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## DEFINING A EUROPEAN IDENTITY

R. K. M. B. U.

WITH THE ADMISSION of ten new members at its recent summit in Copenhagen, the European Union (E.U.) has boosted its presence on the world stage though time alone will tell whether it will bring a commensurate weight to bear on global decision-making. What the E.U. has just undertaken is an expansion that widens its territory by 23 per cent, increases its population to 450 million and rounds off its economy to near parity with the U.S. at \$ 9 trillion. A network of formalised political relations — an inter-connection that is more durable than that provided by day-to-day diplomacy — now ties the nations of Europe from the shores of the Atlantic to the western border of Russia. But while the expansion has certainly been to the advantage of the new members, eight of which are the economically less developed nations of Eastern Europe with the other two being the small island-states of Malta and Cyprus, there is no certainty that enlargement by itself will enhance the E.U.'s clout on the global stage. This uncertainty will last at least till the middle of next year when the E.U. begins to consider the constitution that is being drafted and will come closer to a decision on whether unitarianism or federalism should be its fundamental principle. While some of the heavyweights within the E.U. favour a future set-up wherein a central executive and legislature wield great power, others would be comfortable with a variant of the current format wherein the E.U.'s institutions serve as adjuncts to the nation-state and do not supersede them. Among the more pertinent questions that the member-states will have to ponder is about the degree to which they would like to surrender their autonomy to make decisions on political and strategic matters.

If the defining of the E.U.'s political identity will have to wait till the drafting of the constitution is completed, the Copenhagen summit appears to have taken a (perhaps not so conscious) decision on its cultural identity. It

did so by postponing for a further two years any decision on Turkey's inclusion. There was no expectation that Turkey would be included in the current round of expansion but Ankara had fervent hopes that the E.U. summit would at least set a date for the commencement of negotiations that would lead to its eventual admission. But, despite the hectic diplomatic effort put in by Ankara and Washington, the E.U. agreed only that it would meet in December 2004 to decide whether Turkey had made enough progress in democratisation and the observance of human rights to qualify for such negotiations. If an E.U. that consisted wholly of western liberal democracies could not agree to Turkey's admission it is difficult to see how an expanded body — in which each of the newly admitted East European states as well as Cyprus will have the same voting rights as any other member — would be more accommodating. Cyprus and Turkey are locked in a bitter bilateral dispute and workers in the East European states are not likely to let their Governments agree that the opportunities that they have just won for themselves in the West European markets should be extended to the Turks as well. Further political and economic arguments will be piled on top of the basic concerns of a Christian Europe at admitting a nation of 70 million Muslims (a number set to rapidly expand) into their fold.

While the Europeans appear to be sensitive that the issue should not be defined in religious terms, the widespread belief among the Turks that they were being kept out only because of their faith is likely to become more entrenched. The people of Turkey had given a clear mandate to a religiously oriented political formation in elections held just weeks ago. They have initially reacted with equanimity to the E.U.'s rejection of their bid for membership. But there is no guarantee that the Turks too will not succumb to the rage and resentment at being rejected by the West that afflicts so many others in the Muslim world.

**SUMMIT / TURKEY FEELS SLIGHTED**

# 10 nations join European Union

By **Batuk Gathani**

**BRUSSELS, DEC. 14.** With the European Union throwing open its door to 10 new countries, the organisation is emerging as the world's largest market with a population rising from the current 370 millions to 450 millions.

The expanded Europe will stretch from Portugal on the Atlantic coast to the borders of Russia in the heartland of the Euro-Asian continent. The E.U. last night took in Latvia, Lithuania, Estonia, Poland, Hungary, the Czech Republic, Slovakia, Slovenia, Malta and Cyprus. Bulgaria and Romania will also become full members in 2007. The expanded E.U. of "solidarity and unity" is structured on a common economic and political heritage, based on the key principles of multi-party democracy, rule of law, free market economy and border tariff-free trade.

Last night, the E.U. summit at Copenhagen ended with a show of unity and bonhomie among the delegates who were deeply aware of the historical importance of the occasion. This was highlighted by the former communist-ruled Eastern Europe embracing multi-party democracy and free market economy. There was much backslapping and hugging as Government leaders gathered for a "family photo" opportunity.

Poland, the largest of the new entrants, was to come last on board after finally accepting new financial arrangements. A visibly emotional Prime Minister of Poland, Leszek Miller, described the occasion as a historic one and said, "Today, Poland comes from a 'Poland of Solidarity' to a Europe of Soli-

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...darity." The expanded E.U. comes into being 13 years after the fall of the Berlin Wall when the Soviet Union melted away, highlighting the end of the Cold War. As an ecstatic President of the European Commission, Romano Prodi, put it, "The accession of 10 new member states will bring an end to divisions of Europe."

The secular but Islamic Turkey, with a population of nearly 70 million, still remains a big question mark on the map of the expanded E.U., but in a historic move, the E.U. leaders also accepted that Turkey can become a full member of the Union provided it put in motion reforms to meet European standards of good governance.

The Turkish press on Saturday expressed deep dismay at the E.U. summit outcome. "Once again, a broken dream", read a headline in *Cumhuriyet*, a prominent Turkish daily. Despite such disappointment, however, Turkey is moving closer to entry negotiations with the E.U. The Turkish delegates even accused E.U. officials of treating them differently from the 12 other candidates for membership.

As Turkey's Prime Minister, Abdullah Gul, put it, "If Turkey joins the European Union, it will prove that a Muslim country can be democratic, transparent and comfortable with the modern world. This will enrich the European Union."

However, the former French President, Valery Giscard d'Estaing, last night refused to budge from his stand expressing deep reservations about Turkey becoming a member of the E.U.

P. Dm  
E.U.

# E.U.: Turkey's hopes dashed

14.11 By Batuk Gathani 14/12

**BRUSSELS, DEC. 13.** The European Union, influenced by French initiative, today dashed Turkey's and British-American hopes for an early talk on Turkey's entry into the E.U. Ankara's progress towards better human rights may now be reviewed in December 2004 instead of May 2003. The actual membership negotiations will not start till 2005.

Turkish diplomats have described the European stance as "a disaster for Turkey and Cyprus". According to European diplomats, many loose ends have yet to be 'tied up' by the U.N. mediators before reaching a settlement on the 28-year old division of Cyprus, between Turkish and Greek communities. Britain and the U.S. had pressed for a Turkish membership review date before May 2004. The U.S. President, George Bush, had earlier telephoned the Danish Prime Minister, Rasmussen, to ease Turkey's way into the European Union.

It is obvious that the issue has left the E.U. opinion divided, though the debate has been put on top of the summit agenda. Many Europeans vastly see Turkey as "essentially a Muslim and backward country" and some Europeans even fear that Turkey's entry into the E.U. may even block further social, political and economic integration of the E.U. This sentiment has been boosted in the backdrop of the September 11, 2002 terrorist attack by Islamic fundamentalists. The E.U. countries are also deeply concerned about Turkey's record on human rights. For example, the Scandinavian countries have strong reservations on this issue while on the other hand Holland, Austria and France look at the religious dimensions.

Some European intellectuals see Turkey as better aligned and culturally more integrated with progressive Central Asian Muslim nations.

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**EUROPEAN UNION / LEADERS OPEN HISTORIC MEET**

# Turkey to be the key issue

R. Atiyah  
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By Batuk Gathani

**BRUSSELS, DEC. 12.** The historic summit of the heads of European Union member countries began today at a Copenhagen suburb, as 10 East and Central European states prepare to join the current 15 members of the Union.

The summit is an epoch-making event with Turkey, the largest Muslim candidate country, gaining powerful backing on both sides of the Atlantic for it to join the E.U.

It is ironical that people who work in the European Commission have little concept of what the enlarged E.U. will look like by the end of this decade.

Most West Europeans, according to latest statistics, are in the dark over the E.U.'s proposed new members. On the other side of fence, the issue of E.U. membership has divided Eastern Europe with many questioning the benefits of joining the organisation. The latest opinion polls reveal that 52 per cent of the East Europeans support joining the E.U. Of the 10 candidate countries, eight are former satellites of the defunct Soviet Union, in addition to Malta and Cyprus.

In Brussels, an opinion poll released last night by the European Commission showed that an alarmingly small proportion of the current E.U. citi-



**The Turkish ruling AK party leader, Recep Tayyip Erdogan (left), with the Greek Prime Minister, Constantinos Simitis, before the E.U. enlargement summit in Copenhagen on Thursday. — Reuters**

zens know which countries will join the Union in little over a year. Many are also worried that accession of the new members would have a "welter of negative consequences". It is similar

to the situation in Germany before the unification in 1989 when most West and East Germans had no idea about the consequences and the cost of unification. The silver lining is

that two out of three E.U. citizens remain broadly favourable to the enlargement.

The Copenhagen summit of E.U. leaders will officially end on Friday but preparations have been made to keep it open for Saturday and Sunday when each of the 10 candidate countries has to officially accept the E.U. membership. All new members will hold a referendum next year with the first one scheduled in Hungary in April. To start with, the European Commission has given the candidate countries a total of euro 10 million a year since 1998.

If all goes well, a broad agreement could be reached by the weekend, provided the ticklish issue of the divided Cyprus is resolved by the Turkish and Greek delegations.

Turkey will also be given a date to begin negotiations for the membership. The E.U. countries also remain divided and confused over Turkey's proposed membership amid the realisation that with that country's entry, one in five E.U. citizens will be a Muslim.

At the same time, Turkey has a long way to go to catch up with the level of economic, social and political development in line with the membership criteria of the E.U. It is also argued that instead of full membership, Turkey can be accorded "partnership" status with the Union.

THE HINDU

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**D**URING his recent visit to India, Russian President Vladimir Putin brought up an earlier mentioned subject: namely, the formation of a Russia-China-India triad. Expectantly, this drew a tepid response from New Delhi as we still harbour our non-alignment dogma with sacrosanctity.

On its part, Beijing has been playing a quiet game on this issue, occasionally agreeing and then displaying second thoughts.

The triad concept was first enunciated by Russia's then Prime Minister — a former foreign minister and a highly reputed practitioner of international relations — Yevgeny Primakov when he came to India some four years back. His suggestion, needless to say, fell on deaf ears.

For the past 10 years or so, India, China and not forgetting Russia, have been crying themselves hoarse that it was high time we had a multipolar world. In every summit declaration signed by the top dignitaries of these three countries, be it among themselves or with others, the demand for multipolarity has found a dominant place. Their perennial beef has been and continues to be about the USA flinging its tentacles all over the world, not only in the sphere of manipulating the fate of nations but also in controlling crucial UN institutions like the World Bank and the IMF.

Unless a counter balance in the shape of additional global poles is created by those who possess the ability to do so, it will become extremely difficult for any nation that does not kowtow to Washington to survive. The danger looming over Iraq is a living example.

The question is, where will multipolarity come from? As votaries of this exigent, do India and China in particular expect it to drop like manna from heaven? Russia has been farsighted enough to realise

# ✓ A requisite alliance

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JK DUTT argues forcefully for a Russia-India-China triad to counterbalance the American influence

that this requirement needs to be fulfilled as early as possible. In fact it was one time Russian foreign minister Andreii Kozyrev's frank admission that unless Moscow made itself convenient to accommodate the Western Bloc's expansionist ideas after the Soviet Union collapsed, the Russian Federation would get transformed into a pariah. Kozyrev was sacked, of course, but his notion jelled in the Kremlin.

Unlike his predecessor, Mr Putin understood the seriousness of the unfolding scenario in Europe and hence he has been discreetly insisting on the triad. Surprisingly, New Delhi and Beijing, while sustaining the demand for multipolarity, have been reticent in taking any initiative. This is inexplicable.

Specious excuses have been put forth by India and China: the former harangues that it has a border problem with China besides Russia is selling weapon systems to Beijing, and the latter wants to go it alone in Asia in its goal of attaining super-powership. New Delhi should acknowledge that an exasperating border conflict between five countries that are contiguous has been amicably resolved, witness the notable Four Plus One Agreement.

Thus harping on a border dispute is but a façade. Being naïve on weapons sales is another cover up — are we not doing the same? We should imbibe the portion on arms merchandising in the Theory of Conflict to get an eye opener on this topic. If peace were to come to Kashmir, West Asia, Indonesia, Africa, et al, the first person to put in his papers would be the chief executive of Kalashnikov Company! Just ask Russia's finance minister.

Are India and China really serious about challenging America's universal political might? It does not appear so. It appears on the other hand that India and China periodically lament the lack of multipolarity while preferring to remain tacitly subservient to the USA in international affairs. Apparently, the globalisation syndrome is the cause for the two Asian giants not rubbing America the wrong way. Yet we need to appreciate that without any worthwhile challenge, the USA will use globalisation tactics to only suit its own purpose at the expense of others.

The Kyoto Protocol is proof enough. Things might have been different at Kyoto had there been one or two "pressurisers" on the USA in the form of global poles that matter.

In the Asian panorama, the onus is on India to break out of its antediluvian non-alignment moorings and express itself in thought and deed — not just word — that it is earnest in getting involved in international power play.

If New Delhi thinks so highly of Moscow and considers itself to be close to it, then why is it acting shy on Primakov's suggestion? The diplomat that he is, Putin did not give vent to his inner feelings on our presumptions. If we are truly not interested in projecting India as a global player in the new millennium despite several countries' opinion including that of the USA that we

have the potential, then we should refrain from uttering empty monotones about the absence of multipolarity; it has begun to sound terribly insincere and hollow.

In the alternate vein instead of bumbling along with our frog-in-the-well vision, New Delhi should snap out of its self help straitjacket and back Moscow to the hilt in getting the triad through post haste. An alliance of this nature comprising three progressive industrial powerhouses complete with nuclear capability will send out unprecedented political ripples in the world. Importantly, this triad is bound to become the nucleus of a second global pole and is sure to attract many Asian countries plus the Central Asian Republics into its ambit. This turn of events can be a beacon for the European Union to institute a third such pole.

We should comprehend another worrisome truth. The USA in its pursuance of eradicating terrorism has now embedded its talons fairly deeply in Asia and its peregrination in this regard is assuming a wholly one-way course. The cause for this is the upcoming Asian powers' — e.g. India and China — abstinence in diluting American expansionism. The USA is also playing its Nato enlargement card very astutely and unless this is effectively riposted, both the EU as well as Eurasia will end up holding the thin end of the stick. This will tantamount

to a wholesale hara-kiri by them.

ces of a fresh Cold War surfacing as a fallout are remote on account of the positive side of globalisation.

Probably the most clinching factor for multipolarity will be its utility in curtailing terrorism. Terrorism on a world-wide scale has gained impetus due to irrational American foreign policy outputs. The non-availability of any worthwhile international opposition has encouraged the USA to literally free-wheel its foreign policy all over, according to Washington's moods. West Asia showcases this quite explicitly. A dynamic multipolar world as construed will go a long way in rationalising America's external outlook.

There is no gainsaying the attendant global benefits.

(The author is a retired Lieutenant-Colonel of the Indian Army.)

# Nato backs UN effort to disarm Iraq

STEVE HOLLAND AND  
HAITHAM HADDADIN

**Prague/Baghdad, Nov. 21**  
(Reuters): Nato leaders issued a united declaration of support today for efforts to disarm Iraq, papering over the deep divisions among their ranks over the US threat to wage war.

On the first day of the Nato summit in Prague, two American soldiers in Kuwait were shot and wounded by a Kuwaiti policeman, in the latest of a series of such incidents in a US ally expected to be a crucial launchpad for any attack on Iraq.

Weapons inspector Mohammed ElBaradei, head of the International Atomic Energy Agency, arrived back in Vienna

saying Iraq had promised full cooperation with the UN resolution demanding total disclosure of suspected weapons programmes.

"I think they understand the seriousness of the situation," he said. "I think we have to try every chance to avoid war if we can." US forces have little need of practical military help from Nato allies for any attack on Iraq, although airbases such as Turkey's are strategically important. But President George W. Bush used the Prague talks to lobby Nato leaders to provide at least clear moral support.

The wording of today's summit declaration, however, was watered down by alliance members wary of eventual war.

"Nato allies stand united in their commitment to take effective action to assist and support the efforts of the UN to ensure full and immediate compliance by Iraq with the conditions or restrictions of (Security Council Resolution) 1441," diplomats quoted the summit communiqué on Iraq as reading.

A French official in Prague was quick to express the desire of his government to rein in US military plans. An Iraqi denial that it possesses weapons of mass destruction, in an arms inventory demanded by the UN by a December 8 deadline, would not justify war, the official said.

The official was responding to a warning by Bush yesterday that if Iraqi President Saddam

Hussein denied in a declaration to the United Nations on December 8 that Iraq has nuclear, biological and chemical weapons, he would enter his "final stage" and reap the most severe consequences.

"That is his own interpretation and we do not share it," the French official told reporters. "We have never said there was proof that Iraq had weapons of mass destruction. We say there are indications."

"On December 8, we will take note of what Iraq says it has or does not have, and we will see if its behaviour is consistent with its statement. If the (UN) inspectors found something afterwards, that would constitute a serious violation."

Saddam's government has so far flatly maintained it has no weapons of mass destruction, putting it on a collision course with Washington on December 8.

US officials have suggested that the ever more frequent clashes between Iraqi anti-aircraft gunners and patrolling US and British warplanes over Iraq could also be a breach of the UN resolution, a view not shared by other governments.

Analysts said that in the air the Iraq war could be said to have already begun.

"What we've basically had is the first two to three weeks of the 1991 Gulf War already fought," said Paul Beaver, a London-based defence and security consultant.

PRAGUE / CRUCIAL SUMMIT FROM TODAY

# NATO set to take in new members

By Batuk Gathani

**BRUSSELS, NOV. 20.** The three-day NATO summit in Prague is an epoch-making event as it takes up the admission of seven former communist countries ending cold-war divisions in the world. But sombre clouds are looming on NATO's political and logistical horizon and it is argued that the growing 'unilateralism' of the Bush administration is fuelled by Europe's unwillingness to spend heavily on defence. For example, NATO's 16 European nations spend \$500 millions a day on defence compared to the U.S. \$1000 millions or a billion a day. The U.S. defence budget for 2003 has been increased by \$48 billions. All this is obviously causing concern about NATO's future. In the opening speech, Mr. Bush will set out America's vision for the western military

alliance that has been the cornerstone of the trans-Atlantic security since the Second World War. There are many Europeans who still remain perplexed about the real role of NATO in the post-cold war environment of Europe and the world at large, with Russia and even China, now leaning towards new parameters of a democratic way of life. In a recent interview, Mr. Bush has set a course of 'confident action' and said the country's allies would follow an assertive U.S. because "United States is in a unique position right now. We are the leader." Such hegemonistic rhetoric has not impressed many Europeans who feel that the NATO summit is either a choice of deep change or further decline. The Prague summit has been described as a "transformation summit" and participants may initiate radical changes both in

the composition and the structure of the alliance. The Secretary-General of NATO, Lord Robertson, last night promised a "major shake-up" to make a bigger NATO workable and said that after Prague it would become "a slim and more effective structure".

NATO is currently rated as a slow moving highly bureaucratic organisation where the book does everything. For NATO officials that book is consensus — on political and military decisions, on hiring staff and even on changing the coffee machines. Lord Robertson warns that if the Europeans do not undertake to improve their military capabilities, the U.S. will simply lose patience. Europe will then "remain a pygmy".

Mr. Bush is hoping to gain more allies in the fight against global terrorism as NATO expands. It is argued that NATO's



**GETTING CLOSER: The Czech President, Vaclav Havel (left), with his U.S. counterpart, George W. Bush, in Prague on Tuesday. — AFP**

holding the summit in Prague. He said: "This is the first time NATO is holding a summit beyond the former Iron Curtain and in the city where Warsaw Pact itself was dissolved."

# Nato to adopt aggressive counter-terrorist stance

The Times, London

BRUSSELS, Nov. 8. — Nato will adopt an aggressive counter-terrorist role, sending troops to any country in the world that needs help destroying terrorist groups operating on its territory.

The strategy will be announced at the Nato summit in Prague this month, and officials consider it a dramatic development in the alliance's attempt to transform itself into a "usable" defence organisation. It would mean that the alliance could engage in an Afghanistan-style counter-terrorist operation.

A British diplomat said: "USA didn't call on Nato to attack Al-Qaida in Afghanistan but that doesn't mean the alliance is no longer relevant, as some critics seem to be saying. What if there had been a similar terrorist attack in Britain or Germany — would either have launched

## Bush mate

WASHINGTON, Nov. 8. — Mr George Bush last night announced that Vice-President Mr Dick Cheney will be his running mate in the 2004 presidential election, but left a question mark on the future of Treasury Secretary Mr Paul O'Neill. — The Times

an attack on Afghanistan on its own? It's more likely they would've turned to Nato."

After 9/11 Nato approved an Article V declaration by which each member-state was ready to support the USA, with force if necessary, after what Mr Bush described as an act of war against his country. In the end Nato firepower wasn't required.

The current plan for a new anti-terrorism strategy has not found favour with all Nato's member-states. It has caused alarm in Paris, and senior alliance officials said

that French pressure would prevent Nato from trumpeting this new mission when the summit communique is published on 21 November.

While the wording will be sanitised to keep the French happy, the plan's importance will not be lost on Mr Bush, who will go to Prague expecting strong support from alliance members in confronting Al-Qaida and linked Islamic extremist groups.

Lord Robertson of Port Ellen, the Nato secretary-general, told The Times that the policy would be one of "defending against or deterring a terrorist attack, and, if required, destroying" terrorist groups. Asked whether that meant Nato launching "pre-emptive" raids in other countries, Lord Robertson said that deterrence implied an element of pre-emption and saw no difficulty in acting to stop a terrorist attack were there evidence of an imminent threat.

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THE STATESMAN



# US chief to oversee Nato operations

Michael Evans  
The Times, London

LONDON, Nov. 11. — Nato is to be revolutionised with a slimmer structure to make the organisation born in the Cold War more relevant in the 21st century.

The new structure is intended primarily to meet US concerns about the alliance's flexibility. All Nato operations are to come under the command of a single US military chief as part of a drastic streamlining to demonstrate that it is ready to send troops at short notice to deal with any type of crisis.

With seven more countries due to be invited to join the alliance at the Nato summit in Prague on 21 November, bringing total membership to 26 nations,

there is a sense of urgency to ensure that the organisation does not become so unwieldy that it cannot react quickly to emergencies.

In a plan to be set out at the summit, the two most important Nato posts, Supreme Allied Commander Europe (Saceur), based at Mons in Belgium, and Supreme Allied Commander Atlantic (Saclant), based at Norfolk, Virginia, will be merged into one. The post of Atlantic commander will be abolished and the new overall military chief is expected to be called Strategic Commander Operations.

The set-up in Virginia will remain, but the top job will be non-operational, concerned with planning, education and military doctrine. Saclant, under the present

system, is responsible for operations covering the Atlantic, North America, Iceland and Portugal. He is also in charge of reinforcements in time of war.

Eight operational headquarters are to be formed which could be drafted in to take over managing a crisis or masterminding a campaign. A number of Nato members have been selected for running the HQs, including Italy, Turkey, Spain and a joint one involving Germany and the Netherlands. They will be expected to supplement Nato's Allied Rapid Reaction Force HQ at Rheindalen in Germany, commanded by Britain.

