachi Agreement in July. The problem arose because the CFL was demarcated from the west of river Chenab up to map coordinate NJ 9842 but did not stretch beyond. This is what created the Siachen dispute because there are no natural landmarks to demarcate the area. The 78 km, world's largest non-polar glacier at an altitude of 5472 metres above sea level forms the world's highest battlefield.

In 1965, armed incursions into Rann of Kutch culminated in a full-scale war. Pakistan claimed that the border along Sindh and the Rann running roughly along the 24th parallel was not demarcated and declared that 3500 sq km of territory was disputed. Sir Creek in Gujarat lies between India and Pakistan and has been disputed for the last three decades. From India's point, mid-stream

forms the dividing line between the two countries while Pakistan claims it part of its territory. The reason why the area is important is because it is believed to be rich in oil and natural gas deposits. India maintains the erstwhile ruler of Kutch Sindh had delineated the boundary mid-stream, Pakistan claims the 1949 Kutch Tribunal demarcated the boundary along the eastern bank of the creek.

Status: Since Kargil in 1999, there has been no official level engagement. The impasse will be broken with the SAARC foreign secretaries meeting next month. These consultations apart, no one's holding their breath over the final solution.

India-China: War And (Tenuous) Peace

Border: 3,917 km.

Background: It was the British who drew the McMahon Line and demarcated the India-China border in 1914. The Chinese at that time did not sign on the dotted but hoped that after the British quit India they could renegotiate the boundary.

Lay Of The Land: The Indo-Sino border is divided into three sectors — Western, Middle and Eastern. While the 400-mile-long Middle Sector spanning Himachal and Uttar Pradesh is relatively non-contentious, the problem areas are

in the Western and Eastern sectors. The 1100-mile-long Western Sector that contains 15,000 sq km of Aksai Chin, refers to the boundary between Ladakh and Xinjiang in China. This sector also contains about 2,700 sq miles of land that Pakistan ceded to China from its Pakistan-occupied Kashmir in an agreement in March 1963. The Eastern Sector is the 140-mile-long boundary along Sikkim and 710 miles along Arunachal Pradesh.

What's Been Happening: During the 1962 war, the Chinese seized an area roughly the size of Switzerland: Aksai Chin (India claims China holds a total of 40,000 sq km of land in Kashmir) and overran the state of Arunachal Pradesh which reverted to India after the ceasefire. With that the Chinese were back at the Line of Actual Control (LAC) which approximates to the McMahon Line. But the antagonism between the two countries persisted. So,

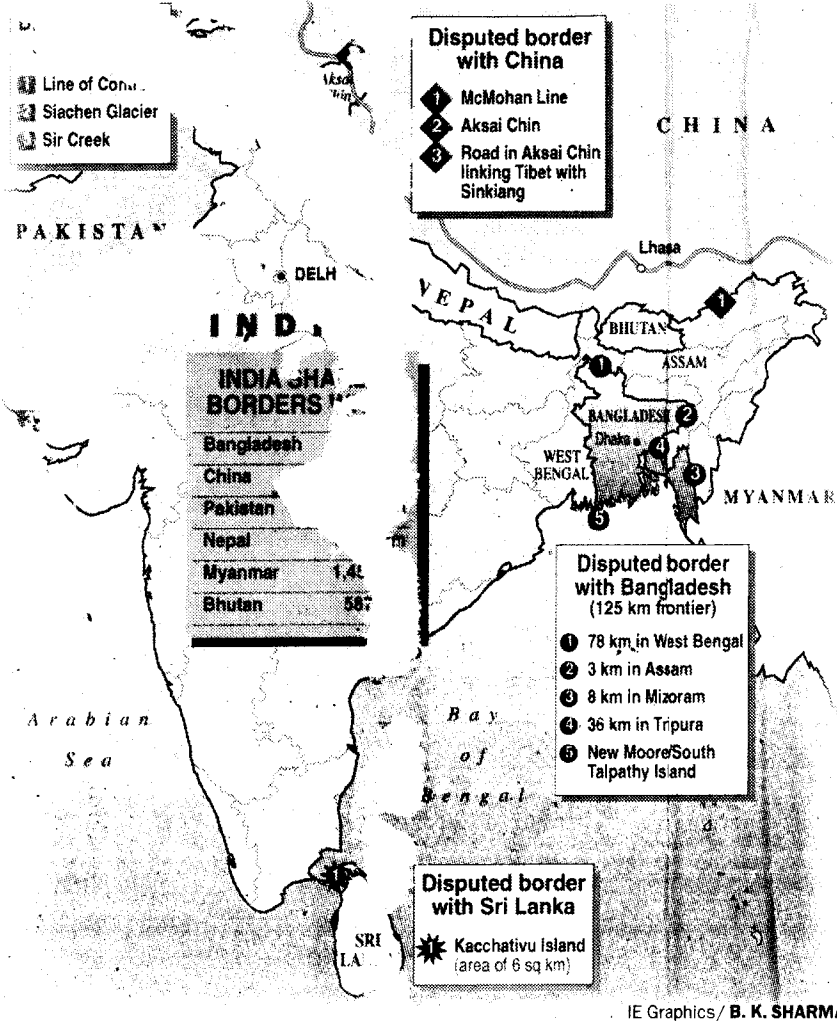
despite the fact that Sikkim seceded to India in 1974, Chinese maps continue to portray it as an independent country. In 1986-87, Chinese and Indian forces clashed in the Sumdorong Chu valley in Arunachal. The Indo-Sino thaw finally began to set in 1988 and on September 7, 1993, the two signed the Agreement on the Maintenance of Peace and Tranquillity on the LAC. The process went further with the Confidence Building Measures Agreement of August 1997. The accord pledged that India and China would respect the LAC and spelt out norms of behaviour such as non-aggression, prior notice of large troop movement, a 10-km no-fly zone for combat aircraft and exchanging of maps to resolve differences about the location of the LAC.