European countries have agreed to start spending large sums of money on

buying key equipment to improve Nato's overall military capabilities. Lord Robertson of Port Ellen, Nato's Secretary-General, has finally won promises from a number of countries to fill gaps in capabilities.

Using what he called a mixture of "thuggery and charm", Lord Robertson told *The Times* that in talks with Nato ministers last week he got each to commit his government to buying or leasing specific equipment immediately.

Germany will lease several strategic-range transport aircraft, either the US C17 Globemaster or the Russian Antonov. Britain, which has four C17s under a seven-year leasing arrangement, is likely to extend the deal with Boeing.

# ASEAN to combat terrorism

By P. S. Suryanarayana

**PHNOM PENH, NOV. 5.** The Association of South-East Asian Nations (ASEAN) has enhanced its cooperation with China as also Japan and South Korea in the campaign against terrorism, even as the issues arising out of North Korea's recent confessions about its clandestine nuclear weaponisation drive were addressed by all these countries with a sense of urgency.

Although no definitive plan was drawn up, either at the eighth ASEAN summit or during the ASEAN+3 summit here on Monday, to nullify North Korea's programme, China and the ASEAN issued a joint declaration on cooperation in the field of non-traditional security issues, which touched upon terrorism among other concerns.

While the 10-member ASEAN issued a Declaration on Terrorism to underline its commitment to combat this menace, China entered into a separate framework agreement to establish a free trade area. Japan and South Korea too held discussions with the ASEAN on a range of issues extending from free trade possibilities to a greater degree of



**SECURITY CONCERNS:** The leaders of the ASEAN + Japan discussing the new terrorist and nuclear threats at their summit in Phnom Penh, Cambodia, on Tuesday. — AP

counter-terror cooperation.

With Japan and South Korea taking the initiative to sensitise the ASEAN to the dangers of Pyongyang's nuclear ambitions, China shared their concerns over the issue without, however, adopting any approach that could have led to a joint stand by the ASEAN's East Asian partners. While China's links with North Korea prevented the creation of a regional alliance against Pyon-

gyang, Japan made clear its intention to engage the Kim Jong-il regime in a dialogue.

The most significant event on the first day was China's two-way agreement with ASEAN — the counter-terror declaration and the framework accord to set up a free trade area by 2010 in respect of the more developed member countries of the organisation and by 2015 in regard to the less developed ones.

## Draft report on E.U. constitution released

By Batuk Gathani

BRUSSELS, OCT. 29. The former French President, Valery Giscard d'Estaing, who is currently presiding over the "Convention on the Future of Europe", on Monday unveiled the first outline of a European Union constitution, as the multi-national organisation gears up for enlargement from the current 15 members to 25.

The proposed constitution would delineate the broader outline of an enlarged European Union. For example, Germany, the "locomotive" economic power of the region, wants a more federal E.U. while France and Britain want the member states to retain their primacy in the political and cultural spheres. The constitution outline released by Mr Giscard d'Estaing is just a skeleton rather than a "fleshed out draft", but it states how power will be allocated in the E.U. The basic quest is to make the concept of the E.U. less remote in the eyes of its citizens who currently number 370 millions and would be 440 millions by 2004, when 10 more nations are made full members. There has been an extensive debate about two alternatives: Either create the post of an

"elected" President of the European Council or strengthen the role of the current President of the European Commission — the executive arm of the E.U., which employs 17,000 civil servants and has a budget of euro 950 billions.

The idea of having an elected Council President is supported by Britain, Spain and France but opposed by smaller member states which fear loss of influence. Germany is technically open to both the proposals but since the British Prime Minister, Tony Blair, and his Spanish counterpart, Jose Maria Aznar, are increasingly being mentioned as "potential presidents", the Germans may back their Foreign Minister, Joschka Fischer, for the post.

The convention headed by Mr. Giscard d'Estaing has so far remained "neutral and academic" on the issue. The current European quest is to first create a new legal entity of the E.U. to replace the current treaties governing the organisation. It is also argued that whatever Mr Giscard d'Estaing proposes, the decisive influence over the future of the E.U. would come from its two biggest founder members — Germany and France.

# E.U. to freeze farm subsidies

2610 By Batuk Gathani

BRUSSELS, OCT. 25. The summit meeting of the 15 European Union heads of Government concluded today with a broad agreement to limit the Union's spending on subsidies to farmers — better known as Common Agricultural Policy — which makes up almost half of the organisation's euro 95,000-million annual budget.

The summit agreement was made possible after the German Chancellor, Gerhard Schroeder and the President of France, Jacques Chirac, in a surprise move, clinched an agreement to limit agricultural spending 2006. This has taken the other 13 members of the Union by surprise as the German and French leaders broke a deadlock that had threatened to jeopardise the proposed enlargement of the European Union from the current 15 to 25 members. Above all, this has averted the collapse of this week's summit meeting of the E.U. leaders here. The new deal will cap agriculture expenditure at current levels, taking inflation into account. This will pave way for smooth entry of



**The European Commission President, Romano Prodi (left), congratulates the Irish Prime Minister, Bertie Ahern, at the European Union summit in Brussels on Thursday on the result of the Irish referendum last week on the Treaty of Nice which confirmed a "yes" vote for the E.U.'s planned enlargement to the East. — Reuters**

10 new members by 2004. The Franco-German deal also scotches rumours suggesting that relations between the two countries have deteriorated. The two leaders met informally before the summit at a Brussels hotel and broadly agreed on the outline of the strategy to

cap the farm spending. "The construction of Europe has always been a co-ordinated effort between France and Germany" Mr. Chirac said in the hotel lobby. The Ministers and officials of the European Commission and E.U. Governments have welcomed the breakthrough.

FRIDAY, OCTOBER 25, 2002

R. Anil **ASEAN AND LOST OPPORTUNITIES** H.P. 10

THE NEED FOR strengthening India's economic ties with the ASEAN was once again voiced quite vociferously at the business summit that concluded last week. There can be no two opinions at all on the desirability of boosting trade and commerce with the ten-member regional group. However, previous efforts in this direction have unfortunately not yielded the desired results. Four important members of the ASEAN — Singapore, Malaysia, Indonesia and Thailand — have at various times in the recent past taken special initiatives to boost trade with India, without commensurate results. It is noteworthy that several State Governments in India have tried to tap the special strengths of a few of these countries — as for example Singapore's known status as a haven for electronics and recently bio-technology — but again with disappointing results. Hence, for the latest summit to be branded as something more than rhetoric and theoretical there must be a significant breakthrough in many directions.

The point has been made that India has not benefited from its traditional multifaceted relationship with South East Asia. A long historical association, which was not exploitative in any sense, could have provided the base for a considerably enhanced trade relationship. Even today some of these countries, Singapore, Thailand and Malaysia, are important tourist destinations for the Indian middle class. There has been a vast potential in India to cater to the specialised educational requirements of students from these countries, especially in the higher echelons. Only now have some attempts been made in exchanging students between India and countries such as Singapore. It is a fact of the increasingly globalised world that the migration of students among countries has paved the way for a more meaningful exploitation of trade and commerce.

However, despite the lost opportunities, there is apparently room for optimism, as the tenor of the recent summit shows. A study conducted by McKinsey, the consultancy firm for summit hosts FICCI, expects trade between India and ASEAN to grow between 15 and 18 per cent over the next five years and that ASEAN'S share in India's trade will grow from the present 6 to 8 per cent. It is not clear as to whether the approach from now on can not only counter the past legacy, but also reckon with a certain heterogeneity among the member-countries that might nullify the advantages of an unified strategy vis-a-vis ASEAN.

For instance, India's trade deficit with Singapore has been increasing — from Rs.845 crores in 1997-98 to Rs.1,582 crores in 2001-02 while with Malaysia it had been decreasing from Rs.2,561 crores to Rs.1,717 crores during the same period. Obviously, Malaysia's efforts to boost its commodity exports to India, especially palm oil, will succeed only if India lowers its import tariff. Such an appeal was made by no less than the visiting Malaysian Prime Minister, Mahathir Mohammad.

However, given the drought conditions in India, it is unlikely that such a sop will be given at this juncture. It will be highly detrimental to domestic oil seed growers. Again, there is a difference in the strategy adopted by individual ASEAN countries in conducting trade with non-members. Singapore favours a bilateral approach while Malaysia a regional one. Under such circumstances, the suggestion endorsed by both the Malaysian and Indian Prime Ministers to set up a Regional Trade and Investment Area between India and ASEAN bristles with practical difficulties. All in all, it is difficult to gauge the efficacy of business summits including the latest one concerning ASEAN. Yet, to the extent they open the doors to fresh ideas, though not immediately to trade and commerce, they should be commended.

# Vote clears E.U. expansion

By Batuk Gathani

310-15  
27/10  
**BRUSSELS, OCT. 21.** The approval of the "Nice Treaty" by Irish voters in Sunday's referendum has cleared major technical and constitutional hurdles to the European Union's expansion. The voters approved the treaty by 63 per cent, according to late returns available on Monday morning. The overwhelming "yes" vote contrasts sharply with the referendum held in June 2001 which the voters rejected.

Ireland, which comprises just 1 per cent of the European Union's population, has put major E.U. agreements to a national referendum. The President of the European Commission, Romano Prodi, said: "Ireland is giving the green light to the E.U.'s enlargement."

The passing of the referendum is sending out the signal that the 375 million citizens of the E.U. prefer to see the 10 candidate countries joining the Union, which at present, comprises 15 states. Ireland held the referendum as it was a constitutional requirement of the country. The overwhelming Irish "yes" vote has come as a great relief for supporters of the E.U.'s expansion. In the more prosperous regions of the E.U., led by Germany and France, many feel that the poorer countries from the former Soviet Union bloc and the Mediterranean are lucky to be offered a chance to join the world's biggest and most prosperous trading region, which will consist of a common market of half a billion consumers, with a single currency and no customs or trade barriers



**A NICE OUTCOME: Hungarians celebrate following the result of the Irish referendum on Sunday.** — Reuters

from Lisbon to Warsaw and Helsinki to Nicosia in Cyprus.

It is also argued that in the near future, the E.U. would

face a major financial and economic challenge to raise the living standards of the new members. Resources and efforts backed by investments will be made to upgrade their institutions to match the standards set by the E.U. With economic growth in the Union currently running at half its 2001 level and over 10 million unemployed people living off state hand-outs, the E.U. is in an economic quandary over the expansion programme.

The E.U. Governments are also committed by the Maastricht Treaty to eliminating budget deficits and hence, there is very little "spare cash" to help the new member states. The European Commission is, therefore, offering the 10 applicant countries 25 per cent of the existing subsidy when they join the Union in 2004, raising it to the full amount of subsidies after 10 years.

# Ireland votes, hope yet for EU

Agence France Presse

R. H. M. G. M.

ST-2 21/10

DUBLIN, Oct. 20. — Hopes rose today that EU enlargement will go ahead as planned and on schedule in 2004, as initial referendum results pointed to Ireland's belated approval of the Nice treaty.

Six Dublin constituencies with electronic voting backed the treaty — a prerequisite for the European Union's expansion into eastern Europe and the Mediterranean — with between 56.87 per cent and 73.29 per cent voting in favour.

County Meath, north-west of the capital, posted 65.31 per cent in favour. Counting of paper ballots in the rest of Ireland was to take all day today, with final results from yesterday's

voting — eagerly awaited in Brussels and the enlargement capitals — expected around 5 p.m.

But the Deputy Prime Minister, Ms Mary Harney, was confident of victory, 16 months after the Irish gave the treaty the thumbs down — and put enlargement in doubt — when 54 per cent voted against it in a referendum that took all of Europe by surprise.

"I think tonight's vote in Dublin is representative of the country at large," Ms Harney told RTE TV. Mr Justin Barrett, a leader of the "No to Nice coalition", virtually conceded defeat when he told RTE: "We've taken a major step towards a European superstate — and that's not going to do anyone any good."

# Why do the Irish want to stick tongues out at EU?

As of now, there are at least three disparate sets of people who may feel a strong and compelling urge to stick their tongues out at the European Union. Prime Minister Vajpayee's aides and indeed, possibly the prime minister himself. President Pervez Musharraf's administration and again, possibly, Pakistan's Generalissimo himself. And the feisty Irish people, though not their prime minister Bertie Ahern.

Mr Vajpayee's emotions may be easily explained. He recently travelled, with a huge supporting cast of ministers, officials and businessmen to the third India-EU summit to talk business and politics with the EU. The business was possibly the easy part. The politics, alas, suffered from Europe's inability to recognise a spade for what it is, i.e. cross-border terrorism as a Pakistani tool of state policy that sunders lives and the chance for peace on the sub-continent.

Gen Musharraf's reasons for wanting to pull faces at Europe's busybodies are domestic. Last week, the EU looked at his meticulously-managed elections with just the right amount of public dis-

dain. This time they called a spade by its right name, i.e. the electoral implement that keeps Pakistan in lock to a military man who may soon come to believe in his divine right to rule.

But what of the Irish people? Why would they, blue-eyed wonders astride the so-called Celtic tiger economy, recipients of more than \$20 billion in EU aid, want to call beneficent Europe a rude name?

And if so, why is their prime minister not preparing to stick his tongue out with the rest of them?

Welcome to democracy, EU-style. A government agrees to a course of action with the 14 other EU govern-

ments. The people give it the thumbs down. It goes ahead anyway. This is in reference, of course, to the reigning European question of the moment—will Irish eyes smile on the process of EU enlargement by means of the Treaty of Nice?

By Sunday afternoon, Indian time, the results of

Saturday's Irish referendum will be clear. The people will have indicated whether or not they wish to rubber-stamp the European enlargement process. Ireland will have had its moment in the full glare of the television camera lights. And enlargement will go ahead anyway, whatever the outcome, though it may take longer to offer all 10 of the eastern and central European applicant-countries safe harbour.

It will go ahead, of course, because the EU wants the muscle that comes with being the world's largest single market; harbinger of a golden age of peace on a continent united for the first time since 804 without war. Go ahead too, because the EU has a back-up mechanism, another, earlier Treaty of Amsterdam, ratified by all 15 EU members, which offers entry passes to five new candidate-countries.

In the final analysis, it doesn't matter much what the Irish do with their votes or tongues. Last year, they voted against enlargement. This year, they're being asked again, nicely, but firmly, to put their tongues back where they belong and behave like adults. Footnotes in history look better that way.

## EURO VISION

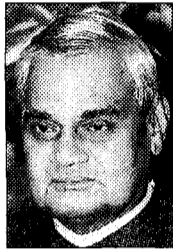
Rashmee Z. Ahmed



## EU plays footsie with Musharraf, holds Vajpayee's hands

It is an unlikely— and controversial— entry for any CV, but five years after he handed Hong Kong back to China, Chris Patten still insists on describing himself as the man who had the task of “bringing the curtain down on the British Empire”.

Till midnight, June 30, 1997, Patten was Britain's last colonial governor. Today, he is external relations commissioner of the European Union (EU) and his job involves the biggest post-imperial project of them all—the steadily-enlarging



A.B. Vajpayee



Chris Patten



Gen Musharraf

citizens best are the best places to invest, that's my number one rule of international economics”.

So now we know. The question is, does it matter? Yes, somewhat, and not just in the short-term when Vajpayee's team reacted to Patten's frank remarks with indignation, prompting Yashwant Sinha to rather childishly dare the EU to dispense

with its narrow prism of Pakistan in relation to India.

If Patten's views counted it was because they were an essential reality check on the eve of an important summit rich in platitudes and promises and short on pretty much everything else. Never mind the gaurav yatras, disnationalism, projected growth rate and IT-wallahs, this is what we seem to be, even to a navel-gazing Europe, supremely obsessed with the tight-fit of its designer bodywork and turbocharged inner mechanism.

In truth, there is not a great deal that is wrong with the assessment. It is another matter that one of the reasons for our much-reviled narrow “prism of Pakistan” is the cynical deliberateness with which Western entities such as Patten's EU lasciviously play footsie under the table with General Musharraf and then publicly hold Vajpayee's hand. But then Charlemagne technically lived during the Dark Ages.

relationship with the outside world. India is one of them, that unseen vista so ripe with possibilities, so riven with problems. That, at least, is the view from Europe. Unsurprisingly, Prime Minister Vajpayee and his delegation, recently in Europe for the third India-EU summit, were not best pleased to hear it.

So too Patten's bracing advice, delivered to me on tape in that eyrie in superbly competent, pleasantly chatty fashion, just one day before the EU's annual summit with Vajpayee on Thursday. India, he said, must not view relations with Europe through the narrow “prism of Pakistan”.

Later, he recalled how he was always struck by the bald fact that “investors routinely flew over India, a democracy, in order to put their investment into China”. But democracies are always more chaotic, I suggested. Patten would have none of that. “In the long-term, the countries which treat their

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**EURO VISION**

Rashmee Z. Ahmed

the grandly-named Charlemagne Building in the capital of Europe, Brussels, is virtually an eyrie. It is right at the top of the glass edifice, named after arguably the most hallowed of the EU's secular saints — Charlemagne, Charles the Great, Holy Roman Emperor, who united most of western Europe by 804.

Eyrie, of course, because Patten has to look out, look far and look long to identify the unseen vistas that could feed into a coherent European rela-

R Am  
119-15 Turkey out of E.U. accession list 5/10

**BRUSSELS, Oct. 4.** The European Commission will next week recommend that 10 countries from the former Soviet bloc and the Mediterranean join the European Union in 2004, but excluded Turkey from the world's biggest trading bloc for the time-being, an EU source said today.

On Wednesday next week, the E.U.'s executive commission will recommend the entry of Cyprus, the Czech Republic, Estonia, Hungary, Latvia, Lithuania, Malta, Poland, Slovakia and Slovenia, the source said.

But Turkey's long-running bid to join the European Union would be put on the back-burner. "It's not that we're saying 'no' to a

date" for Turkey's accession negotiations, the source said. "We can't take a position before the elections in Turkey, and Turkey's elections are in November," she said, adding that human rights in the country remained a concern.

Wednesday's reports will be a regular appraisal by the commission on the progress being made by the candidate countries to get in shape for E.U. membership.

They will be discussed by the E.U.'s existing 15 member states at a Brussels summit on October 24 and 25, which will set the stage for a December gathering in Copenhagen which will formally invite the candidate nations. The E.U. must in the weeks

ahead tackle tricky questions over budgets and agricultural subsidies for the enlarged club. Candidate countries hailed today's news.

"We see membership in the EU and NATO as a return to Europe from which we were brutally and illegally taken away by the Soviets for 50 years," said Andrejs Pildegovics, an adviser to Latvia's president.

The E.U. source said the Commission's regular report on the aspirants, due next Wednesday, will call for strict monitoring of candidates' implementation of E.U. law after entry negotiations are concluded in December and the treaty is signed next April.

— AFP, Reuters

# Concern in E.U. over Iraqi imbroglio

By **Batuk Gathani**

**BRUSSELS, SEPT. 30.** The European Union Governments are keenly watching the outcome of the two-day meeting which began in Vienna on Monday between Iraqi officials and the chief United Nations weapons inspector, Hans Blix, who has waited for nearly four years to begin his work.

Despite the rhetoric to the contrary, the Europeans are increasingly convinced that the U.S. — perhaps followed by Britain — cannot afford to go it alone in Iraq by ignoring and even undermining the U.N. It is also feared that Mr Blix's demands could be quickly overshadowed by stronger demands initiated by the U.S. at the Security Council. In his talks with senior Iraqi officials, Mr Blix will seek Baghdad's consent to arrangements for the proposed inspections for weapons of mass destruction.

The Europeans are increasingly concerned with the gathering diplomatic

and political storm at the U.N. where the U.S. and Britain are facing major hurdles, as they started a series of talks over the weekend with France, Russia and China. A meeting of 10 non-permanent members of the Security Council was also convened.

In the E.U. capitals, it is assumed that France, Russia, China and Syria — a key Arab state on the Security Council — may abstain or vote against the U.S.-British-initiated resolution. The Atlantic allies will need two additional votes from countries of the bloc made up of Ireland, Norway, Singapore, Mexico, Mauritius and Guinea.

The French President, Jacques Chirac's administration has conveyed to American officials that it would continue to insist that a new resolution from the U.N. Security Council must not lay down "automatic consequences" that would follow any non-compliance by Iraq. In the event of a military initiative against Iraq, the French officials suggested, the

consequences of any Iraqi obstruction should be defined only in a second resolution. Russia and China share a similar perception and hence, most Europeans conclude that a second Security Council vote is indispensable before a military action against Iraq can be undertaken, should U.N. inspectors report that Iraqi officials have not fully co-operated with them.

The U.S. draft of the proposed Security Council resolution has given Iraq seven days to accept the U.N. resolution and 30 days to declare its weapons of mass destruction.

The Americans also insist that armed guards accompany the inspectors, but this proposal is rated as controversial and perhaps unacceptable. Despite intense diplomacy over the weekend, the average European still has no idea about the precise language and parameters of the proposed U.N. resolution and how the votes may be cast in the Security Council.

Some European analysts have argued that if the U.N. does not act this week, Mr. Saddam Hussein would win a significant political and propaganda victory. The Europeans are leaning towards what the French officials describe as a two-stage process, trying to avert an automatic military confrontation.

There is also confusion about Russia's response, as it is argued that any solo initiative taken by the President, Vladimir Putin, may undermine the so-called "special relationship" that he has cultivated with Mr. George Bush.

The current European perception is that the Bush administration has consistently played down the importance of diplomacy as it lays more emphasis on the outlines of a national security strategy of extraordinary ambition.

The Americans are seen as abandoning the strategy of containment and there is much talk of "anticipatory defence" and political and logistical challenges posed by "rogue states".

U. S. HINDU

2002

# Straw backs E.U. Constitution

28/8 110-17  
By Hasan Suroor

LONDON, AUG. 27. The British Foreign Secretary, Jack Straw, today re-ignited the row over Europe when, in what is seen as a departure from the Government's stated position, he called for a written constitution for the European Union prompting accusations of a "sell-out" of national sovereignty.

The Tories seized on his remarks, during a speech in Edinburgh on Tuesday morning, to accuse the Labour Government of encouraging attempts to create a European "superstate". The talk of a written constitution, they said, was the first attempt since the Napoleon era to set down a set of common laws for the entire European continent. It was also inconsistent with Prime Minister Tony

Blair's own oft-repeated stand against a "single, legally binding" constitution, they pointed out.

"It's clear that once again Jack Straw and Tony Blair have given in to European integrationists. Despite assurances to the contrary they are now backing a constitution which only makes sense as part of a move to a European superstate," the Shadow Foreign Secretary, Michael Ancram, said calling Mr. Straw's suggestion a "sell-out of British interests".

Mr. Straw, who started a countrywide tour on Tuesday to promote the idea of an integrated E.U. ahead of a referendum on Britain's entry into euro, justified a written constitution on the plea that it would clarify the role of E.U. institutions. He insisted that national governments would remain the

R. M. S. U.  
"primary source of political legitimacy".

"This need not mean a long list of each and every activity of government, setting out in detail who should do what and at which level. But there is a case for a constitution which enshrines a simple set of principles, sets out in plain language what the E.U. is for and how it can add value, and reassures the public that national governments will remain the primary source of political legitimacy," he said. The row comes amid growing uncertainty over whether Mr. Blair would be able to win a referendum on single currency. Contrary to expectations that Britons would warm up to the euro once they became familiar with it on their European travels, the vast majority remains lukewarm according to a latest poll.

28 AUG 2002

# European Commission firm on steel action in WTO

Daniel Dombey  
BRUSSELS, 25 AUGUST

The European Commission on Friday welcomed a US decision this week to exempt more than half the European Union's steel exports from controversial new tariffs, but said it would press on with legal action in the World Trade Organisation over the issue.

The Commission would not be drawn on whether Washington's move made it less likely that the EU would impose countervailing duties on US products. But the mood in the steel dispute, which had threatened to break out into an all-out trade war, has grown more conciliatory in recent months.

"This is at first sight a positive action and a signal to the world that the US realises that protectionism has a cost, in terms of higher prices for domestic users and in terms of



Pascal Lamy

American credibility in the WTO," said Pascal Lamy, EU trade commissioner.

The Commission said that the exemptions for 178 steel products, the seventh round of exemptions since tariffs of up to 30 per cent were imposed in March, meant that more than half of EU exports would not be hit. However, it has yet to check

these figures with European industry.

When the US tariffs were announced, the Commission estimated they would affect more than \$2 billion of EU steel exports.

Officials in Brussels also concede that many EU exporters have yet to be seriously affected by the US measures, as the tariffs have driven up US prices, reducing the deterrent effect of the extra duty on foreign products.

But they maintain that the US tariffs are illegal in themselves, even if their direct impact on individual European producers may not be great.

"What we have obtained until now is far away from what the industry requested," said Salvatore Salerno, a senior Commission trade official. "We are sure that the US measures are not compatible with the

WTO. . . The important thing is to win the case and make the US drop the measures."

Steelmakers such as ThyssenKrupp, the German group, have also welcomed the latest US move but called for the exemption process to be continued. The US has said it will make no further exemptions this year. The Commission, which has been waiting for a definitive US stance, now says it will present EU member states with its decision on whether to call for retaliatory tariffs in mid-September.

It had been due to decide on a first round of up to 379 million euros (\$376 million) in retaliatory tariffs by mid-July. A separate decision on a larger round of retaliatory duties is due next year, if the WTO rules that the US tariffs violated world trade rules. The WTO decision is expected in March.

(Financial Times)

# Asean and global terrorism

The Asean Regional Forum has recently concluded its annual meeting at the Malaysian resort of Bandar Seri Bagawan. This gathering is now established as a major event on the Asian calendar. It brings together nearly two dozen foreign ministers from key regional and non-regional countries to discuss significant political and security issues affecting South East Asia. India was not initially part of the ARF but was invited to join half-a-decade ago.

The agenda at the latest meeting was dominated by the question of terrorism, which is hardly a surprise, given the worldwide concern evoked by the subject.

Of particular interest to India was what the ARF communiqué had to say about terrorism in South Asia. Here, there was cause for considerable satisfaction. The ARF called in unusually forthright terms for an end to cross-border terrorism by Pakistan and asked that country to implement all it had committed itself to in this respect.

It also called for non-interference in the

forthcoming elections in Jammu and Kashmir. Coming when it did, with the demanding challenge of the elections just round the corner, one can hope that this call by the ARF will have a salutary effect. It is also a reminder that the conduct of the elections will attract a great deal of international attention even in the absence of any external monitoring.

The fear of massive rigging has been dwelt upon by all manner of observers, some of whom would like to reject in advance whatever result emerges and would seek to invalidate the electoral process. However, in its communiqué, the ARF showed awareness of the fact that disruption from outside is a real threat to the integrity of the elections. Thus this prime Indian concern was echoed by the ARF. Noteworthy, too, is that the coverage received by Jammu and Kashmir at the meeting shows how this subject has been placed on the international agenda.

What US Secretary of State Colin Powell said to this effect when he was in India, to considerable dismay in some quarters, was brought home in Bandar

Seri Bagawan. At the same time, quite a lot was said on the margins of the meeting in favour of bilateral dialogue to resolve Indo-Pak problems.

Pakistan chose to denounce the communiqué. Nevertheless, it will have to reckon with the fact that the international community is no longer ready to ignore its disruptive actions in Kashmir.

Buoyant perhaps over these developments, some Indian spokespersons were reported to have said that India was ready to block Pakistani entry into the ARF until such time as that country adopted

democracy government and stopped its terrorism practices. It is not clear how India can achieve this result, for unless there has been a change, only Asean itself is able to decide such matters. It has its own ways of achieving consensus, as was seen when India's entry into the ARF was initially opposed by some members but eventually pushed

through. Pakistan was kept out for various reasons, including the fear that the presence of both countries might overwhelm the ARF with their differences. Perhaps, the current contretemps illustrates the wisdom of the Association of South East Asian Nation's initial decision.

The attention directed to the sub-continent should not lead us to believe that this was the main focus of activity. The Asean region's affairs, as ever, took priority. On 1 August, a pioneering agreement to enhance cooperation against terrorism was signed between Asean and the USA. In recent months, South East Asia has drawn attention as a possible area where a revived al-Qaida could base itself and conduct operations.

Hence, the American push for such a pact. It is expected to improve Intelligence-sharing among participating countries and encourage stronger measures to

contain terrorist groups. General Powell, who signed on behalf of the USA, clarified that the new pact did not point to any further induction of US forces: already there are 100,000 US troops in the Asia-Pacific region.

Some developments relating to China also came into the spotlight. The original impulse behind ARF was to involve this vast, looming presence in a process of discussion about security and political issues. The smaller countries on China's fringes sought to allay their anxieties about their giant neighbour by so engaging it.

They devised a setting for these exchanges that brought in major non-regional countries. Asean's diplomatic initiative has yielded results and regular discussions over many years appear to have softened policy edges and made the participants more comfortable with each other.

Yet the Asean-China relationship is not without its problems, and currently these have much to do with their conflicting territorial claims in the South China Sea.

For more than two years, efforts have been afoot to develop a code of conduct that would represent a sort of standoff between China and many Asean countries about the Paracels, islands claimed by Vietnam and now occupied by China, and the Spratlys, an island group with multiple claimants.

There was something of a setback to the diplomatic effort at the time of the ARF meeting and these touchy issues remain on Asean's agenda.

To be noted, too, is China's recent statement emphasising the role of the Shanghai Five, a group established largely at China's initiative, as an anti-terrorist combination. While this statement may not be directed against the new pact between Asean and the USA, it shows that China is not to be swept along by the US lead and has its own perceptions and interests to promote. This, too, is something for the ARF to assimilate.

*(The author is a former Foreign Secretary.)*

## wide angle

SALMAN HAIDAR

R. ALU.  
ASIAN

## FOR REGIONAL STABILITY

410-10  
575

WHILE UNDERLINING THE irrefutable fact that peace, security and stability in South Asia are inextricably linked with sane order in the Asia-Pacific region and the rest of an increasingly networked world, the Association of South East Asian Nations Regional Forum (ARF) has identified the most immediate source of disruption. To India's immense satisfaction, the ARF has zeroed in on Pakistan's shortcomings in living up to its commitment to combat terrorism as the factor that most strongly inhibits a return to regional stability. The ARF said that it earnestly looked to Pakistan to take further urgent steps to implement its commitment to counter terrorism and added that if Islamabad were to choose to do so it would be taking an important step towards the resumption of a dialogue with India. These sentiments have been expressed in a context where Islamabad believes that it has done enough on the anti-terrorism front so as to place the onus on New Delhi to revive the dialogue. As such, the ARF's views, on the sequencing of measures that have to be taken by either side, reflect India's concerns especially since the forum has noted that a comprehensive cessation of terrorist activities would mark an essential step to de-escalate the situation.

The ARF's views on the India-Pakistan standoff have been formulated at a time when ASEAN is itself separately engaged with the U.S. and its closer partners on the measures and mechanisms that have to be adopted to deal with the phenomenon of terrorism in South-East Asia. ASEAN has been trying to fine-tune some of the member-states' concerns about erosion of their sovereignty with the U.S. demands for more integrated global action against the phenomenon even if such interaction involves a measure of intrusion into the internal affairs of individual states. While reports suggest that accord on contentious issues is close at hand, it is nevertheless quite remarka-

ble that the ARF scrutinised the South Asian standoff so closely at such a juncture. In fact, the ASEAN Ministerial group, which met the day before the full ARF held its session, had issued a statement that was more neutral or generalised in respect of the India-Pakistan standoff. The sharpened focus that the ARF brought to bear on the issue has been attributed to forceful interventions by the U.S. Secretary of State, Colin Powell, and the European Union's foreign policy and security chief, Javier Solana. Mr. Powell's intervention in the ARF session and the several statements that he has issued since he flew out of India after his last visit appear to have finally put to rest misapprehensions that Washington and New Delhi had substantively different assessments in respect of cross-border infiltration of terrorists into India from the Pakistan side of the Line of Control.

India had less reason to be smug in respect of the ARF's position on nuclear non-proliferation. Besides emphasising the need to maintain the existing moratorium on the testing of nuclear weapons, the ARF took note of recent calls, made at the Preparatory Committee for the 2005 NPT Review Conference, on non-signatories to accede to the Non-Proliferation Treaty and other related documents. India had to perforce adhere to the format under which the Chairman of the ARF session issues a statement that reflects the "sense" of the deliberations (rather than a communique or declaration comprised of the agreed minutes). As such, India's objections to the discriminatory aspects of the NPT were not reflected in the Chairman's statement. However, reports that had appeared prior to the ARF session had suggested that the forum might bring the nuclearisation of the Subcontinent under closer scrutiny. Since the forum did not bring such a focus to bear, New Delhi has reason to be pleased with the overall outcome.

1 AUG 2002

# E.U. calls for J&K polls in a 'climate of freedom'

By P. S. Suryanarayana

**BANDAR SERI BEGAWAN (BRUNEI), AUG. 1.** The European Union today expressed the hope that elections in Jammu and Kashmir would take place in "a climate of freedom". Such elections would set the stage for a "positive movement towards dialogue between India and Pakistan", the European Unions High Representative for Foreign Affairs, Javier Solana, said.

Mr. Solana was speaking to journalists on the sidelines of the meetings here between the Association of South East Asian Nations and its dialogue partners, which include India but not Pakistan. Noting that Kashmir dispute "cannot be hidden from the international community's gaze", Mr. Solana said that it was time Pakistan addressed the issue of "trans-border terrorism that was taking place from its side into India".

Observing that the terrorist crossings into India along the Line of Control in Jammu and Kashmir had at present "diminished", the E.U. official indicated that the international community would like to see Pakistan act in a manner that would help end trans-border terrorism and also facilitate free polls in Jammu and Kashmir. It was in this context that "a possibility exists for a positive way" of moving out of the current impasse on the India-Pakistan front, Mr. Solana indicated, but he was not inclined to be drawn into a discussion on how the ASEAN Regional Forum (ARF) issued an India-friendly statement on Wednesday on the Pakistan issue after the South East Asian association, which constitutes the ARF's nucleus, had only a day earlier equated New Delhi and Islamabad.

The story within the wider

diplomatic circles of the ARF member-states is that the U.S. intervention at the plenary session of the security forum and the European Union's willingness to take a forthright stand against political terrorism were not the only factors that enabled the ASEAN and other nuclear pacifists to take a final view that suited New Delhi. It is considered very significant in this context that China, a known benefactor of Pakistan, has associated itself with the ARF Chairman's statement, de-

spite its sophisticated plain-speak about Islamabad's obligation to end cross-border terrorist infiltration into India.

The overwhelming impact of the U.S.-led international discourse against political terrorism is the context in which China has made its choice at this ARF meeting. The ASEAN itself has moved to sign along with the U.S. a document, hailed as a virtual Magna Carta of anti-terror sentiments. In the event, even Japan, which took a particularly grim view of the re-

cent "nuclearised tensions between Islamabad and New Delhi", is understood to have interacted with India in a noticeable atmosphere of goodwill. The Japanese Foreign Minister, Yoriko Kawaguchi, and the External Affairs Minister, Yashwant Sinha, held a bilateral meeting that enabled the two sides to recognise the positive opportunities for new bilateral linkages in the context of their respective positions as an economic superpower and an emerging power.

## India offers help to combat terrorism

By P.S. Suryanarayana

**BANDAR SERI BEGAWAN, AUG. 1.** India today offered to "develop practical programmes of cooperation" to combat terrorism in conjunction with the Association of South East Asian Nations. Outlining the offer at the ASEAN-India dialogue, the External Affairs Minister, Yashwant Sinha, said: "India is ready to work together both bilaterally with the ASEAN countries and in the India-ASEAN framework".

Indirectly commending the ASEAN for reaching an anti-terror understanding with the U.S. here today, Mr. Sinha said: "As a major victim of terrorism, India fully supports ASEAN's efforts to develop bilateral and regional cooperation to combat terrorism".

Prince Mohamed Bolkiah, Brunei's Foreign Minister and chairman of the latest round of ASEAN's meetings with its dialogue partners, underlined at a post-conference media meet that the association was looking forward to its prospective summit with India, the first of its kind, later this year.

Mr. Sinha called upon the prosperous nations to address the problem of development deficit across the world. Intervening during the plenary session of the ASEAN post-ministerial conference, he said India would play a proactive role in the promotion of the association's own initiative for internal economic integration.

Addressing the richer countries present at the ASEAN's post-ministerial conference with all its dialogue partners, Mr. Sinha said that an equitable regime of international trade rather than the practice of external aid to the poor countries would help address the issue of development deficit. It

was estimated that a five per cent surge in the exports of the developing countries would enable them to net \$350 billion over a given period. This would be far more beneficial to the developing countries than aid. Mr. Sinha told the ASEAN members that India would play a proactive role in

the promotion of the association's own initiative of internal integration between its less-developed member-states on one side and its advanced members on the other.

New Delhi's contribution in this regard would be of the order of \$5 millions. Mr. Sinha said the identified areas of cooperation were those relating to human resources development, information and communications technology, besides infrastructure projects.

The External Affairs Minister called upon the developed bloc to resist the temptation of "cherry-picking the best and the brightest manpower from the developing countries. The immigration policies of the rich countries should be made more equitable with a view to promoting a better mobility of labour across frontiers.



MEET / NOT LOOKING FOR NEW BASES, SAYS POWELL

## U.S., ASEAN sign pact to combat terror

By P. S. Suryanarayana

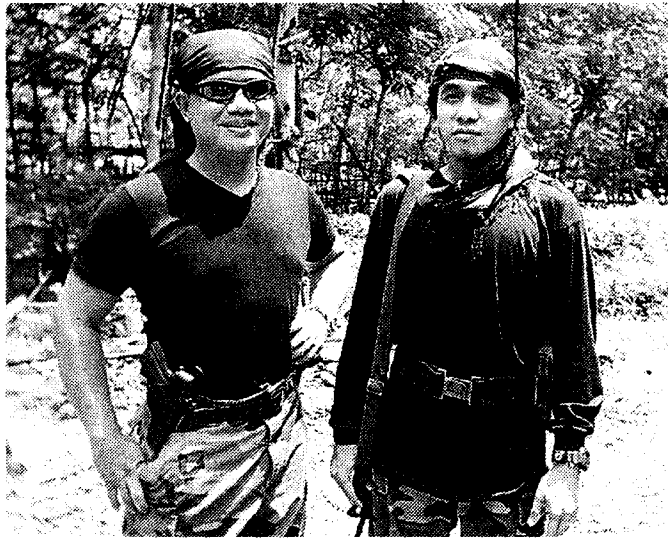
**BANDAR SERI BEGAWAN (BRUNEI), AUG. 1.** The United States and the Association of South East Asian Nations (ASEAN) today signed a joint declaration for Co-operation to Combat International Terrorism.

Hailed as a trend-setter in the ongoing U.S.-led global campaign against terrorism, the document was signed by the American Secretary of State, Colin Powell, and the Foreign Minister of Brunei, Prince Mohamed Bolkuah, on behalf of the ASEAN.

Allaying fears that the new accord might encourage the U.S. to spread its military wings across South-East Asia, Mr. Powell said his country was "not looking for new bases or places at this time".

At a press conference, Mr. Powell sought to dispel the impression that the declaration may serve as a smokescreen for enlarging America's military footprints across South-East Asia.

He noted though that the presence of U.S. troops in the larger East Asian theatre, now estimated at about one-lakh personnel, and the related American military posture had already marked "a stabilising influence" for many decades. This factor would remain a stabilising force for decades to come in the present context, he said. Despite this perception of



**GENERATING HEAT:** Abu Sabaya (left), leader of the Muslim extremist Abu Sayyaf group, in the jungles of Basilan island in southern Philippines, in this file photo. Rumours persist that Abu Sabaya has survived an army attack on June 21.

a strategic dividend for America and also the larger East Asian entity, Mr. Powell underscored the absence of any provision in the latest accord for direct military co-operation between the U.S. and any or all of the South-East Asian States.

The centrepiece of the new declaration is the network of "intimate contacts" which the U.S., on one side, and any or all of the South-East Asian nations, on the other, hope to develop for intelligence-sharing and anti-terror capacity building. Asked why the U.S. felt the need

to sign a separate anti-terror declaration in conjunction with the ASEAN, Mr. Powell said the regional association had taken the initiative in this regard. Both sides agreed that the accord would signal "a positive political commitment in the fight against terror."

To a question whether the U.S. would be inclined to consider similar agreements with other regional organisations, Mr. Powell said Washington would be willing to do so on a multilateral basis.

The U.S. will be no less in-

terested in purely bilateral agreements of this kind too. Mr. Powell, however, emphasised that the U.S.-ASEAN consensus was accomplished as a result of an "invitation from this regional outfit."

Referring to the recent resolutions that the United Nations Security Council adopted to put the anti-terror issue on the global agenda, Mr. Powell said there was still room for commitments at various levels of inter-state co-operation.

About Western arguments that the new anti-terror war may only encourage some governments in South-East Asia to suppress human rights, Mr. Powell said: "We have to attack them (the terrorists) from the highest moral plane. Human rights must be protected and observed."

On another major subject of concern at the ASEAN-organised annual meetings, which concluded here today, Mr. Powell took the line that his now famous coffee diplomacy, which brought him to a brief but direct meeting with the North Korean Foreign Minister, was not at all inconsistent with the U.S. President, George W. Bush's identification of Pyongyang as a co-ordinate in the "axis of evil." According to Mr. Powell, the idea was to encourage North Korea to sustain its willingness to engage both South Korea and Japan with a view to defusing tensions.

AUG 2002

THE HINDU

# Powell signs anti-terror treaty with Asean

*R. Alvin*  
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*2/8*  
**Associated Press**

**BANDAR SERI BEGAWAN** (Brunei), Aug. 1. — Upgrading the fight against terrorism in a region that has become a second front in the war against Al-Qaida, US Secretary of State Colin Powell today signed a treaty with Southeast Asian nations to make the area more responsive to future threats.

The signing capped a week of diplomacy that overcame fears from Vietnam and Indonesia that the accord could lead to the basing of US troops in Southeast Asia, where American forces have already helped the Philippines battle the Abu Sayyaf guerrillas.

Under the agreement, the Association of Southeast Asian Nations and Washington will share information, boost police cooperation and plug holes that extremists can exploit. It would raise US technical and logistical aid to "prevent, disrupt and combat" international terrorism.

Al-Qaida operatives have established

links with extremists in Southeast Asia that were exploited in the logistics of the September 11 attacks and plots to bomb the US embassy and other targets in Singapore.

Asean, yesterday, joined the United States, China and 11 other countries, meeting under the Asean Regional Forum security grouping, in a separate bid to block extremists from accessing the money they need to carry out terror attacks.

Their agreement targets terrorists' finances with a range of cooperative efforts from freezing assets to creating "financial intelligence units." The forum comprises the Asean countries — Brunei, Cambodia, Indonesia, Laos, Malaysia, Myanmar, the Philippines, Singapore, Thailand and Vietnam — along with other nations that have security interests in the region.

Both accords dovetail with what Asean has made into a theme in its first meeting since the September 11 attacks: fighting terrorism before it

happens. A Chinese statement issued today stressed the need for multilateralism, economic cooperation and respect for the UN Charter in tackling 'nontraditional' security concerns like terrorism.

For Southeast Asia, stung by perceptions that it has become a launching pad for terror attacks, it is not only a security issue but an economic one. Fear, the region's leaders say, impedes investment and economic recovery.

Their annual meeting — derided in the past as an ineffective, bureaucratic talk shop — has been the scene of intense diplomatic contacts dealing with issues ranging from tensions on the Korean peninsula to the conflict between India and Pakistan.

In another regional alliance against terrorism, Malaysia and Australia plan to sign a pact promoting intelligence-sharing and cooperation between their immigration, legal, defence and customs officials.

2 AUG 2002

THE STATESMAN

# ASEAN forum calls on Pak. to intensify steps against terror

By P. S. Suryanarayana

**BANDAR SERI BEGAWAN (BRUNEI), JULY 31.** The Association of South East Asian Nations Regional Forum (ARF) today called upon Pakistan to intensify its efforts to combat terrorism, which is of direct concern to India. Walking a fine diplomatic line even while exuding empathy for India, the ARF welcomed Islamabad's "commitment to counter terrorism" and said that the forum "earnestly looked (at this sensitive stage) to Pakistan to take urgent further steps to implement it." Reinforcing such nuanced expectations with a political formulation, the multilateral security forum said that the choice that Pakistan might now make "would constitute an important step towards (the) resumption of dialogue between New Delhi and Islamabad." In this specific sense, the ARF

placed the onus on Islamabad for the "strengthening of cooperation and (the) resolution of differences that exist between India and Pakistan." A process of this order would entail "peaceful means to promote regional and international security and stability."

As music to New Delhi's ears, the ARF also sent out a call for "an immediate end to all terrorist activities in the (South Asian) region" and noted that a comprehensive cessation of terrorist activities would indeed mark "an essential step to de-escalate the situation on the India-Pakistan front at this point."

The ARF, a grouping that brings together major and emerging global powers as also all the South East Asian States, placed all these observations in the overall context of the "recent efforts by the international community" to ease tension between India and Pakistan. Trying to avoid any impression of a new pro-India tilt, the forum, which includes India but not Pakistan, said that it "recognised the close link between peace, security and stability in the (South Asian) region and in the rest of the world." A subtle political message was also sent out by the ARF through its studied effort to place the endemic India-Pakistan crisis in the context of the need to "promote regional and international security and stability."

By taking this line, the ARF signalled that its latest India-friendly gesture was traceable to the forum's own sustainable concerns about globalised security and stability, inclusive of nuclear stability,

across the world. Nevertheless, the Indian camp here felt upbeat over the ARF's final formulation on this subject, if only because the ASEAN had only yesterday voiced views with no definitive resonance for New Delhi's Pakistan policy. The ARF's internal debate on the India-Pakistan issues was in the end determined largely by the forceful intervention by the U.S. Secretary of State, Colin Powell, who endorsed the External Affairs Minister, Yashwant Sinha's assertion that Islamabad's sponsorship of cross-border terrorism in India and related activities might only distract India from its development agenda. Gen. Powell was also understood to have exuded much

sensitivity in acknowledging the Indian perceptions that Pakistan must not only end cross-border terrorist incursions but also dismantle the infrastructure of terror and take steps that would not disrupt the promised elections in Jammu and Kashmir.