Status: A somewhat uneasy calm prevails for now.

FLASHPOINTS

Border n: the line separating two geographical areas, esp.

... narcat... the fragile... d... onal identity. And as... y too well, they can be... r. In the era of... when the world is looking for... market, India, the IT... ver of the future, res... ces i... the news as the country that seems to... have a problem on almost all... borders. **Son... Trikha** examines the live wires... that map the margins of India



India-Nepal: A River Runs Through

Border: 1,752 km

Background: This has to be the country with which India has the least serious problem. After all, India-Nepal relations have been shaped by their geographical contiguity. Nepal's geo-strategic location has meant that India from the days when Jawaharlal Nehru was prime minister has been happy to keep the Himalayan kingdom as a buffer between itself and the more aggressive China. The problem lies with a 75 sq km stretch of land called, appropriately enough, Kalapani. The other area of contention is the Sagauli Treaty of 1816 signed between Nepal and the British East India Company. Here, there is a difference of interpretation of the boundary along the Mahakali river which is known as Sarda in India.

Lay Of The Land: In 1962, Kalapani, which lies 475 km west of Kathmandu at the junction where China, Nepal and India meet, was occupied by India in the war against China. This area comprises three villages: Kuthi (30 degrees 19 N, 80 degrees 46 E), Gunje and Knabe.

What Has Been Happening: The problem began when Nepal started negotiating the hydro-power development of the Mahakali river with India. The countries differ on which tributary constitutes the source of the river: Nepal says it is Limpiya Dhura just west of Kalapani; India claims it is Lipu Lekh, just east of Kalapani. Nepal reportedly has maps from 1856 to support its claim. Though minor, the

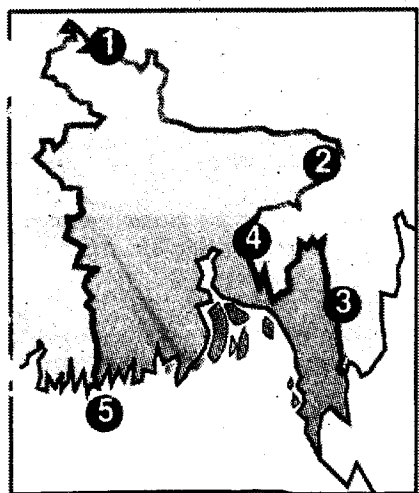
dispute remains a thorn in the flesh in bilateral relations. But more important than the small area of land out of a total border of 1,751 km is the issue of its strategic value on the Indo-China border. The other problem is not strictly a border issue but is part of the Nepali rivers along the boundary which India uses for irrigation and power generation. A good example is the construction of Laxmanpur barrage about 15 years ago on the Rapti river that flows through the Banke district in Nepal and into Baharaich in India. In February last year, India constructed another 13.6 km-long embankment to the northwest of the barrage. Nepal is claiming that the construction of the barrage has meant that the natural flow of the Rapti has been disrupted and stemmed the flow of Gandhaili and Sutaiva streams. Political parties in Kathmandu have demanded that Laxmanpur barrage be dismantled. The 1950 Treaty of Friendship, which defined the economic, political and strategic relations, too is coming in for flak in the new look at India-Nepal relations. In 1989, in direct violation of the treaty, Nepal gave road construction contracts to China in the Terai region and even bought arms from Beijing. The last consignment of arms was cancelled after an understanding between the then prime ministers, K P Bhattarai and I K Gujral.

Status: While there's peace on the border, there is a definite souring of the relations as is obvious from the testiness that was on display during first, the Madhuri Dixit and then, the Hrithik Roshan controversy.