On the feasibility of free and fair elections in Jammu and Kashmir, Gen. Powell appeared to have taken note of India's track record as a vibrant democracy that is constantly at work. In the end, even as the ARF resiled from taking a glasshouse view of the

India-Pakistan tensions, given the backstage concerns of many of the forum's members about the risk of some nuclear instability in South Asia, the European Union also played a pivotal role by seeing New Delhi's position through much the same diplomatic prism as the United States.

Post-imperial Japan's traditional policy of nuclear pacifism was also fine-tuned in this overall context, while China, too, made New Delhi's job easier at today's ARF session by making a pragmatic assessment of India's emerging profile outside the confines of South Asia. The India-Pakistan question was evaluated by New Delhi's fellow-members of the ARF from four inter-related perspectives concerning cross-border terrorism and the prospects of violence-free elections in Jammu and Kashmir, on one side of the spectrum, besides the tensions in South Asia as also the

implications of such a situation for global stability in all its facets, on the other side. It was against this background that the question of associating Pakistan with the ARF in some form or the other was shelved as a non-issue at today's meeting.

## 'Maintain moratorium on n-testing'

By P.S. Suryanarayana

**BANDAR SERI BEGAWAN (BRUNEI), JULY 31.** The Foreign Ministers of the Association of South East Asian Nations' Regional Forum (ARF) today underlined the need to "maintain the existing moratorium on nuclear-testing". The Forum called upon all states to "work towards the objective of total elimination of nuclear weapons".

Briefing the media, the ARF Chairman and Brunei's Foreign Minister, Prince Mohamed Bolkiah, made no mention of India's traditional reservations about the discriminatory provisions of the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty and related documents that froze the number of states that could be deemed nuclear powers under conventional international law.

However, India too, as an ARF member, took note of certain calls that were made at the recent Preparatory Committee for the 2005 NPT Review Conference. These calls were directed at non-signatories to accede to the NPT and take other related measures.

If India has not dissociated itself from the ARF's formulations of this kind, the reason is that the Forum, by tradition, issues a statement by its Chairman. Being different from the normal international practice of issuing agreed joint communiqués or declarations, the ARF Chairman's statement is taken as a "sense" of the Forum's deliberations and not as a summary negotiated by all the members.

The ARF, which issued a separate Statement on Measures against Terrorist Financing, brought the anti-terror commitments of the member-states more completely in line with the recent mandatory resolutions of the U.N. Security Council and the general thinking of the U.S. on this issue. However, the ASEAN states, which will sign a separate anti-terror protocol with the U.S. here tomorrow, have said that they are not seeking to function as America's satellites for the purpose of Washington's efforts to accelerate its own boost-phase diplomacy to fight globalised terrorism.

1 AUG 2002

APPREHENSION OVER KASHMIR ALLAYED

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It is for India, Pak. to find a solution, says Powell

By P. S. Suryanarayana

BANDAR SERI BEGAWAN (BRUNEI), JULY 31. The United States is understood to have assured India that the emergence of the Kashmir issue as a matter of international concern does not imply that it would like the global community, more particularly Washington itself, to play a role in the resolution of the dispute.

This, and other aspects of an India-friendly disposition, came into focus during a brief conversation that the U.S. Secretary of State, Colin Powell, held with the External Affairs Minister, Yashwant Sinha, on the margins of the latest annual plenary of the Association of South East Asian Nations Regional Forum (ARF) here today.

Outlining the substantive details of the conversation, the Foreign Secretary, Kanwal Sibal, told the media that Gen. Powell had indicated that the resolution of the Kashmir issue would be a matter for India and Pakistan to address.

He quoted Gen. Powell as having said that his latest reported comment on Kashmir "does not refer to a solution, which you have to find yourself."

Gen. Powell's diplomatic intervention here may now influence, if not also defuse, the raging controversy over the



The U.S. Secretary of State, Colin Powell (left), the European Union foreign policy chief, Javier Solana (centre), and the External Affairs Minister, Yashwant Sinha, before the start of the ninth ASEAN Regional Forum meeting in Brunei. — AFP

apprehension that New Delhi might be mortgaging its sovereignty over the Kashmir issue to the United States.

The row was caused by recent reports that quoted Gen. Powell as having said, during his recent visit to the subcontinent, that Kashmir was on the

international agenda.

Mr. Sibal said that Gen. Powell apprised the External Affairs Minister of America's latest interaction with Pakistan on issues such as cross-border terrorism. Responding to Pakistan's concerns, as relayed by Gen. Powell, Mr. Sin-

ha said that India would expect Islamabad to cooperate on anti-terror issues in much the same way as Pakistan was engaging the U.S. itself.

And that India's responses to Pakistan would be determined by how far it might take steps for an effective cessation of cross-border terrorism on a permanent basis.

The meeting with the Chinese Foreign Minister, Tang Jiaxiang, was one of a series of bilateral exchanges that Mr. Sinha held with Western and Asian Foreign Ministers today.

Mr. Sinha and his Chinese counterpart sought to put their interaction in the larger perspective of the Prime Minister, Atal Behari Vajpayee's prospective visit to China later this year.

Expressing China's understanding and sympathy for India as a victim of international terrorism, Mr. Tang expressed the hope that New Delhi and Islamabad could resolve the problems in their relationship through dialogue in an atmosphere of goodwill and sincerity.

In a brief media response after the meeting, Mr. Sinha said that Mr. Tang did not raise the question of Chinese concerns, if any, over the manner in which the U.S. and India had struck a strategic understanding about patrolling the Malaccan Straits.

# Asean forum asks Pak to de-escalate border tension

**Bandar Sri Bagwan (Brunei):** A security grouping of Asian and western nations on Wednesday asked Pakistan to take "urgent further steps" to halt cross-border terrorism as an immediate way to de-escalate the Indo-Pakistan standoff and not to disrupt assembly elections in Jammu and Kashmir (J&K).

Foreign ministers of the 23-member Asean Regional Forum (ARF), Asia's biggest security grouping, also decided to build a network of intelligence and co-operation aimed at cutting off funding to terrorists.

A declaration adopted by the forum after its day-long meeting here put the onus on Pakistan for resumption of the stalled Indo-Pak dialogue after its foreign ministers echoed India's position on ending cross-border terrorism as an "important step" to facilitate talks.

The declaration by the ARF representing all the major powers came hours after the U.S and the EU said it was "incumbent" on Pakistan to ensure an atmosphere free of violence in the run-up to the elections in Jammu and Kashmir and that it did not seek to 'disrupt' the poll process.

U.S. secretary of state Colin Powell said Pakistan must cease support to cross-border terrorism while EU's top foreign policy representative Javier Solana said Islamabad had a role and responsibility in ensuring that the J & K elections were not disrupted.

Indian external affairs minister Yashwant Sinha said cross-border terrorism must be recognised as the core problem in South Asia.

He said India was always ready for talks with Pakistan and prepared to restart the process the moment it realised that Islamabad had put



Colin Powell



Y. Sinha

a stop to cross-border terrorism and dismantled terrorist infrastructure.

An external affairs ministry spokesperson, briefing reporters on the statements by the ARF ministers, said Mr Powell also referred to how both India and the US agreed that infiltration of militants from Pakistan had not stopped though it had gone down.

Mr Powell and Mr Sinha had a brief interaction at the venue before Asia's biggest security gathering got down to deliberate on a range of issues.

Mr Powell told Mr Sinha that India and Pakistan alone must find a solution to the Kashmir issue and his remark in New Delhi on Sunday that the subject was on the international agenda, did not mean the international community would broker a solution.

The Indo-Pakistan tension also came up at the bilateral meetings Mr Sinha had with Mr Solana and his counterparts Tang Jiaxuan of China, Kawaguchi of Japan and Bill Graham of Canada.

Mr Tang said China wanted very much to see reduction in tensions and that it was opposed to violence in Kashmir targeting innocent civilians.

"China is always opposed to terrorism in all its forms," Mr Tang told Mr Sinha. As a friend and neighbour of South Asia, Beijing would like to see the differences between New Delhi and Islamabad resolved through peaceful dialogue, he said. Agencies

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THE TIMES OF INDIA

ASEAN MEET / A BREAKTHROUGH.

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# U.S., N. Korea agree to resume talks

**BANDAR SERI BEGAWAN (BRUNEI), JULY 31.** A long-stalled dialogue between North Korea and the United States looked set to resume on Wednesday after a meeting between the U.S. Secretary of State, Colin Powell and North Korea's Foreign Minister.

"We have agreed to resume the dialogue between North Korea and the United States," the North Korean Foreign Minister, Paek Nam Sun, said, without elaborating. "Everything went satisfactorily." Mr. Powell told reporters that the pair had a "good meeting, a short meeting over coffee."

"I told him that we should stay in touch and see how to pursue our dialogue," Mr. Powell said. Mr.

Powell and Mr. Paek met on the sidelines of the Asia-Pacific's largest security forum in the first high-level contact between the countries since the U.S. President, George W. Bush, branded the North part of an "axis of evil" with Iran and Iraq, and accused Pyongyang of sponsoring terrorism and menacing world peace.

The men met in a delegates' lounge for 15 minutes at the start of the ASEAN Regional Forum after Mr. Paek was told that Mr. Powell was there and ready for a conversation. Mr. Powell told Mr. Paek that in any future



The U.S. Secretary of State, Colin Powell (left), and the North Korean Foreign Minister, Paek Nam-sun, are seen in this combination photograph.

discussions, the U.S. would want to "emphasise a variety of matters, including proliferation and mutual commitments made" under a 1994 agreement to curb North Korea's nuclear weapons programme. The U.S. would consider recent statements by North Korea in deciding whether to hold any follow-up meetings, Mr. Boucher said. South Korea said there appeared to be no definite schedule yet for the U.S.-North Korean dialogue to restart.

"Our understanding is that North Korea and the United States agreed in principle on the need for dialogue," Mr. Lee said. "This means that discussion on

the U.S. proposal to send an envoy, which was withdrawn, would resume."

Mr. Powell said the Russian Foreign Minister, Igor Ivanov, who visited Pyongyang earlier this week, had been "encouraging the North Koreans to move in the direction that they have been moving recently."

Mr. Paek said earlier on Wednesday that he was "always ready" to meet Mr. Powell, and was also willing to meet with South Korea. The conciliatory messages at the forum, however, coincided with more confrontational rhetoric in Pyongyang, the North Korean capital. — AP

1 AUG 2002

# N-disarmament: call for new approaches

HD-1A P. S. Suryanarayana 31/7

**BANDAR SERI BEGAWAN (BRUNEI), JULY 30.** The Association of South East Asian Nations (ASEAN) today called upon the acknowledged Nuclear Club of Five to "look for new ideas and approaches to address the issue of nuclear disarmament."

The ASEAN, which concluded its annual ministerial meeting here on the eve of a session of the ASEAN Regional Forum tomorrow, asked the five declared nuclear haves to "continue dialogue for a *de novo* approach" towards the eventual elimination of atomic weapons. However, the group itself set out no new ideas.

Commenting on the withdrawal of the U.S. from the Anti-Ballistic Missiles Treaty, the ASEAN welcomed the recent accord between America and Russia on strategic reductions of nuclear weapons.

This new treaty, the ASEAN felt, would contribute to the "maintenance of strategic balance across the world". The forum urged the nuclear powers to sign the protocol of an ASEAN document that declares the territories of its member-states as a collective and comprehensive nuclear-weapons-free zone.

No particular mention was made of the Indian commitment to accede to such a protocol. The reason has to do with the ASEAN's reluctance to accept India and Pakistan as new members of the Nuclear Club. The group welcomed the "intention of China, Russia and India to accede to the Treaty of Amity and Cooperation in South East Asia".

R. Alwar

# ARF meet may focus on Indo-Pak. nuclear stability

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31/7

By P. S. Suryanarayana

**BANDAR SERI BEGAWAN (BRUNEI), JULY 30.** The Association of South East Asian Nations today hinted that the ASEAN Regional Forum (ARF), which would hold its annual meeting here tomorrow, is poised to turn the spotlight on the issue of India-Pakistan nuclear stability.

It was evident behind the diplomatic scenes here tonight that the ARF might do so in as benign a manner as might be possible for this elite multilateral organisation. India too appeared to be bracing for a new qualitative international focus on its ties with Pakistan.

The new light on the India-Pakistan tensions is likely to be beamed in the specific context of the recent row between the two countries over their respective nuclear arsenal as a credible diplomatic card.

Asked specifically whether the ARF would address the India-Pakistan issues anew, the External Affairs Minister, Yashwant Sinha, indicated that he would like to wait for the events to unfold tomorrow rather than pre-judge them.

Implicit in his cryptic remark - "let us see" was the mood in the Indian camp to prepare itself for any reasoned discussion at the ARF session. The ARF meeting will be attended by the United States' as also

China and Japan, besides India among the major and emerging powers.

Pakistan is not a member of the ARF, while the 10-member ASEAN occupies the geopolitical centre space of this 23-member Asia Pacific security forum.

According to some top Western diplomats and key East Asian interlocutors represented at the ARF, the India-Pakistan question would certainly be a matter of concern to the collective association in view of the cutting-edge controversy over the nuclear brinkmanship that these two estranged South Asian neighbours have engaged in (regardless of whether Pakistan or India was the first to play the nuclear card in a dangerous diplomatic poker game).

The question of nuclear stability in South Asia is expected to rank alongside the simmering tensions in the Korean peninsula at tomorrow's ARF deliberations.

The ASEAN, which concluded its annual ministerial meeting today ahead of the ARF session, said in a joint communique that the South East Asian group "considered peace and stability in South Asia as important to the whole region and beyond.

Expressing the "hope that India and Pakistan" would take all necessary steps to defuse tension, the ASEAN called on both to "resume immediate dialogue, strength-

en their cooperation and resolve their differences through peaceful means to restore and maintain peace and stability.

Responding to media queries on this aspect of the ASEAN's call, Mr. Sinha said India had never shied away from a policy of holding talks with Pakistan. However, it was entirely up to the international community to exert pressure on Pakistan to end cross-border terrorism, he said.

Striking different strokes in complex diplomacy, Mr. Sinha maintained at the same time that the "tension on the India-Pakistan front" is down at this stage and that the recent reversal of some Western advisories against travel to India was a proof of (this) fact.

About whether the U.S. Secretary of State, Colin Powell, had re-engaged India in the context of his latest talks with the Pakistan leadership, Mr. Sinha said he had not been contacted yet.

Mr. Sinha also left it an open question as to whether he and Gen. Powell would hold further talks on the sidelines of the ARF meeting here. The diplomatic atmosphere here on the eve of the ARF meeting is dominated by the sound bytes of the ASEAN's symphony of anti-terror alliance with the U.S. in a non-militaristic mode of cooperation.



ASEAN / CLOSER TIES WITH U.S. ON THE ANVIL

# Consensus reached on anti-terror pact?

*2007*  
*R. Albar* *HO-121*  
**BANDAR SERI BEGAWAN (BRUNEI), JULY 29.** Southeast Asian Foreign Ministers removed all the stumbling blocks on Monday to an anti-terrorism pact that would allow the United States to more actively pursue Al-Qaeda-linked extremists throughout the region.

The Association of Southeast Asian Nations and the U.S. Secretary of State, Colin Powell, are expected to sign the agreement during the Asia-Pacific region's largest security meeting on Wednesday and Thursday. After a closed conference, senior diplomats said on condition of anonymity on Monday night that differences had been overcome and that the accord should win easy approval.

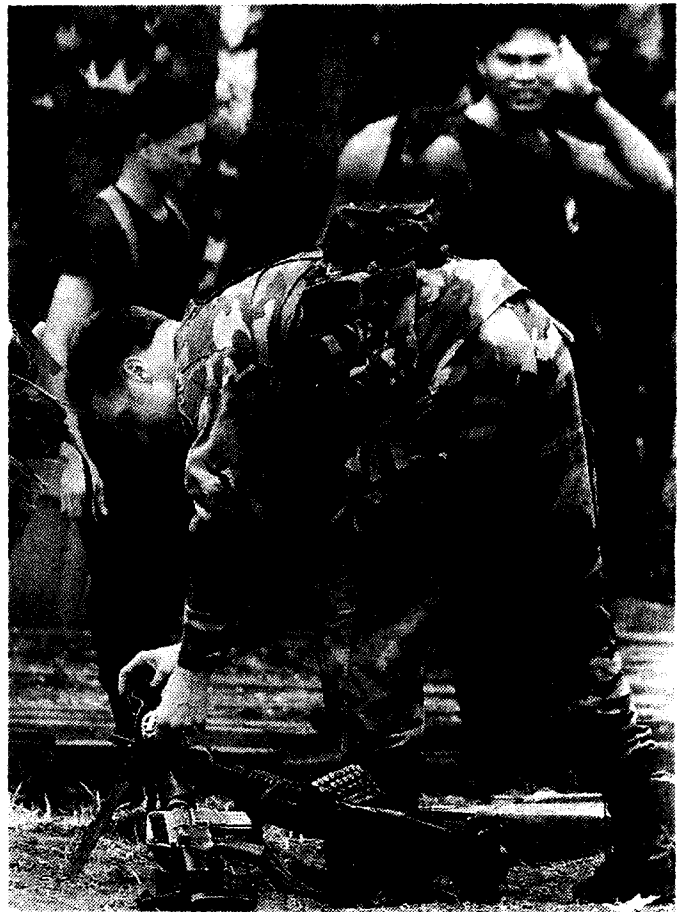
The agreement would increase U.S. technical and financial aid against terrorism, increase sharing of intelligence information and build closer ties between law enforcement agencies in each nation. It originally stipulated that the United States would act in accordance with "the principles of sovereign equality, territorial integrity and ... non-intervention in the domestic affairs of other states." The new wording, changed at Washington's request, says only that it "recognises" such principles. Indonesia and Vietnam initially objected to the revision, fearing it would dilute sovereignty and allow the United States to send ground troops to the region. ASEAN ministers said military

operations would be left to individual countries and Hanoi and Jakarta now say they will support the pact.

Southeast Asia has become a second front in the battle against terrorism, with U.S. troops helping fight Abu Sayyaf guerrillas in the Philippines, and Malaysia and Singapore arresting scores of alleged Al-Qaeda-linked extremists accused of plotting bomb attacks. The region's leaders want to end the perception that their nations are a launching ground for terror. The Singapore Foreign Minister, Shanmugam Jayakumar, said the draft document was "very close to finalisation. It emphasises that ASEAN wants to work with the United States."

The ministers are expected to finalise wording on a proposed accord with China on preventing military clashes in the South China Sea, where many have overlapping territorial claims over the Spratly islands and other areas rich in oil and fisheries.

After three years of unsuccessful ASEAN negotiations on a legally binding "code of conduct" for disputed areas, Malaysia has proposed a non-binding declaration that would have only moral force. ASEAN diplomats said Vietnam was worried the accord would be weak. But after Monday's session, "Vietnam has agreed to accept the code of conduct as a political declaration," the Malaysian Foreign Minister, Syed Hamid



**SUPPORTIVE ROLE: A U.S. Special Forces member looks at the weapons of Philippine Scout Rangers — seen in the background — at the 103rd Philippine Army Brigade headquarters in Tabiawan, Basilan island, on Sunday. — AFP**

Albar, said. He said it wasn't quite ready to be signed because officials still had to work out details and eliminate wording that might appear legally binding. — AP

ACP MEET / HUMAN RIGHTS

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# Europe excludes Cuba from aid

**NADI (FIJI), JULY 19.** The European Union has excluded Cuba from a multibillion dollar pool of aid because of Havana's human rights abuses and lack of democracy, a spokesman for a group of former European colonies said on Friday.

Cuba is a new member of the 78-member African Caribbean Pacific group that was holding a leaders' meeting at a palm-fringed island resort near the Fijian town of Nadi.

Delegations from 63 nations at the conference are trying to forge a single negotiating position ahead of trade talks with Europe in September.

Central to the trade talks is a 25-year agreement signed between the E.U. and ACP members in 2000.

The Cotonou agreement promises 13.5 billion euros (\$12.7 billions) in aid to ACP states over the next five years, but only if they show efforts to improve human rights and root out corruption.

As a latecomer to the ACP, Cuba has not signed Cotonou and the E.U. Trade Commissioner, Pascal Lamy, who is attending the summit, on Friday rejected overtures from ACP

leaders to give Cuba quick access to the aid.

Mr. Lamy told delegates that it was "the wrong time" for Cuba to join Cotonou, and that the E.U. wanted to see more political reform from Havana, said an ACP spokesman, Hegel Goutier.

Forced to leave the summit early to avoid a looming airline strike, Mr. Lamy was unavailable for comment and cancelled a planned press conference.

The head of Cuba's delegation and Minister of Government, Ricardo Cabrisas, was furious at the rejection, telling the meeting it was "a humiliation and slap in the face for Cuba," said Mr. Goutier. Mr. Cabrisas refused to comment publicly on the decision.

The Deputy Prime Minister of Barbados, Billie Miller, who heads the Caribbean grouping, Cariforum, said the E.U. believed Cuba cannot satisfy basic principles of the agreement.

"There are a number of them they have to do with good governance and matters to do with democracy and human rights issues". Ms. Miller said she had appealed on behalf of Caribbean nations to the E.U. to accelerate Cuba's inclusion. — AP

20 JUL 2002

THE HINDU

# EU to delay sanctions on US in steel row

Brussels, July 19

THE EUROPEAN Union's executive commission is expected Friday to recommend a delay of at least a month in the imposition of sanctions on the United States in retaliation for US steel tariffs, diplomatic sources said here.

The EU has decided to increase customs duties on some 300 million dollars' (euros) worth of US imports to protest a decision last March by President George W. Bush to impose three-year tariffs of up to 30 percent on selected steel imports.

A first set of EU sanctions is scheduled to take effect August 1, but diplomats here predict the European Commission will recommend to the 15 EU member states that the measures be postponed until September in hopes Washington will continue to grant exemptions to the tariffs.

To date, according to the Commission, the United States has agreed to grant exclusions to 247 EU steel products worth 230 million dollars, offers that EU officials have described as "manifest-

ly insufficient."

The Commission received a new list of exemptions was received from the US early Friday, a few hours before a meeting of EU ambassadors on the steel issue.

The Commission is studying the new list and is "making progress over the package of concessions we want to obtain" from the US, a Commission spokesman said. The new exemption categories were not detailed.

Nevertheless, the Commission is leaning toward a delay in EU retaliation in order to "avoid a confrontation" with the United States," a European diplomat said. "I think they will arrive at an un-dramatic solution, probably with a delay in the sanction decision until the 'rentree' (early September)... to give the Americans more time."

EU foreign ministers are scheduled to convene here Monday to consider the Commission's recommendation.

But another European diplomat predicted that "the Commission will most likely not call on the ministers to come to a deci-

sion Monday."

A European source noted on Thursday that "the Commission knows that certain European states are hesitant to confront the United States and could therefore propose to postpone the decision (on applying the sanctions) while waiting to see the exemptions accorded between now and the end of August." Germany and Sweden have publicly hinted their reluctance to get involved in a deeper row with Washington over the tariffs.

The US duties affect some 2.3 billion euros' worth of EU exports.

Washington's trading partners were outraged at Bush's decision to impose the tariffs, which he said were necessary to allow the struggling US steel industry time to restructure.

The European Union, Japan and other parties have challenged the legitimacy of the tariffs at the World Trade Organization and the Commission expects the WTO to condemn the measures in the second half of next year.

AFP

# ALMATY AND AFTER

## India Must Rejuvenate Kazakh Connection

By JK DUTT

5/11 2007

**T**he conference on cooperation and confidence building measures in Asia is a positive process in the Asian continent ... guaranteeing opportunities for political dialogue on the issues of regional security and mutual confidence in the integrity of international boundaries ... and the development of multilateral cooperation in the economic field". Thus goes an extract from the Shanghai Cooperative Organisation's summit declaration soon after Kazakhstan took the initiative to start the first multi-national congress of its kind called "Conference and Interaction for Confidence Building Measures in Asia (CICA). The recent CICA meeting at the Kazakh capital, Almaty, which was attended by many important political leaders is a confirmation of the SCO's vision.

### Fuelling evil

Admittedly, one of the principal items on the current agenda was the diffusion of Indo-Pak tensions that have reached an all time high. Additionally, there has been scepticism from various quarters about Almaty's ability to restrain both adversaries. Yet the fact that two globally influential persons, Presidents Jiang Zemin and Vladimir Putin, did their utmost to break the Vajpayee-Musharraf impasse says a lot. Besides, the joint attempts by the two presidents had the full backing of Washington. Hence all credit must go to the Kazakh President Nursultan Nazarbayev for his determination in getting a dialogue going on the subject at hand in keeping with the conference's notified theme.

As an emerging regional power centre, India must begin to look well beyond its immediate neighbours in the context of a widespread disorder, transitional terrorism. Islamic fundamentalism, which spearheads this disorder, has crept into Central Asia in an insidious manner, witness the turmoil at the Azerbaijan-Russia and the Tajikistan-China borders, and in Uzbekistan. There are clear indications now that this cancer may spread in other directions. Operation Enduring Freedom may have contained terrorism in Afghanistan but the scourge lurks in several adjacent spots.

Most of all, there is grave danger of this evil being fuelled by desperate terrorist groups in and around the Caspian Sea region as an act of revenge against the USA. The incentive for this act is the unpopular increasing American pressure in Central Asia. Doubtless, Pakistan has

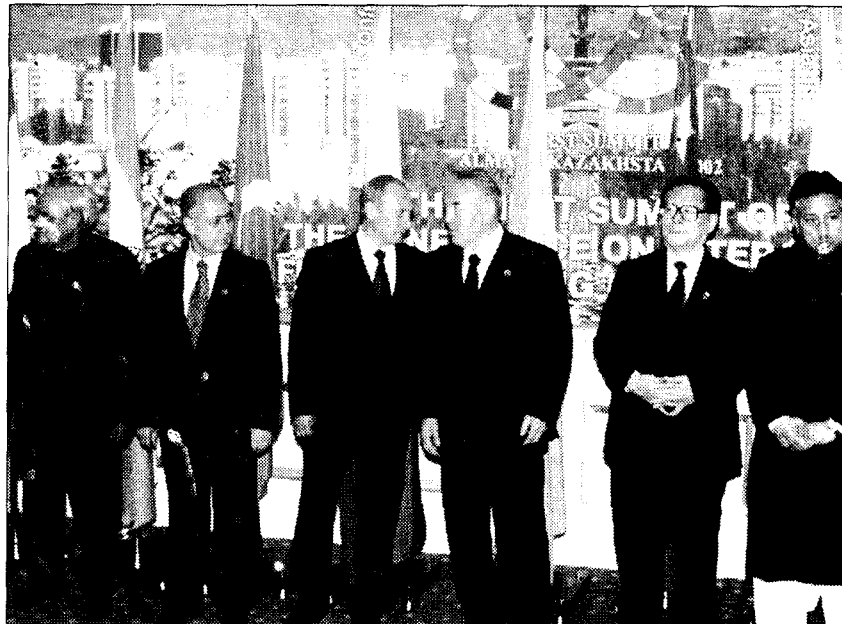
become host to the operatives of the post Afghanistan reign of terror with Musharraf having little or no control over them — perhaps willingly — in order to ensure his own survival. India, therefore, should plan ahead and contribute its mite to stem this evil, having been a long time sufferer of the scourge.

Truth to tell, it is difficult for a country to tackle the cult of terrorism alone because its parameters are undefined. Kazakhstan and India share this danger

Almaty and simultaneously, open consulates in other towns that matter.

Creation of a combined security platform is the next step. Almaty finds itself in an awkward situation after 9/11 — it realises with considerable discomfiture that the influence of the USA, China Russia and lately the European Union is on the rise all around it due to two main reasons.

First, the geo-strategic placements that Kazakhstan's periphery offers' make



and it would make eminent sense for both to unite on a common cause, namely, fighting terrorism.

### Political equation

As of date, Kazakhstan is the least volatile of all the eight Eurasian nations that flank the Caspian Sea with three to the waterway's west, and five to its east. India should establish a firm tie with Kazakhstan, something which can be achieved by basing our approach on one appreciable contention: both countries are secular democracies and uphold multi-ethnic existence. The Kazakh government has never promoted or encouraged Islam as a religious weapon despite the country having a large percentage of White Muslims.

This national characteristic is on a par with India. An Indo-Kazakh political equation can hence be conveniently brought into being, an equation from which many benefits can accrue to both. India's first step in this regard should be

attractive engagement in the region; and second, the endless availability of energy producing material like oil and natural gas is a magnet by itself. In terms of politico-geographical disposition, Kazakhstan makes an exemplary fulcrum wherein a complex of countries spanning two continents have contiguous borders with it, not forgetting the presence of three dominant stretches of water within its territory.

Almaty has direct land approaches to China, Russia and Europe and a sea approach to Iran. New Delhi can gainfully utilise this fulcrum for furthering its own foreign policy as it maintains well found relations with all the countries mentioned.

Kazakhstan has become progressively uneasy, and rightly so, because it expects sooner or later to come under threat from religious fundamentalism that is emanating from its southern neighbours. It is sure to become quite vulnerable to this threat if it remains a loner in the region. The June CICA meeting

discussed this point at some length. Kazakhstan would welcome anybody into its fold that visualises a similar threat, and India fully qualifies! India and Kazakhstan need to work out a joint venture action plan for combating trans-border terrorism. Bilateral ventures apart, multilateral ones are also opportune by coopting Beijing, Moscow, Brussels and Tehran. We can moot roping in NATO for actively participating in anti-terrorism operations.

### Understanding with China

Our Foreign Ministry has to get totally involved with the Kazakh line and not be content with issuing just statutory homilies as is its wont. An Indo-Kazakh bond with multifarious objectives will create consternation in Pakistan of a kind that Islamabad has not come across so far.

India faces one problem though — it does not readily possess any physical communication leeway with Kazakhstan. Although New Delhi is a signatory to the tri-nation North-South Corridor Agreement, movement from India has to undergo the hassle of what is termed as the "sea-land-sea-land" syndrome. For instance, cargo ex-Mumbai meant for say Almaty, has to be transported by ship to the Persian Gulf, thence by land through Iran to the Caspian Sea to be shipped again to Russia's port of Astrakhan, and then finally by land to Almaty. Vice versa naturally applies.

Transshipment taxes at every point of change take their toll and the inherent loss of time coupled with the uneconomical effort of it all are worse. It would hence be prudent for India to arrive at an understanding with China for using the latter's Aksai Chin all weather highway. With Leh as a junction, we can reach Kazakhstan by a much shorter, single transportation mode land route. There is no gainsaying the advantages. To cite one, the proposed Iran-India land oil pipeline will not be required to traverse Pakistan.

Indo-Kazakh connections date back to the days of the Silk Route. We need to rejuvenate this connection in a way that will enhance India's entry into a wholly new external environment. By bonding ourselves with it as suggested, India's exposure to a unique scenario will cover a huge spectrum in our international relations.

The consequential effect of this on Pakistan will be rewarding for us; even the powerful Organisation of Islamic Conference will become chary of holding Pakistan's hand against us as the Indo-Kazakh forum takes root.

The author is Lt. Col. (retd.), Indian Army.

# Asean breaks with tradition to liberalise its markets

JALIL HAMID

GENTING HIGHLANDS | JULY 6

SOUTHEAST Asian nations decided on Saturday to break with tradition by adopting a new formula to speed up market-opening and keep up with growing competition from powerhouses like China.

Economic and trade ministers from the 10 member Association of South East Asian Nations (Asean) said a so-called '10 minus X' principle would be adopted in areas such as open-sky policy, telecommunications, financial services and equity investment. Under the formula, member countries that are ready to open up their markets can move forward without having to wait for rest—a departure from

the normal procedure of moving together.

"Those who are ready can go first and those who are not can come on board as and when they are ready," Malaysia's International Trade and Industry Minister Rafidah Aziz told a news conference at the end of the one-day meeting at the Malaysian resort of Genting Highlands. "It's a more pragmatic way of implementing some of the programmes."

Her Singapore counterpart, George Yeo, hailed the agreement as a 'breakthrough' and said the plan would overcome delays faced by some countries in areas like aviation and telecommunications.

"Some countries are understandably less prepared to move now than others,"

he said of the open-sky policy which allows foreign carriers to pick-up passengers from any destination within Asean. Asean groups Brunei, Cambodia, Indonesia, Laos, Malaysia, Myanmar, the Philippines, Singapore, Thailand and Vietnam.

The move to hasten liberalisation comes as the region battles to regain its investment charm amid rising competition for funds from China and other parts of the world. Last year, much of the foreign direct investment in Asia went to China. A low cost base is seeing it displace Southeast Asia as the continent's preferred manufacturing hub, economists say. A World Bank report in March said China attracted \$44 billion of FDI last year. Reuters

# Consensus on immigration eludes E.U.

By Batuk Gathani

19.15  
26  
**BRUSSELS, JUNE 25.** The European Union's quest to evolve a uniform immigration policy for its 15 member states has failed despite much rhetoric and political shadow boxing at the leaders' summit in Spain.

Spain and Britain, with the covert blessings of Germany and Italy, took a tough line on the immigration policy.

This verged on a jingoist approach, with the first two proposing "economic sanctions" against Third World countries that fail to contain the flow of illegal immigrants, arguing that economic sanctions would fail to serve the purpose.

The French President, Jacques Chirac, won the day by suggesting a "carrot over stick" approach.

He said: "It is not by brandishing the sword that we should resolve the problems surrounding illegal immigration", and added that the more prosperous E.U. members should increase economic aid to countries from where immigrants originate, creating incentives for them to stay in their own countries.

The leaders agreed to co-or-

26  
dinate efforts on the immigration policy by 2003, despite widespread misgivings that a pan-European policy may impinge on member nations' sovereignty.

There is also much confusion over the number of asylum seekers arriving in the E.U. every year.

The current estimates vary between half a million to a million, but according to figures compiled by the E.U.'s statistics office, the net immigration rate in 2000 did not exceed two per 1,000 population.

According to current estimates, 500,000 illegal immigrants enter the 15 countries annually in addition to almost 400,000 "asylum seekers" but the net flow of immigration has been declining.

The more liberal intellectuals have argued that the anti-immigration hysteria is taking Europe down dangerous roads with Governments "making a mess" of the immigration policy.

It is argued that popular opinion and media hype have turned the term "economic migrants" into one of abuse, unlike in the U.S. where the same "economic migrants" brought

Regional Affairs  
that country its economic clout. On the demographic front, the European continent is fast ageing and the situation is compounded low birth and high divorce rates.

The leaders also pledged to keep the E.U.'s expansion project on track. With the relaxation of passport controls within the E.U., it becomes more im-

portant to police the borders. The summit was overshadowed at times by a general strike and three days of mass demonstrations by anti-globalisation protestors.

The leaders also discussed reform of the common agricultural policy and agreed to elect a president of the European Council for a five-year term.

THE HINDU

26 JUN 2002

## E.U. agrees to curb illegal immigration

**SEVILLE (SPAIN), JUNE 22.** European leaders agreed today measures to turn back a tide of illegal immigrants, without going so far as to slap sanctions on the poor countries from which they come.

Wrapping up a two-day summit in Seville that was shaken by a string of bomb attacks in other parts of Spain, the leaders also reaffirmed that the European Union's planned 2004 enlargement into eastern Europe was firmly on track. "This common aim can be realised within the timeframe envisaged only if each candidate country adopts a realistic and constructive approach" in the final stages of accession talks, a draft version of the summit conclusions said.

Discussions were delayed today by more than an hour as the leaders took in the World Cup quarterfinal match between South Korea and Spain. And Seville braced itself for tens of thousands of demonstrators expected on the streets at the tail end of the summit.

Illegal immigration was the dominant issue for the E.U. leaders who met beneath the

mosque-like dome of the Seville convention centre — an architectural reminder of the eight centuries, until 1492, when Muslims ruled much of Spain.

"We have reached a very balanced solution that clearly indicates that we want to limit and to channel immigration," Mr. Schroeder told a press conference. "You know, and I am not ashamed of it, that I would have liked to go further in the way of sanctions. But it was not do-able."

Spain, which passes the E.U. presidency to Denmark on July 1, and Britain had hoped to propose sanctions against poor countries that fail to co-operate with Europe on curbing illegal immigration. But they were forced to back down yesterday in the face of resistance led by the re-elected French President, Jacques Chirac, who argued that E.U. development aid was better used as a carrot, not as a stick.

Several other countries joined France and Sweden in criticising the notion of sanctions — notably Portugal, Belgium and Luxembourg. — AFP

E.U. SUMMIT / ILLEGAL IMMIGRATION

## Leaders take a tough line

SEVILLE (SPAIN), JUNE 21. Leaders of the 15 European Union countries on Friday began a two-day summit here over an agenda that includes tightening Western Europe's borders and enlisting poor countries in the fight to curb illegal immigration.

Also up for discussion was the problematic issue of funding the European Union's ambitious eastward expansion. Germany, the Netherlands, Sweden and Britain do not want the E.U.'s programme of subsidies extended to farmers in 10 nations scheduled to enter the E.U. in 2004.

The summit opened against the backdrop of heightened security: Spanish army and air force units were on high alert and police isolated the summit site, a sprawling convention complex in this southern Spanish city.

The leaders' meeting also comes a day after a general strike in Spain by labour unions protesting cuts in unemployment benefits. About 70 people were detained for damaging property and trying to keep people from reporting for work. The Government said the disruption was minimal.

E.U. efforts to stem the tide of illegal immigration comes amid rising support in several E.U. nations for right-wing, anti-immigration politicians.

An estimated 500,000 illegal immigrants enter the E.U. every year, in addition to almost 400,000 asylum seekers.



**NO TWO OPINIONS?:** The European Commission President, Romano Prodi (left), with the French President, Jacques Chirac (centre), and the Spanish Prime Minister, Jose-Maria Aznar, in Sevilla, Spain, on Friday. — Reuters

The Spanish Prime Minister, Mr. Jose-Maria Aznar, has said E.U. leaders must send a clear message to citizens that fighting the flow of illegal immigration was a priority. "We will be tough on illegal immigration and the trafficking of human beings it so often entails because this is a crime and an affront to human rights," he said in a letter to his E.U. counterparts.

Spain, Britain and Italy want tough policies on illegal immigration.

"Populists and extremists gain a purchase on the political system when the moderate politicians ... fail to get a grip on the issues," the British Prime Minister, Tony Blair, said on Thurs-

day. Among the proposals being considered are boosting border patrols, improving cooperation among countries on visas and sending help to Italy, Spain and Greece. The three southern European nations are on the front line of an influx of illegal immigrants crossing the Mediterranean Sea from Africa, West Asia and the Balkans. Other proposals call for sharing the costs of border controls

and using naval ships and planes to track and intercept boats carrying illegal aliens. Even before the summit, there was disagreement on a plan to threaten sanctions against poor nations that do not cooperate with the E.U. on immigration issues.

Sweden and France argue sanctions will only worsen the poverty that forces people to head for Europe. The two countries suggest the E.U. offer incentives to poor countries, rather than punishment, to help poorer countries control immigration. Organisations helping political refugees and illegal immigrants are leery about the E.U. drive for a tough immigration policy. — AP

22 JUN 2002



# E.U. on road to closer ties with Iran

By Batuk Gathani

*P. A. W.*  
**BRUSSELS, JUNE 19.** The European Union has said it will negotiate trade and co-operation agreements with Iran if the West Asia nation consults the E.U. on political and anti-terrorism issues. The decision by E.U. Foreign Ministers came after Britain, Germany and the Netherlands dropped their insistence on a single accord covering trade and a broad range of political and human rights issues.

The agreement that came on Monday ends a months-long impasse over E.U.-Iran relations and marks a significant break with the United States. Washington accuses Iran of sponsoring terrorism and pursuing the construction of weapons of mass destruction. The U.S. President, Mr. George Bush, has said Iran, Iraq and North Korea form an

*HO-15*  
"axis of evil" — language some E.U. governments find unnecessarily tough.

Mr. Chris Patten, the E.U. Commissioner for External Affairs, has been given the mandate to start trade and co-operation talks with Iran. Any agreement will then be ratified by the Iranian and European parliaments.

In a statement, the E.U. Foreign Ministers said they hoped a trade and economic cooperation accord will lead to a "deepening of economic and commercial relations (with Iran) that should be matched by similar progress" ~~in other areas~~. It said the E.U. will ask Iran to sign "separate instruments on political dialogue and counter-terrorism" issues in parallel to a trade agreement.

The E.U. initiative is seen as a reflection of the widening chasm with the Bush administration's foreign policy on West Asia.

*20/6*  
The pro-Iran lobby in the European Union is led by Germany, which has the largest trade and investment ties with Iran. The U.S. and Israel had lobbied hard to delay E.U. trade negotiations with Teheran.

The Europeans have categorically rejected Mr. Bush's stand that Iran is part of an "axis of evil".

E.U. officials said on Monday that it was essential to engage Iran's political leaders, especially the reformists, as part of an attempt to influence the ideological battle in that theocratic state. Intellectuals in Europe have often argued that better economic opportunities and a social-economic dialogue with the West can overwhelm, if not defeat, Islamic fundamentalism in Iran. The E.U. has emerged as Iran's main trading partner with over euro13 billion plus, two-way trade flows.

THE HINDU

20 JUN 2002

# Bush favourable to Nato expansion

R-AM 51-12 ✓ AGENCE FRANCE PRESSE 14/7

WASHINGTON, July 13. — President George W Bush said that Nato must shift its focus from containing Russia to battling terrorism and renewed his conditional support for adding new members to the alliance.

"The enemy has changed and the nature of the battlefield has changed, and therefore the Nato mission must remain the same — which is mutual defence — but its tactics must change," Mr Bush said.

On the issue of admitting new members to the Nato, Mr Bush said "people know that I'm forward-leaning if the member countries meet their MAP (Membership Action Plan) requirements."

The Nato, which last expanded in 1999 taking in Hungary, the Czech Republic and Poland, will say nothing officially about which countries are likely to get the nod at a November conference in Prague.

"I am interested in more rather than less, and at the same time I urged the applicant countries to take nothing for granted, to work very hard up until the last minute to prove to everyone of us in the Nato that they will definitely be willing and active and capable partners," said Mr Bush.

The president's comments came during a roundtable of Polish reporters convened to set the stage for Polish President Aleksander Kwasniewski's state visit to Washington on 17-18 July.

President Bush did not directly answer whether Moscow might someday join the alliance as a full member but said that Nato/Russia ties must allow for the new relationship to develop and mature and I think it will in a very positive way.

"Russia is no longer the enemy," he said, stressing that the Nato must turn its attention from deterring an attack on Western Europe by Communist forces to the threats made clear by the 11 September terrorist attacks on the USA.

THE STATESMAN

14 JUL 2002

110-19

# Hope high among NATO aspirants

R - Albania

**RIGA (LATVIA), JULY 6.** Hopes were high at a summit of 10 former communist countries aspiring to join NATO, and many delegates already were looking ahead to the responsibilities of membership as "de facto allies."

The leaders of Estonia, Latvia, Lithuania, Bulgaria, Romania, Slovakia, Slovenia, Albania, Croatia and Macedonia pledged to accelerate reforms and deepen democratic commitments on Saturday as they wrapped up two days of meetings in the Latvian capital. "We recognise that we are in the midst of an historic endeavour, not only to defend our democracies from the threat to our freedoms posed by terrorism, but also to build a Europe that is truly whole and free," a summit declaration said. "Thus, we set for ourselves the goal of acting in solidarity and as de facto allies — toward each other and toward those Western institutions we aspire to join," it added.

It was their last joint meeting before a November 21-22 NATO summit in Prague, where the



**Zbigniew Brzezinski, National Security Advisor to the former U.S. President, Jimmy Carter, addresses the NATO Aspirant Countries summit in Riga on Saturday.**

19-member alliance is expected to issue invitations for membership as part of its most dramatic

transformation since it was formed 53 years ago. The U.S. President, George W. Bush, said in a videotaped address on Friday that NATO's eastward expansion was necessary to secure democracy and stability after the September 11 terror attacks on the United States.

The three ex-Soviet Baltic republics of Estonian, Latvia and Lithuania along with Bulgaria, Romania, Slovakia and Slovenia lead the list of countries expected to get the coveted invitations, although NATO diplomats stressed that no decision would

be made before the summit in the Czech capital.

Leaders, experts and other delegates hailed the expansion as an important step toward the long-awaited reunification of Europe after World War II. Political scientist Zbigniew Brzezinski, the National Security Adviser to the former U.S. President, Jimmy Carter, called it "the final undoing in Europe of the legacies of the Stalin-Hitler act."

U.S. delegates, starting with the Senate minority leader, Trent Lott, on Friday, also gave the candidate countries reason for optimism but noted concerns about corruption, religious intolerance and other problems still facing the former communist countries.

Once the invitations are issued, the member countries need to ratify the decision. "Prague in this sense is not an end point, it's a beginning point ... that ought to keep the spotlight on reform for all the candidates," the U.S. Ambassador to NATO, Nicholas Burns, said.

— AP

7 11 2002

# E.U. approves sanctions on U.S. over steel dispute

By Batuk Gathani

BRUSSELS, JUNE 11. Reacting to the imposition of tariffs by the United States on steel imports, Foreign Ministers from the European Union have approved plans to impose trade sanctions on the U.S.