India-Bangladesh: Six km Of Separation

Border: 4,096 km

Background: After William Paddcliff drew the line to demarcate East Pakistan at the time of Independence, Indian and Pakistani Prime Ministers Jawaharlal Nehru and Feroze Khan Noon conferred on the issue in 1958. After the liberation of Bangladesh in 1971, the issue was decided with the 1974 agreement which only leaves 6.5 km of the border to be demarcated. These few kilometres, left undecided have meant that serious skirmishes like the ones in Pyrduwah are always a real threat.



cated stretches there are areas in adverse possession. What it means is that India holds 111 enclaves that really belong to Bangladesh and that country holds 51 enclaves that are India's territory. The total area in adverse possession of Bangladesh is 2749.16 acres and that held by India is 2922.25 acres. According to the 1974 agreement between Indira Gandhi and Sheikh Mujibur Rahman these areas are to be exchanged.

What's Been Happening: India and Bangladesh constantly describe themselves as friendly neighbours. It's also largely true, except when the B word crops up. From Pyrduwah in Meghal

B... jari in Assam, the clashes can erupt... here. The political ramifications aside, the unresolved border issue between the two countries is an easy target for... elating tensions. Bangladesh took over Pyrduwah to 'reclaim' the... land and India retaliated in Boraibari. In the past, the virtually intertwined border has also led to crises such as the Teen Bigha one in... 80s. Teen Bigha was given to Bangladesh in exchange for Berubari and to allow them... ess to Dahigram and Agapotta. This action... ame in for political criticism and finally it took a Supreme Court ruling to reinstate the... eement. In December last year both countries decided to set up two Joint Working Groups for sorting... the border issue. Without apportioning blame... wards which nation stalled the good work, it has taken 30 years to come to that stage in... rder negotiations with a friendly country.

Status: India has registered a protest, Bangladesh has expressed regret but the current fiasco has only highlighted the difficulties.

India-Myanmar: China Syndrome

Border: 1,458 km

Background: While there is no bilateral dispute, India is worried about activity on the border which it perceives as unfriendly, even hostile. There has been the whole issue of Naga rebels fighting Indian forces along the border and seeking shelter across it. At the same time, the largest ever coordinated military operation was mounted along the borders of Manipur, Mizoram and Nagaland with Yangon in 1995 to challenge groups of militants infiltrating from across the border.

Lay Of The Land: The border terrain is among the toughest to negotiate anywhere in the world. The forest and marshy area, combined with the wet climate, makes operations difficult.

What's Been Happening: Myanmar has also been seen to be playing host to anti-India activity from China in its Coco Islands. China has established an electronic listening post on the Myanmar island in the Bay of Bengal. The maritime reconnaissance and electronic intelligence station is on the Great Coco Island, some 300 km south of the mainland. The radar

system was set up between 1992 and 1994 and some 70 Chinese naval personnel operate the systems. Besides, the Chinese army has a base on Small Coco Island, in the Alexandra Channel between the Indian Ocean and the Andaman Sea, north of the Andaman Islands. The Coco Islands were leased to China in 1994, and are located at strategic points between the Bay of Bengal and the Straits of Malacca, thus being in the ideal location to snoop on Indian naval and missile launch facilities in the Andaman and Nicobar Islands, where India wants to develop its third operational command.

Status: There has been active engagement between the two countries recently. External Affairs Minister Jaswant Singh inaugurated a 165 km-long road on the border at Tamu in February. It's apparent that India has an economic and strategic stake in Myanmar but the border, while not disputed, remains active. There's also room for worry with the upcoming visit of General Pervez Musharraf to Yangon next month. The military dictatorships on two ends of India's borders cooperating can't spell good news for New Delhi.

Politics and power transcend national security in India

Fair game in uniform

BRIJESH D. JAYAL

For the second time in recent years, members of the Indian security forces have been tortured, killed in cold blood and mutilated by one or the other of our neighbours. The first instance took place during the Kargil conflict at the hands of Pakistan, whose sole strategic aim is to decimate India using means fair or foul and whose only belief is that the end justifies the means. The recent happenings on the India-Bangladesh border have surpassed even the earlier Pakistani brutality. That there was no open hostility between the two sides and that diplomatic relations were stable only makes the incident more revolting from the Indian perspective.

It is not one's case to reflect on the tactical aspects of the recent incident or indeed the deeper political ramifications considering that Sheikh Hasina Wajed's government stands for good relations with India while battling with hostile elements within her security and civil services. It is to reflect on why a country that stands by high moral values and has the fourth largest military in the world should have to bear the ignominy of having its men in uniform abused and defiled. What is it that makes Pakistani military and hostile elements within the Bangladesh military think that Indians in uniform are fair game? How many other forces inimical to our national interests feel the same way? And what is it about India that conveys the impression that Indian forces can be routinely exploited without exemplary retribution?