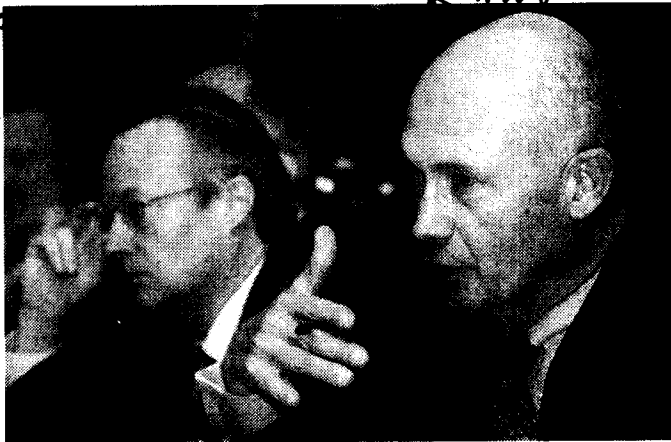
The Ministers, who met in Luxembourg, agreed to support the European Commission plan to raise tariffs on U.S. goods, including manufactured items and agricultural products.

Though the E.U. measure has all the trappings of a trade war, officials in Brussels played down such an outcome, reiterating their faith in a free trade agenda and pointing to the prospects of holding negotiations with the U.S. over the issue to avoid a confrontation.

The E.U.'s move was described as "necessary posturing" for a better long-term outcome. The proposed sanctions are modest — a tariff of euro 378 million on products including steel, textiles and fruit juice from the U.S. from August if Washington fails to offer compensation or exemptions from the duties to E.U. manufacturers.

The E.U. Trade Commissioner, Pascal Lamy, said on Monday that the E.U. was not seeking to escalate the dispute but "we are showing firmness" through a show of solidarity.

Meanwhile, according to European Commission observers, the U.S. may not offer compensation but may have already begun exempting certain



**STEELY RESOLVE:** The European Union Commissioner for Trade, Pascal Lamy (right), at a media conference in Luxembourg, on Monday. Seated left is Spain's Foreign Minister, Josep Pique. — AP

categories of European steel from the new tariffs. A final decision on the proposed E.U. sanctions would be taken at a ministerial meeting on July 22.

Leading European steel manufacturers have cautiously welcomed the moves by the U.S. to lift tariffs on a limited range of items and its unveiling a list of 61 steel products that would be exempted from the new tariffs.

European officials here agree that any trade retaliation may trigger a backlash, which may diminish American support for trade expansion and doom the World Trade Organisation negotiations on liberalising trade and investment flows. A trade war, even at a modest level, could have a damaging effect on E.U.-American relations, as there are already serious differ-

ences between them over issues related to global warming, climate control and West Asia. Hence, it is argued that a compromise with the U.S. is inevitable. It is felt that a compromise on steel would go a long way as many Europeans feel that the Bush administration may be willing to cut a deal on steel. The E.U. is one of the largest overseas customers for U.S. goods and services. Major American and European companies have established trading and manufacturing bases on both sides of the Atlantic.

The U.S. and Europe also share a tradition of free market economy and multi-party democracy, based on the rule of law and the use of the judiciary as independent arbiters in legal and commercial disputes.

# Shanghai group gains legal status

By Vladimir Radyuhin

*HD-14*  
**MOSCOW, JUNE 7.** The leaders of Russia, China and four Central Asian nations have formally established a new regional grouping sprawling from the Baltic Sea in the West to the Pacific Ocean in the East.

At a summit in St. Petersburg on Friday, the leaders of the six member-States, which also include Kazakhstan, Uzbekistan, Kyrgyzstan and Tajikistan, signed the Charter of the Shanghai Cooperation Organisation, making it a full-fledged international body.

The Charter, subject to ratification by the respective Parliaments, said the new organisation was not a bloc or a closed alliance, nor was it directed against any country or groups of countries. The six founding members also signed a political declaration, which formulated three priority tasks for the new grouping — regional security, economic and humanitarian cooperation. Fight against terrorism and separatism was described in the declaration as a priority task for the new organisation.

The member-States “resolutely reject all acts, methods and practice of terrorism.” “The struggle against terrorism must be conducted on the basis of norms and principles of international law, it must not be identified with the struggle against any religion, countries or nationalities, it must be free from bias and ‘double standards,’” said the declaration.

The participants signed an agreement to set up a regional anti-terrorist structure.



*R. Khizmet*  
**The Russian President, Vladimir Putin (centre), speaks with Tajikistan's President, Emomali Rakhmonov, at the Shanghai Cooperation Organisation meeting in St. Petersburg, Russia, on Friday. The Chinese President, Jiang Zemin, is at left. — AP**

Even as the summit was under way, the Indian Ambassador to Russia, Krishnan Raghunath, reiterated India's willingness to join the new organisation. He told a press conference in Moscow that India shared the objectives of the SCO and its membership would help make the organisation more efficient.

At a post-summit press conference, the Russian President, Vladimir Putin, said Russia “positively viewed” India's accession to the SCO. Pakistan, Sri Lanka, Mongolia and Iran have also showed interest in joining the Shanghai group.

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THE HINDU

# Dialogue, the only sane option: Musharraf

By Atul Aneja

ALMATY, JUNE 4. Without backtracking from his commitments on curbing terrorism, the Pakistan President, Pervez Musharraf, has blamed India for the existing military tensions in South Asia.

In his address to the first Conference on Interaction and Confidence-Building Measures in Asia (CICA) today, Gen. Musharraf said that India's refusal to address the Kashmir issue and its resistance to an immediate revival of a dialogue were the root causes for the existing border tensions. He condemned the use of terrorism in all its forms, but said that extremist violence could occur as a response to "terrorism by states."

Gen. Musharraf reiterated that "Pakistan will not allow its territory to be used for terrorism within or outside its borders." Without referring to the nuclear threat in the subcontinent, he said India must return to the path of dialogue, as it was the only sane option in the "dangerous environment." While Pakistan would not "initiate" a war, "if it is imposed on us, we will defend ourselves with the utmost resolution and determination," he said.

India's refusal to address the Kashmir issue, its disregard for the United Nations resolutions on Kashmir and the neglect of the "wishes of the Kashmiri people" was at the heart of the poor relationship between India and Pakistan.

Referring to the Agra summit, Gen. Musharraf said that he gone for the summit meeting with the Prime Minister, Atal Behari Vajpayee, to "set in motion a dialogue process to address Kashmir and all other outstanding issues with India. Regrettably, the summit remained inconclusive." While "individual or group terrorism" could not

be allowed under any pretext, it was necessary to analyse the causes of extremist violence. "We must ask ourselves whether the present situation has been brought about because of a sudden eruption of violence and terrorism by misguided individuals and

desperate groups that threaten to destabilise the international community or (whether) there is a deeper malaise and terrorism is a symptom of the malaise."

Without mentioning India or Kashmir, Gen. Musharraf referred to the "rapacious policies of certain states that forcibly occupy territories and deny freedom to peoples for decades on end, with

total disdain for charter of principles and decisions of the United Nations." Global peace had remained "hostage to the expansionist ambitions of such states and their ruthless campaigns to suppress — through brutal use of force — the legitimate struggles of peoples to gain their internationally-recognised fundamental right to freedom and self-determination."

The denial of freedom and the resultant desperation were the breeding grounds for extremism.

Urging the international community to intervene, he said "to eradicate terrorism, we must address the root causes by eliminating injustice and honouring the commitments consecrated in the Charter Principles."

Reflecting on the Almaty Charter, which was adopted at the end of the CICA summit, Gen. Musharraf said that Pakistan endorsed "the positive elements" of the "declaration on eliminating terrorism and promoting a dialogue among civilisations."

JUN 2002

THE HINDI

## EU ratifies Kyoto Protocol

AP ASSOCIATED PRESS

UNHQ, June 1. — European Union countries have formally signed on to the Kyoto Protocol, a pact aimed at stemming pollution and global warming that has been opposed by the USA. The ratification by the 15 EU countries yesterday is a major step toward putting the 1997 treaty into force.

The ceremony at the United Nations headquarters in New York also highlighted the USA's isolation as the only announced opponent of the accord. One by one, envoys from the 15 EU members presented the documents of ratification from their governments to UN legal adviser Mr Hans Corell.

EU environment commissioner Ms Margot Wallstrom, who handed over a separate ratification from the organisation itself, hailed the "historic moment for global efforts to combat climate change" and pointedly singled out the USA as the only country to reject the treaty.

THE STATESMAN

2002

## NATO's Bear Hug

"The Cold War is finally over and America and Russia need to be friends for the good of the world", remarked US president George W Bush — a decade too late perhaps — when he accepted Russia into the NATO fold in Rome earlier this week. Though Mr Bush is given to malapropism, this time round his Dubyaspeak seems to have a touch of realism — however cynical — about it. The American president has a problem on his hands. In a world bereft of any real adversaries — there is an embarrassing economic and military deficit on the Russian and Chinese side of the fence — NATO, which has allowed Washington to remain firmly entrenched in Europe, needs to find a new *raison d'être*. And fast. Let's not forget NATO's original function was two-fold. First, to militarily contain the Communist threat which revisionist historians have proven didn't exist: Stalin was no revolutionary dedicated to 'world communism' and had even broken with Trotsky. And second, to give the US a toe-hold on the Continent on the pretext of keeping Germany pinned to the mat after World War II.

With conservative Republicans in Washington unwilling to give up the dubious right to remain engaged in Europe and with NATO teetering on the brink of redundancy, it's not surprising that Mr Bush chose to make his "NATO for the greater good of the world" speech. To believe the US president, the Russia-inclusive NATO will do the world a whole lot of good by putting on notice "the common enemy — all terrorists and their supporters". But whether the new NATO will actually work to "make the world a safer place" is open to question. NATO's actions — for instance in the mid-nineties in the war in Yugoslavia, during the Gulf War and in the field of nuclear arms reduction — have often flouted international norms established by various covenants or laid down by the UN itself. Given this record, there is little reason to doubt that an expanded NATO will not intervene in the internal affairs of "non-complying nations" in the developing world. Such suspicions are reinforced by the fact that the organisation's driving force, Washington, has long assumed that "what's good for the US is good for the world at large".

THE TIMES OF INDIA

2002



# EU reliefs fail to please Putin

FROM RICHARD BALMFORTH

Moscow, May 29 (Reuters): Russian President Vladimir Putin failed today to persuade the European Union to drop its policy towards Russia's tiny Baltic enclave of Kaliningrad which will be encircled by the bloc after it enlarges.

The EU, after a one-day summit in Moscow, extended trade concessions to Russia by granting it "market economy status", a move intended to help its exports. But this offered scant consolation to Putin for the EU's failure to give in over Kaliningrad, sandwiched between Poland and Lithuania, and grant its residents visa-free transit to Russia proper after the bloc expands eastwards.

The EU insists Russians will then have to have EU visas to go to and from Kaliningrad, feared by European security services as a haven of organised crime, disease and poverty.

Swallowing a setback after five days of diplomatic successes with the West, Putin told a Kremlin news conference that the basic human rights of the enclave's citizens were at stake.

"This is a very serious problem," said Putin, flanked by Prime Minister Jose Maria Aznar of Spain, current EU president, and European Commission President Romano Prodi.

Referring to Kaliningrad's 1.3 million people who had kin and friends to visit in the rest of Russia, Putin said: "Given the current state of affairs in the

world, we have no right to ignore the observation of basic human rights today."

While welcoming a decision to talk further about the issue, Putin added: "If we do not solve this problem, the fundamental basis of contemporary society will be tested."

Prodi was confident the problem would be solved. "The fact that we have visas is a symptom of how complex the situation is. It is not negative."

Kaliningrad was the German city of Koenigsberg when it was seized by the Soviet army in 1945, and became the main base for the Soviet Baltic Fleet. It became separated from Russia proper when Lithuania won independence from the Soviet Union in 1991.

In sharper comments before the talks, Putin drew a contrast with his two just-concluded summits with US President George W. Bush and Nato at which leaders triumphantly proclaimed a final end to the Cold War.

"Now that the funeral of the Cold War has taken place, such an approach (over Kaliningrad) is at the very least incomprehensible," Putin said. "It is no exaggeration to say that our overall relations with the European Union depend on how this issue of vital importance to Russians is resolved."

Russia has suggested visa-free transit aboard sealed trains, raising the notion of an extra-territorial corridor which has unacceptable historical parallels for both Lithuania and Poland.

THE TELEGRAPH

THURSDAY, MAY 30, 2002

X9-10 NATO AND THE WINDS OF CHANGE

THE NEW LINKAGE between the North Atlantic Treaty Organisation and its old enemy, Russia, illustrates the political preferences of the NATO's chief architect, the United States, in its present status as the campaign-leader in a 'globalised' war on terrorism. With post-Soviet Russia and the U.S.-led NATO, a 19-member military alliance, signing an accord in Rome on May 28 to set up a Council linking the two sides, the stage is now set for a new strategic ethos for the Euro-Atlantic politics rooted in the notion of Western supremacy. It has of course been made amply clear that Russia now gains only a say in, and not a veto as such over, the NATO's new priorities. Yet, if the U.S. considers it essential to consult Russia over the NATO's agenda, the reason has not a little to do with Washington's recognition of the relevance of post-Soviet Moscow to the current war against terrorism. For over a decade since the end of the old U.S.-Soviet Cold War in the early 1990s, the trans-Atlantic organisation has remained in a state of nebulous identity. While the latest NATO-Russia accord cannot fashion the former's new profile complete with a mindset for the foreseeable future, an effort has indeed begun to find out whether this alliance can serve the West's interests not only in the Euro-Atlantic theatre but also across the entire international stage itself. Not surprisingly in this context, the new NATO-Russia Council is being depicted by some of its protagonists as an "incubator" for the "integration" of post-Soviet Russia with Europe and the entire West over time.

As some Western leaders tend to see it, Moscow's willingness to work closely with the NATO flows from a dramatic decision by the present Russian President, Vladimir Putin, to make common cause with the U.S. in its fight against international terrorism of direct interest to Washington. To be viewed against this background is the basic reality that the trans-Atlantic

organisation, now dubbed variously as a Cold War relic and as yesterday's military alliance, is hardly in a position to make its presence felt across the entire world. In fact, the European allies of the U.S. within the NATO framework seem to be in no great position to bridge the widening gap of military acumen between Washington and themselves. Most recently, the U.S. has demonstrated its superior offensive know-how of the post-modern kind in the war against the Al-Qaeda-Taliban terrorist mafia in Afghanistan. While a similar reality might apply to Moscow as well at this moment, the fact remains that Russia's prospective consultations with the NATO might enable the outfit to take a broader view of the emerging challenges from terrorists and their state-sponsors. This subtle argument is derived from Washington's apparent willingness at present to treat Russia as a nuclear superpower.

Russia's new consultative relationship with the NATO may only impinge on, without really determining, the eventual expansion of the forum to cover the entire Euro-Atlantic domain. Seen in this perspective, the NATO-Russia Council might, in the short term, zoom its laser beams onto issues of international terrorism. A prime challenge facing the civilised societies is to prevent the growing number of terrorists from acquiring nuclear and other weapons of mass destruction. In Washington's reckoning, the terrorists roaming the world might acquire such weapons either through clandestine means or with the help of some state-actors themselves. It is in this context that the U.S. appears eager to engage Russia, versed in the art and sciences of nuclear security, within the larger NATO framework. It is for Russia to decide whether or not to run the risk of becoming a U.S.-satellite within the NATO's expanding domain, but Washington seems to value Moscow's expertise at arms control as well.

THE HINDU

30 MAY 2002

✓ ✓  
**ROME SUMMIT / SIGNING OF AGREEMENT TODAY**

# NATO-Russia Council to take shape

By Batuk Gathani 40-195  
28/5

**BRUSSELS, MAY 27.** At a special summit in Rome on Tuesday, Russia and NATO plan to forge closer ties on the defence front and will unveil proposals, which if implemented, could usher in radical changes in Russia's defence establishment.

On the economic front, Russia is seeking closer relations with the European Union. All this is happening in the background of a new arms treaty signed over the weekend by Mr. George W. Bush and Mr. Vladimir Putin.

Russia is paying special attention to its economic agenda and insisting that trade barriers built up over the decades by the West be dismantled. Both on the economic and defence fronts Russia insists on "equal partnership" status, although according to Western analysts, there is embarrassing imbalance between economic and military resources on both sides of the fence. For example, Russia's defence spending is 1/40th of the U.S. and the size of the former's economy is no bigger than that of Belgium.

But Russia has vast economic and strategic potential which can overcome the shortcomings, as Moscow tries to adopt multi-party democracy based on the rule of law. The economy is being structured on the fundamentals of free market economy and all that which goes with it.

According to Mr. Bush, the agreement signed last week in Moscow says "the Cold War is over and America and Russia need to be, and will be friends, for the good of the world."

Such rhetoric has added new dimensions to the relationship Russia proposes to have



**The deputy head of Russia's General Staff, Gen. Yuri Baluyevsky (left), and the Chairman of NATO's military committee, Guldo Venturioni, during the opening of the long-delayed NATO's military mission in Moscow on Monday. — AP**

with the U.S., NATO and the E.U. The NATO-Russia Council (NRC) will lay the foundation for this new era in Rome on Tuesday, when NATO approves an agreement that grants Russia a non-voting seat in the new organisation.

The NRC will initially address issues related to global terrorism and seek ways to contain challenges related to global transportation and deployment of search and rescue missions to contain terrorist threats. The Tuesday summit will usher in a new relationship for the former Cold War ene-

mies and for the first time, Russia will get a foothold in the NATO headquarters here.

Moscow has been lobbying hard in Western capitals to ensure a symbolic outcome of the relationship, highlighted now by the emergence of the NRC.

Many Russians argue that Mr. Putin's epoch-making policy shift is too bold and risky. The country still faces a crisis of national identity and many wonder if it can ever integrate fully with Europe. Russia is seen as an Asian power too as it spans across the Euro-Asian continent.

**THE HINDU**

... French President, Jacques Chirac ...

**SUMMIT / ONLY A BEGINNING, SAYS PUTIN**

100-19  
29/5

# NATO accepts former foe into its fold

**ROME, MAY 28.** Russia and NATO have signed an agreement which heralds a new era of post-Cold War co-operation. Under the new arrangement, Russia will have more authority in the new NATO-Russia council than in an earlier, less formal arrangement set up several years ago to try to nudge Moscow closer to the West. Even so, its future involvement will be limited to certain areas. They include crisis management, peacekeeping and such military areas as air defence, search-and-rescue operations and joint exercises.

Nineteen NATO partners and the Russian President, Vladimir Putin, sat around a circular table and remained seated as the documents were passed around for them to sign. "The significance of this meeting is difficult to overestimate," Mr. Putin said earlier, noting that a few years ago, such a role for Russia "would have been, simply, unthinkable, whereas today it has become a reality."

"Being realists, we must remember that relations between Russia and the North Atlantic alliance have been historically far from straightforward," Mr. Putin said. Even though Russia

was not admitted as a full partner and has a limited role, "we must understand this Rome Declaration ... is only a beginning," he said.

Leader after leader cited September 11, and the lingering terror threat, as a catalyst for new cohesion and determination among NATO members. "The attacks ... made clear that the new dangers of our age threaten all nations, including Russia," the U.S. President, George W. Bush said. "The months since have made clear that by working together against these threats, we multiply our effectiveness." Mr. Putin agreed, and mentioned a blast during a holiday parade in the Russian region of Dagestan on May 9, which killed 41 persons. Russia blames Islamic extremists for the attack.

The NATO Secretary-General, George Robertson, who will be chairman of the new council, opened the session, declaring "this gathering represents the hope of a better, saner future." He said he considers the council a real breakthrough and expressed hope that it would "not just deliberate but take decisive actions. ... There is a common enemy out there."

Mr. Bush, just days after he and Mr. Putin signed an agreement slashing their nuclear arsenals by two-thirds over 10 years, hailed the transformation of Russia from Cold War rival to friend.

"Two former foes are now joined as partners, overcoming 50 years of division and a decade of uncertainty," Mr. Bush said.

The leaders formalised their new arrangement amid the tightest of security at the seaside Practica di Mare air base. Concerned about terrorist attacks, Italy deployed 15,000 security forces and mounted robust air and sea defences to protect the 20 world leaders. Mr. Bush, meeting privately with Lord Robertson beforehand, praised the alliance for recognising that a united Europe is "more likely to be achieved by welcoming Russia west." Russia's participation comes as NATO looks forward to expanding further in November and as it ponders its role in an age when Russia is no longer an adversary, but a friend.

The United States counts Russia as a key ally in the present anti-terrorism war. — AP

THE HINDO

29 MAY 2002

# 49-15 Jakarta for Dili in ASEAN 25/5

By Amit Baruah

**SINGAPORE, MAY 24.** Indonesia supports the idea of East Timor becoming a member of the Association of South-East Asian Nations (ASEAN).

A Foreign Ministry spokesman said in Jakarta today that Indonesia had an interest in East Timor becoming a member of ASEAN as this could help maintain the stability and security of South-East Asia. The spokesman, however, added that the decision to become a member of ASEAN or other regional groupings had to be taken by East Timor itself. In the past, there has been some opposition from within ASEAN against East Timor becoming a member. Myanmar, for instance, had objected to membership of East Timor, given the contacts of the East Timor lead-

ership with the pro-democracy leader, Aung San Suu Kyi. Interestingly, Papua New Guinea still enjoys observer status within ASEAN — it doesn't have the status of a full member. There have been voices within the ASEAN region about new members such as Cambodia, Vietnam, Laos and Myanmar, which are less developed, dragging the regional grouping as a whole. The argument has been that a country like Papua New Guinea would further affect the prospects of ASEAN, whose advanced members have been dogged with problems of slowing economic growth and enhanced competition from countries like China.

For their part, East Timor leaders have referred in the past to the possibility of linking up with Pacific Islands Forum given its proximity with other Pacific nations. In a recent interview,

the East Timor Foreign Minister, Jose Ramos-Horta, spoke about Dili taking membership of ASEAN.

"We should develop an active foreign policy based on membership in important international and regional bodies, such as ASEAN...." "We should also develop strong bilateral ties with nearby countries like Australia, Indonesia, Malaysia and others in Asia. I view East Timor's relationship with the European Union and the United States as being of strategic importance. Both have been very much engaged in supporting us," Mr. Ramos-Horta said. The East Timor President, Xanana Gusmao, who personally invited the Indonesian President, Megawati Sukarnoputri, to attend the May 20 independence day celebrations, is to pay his first visit abroad to Indonesia.

25 May 2002

40-14  
**ASEAN MEET / FOCUS ON CO-OPERATION**

# Plan to counter terrorism

By Amit Baruah

**SINGAPORE, MAY 21.** The Association of South-east Asian Nations (ASEAN) today agreed to "counter, prevent and suppress all forms of terrorist acts" even as it chose not to come up with a definition of terrorism.

A two-day ASEAN ministerial meeting on counter-terrorism, which ended in Kuala Lumpur today, called for the development of multilateral or bilateral pacts to help arrest, investigate, prosecute, extradite and seize criminals and their assets. A joint communiqué contained the outline of a work programme to fight terrorism, which included exchange of information, compilation and dissemination of bilateral and multilateral agreements as well as information on relevant international treaties.

"I believe that today terrorism is a serious problem and this plan of action should rank very high in the priority list of ASEAN co-operation," the Malaysian Deputy Prime Minister, Abdullah Ahmad Badawi, told presspersons in Kuala Lumpur today. Mr. Abdullah also said that ASEAN nations had agreed

to pay more attention to eradicate the root causes of terrorism. The Deputy Prime Minister, who also holds the Home portfolio, said in the past the grouping had concentrated more on exchange of intelligence and information.