As commander at various levels, it has been one's duty to break the news of tragedy to families whose kin have laid down their lives in the line of duty. Sometimes, as in the case of air accidents, it is not practical to even permit them to see the remains. Never in his service career did this writer ever face a situation where the next of kin was not convinced of the cause for which their kin had made the supreme sacrifice and never did one ever have to tell them anything but the truth. Taking heart from Tagore's prayer, the tragedy was faced with the mind being without fear and the head being held high.

For the first time when the mutilated Kargil bodies were received on Indian soil and reported upon, shivers went down one's spine. If one were the commander of the deceased how would he face the kin and what would he say to them? That their kin sacrificed their life in line of duty was fine. It was an occupational hazard they had accepted with dignity and honour. But with what degree of personal conviction would one convey that a nation, for whose cause they had made the supreme sacrifice, could not ensure their kin dig-

nity in death and according to clearly defined international conventions? What had failed in the system to deny them a right that is afforded even to those condemned to capital punishment? Who could they turn to for solace?

It is this sense of deep remorse that has again overwhelmed one on learning of the recent India-Bangladesh border episode. How much more humiliation does this nation have to bear and how many more military men tortured and defiled before someone somewhere has the moral courage to stand up and say

Precedence. Such decline has lowered the izzat of personnel donning the republic's uniform. In turn, unbeknown to its myopic leaders, the republic's own izzat has suffered.

During Kargil and the present crisis, there has been much reporting and debate on the operational, diplomatic and political aspects of various security-related issues. Sadly, one has failed to see any meaningful commentary and debate on the moral, ethical and degenerative aspects of the latest trends of torture, cold-blooded murder and mutilating of



enough is enough.

This is not the time to point fingers and score debating points. It is a moment for introspection and reflection. And before we start passing the buck, let it be said that every individual and institution of this potentially great country has in some measure failed. We owe the dead men and their families not just an apology but a solemn commitment that this will never ever be repeated, whatever the cost. No price, even a political one, can be put on the izzat of the nation, its people, its institutions and its soldiers. And this needs deeds not words.

Ever since independence, there has been a consistent decline in the status of India's armed forces institutionally, organizationally and as individuals. The services have been victims at the hands of the administrative and political classes, remaining mute spectators to their eroding status. This explains why India's first and only living field marshal is under article 12 of the Warrant of

What is it about India that conveys the impression that its forces can be routinely exploited without exemplary retribution?

soldiers that has newly emerged and their impact on military minds. This speaks of a media that is shallow with confused priorities set by a power-hungry and corrupt polity.

When television cameras tell us how our Parliament does not function, then one begins to wonder. Especially those that sit atop battlegrounds of 18,000 feet where survival itself is an achievement without the bonus of daily enemy fire. It was hoped that the *Kargil Review Panel Committee Report* would be debated in Parliament after it was tabled during the

last winter session. Instead, the nation was rewarded with a spectacle of pandemonium with no discussion on this report. The message was clear. The price that our forces had paid in Kargil, including those tortured and mutilated, had already been forgotten. The message to our adversaries was also clear. Politics and power in India transcend national security.

The current budget session has met with a similar fate and the defence budget will be passed without debate through a guillotine. Our parliamentarians and political parties have forgotten that their priorities and performance are being watched not just by their electors, but the national security institutions and more ominously those across our borders that harbour us ill will. It is not beyond the realms of possibility that those ill-disposed towards India in Bangladesh saw this an opportune moment to humiliate our border forces and hence chose to act.

With the Tehelka exposé, it is almost certain that whatever service modernization plans were afoot post-Kargil will again be put on hold. A mere replay of Bofors, 1986. That is why we paid dearly with servicemen's lives in Kargil. And that is why we have lost over 90 young pilots and over 250 aircraft in accidents during the Indian air force's long wait for the advanced jet trainer. The 12th Lok Sabha standing committee on defence had made scathing remarks about successive governments using delaying tactics while accepting that absence of an AJT was costing loss of lives and equipment. The latest standing committee on defence has again passed similar grave strictures. Yet these people's representatives have found no time to debate these vital national security issues within Parliament. It is this lack of concern by our legislators and administrators to the needs, safety and izzat of our armed forces that is giving our adversaries unconventional ideas that are aggressively being put into practice.

Post-Kargil, enough has been written about neglect to national security by our democratic institutions. Pleas have fallen on deaf ears. Action is now needed. Let the military leadership clearly articulate what essentials they need to implement government security policy and not acquiesce in governmental procrastination. Let Parliament hold a special and comprehensive debate on national security for people to judge where political parties stand on national security issues. And let the government continue to reorganize and modernize its defence apparatus without fear or favour.

Institutions of democratic India must now consider themselves on notice as the people are in no mood to tolerate torture and humiliation of our servicemen and defiling of our dead soldiers.

The author is a retired air marshal of the Indian air force