On the lack of consensus to define "terrorism", the Malaysian leader said this should not be an obstacle to ASEAN efforts to stamp out the problem. "The issue is that we should not be spending all our time trying to argue who is a terrorist and what is terrorism so much so that we have no time to talk about what we should be doing together (to tackle the issue)," the Deputy Prime Minister stated.

Referring to the issue of extradition, Mr. Abdullah said extradition arrangements between countries had to be arrived at bilaterally. "It is up to a country to decide whether to have an extradition arrangement with any country it chooses. We can't have an extradition arrangement on a regional basis," he said.

The Singapore Home Minister, Wong Kan Seng, said the definition of terrorism should

be left to the United Nations. "Eminent organisations like the OIC which had made such an attempt (to define terrorism) had difficulties agreeing on the definition," he said.

"While we did not discuss the definition of terrorism at the senior officials' and the Ministerial meetings, we each in our own laws have defined terrorists and acts of terrorism.... those of us who have encountered terrorists and experienced acts of terrorism can recognise a terrorist and know the effects of terrorism on our security and stability," Mr. Wong said.

He added that ASEAN countries could consider designating a special unit within their country to serve as a principal contact point with other foreign counterparts on counter-terrorism matters.

"This will facilitate the exchange of information among ASEAN member-countries in the fight against terrorism," he said.

The links between Islamist militants in Indonesia, Singapore, Malaysia and the Philippines and their ties with the Al-Qaeda have perturbed South-East Asian nations.

**THE HINDU**

MAY 2007

# Asean focus on fighting terror

The Star/Asia News Network

KUALA LUMPUR, May 20: — Asean cannot waste time coming up with a common definition of terrorism and has to act together now to check terrorism and find its root causes, Deputy Prime Minister of Malaysia, Mr Abdullah Ahmad Badawi said today.

He said that valuable time would be wasted if the member countries were distracted in finding a common definition for terrorism. "We may not be able to agree on a definition but I hope this will not stop or derail our efforts to fight terror wherever it lurks," he said at the opening of the Special Session of Ministerial Meeting on Terrorism at the Renaissance Hotel here.

Mr Abdullah noted that all member countries were committed to fighting terrorism in the region. "We are all here to talk about what can be done together rather than as an individual country," he said, adding that more clear-cut cases of terrorist threats had been jointly identified by all countries in Asean. He called on Asean countries to work at the international level to address the feeling of discontentment and dispossession that led to terrorism. "I urge fellow Asean members to turn to these underlying feelings of oppression... We must act preventively before it becomes too late... If we understand that human development and dignity is an important deterrent to terror, we must take a common stand to reduce instances where they are denied," he said.

THE STATESMAN

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REYKJAVIK MEET / 'HISTORIC' AGREEMENT IN PLACE

## Russia gets a bigger role in NATO

HO-14  
1675

By Batuk Gathani

**BRUSSELS, MAY 15.** The 19 member-States of the North Atlantic Treaty Organisation (NATO) and Russia are entering a new relationship, more than 50 years after the foundation of the alliance and a decade after the end of the Cold War.

At a summit in Reykjavik, Iceland, NATO Foreign and Defence Ministers yesterday approved an agreement in which Russia was accepted into the alliance. The new NATO-Russia Council will co-operate on issues related to terrorism, arms control, international crisis management, peacekeeping and civil-emergency planning.

While all members involved hailed the strengthening of relations, senior officials on both sides cautioned that success would depend on how the summit rhetoric was backed by action. It remains to be seen what tangible benefits NATO can give to the Russian President, Vladimir Putin, to promote economic and structural reforms.

Many Russians are still suspicious of NATO — a Cold War alliance formed in opposition to the Warsaw Pact. As the former

head of the Russian Defence Ministry's Department of International Military Cooperation, Leonid Ivashov, said: "This is just a diplomatic game, a way to sugar the pill of NATO expansion into eastern Europe and former Soviet Baltic republics later this year."

Russia's hardline politicians share this perception, seeing their country's new relationship with NATO and the West as a "blow" to Russian national interests.

According to Western observers, such pessimistic observations represent a "minority" view, as Russians are also extremely worried about the growing clout of Islamic extremism in the Central and West Asian regions.

The Russian establishment is paying special attention to issues related to counter-terrorism and Russia and NATO have agreed to conduct "joint threat assessments" of their troops, civilian aircraft and critical infrastructure. Mr. Putin and NATO leaders are to meet again in two weeks in Rome — when for the first time, Russia will sit as an "equal partner" at the NATO conference table. The agree-

ment gives Russia a bigger role in NATO decision-making on certain issues related to global terrorism and weapons of mass destruction; however, as an "associate" member, Russia will not participate in any decision-making related to NATO's military initiatives.

As the U.S. Secretary of State, Colin Powell, said: "We believe we can lay the foundation of new co-operation between NATO and Moscow while fully protecting the alliance's ability to act independently."

16 MAY 2002

THE HINDU



# NATO expands into irrelevance

HP-11  
By C. Raja Mohan

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tion of some of the policies of the military alliance.

**GENEVA, MAY 13.** As the North Atlantic Treaty Organisation, the most powerful military alliance the world has ever seen, prepares to expand its membership and build bridges to its former adversary, it has become increasingly marginal in the management of international security.

For NATO, what should have been a moment of greatest triumph, the creation of a Europe that is united and peaceful for the first time in centuries, is also an occasion to reflect on a bleak future that beckons it.

Lord Ismay, the first Secretary-General of NATO, summed up its objectives at the end of the Second World War in Europe: "keep America in, Russia out and Germany down". NATO successfully pursued these objectives during the Cold War that lasted more than four decades. But today, America does not seem to care much for NATO, Germany is united and Russia is about to be integrated into NATO.

After September 11, the U.S. made it clear that it has the military capabilities and the political will to act alone in handling the new security threats. The long-standing allies of the United States

in Europe were welcome to join the American war on terrorism; but it did not really matter if they did not.

"It is the mission that will define the coalition and not the other way around", the Americans suggested as they launched an expansive war against international terrorism. Europeans now can neither influence American policy nor undermine it.

Until recently the United States insisted on the expansion of NATO, and Russia opposed it. That controversial debate has ended in a whimper as NATO loses political coherence. This week Russia will join a new arrangement with NATO in which it will get a vote and not just a voice in the formula-

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The growing irrelevance of NATO is rooted in the transformation of U.S., Russian relationship from an uneasy friendship since the end of the Cold War into a near alliance. As the American strategic attention moves from Europe to Asia, Russia is likely to become a more valuable political partner to the United States in dealing with the conflicts in the southern and eastern parts of the Eurasian landmass.

A distinguished scholar recently summed up the changing American perceptions of Europe as follows: "What is Europe? There is Britain in the West, Russia in the East and Turkey in the South. The rest is a marshland!"

Great Britain is of course a fellow Anglo-

## EUROPE IN FLUX

Saxon power that is willing to back the U.S. on key issues in contrast to the whining Europeans. The secular and moderate Turkey is an important ally of the new American project in the Islamic world and West Asia.

Russia can contribute to the American efforts to stabilise the volatile Central Asia and the Caucasus and is a potential partner in containing the rising power in the East — China.

The summit meeting later this month between the U.S. President, George W. Bush, and his Russian counterpart, Vladimir Putin, is likely to give the final touches to the contours of a new relationship between Washington and Moscow.

The two leaders are said to be close to clinching an understanding on nuclear reductions and missile defence and a joint document proclaiming an alliance-like re-

lationship between the U.S. and Russia is apparently being drafted.

While there is deep scepticism rooted in the inertia of the past, in both Moscow and Washington on the prospects for a new relationship between the two, Messrs. Bush and Putin appear determined since September 11 to push forward in a new direction that will have a big impact on India's strategic environment.

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The attempt by the Europeans to carve out an independent role in West Asia has suffered a setback amid accusations in the American media that "anti-Semitism" was at the root of the European criticism of Israel. The European Union had been sharply critical of unconditional American support to Israel during its recent military offensive.

A leading American columnist wrote that Europe, having run a genocide against the Jews in the 1930s and 1940s was now practising "anti-Semitism without Jews" and playing its part in the "Second and final phase of the struggle for a final solution to the Jewish Question".

To accuse the Europeans of anti-Semitism for supporting Arabs and Palestinians at the moment is indeed unacceptable. But it demonstrated the ability of a handful of American columnists to put the European leaders on the defensive.

The American tirade against European policy in West Asia has brought the top foreign policy handlers of the EU — Chris Patten and Javier Solana — scurrying into denials of the charge of anti-Semitism in European newspapers.

More fundamentally, the European support to the Arabs has not in anyway increased their leverage in West Asia. The Arabs will continue to turn towards the United States to restrain Ariel Sharon and persuade Israel to accept a reasonable settlement of its disputes with them.

# EU takes report on Arafat seriously



Journalists stand behind barricades metres away from Manger Square where the Church of the Nativity stands in Bethlehem on Monday. — AFP

## Agencies

**BRUSSELS, May 6.** — The European Union is treating seriously an Israeli report accusing Palestinian leader Mr Yasser Arafat of overseeing terrorist attacks, a European Commission spokesman said today.

"The claims by the Israeli government are serious and we are taking them very seriously," the spokesman for EU external affairs commissioner Mr Chris Patten, adding that the commission would examine "all available evidence" as soon as the Israeli government makes it available.

Israeli Prime Minister Mr Ariel Sharon arrived at Washington yesterday at 2.55 a.m. with a 91-page intelligence file that aims to prove Mr Arafat's Palestinian Authority both financed and oversaw the execu-

tion of a wave of suicide strikes that sparked Israel's West Bank offensive last month. The documents purport to show Mr Arafat's signature on payments to militants who organised suicide attacks and arranged arms purchases.

They also allege Mr Arafat routinely diverts European and US aid to finance these operations.

Palestinian information minister Mr Yasser Abed Rabbo labelled the booklet "ridiculous" and said that all the documents "were forged".

In Washington, Miss Condoleezza Rice, US President Mr George W Bush's national security adviser, said: "The White House position is that we're not going to try to choose the leadership for the Palestinian people. Chairman Arafat is there."

The five-week standoff at

Bethlehem's Church of Nativity appears close to an end with Israeli and Palestinians working on the sticking points of a proposed deal.

Palestinian officials were earlier today reported to have said the two sides had agreed to a deal worked out by the Vatican and the European Union. But Israeli sources denied it, while conceding there had been progress in talks.

"We are in the last stages of negotiations and unless there is a last-minute breakdown, I think that this affair will be sorted out in the coming hours", Israeli defence minister Mr Binyamin Ben Eliezer said.

Mr Arafat's adamant opposition to exiting more than six "senior terrorists" to a European country was the main point of contention, CNN reported quoting sources. Israel Radio quoted

senior Fatah activist Mr Ibrahim Abayat as saying a solution to the standoff would be achieved within hours.

The Bethlehem Governor, who is among those trapped inside the church since, echoed the view saying the siege would end "in a matter of hours." English daily Ha'aretz, however, said an American source involved in the talks estimated an agreement was unlikely to be reached today and that a representative of CIA was to join the talks.

Palestinian officials had said under the deal of the over 100 Palestinians holed up in the church, six to eight will be deported to Italy while 30 others would be sent to Gaza for trial in Palestinian courts. The rest will be allowed to go free. The end of the standoff would pave the way to Israeli pullout from Bethlehem and Beit Jala.

# Summit to examine E.U.-U.S. divide

By Batuk Gathani

**BRUSSELS, MAY 2.** The Euro-American summit later in the day in Washington has aroused wide expectations on both sides of the Atlantic, despite the divide that in recent months has widened, particularly over West Asia, Iraq and the prospects of a trans-Atlantic trade war.

The E.U. Foreign Policy Chief, Javier Solana, recently wrote: "It is fashionable these days to talk of an intercontinental rift pushing the U.S. and Europe ever further apart...rumours of the death of the trans-Atlantic relationship have once again been greatly exaggerated."

The European delegation is led by the Spanish Prime Minister, Jose Maria Aznar and includes the European Commission President, Romano Prodi, the E.U. Trade Com-

missioner, Pascal Lamy, and Mr. Solana. They will meet the U.S. President, George W. Bush, and the summit will later resume informally at Camp David.

At the table, the Europeans are expected to voice concerns over the American "unilateral approach" to foreign and trade affairs. Europe has been taken aback by Mr. Bush's extraordinary support for Israel, potentially undermining western interests in the Arab world. The summit will also cover bilateral trade issues and a new role for Russia in NATO.

According to U.S. observers, Mr. Bush and the Europeans are not likely to find much common ground on proposed military action against Iraq. Mr. Bush's administration sees itself as involved in a moral war against terrorism, but Europeans argue

that the U.S. cannot win that war without the cooperation of Arab states.

In E.U. fora, France has led a growing chorus of dissent against proposed air strikes against Iraq, while the German Government has maintained a "tactical silence". Arab countries have called for Iraq's rehabilitation after years of living under U.S.-initiated sanctions, while European opinion is also shifting in that direction. But American rhetoric has exposed deep strains within the alliance. France has stated that the U.S. has "no legal basis for this kind of bombardment" and warned the U.S. to "change its approach" if it wants to forge a new western consensus on a strategy to contain the crises in West Asia.

U.S. rhetoric weighs heavily on the future of the trans-Atlan-

tic relationship, with far-reaching consequences for the 21st century.

The traditional relationship — between a dominant U.S. and semi-passive Europe — is quickly fading, as the E.U. attempts to evolve new "common European foreign and defence policies".

E.U. leaders are also keen, however, to develop new mechanisms for a "collective" decision-making process to sustain the trans-Atlantic alliance.

The 15-nation E.U. is already one of the largest overseas customers for U.S. goods and services. In the recent past, there has been talk of bringing together three of the world's largest U.S. customers — the E.U., Canada and Mexico — into a massive free trade area with a combined gross domestic product of \$10 trillions.

THE HINDU

MAY 2002

FROM JON BOYLE

**Pratica Di Mare (Italy), May 28** (Reuters): Nato and Russian war today, inaugurating a security forum to cooperate over terrorism and arms control that enshrines their new relationship since September 11.

"Two former foes are now joined as partners, overcoming 50 years of division and a decade of uncertainty," US President George W. Bush told a summit of the Western defence alliance and its once-defining enemy.

The new Nato-Russia Council, which gives Moscow an equal voice on key security issues, was also a prize for Russian President Vladimir Putin, who — despite critics at home — has reached out to the West since the September 11 hijacked airliner attacks on the United States.

"The significance of this meeting is difficult to over-estimate," said Putin, telling the inaugural meeting of the security body that their meeting would have been "unthinkable" even only a short time ago.

Russia froze ties with the alliance in 1999 when Nato jets bombed Yugoslavia in a bid to halt a crackdown in its separatist Kosovo province.

Putin's comments could also be seen as a veiled warning against possible US-led attacks on Iraq, for he signalled that his pro-Western foreign policy did not give the alliance carte blanche for military action.

"It's absolutely fundamentally important to understand that this cooperation... must repose on the stable foundations of international law, the UN charter, the Helsinki Final Act and the European security charter," he said. Russia traditionally maintains that force can be used to intervene in world affairs only with the explicit approval of the

UN Security Council, where it has the right of veto.

"We accept that the views of Russia and Nato on certain security related issues may not always coincide, but... what unites us is far more serious and far outweighs what divides us," he told a news conference later.

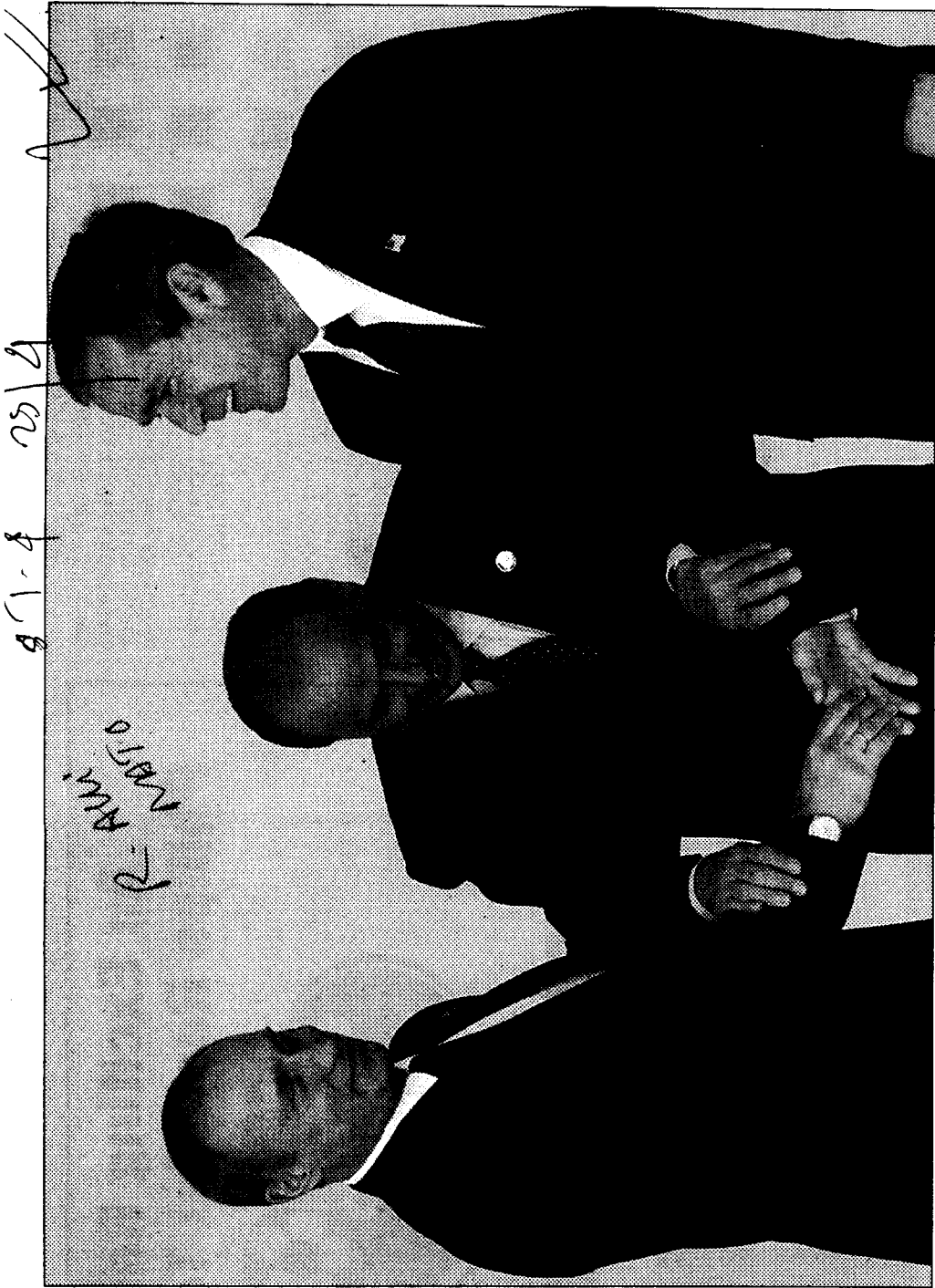
## Engels but not Marx

**Moscow, May 28 (Reuters):** Russian President Vladimir Putin, after a weekend of wisecracking with President Bush, showed his new-found talent for witty one-liners again — this time taking a shot at Russia's communist past.

"I see on the list the name of one Mr. Engels from Germany," he said, opening a Kremlin conference of European audit institutions. "Thank God he came without Marx," Putin chuckled, prompting laughter among delegates. The writings of communism's fathers Friedrich Engels and Karl Marx provided the theoretical basis for the 1917 Bolshevik revolution that ushered in seven decades of communist rule in the Soviet Union.

The stand-off between India and Pakistan over Kashmir forced its way onto the agenda of the meeting, with Russian and Nato leaders urging the two nuclear-capable rivals to pull back from the brink of war and resume talks.

"The Presidents and Prime Ministers strongly urge both sides to de-escalate and to resume talking together so that their problems can be resolved peacefully," Nato Secretary-General George Robertson said.



Italian Prime Minister Silvio Berlusconi (centre) tries to end a long handshake between Russian President Vladimir Putin and US President George W. Bush. (AFP)

The summit got under way behind a massive security shield on the sprawling Pratica di Mare military airbase south of Rome, for fear dissidents might target the first gathering of Nato leaders since September 11.

Hundreds of troops guarded the perimeter fence, helicopters and fighter jets patrolled the brilliant blue sky and, out at sea, a naval vessel imposed a 15-km exclusion zone. All Italian airlines

and some foreign carriers suspended Rome operations to guard against possible hijackings.

Robertson opened the summit, hailing the pact of nations from "Vancouver to Vladivostok" as a force to tackle their common enemy of global terrorism.

The declaration signed by the leaders committed them to cooperation on counter-terrorism, crisis management, non-prolif-

eration, arms control and confidence-building measures, theatre missile defence, search and rescue at sea, military-to-military cooperation and defence reform, civilian emergencies and "new threats and challenges".

Any state in the Council of 20 will be able to take back any security issue from the new forum if there is no consensus. Issues removed from the forum by the Western members could still be

debated among the 19 Nato allies, thus barring Russia from any veto over independent action on their part.

The new Council will give Russia an equal voice, something it never had in the hapless "19-plus-one" Permanent Joint Council (PJC) which was established in 1997 partly to console Moscow for Nato's first enlargement into the former Soviet bloc.

# Le Pen's victory prompts 'wake-up call' alert in UK

By Rashmee Z Ahmed  
Times News Network

LONDON: Some days after the election successes of French far-right leader Jean-Marie Le Pen, Britain is fearful that the far-right British National Party (BNP) might make gains in next month's local authority elections.



With local elections just a few days away, leading British politicians and race relations activists are warning that the French presidential poll was a "wake-up call" for Britain.

On Tuesday, an alarmed Gurbux Singh, head of the Commission for Racial Equality, warned in an open letter to Prime Minister Blair that the BNP could capitalise on Le Pens success in the May 2 UK local elections.

Leading members of Blair's party, including former foreign secretary Robin Cook and party chairman Charles Clarke have admitted there is a "localised" threat from the British far right.

The BNP, however, is generally considered a potential threat across the English regions. Its Oxford-educated leader Nick Griffin, admitted to this paper in an earlier interview that his party had to build an image as had the French far-right.

After September 11, Griffin began to build bridges and extend his party's appeal even to minority, non-Christian communities such as Sikhs and Hindus by publicly proclaiming that he was opposed only to Muslims.

Griffin, in concert with a few angry young Sikhs in the Punjabi-dominant Southall area of London, started to issue posters and cassettes asking Sikhs and Hindus to boycott Muslims.

Immigration, asylum, multi-faith schools and integration have long been urgent issues in a Britain that officially calls itself multi-cultural even though ethnic minorities account for just 6.5 per cent of its total population.

The BNP vote percentage in those constituencies at the last general election was an unprecedented over-10 per cent.

Blair's Labour Party may do badly in the local polls.

# Le Pen's victory may worsen UK race relations

Vijay Dutt  
London, April 23

Racism  
H11

JEAN-MARIE Le Pen's amazing success in France has alerted politicians here of all political hues against a knock-on effect that could lead to another summer, like the one last year, of racial unrest. The racist violence in 2001 in Bradford, Oldham and Burnley were the worst in 20 years.

The far-Right British National Party (BNP) leader Nick Griffin has caused further concern by declaring that the French National Front's success was the most dramatic representation yet of the Far Right's advance across Europe. As if to further compound the fear among ethnic minority groups, gangs of white youths in Preston clashed with Asians on Monday night. The police described the clash as "racially aggressive".

Residents in Preston said Le Pen's victory would surely boost the morale and ambitions of the BNP, the supporters of which were involved last year in Bradford and Oldham riots.

The police do suspect that the fuse for igniting race-oriented violence is very short. In Preston which has a mixed population of whites and mostly Bangladeshis and some Pakistanis, just a minor argument between a white and Asian youth whose cars had met with a minor accident, led to gangs spilling on streets within an hour.

APR 2002

THE HINDUSTAN TIMES

# ARF meet focus on aviation security

R. Ali M4 By Amit Baruah HD-15

**SINGAPORE, APRIL 21.** Will the ASEAN Regional Forum (ARF) meeting, to be held in Bandar Seri Begawan, Brunei, in July, adopt a plan of action to combat terrorism? Senior officials, who met for a three-day preparatory meeting in Bangkok earlier this week, are keen on enhancing cooperation in border control, VIP and aviation security, accounts of the deliberations said.

Officials, who attended the deliberations, told this correspondent that the focus of the meeting was on the staging of the coming football World Cup in Japan and South Korea.

The exchange of information and intelligence relating to the World Cup came up for discussion the officials said. They stressed that the nature of the discussions during the meeting was of a "very general" nature.

A spokesman for the Thai Foreign Ministry told reporters in Bangkok that investment and tourist flows could be affected if countries did not act individually and collectively against terrorism.

He said that as the Asia-Pacific's regional security forum, the ARF could lay a role in building the capacity of nations to deal with the problems of terrorism. The Bangkok meeting, sponsored by Thailand and Australia, was attended by officials from the 23-member ARF grouping. An Australian official was quoted as saying after the meeting that the ARF plan to counter terrorism centred on maritime and aviation security as well as border control. "Further work is needed. But there was no finger pointing....(but) the region needs to be seen to be taking action," the Australian official said. For his part, the Thai Foreign Minister, Surakiat Sathirathai, said about the meeting: "We are very pleased that the outcome is a very positive one. And I think this is a very important step, that this cooperation will be expanded from the ASEAN (grouping) into the (ARF) countries."

Mr. Surakiat was quoted as dismissing concerns that countries in the region had been "complacent" when it came to dealing with terrorism. "I think we are not complacent at all....we are very committed...." The 23-member ASEAN Regional Forum, which was set up in 1994, essentially is a stage for discussing security concerns among a diverse lot of countries which include China, Russia, India and the United States apart from ASEAN and Pacific nations. While there have been efforts to nudge the ARF to deal with more substantive issues, the group remains a "discussion" forum. It remains to be seen whether concerns about terrorism galvanise this ASEAN-led association to do more than talk about concerns.

2002

THE HINDU

## 7/10 Akhand ASEAN 17/10

Can tigers — even bruised ones — and a ponderous pachyderm share a meaningful relationship? Yes they can, but only provided both sides are willing to go the extra mile to evolve a shared vision and greater understanding. So, it was heartening to hear prime minister Atal Behari Vajpayee making appropriate noises, during his recent foreign trip, about the need to strengthen relations between India and the Association of South East Asian Nations (ASEAN). 'Look east' appears to be the new government mantra, and an ASEAN-India summit is planned for Cambodia in November to prepare the groundwork for broader links. Hopefully, both sides will not just confine themselves to platitudes, but will succeed in invigorating economic and cultural ties that had suffered a distinct chill due to the onset of the Cold War. India had traditionally enjoyed warm relations with the ASEAN countries; indeed, it had helped many of them in their struggle against colonialism. But geopolitics intervened. ASEAN was created in 1967 as a US-backed body to check the spread of communism in South East Asia. India's pro-Soviet tilt ensured that it would be viewed with suspicion both by ASEAN and its mentor, the US. Of course, all that is now practically ancient history. We live in an increasingly unipolar world; India prides itself on being Washington's 'natural ally' in the region; and China — once feared by xenophobic westerners as the communist 'yellow peril' that would swarm over the world — is today working with ASEAN to create a mammoth free trade area that will cover nearly two billion people within the next decade. Times have changed, but India has been extremely slow in reacting to the new realities.

Dramatic new steps are needed. Perhaps one could be for India to seek ASEAN membership. If that sounds far-fetched, consider this: geographically, India is in the immediate neighbourhood of ASEAN, sharing land and maritime borders with Myanmar, Indonesia and Thailand. Culturally, many people in south India claim to feel far greater affinity with ASEAN members like Singapore — which they regard as role models — than with the cow belt. Even if India doesn't actually enter ASEAN, we could explore the possibility of creating a free trade area with it. This would give ASEAN greater access to a huge emerging market, second only to China's. But closer linkages with ASEAN would also benefit India, particularly if they inspire within us the sense of a larger Asian identity. Indians tend to overwhelmingly identify themselves with the subcontinent. Certainly, geography cannot be denied, but this identification also traps us into mindsets dominated by ethnic and religious conflicts, petty rivalries with neighbours, and an unwillingness to bury the past and move on. In a way, it amounts to ghettoising the Indian mind. Greater interaction with ASEAN countries would, among other things, open our eyes to the fact that there are multiple Ramayanas extant among them. This may offend purists, but offers two valuable lessons to those with open minds. One, that the message of Lord Rama is truly universal, and cannot be hijacked by a handful of fanatics. And two, that diversity is something that can enrich all of us, if we are willing to resist succumbing to an irrational fear of 'the other'.



# European Parliament calls for sanctions

By Batuk Gathani

**BRUSSELS, APRIL 11.** The European Parliament has called on the 15 European Union member-States to impose political and trade sanctions on Israel for its offensive against Palestinians amid growing frustration over the military attacks.

In a hard-hitting resolution, promptly deplored by a senior Israeli diplomat, the E.U.'s directly elected legislature said an agreement signed in November 1995 which defines political and trade links between the European Union and Israel should be suspended. But suspending the pact with Israel would require the unanimous approval of all the member-States — something that political analysts said is unlikely to materialise in the immediate future. The European Union is Israel's biggest trading partner, buying a quarter of all Israeli exports — about \$8.5 billion worth in 2000. It is also the largest source of funding to the Palestinian Authority.

The Spanish Foreign Minister, Mr. Josep Pique, said last night that the European Union was "beginning to contemplate" economic sanctions against Israel. There is a great deal of interest in Europe on the outcome of the U.S. Secretary of

State, Colin Powell's visit to Israel. Next Monday, the E.U. Foreign Ministers will meet to discuss a strategy on ending the bloodshed in the region.

In recent years, the E.U. has contributed euro 3,470 million through the United Nations and directly to the West Bank and Gaza Strip. According to officials, E.U.-financed projects in the Palestinian controlled territories have been substantially damaged by the Israeli military offensive with estimates placing the damage at \$17.3 million.

The European Parliament has called for "consideration to be given to the sending of international peacekeeping and monitoring force to the region under United Nations supervision". It asks the E.U. member-States "to make an immediate start on preparing their contribution to that force." The European Parliament also stressed "the special responsibility of the United States" in influencing Israeli policy and condemned recent acts of anti-Semitism in European capitals.

Many Europeans feel that the Bush administration has "looked at the Israeli-Palestinian conflict exclusively through the prism of war against terrorism rather than the lens of an occupation".

# Israel stymies E.U. mission

By Batuk Gathani

679  
10-14  
BRUSSELS, APRIL 5. The European Union's peace mission to West Asia has been "temporarily aborted" ostensibly due to "intransigence" on the part of the Israeli Government.

The two E.U. peace envoys, Javier Solana, the Foreign and Security policy chief and Josef Pique, Spain's Foreign Minister, cut short their visit to the region on Thursday night, after Israel refused them permission to visit Yasser Arafat, the Palestinian leader.

There is mounting unease in the European financial markets about the prospects of rising oil prices as a result of the worsening situation in West Asia. Motorists in several E.U. countries have started feeling the effect of rising petrol prices.

On the commodities market, oil prices today fell after touching \$ 28 per barrel. The rollback is attributed to the strong statement by the U.S. President, George W. Bush, on West Asia. Mr Bush called on Israel to quit the West Bank, and followed it up with his decision to send his Secretary of State, Colin Powell, to the region.

The massive Israeli military offensive in the West Bank where Mr Arafat remains besieged in his headquarters has triggered bloodshed, chaos and uncertainty in the region. The average European remains both perplexed and worried by the developments. This frustration is also reflected in the growing number of anti-Jewish incidents in major European cities, particularly in France where synagogues have been

set on fire. If European political and investment nerves are jittery, the ripple effects were felt in the oil market. Oil prices have jumped more than \$ 1 every week for the past four weeks and since the start of the year, the prices have increased 34 per cent. The OPEC (Organisation for Petroleum Exporting Countries) based in Vienna, last night promised to increase oil production should the price rise beyond \$ 28.

The OPEC secretary general said the oil cartel members would do nothing except boost oil production to stop rise in oil prices. Much attention is now focused on Russia as that country has overtaken Saudi Arabia as the world's largest oil producer. Russia's steadily rising output far exceeds domestic demands.

FOR UNINTE

# EU to slap duties on steel in trade row with the US

PATRICK LANNIN  
BRUSSELS, MARCH 25

THE European Union is to set up a shield against a surge in steel imports after heavy new US duties, EU officials said on Monday in the latest salvo of a growing trade war.

President George W. Bush has infuriated the EU by setting tariffs of up to 30 per cent on steel from Europe, Asia and Latin America to protect struggling US steel producers.

Fears of a wider trade war have been heightened by EU threats of sanctions on a wide range of US products if Washington refuses to compensate the 15-nation bloc for the steel measures with lower duties on other goods.

On steel, an EU official said Europe would impose import tariffs ranging from 14.9 per cent to a maximum 26 per cent on 15 steel products. There would be a quota of 5.7 million tonnes before the new tariffs come into effect. The duties come into force next week if the European Commission, the EU's executive arm, approves them on Wednesday.

"What we are intending to do with these safeguard measures is to protect our market without being protectionist," EU commission trade spokesman Anthony Gooch told reporters. "What we will not be doing is taking on board the steel that US is closing out of its market," he added.

The official said the measures could be made permanent if the United States did not scrap its duties after six months,

although this would be decided by the EU Council of Ministers.

The EU and a string of other countries have already complained to the global trade watchdog, the World Trade Organisation (WTO), seeking to have the US duties overturned.

As this procedure takes around a year, the EU plans in the meantime to protect itself from a surge in shipments of steel that will be barred from the United States and seeking a market. The official said the EU had evidence imports had risen between 1998 and 2001 and feared the influx of 15 million tonnes of steel worth \$4 billion due to the US measures. But he said the EU measures would cover only 40 per cent of total steel imports. Of 133 developing countries, many would not be affected at all while others would only be impacted in one or two of the 15 product categories.

The first period for the quota will be six months, split into two periods of three months. The official said further talks on EU compensation demands would be held in Geneva, the home of the WTO, on April 11. But the European Commission has already circulated to EU member states a list of \$2.0 billion of goods it would hit with sanctions if Washington refused compensation for the duties. These include steel, textiles, citrus fruit, motorcycles, rice, paper and other products.

The EU has denied the list is aimed at applying political pressure on the White House by focusing on products that come from US States which are sensitive for Bush.

INDIAN EXPRESS

26 MAR 2002

# E.U. meet on reforms in energy sector

10-19  
By Batuk Gathani

1873  
BRUSSELS, MARCH 12. On the eve of this weekend's summit of the 15 European Union heads of government at Barcelona, Mr Romano Prodi, the President of the European Commission has stated that liberalisation of the European energy market may be agreed upon.

Mr Prodi brushed aside concern that France, which faces presidential elections in a few weeks, may vote against the energy programme for the second year running. France wants the summit to focus on social issues and has called for changes to tax and social policies to accompany any agreement on energy liberalisation. The summit will also test the credibility of the proposed pan-European economic reforms programme.

Mr Prodi is confident of "real progress" and expects France to fall in line with other E.U. member states, since the European Commission - the administrative arm of the E.U. - has powers to use Article 86 of the E.U. treaty. This allows the European Commission to impose liberalisation norms on public sector companies providing services of general interest. Hence, the common perception is that the E.U.'s non-household markets could soon be liberalised. Mr.

R. Amores  
Prodi describes this as "a very major step" which would cover more than half the E.U. market. The strategy is to make European manufacturing more competitive with lower energy costs.

The last summit was derailed by French and German opposition to liberalisation of electricity and gas markets, which some observers suspect was done to protect the their established energy providers. Mr. Prodi is confident that a breakthrough is possible and the E.U. will be moving towards opening of electricity and gas markets for all consumers - both private households and commercial establishments - by 2004. The summit will also attempt to strengthen economic policy co-ordination which include harmonisation of company and private taxation with a common European benchmark.

Mr Prodi said the progress achieved in market liberalisation in the E.U. countries now justified the European Commission concentrating on research, labour mobility and pension reforms at both national and European levels. Mr. Prodi warns that if the E.U. states do not make a "breakthrough" on research budgets and fail to create a few centres of excellence, the European companies may lose their competitive edge in the global market.

THE HINDU

10 MAR 2002

R. ANI  
100-15

## E.U. challenges U.S. tariff on steel 9/3

By Batuk Gathani

**BRUSSELS, MARCH 8.** The European Union has filed two complaints with the World Trade Organisation against the action of the U.S. President, George W. Bush, in imposing high tariffs on steel imports. The E.U move has been followed by Japan, Australia and New Zealand.

Ironically, it is the closest allies of the U.S. that will be hit the hardest by the Bush administration's action. The European media on Friday described the action as "disgraceful". It has eroded Mr. Bush's credibility as a champion of free trade. He is now rated as a "protectionist" who plays politics with trade. The spillover effect of all this is that it may trigger a major trade war.

It is argued that by imposing high tariff, the U.S. may save one job in the steel industry but may lose eight jobs in other sectors if America's major trading partners too adopt such protectionist measures.

The President of the European Central Bank, Wim Duisenberg, last night said the U.S. move may have been prompted by an over-valued dollar and warned that it risked provoking trade protectionism round the world. The euro is now trading at 88 cents to a dollar and the current sentiment in the markets indicate that unless there is a major upsurge in the recovery of the U.S. economy, the euro will make impressive gains against the dollar.

THE HINDU

100-15

# Move for E.U. statute gains momentum

By Batuk Gathani

**BRUSSELS, MARCH 1.** Delegates numbering 105 from 28 European nations gathered in Brussels on Thursday to deliberate on a constitutional arrangement for Europe. The meeting was chaired by the former French President, Valery Giscard d'Estaing.

It was a crucial moment in the continent's history as it marches towards a 'United States of Europe' with a single Constitution and currency as Napoleon Bonaparte dreamed of two centuries ago.

Mr. Giscard d'Estaing inaugurated the boldest pan-European consultations ever about where the European Union should be heading in the coming decades.

It is also tempting to draw parallels with the founding fathers of the United States, who met in Philadelphia in 1787 to write a new Constitution. Visionary leaders such as Charlemagne, Napoleon, Bismark and others have sought to create a European federal state but it has taken two World Wars and six decades of post-War peace in Europe for the continent to concretise the idea.

The basic European quest is to reform its institutions and remould itself into a federal state which, for many European poli-

ticians, is the logical evolution from the January launch of the euro currency and creation of a single free market economy. However, there is a minority of influential euro-sceptics who find all this difficult to swallow.

The "Convention on the Future of Europe" fulfils the aspirations of some 370 million European citizens.

But this is also a beginning of the process which has been overshadowed by wrangling over Mr Giscard's pay and perks for serving as president of the convention. All this has attracted a dose of nasty publicity. The E.U. has the potential to become a global power which can challenge the he-

gemony of the U.S.

A great deal about this will depend on what relationship the E.U. evolves with Russia, Japan, China and India. After the present meeting of the European Convention, its 105 members are to meet regularly for a year to define how the unique

blend of super-national government that is the E.U. can become more popular, democratic and effective. There is also a call for more transparency and efficiency in the working of the E.U.'s institutions which have been rocked by allegations of sleaze.

**HYDERABAD URBAN DEVELOPMENT AUTHORITY**  
 1-8-323, Paigah Palace, Police Lines, Secunderabad - 500 003, A.P., INDIA,  
 Ph : 91-40-7901533, 7905371,  
 Fax : 91-40-7903185, 7906297,  
 E-mail : hudaahyd@hd2.dot.net.in,  
 Website : www.hudaahyd.com.

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 FOR SALE OF PLOTS AT NARAYANAGUDA, HYDERABAD  
 Notice No. HUDA/DEV/GL.U/CE/7/2001-2002  
 Dated: 20-02-2002

In modification to the tender notice on the above referred Project Published in the 'TIMES OF INDIA' (Mumbai & Delhi) on 25.2.2002 and 'THE HINDU' (South) on 26.2.2002 the following is informed.

The "Invitation To Offer" document can be purchased from this office on any working day during office hours i.e. 10.30 Hrs to 17.00 Hrs. from **25.2.2002 to 05.04.2002 on payment of Rs. 2000/-** (Rupees two thousand Only) in the shape of Demand Draft drawn in favour of **Vice-Chairman, HUDA**. Bidders may submit bids for more than 1 (one) plot by purchasing a single "ITO" Document. The Phone/Fax numbers referred above may be contacted for any clarification.

**Sd/- Vice-Chairman**

**NOTICE**  
 Property situated at Rajagoundampalayam, Old Street No. 9, New Street No. 4, Old Ward No. 2, New Ward No. 8, S.F. No. 183/4, Plot No. 168 in Velalar Nagar of an extent of about 2,400 sq. ft. owned by Mr. K. Ramaswamy, S/o. R. Kandaswamy, Perankadu, Konnaiyar (Post), Tiruchengodu - 637 203 is offered for sale to my client. Any objection or claim in this regard be intimated to the undersigned within 7 days from date with supporting proof.  
 Advocate **K. Narayanaswamy**  
 Address : 113, Dr. Rangachary Road, Mylapore, Chennai - 4.  
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# NATO extends hand of friendship to Russia

R. ANI  
19-16

By Batuk Gathani

**BRUSSELS, FEB. 28.** The American military has an overwhelming impact on its NATO partners in Europe. The recent sharp exchanges between the European Union and the U.S. have prompted many Europeans to do some "soul searching" about their future relationship with the U.S. and Russia.

According to estimates, of the \$ 500 billion defence budget of NATO, the U.S. contributes \$ 300 billion compared to Europe's share of \$ 150 billion. To redefine and reiterate NATO's special relationship with Russia, the 19 member states of the alliance are again in the process of wooing Russia with offer of a close relationship. The latest proposal was worked out by 19 ambassadors of the member countries "behind closed doors". According to current estimates, NATO may add a dozen

new members within a decade. As the organisation already borders Russia with Poland becoming a member, the former is being offered a new relationship, giving it a "unique status".

According to current projections, NATO will have the three Baltic states of Estonia, Latvia and Lithuania as members within the next 12 months. The enlargement process will be launched later this year. A political row between Washington and Moscow was triggered when the U.S. was accused of backing NATO membership of the Baltic states ahead of other candidate countries from eastern and central Europe.

The move to give special membership preference to Baltic states has caused resentment and Moscow has obviously frowned on the process. The three states will be officially invited to become NATO members at a summit in Prague

in summer.

The Czech Republic, along with Hungary and Poland, are the newest members of NATO and among the first batch of former communist-ruled East European countries, who were also members of the now defunct Warsaw Pact alliance. It is argued that the Baltic states are being given "preferential treatment" at the insistence of the U.S., which wants to send a strong signal to Moscow that it has no "lingering imperial rights" over the three states. The latest proposals by NATO ambassadors, if accepted by Russia, may officially end a three-month diplomatic deadlock. The Americans have consistently resisted proposals which may give Russia wide decision-making powers in the NATO. It remains to be seen how Russia will respond to the NATO overtures for a "warm and friendly" relationship.

1/3

MAR 2002

# Zimbabwe blasts EU, envoys return

REUTERS  
HARARE, FEBRUARY 19

EUROPEAN Union election observers prepared to pull out of Zimbabwe on Tuesday, a day after the EU imposed sanctions against President Robert Mugabe and his inner circle for refusing to let them do their job.

The first of 26 EU observers were expected to leave the violence-racked southern African nation where Mugabe will face the biggest election challenge to his 22 years in power from Opposition leader Morgan Tsvangirai in a March 9-10 presidential election. Zimbabwe reacted defiantly to the EU actions, saying it amounted to "economic terrorism".

The 15 foreign ministers imposed a ban on travel to EU countries by Mugabe and 19 close associates, and a freeze on their assets in the EU, after hearing a report from Pierre Schori, the head of the observer mission who was expelled by Zimbabwe on Saturday.

Schori, a Swedish diplomat or-

dered to leave after being accused of "political arrogance", said he had recommended sanctions because law and order was unraveling in the country.

Mugabe's Information Minister Jonathan Moyo charged that the EU was hiding behind the cover of democracy to protect white minority interests in the former British colony which Mugabe led to independence in 1980.

Moyo said the Zimbabwean government would survive the sanctions in the same way that Iraq, Libya and Cuba survived Western sanctions. "These sanctions will have no material impact on us and on the country because we will overcome them," he said.

Political analysts say the sanctions will affect some of Mugabe's officials who are believed to have considerable investments in Europe. But the analysts say that because the sanctions have been threatened for a long time, some might have already moved their wealth.

EXPRESS

20 FEB 2002



# U.K., Italy form axis on E.U. reforms

**ROME, FEB. 16.** The British Prime Minister, Tony Blair, and Italy's conservative Premier, Silvio Berlusconi, laid the cornerstone of a new "British-Italian axis" in Europe on Friday by agreeing in Rome to speed up European economic reform.

Meeting less than a month before an important E.U. economic summit in Spain, the two leaders said they saw eye-to-eye on all major issues and released three documents spelling out the direction they thought the E.U. should take.

"This is a really key economic moment for Europe. It is important that we drive forward the process of reform," Mr. Blair told a news conference at the end of the half-day summit.

After lunching at a Renaissance villa overlooking Rome which was built for Catherine de' Medici, the two leaders signed three agreements on labour and other reforms, including liberalising the energy sector.

Their commitments are to be put forward as a joint

proposal at the Barcelona Council of Ministers meeting next month. While British and Italian officials played down talk of their relationship as an axis, it is seen in Europe as a bid to counter the impetus of France and Germany, whose partnership has long been the union's driving force.

The two leaders promised to meet again ahead of the March summit and said British and Italian delegations to the body entrusted with drawing up an E.U. constitution would also hold separate talks. "They will try to arrive at a common position on the most important points," said Mr Berlusconi, who referred to the Prime Minister as "my friend Tony Blair".

Italy was traditionally one of the most ardent supporters of closer E.U. integration. But since his election last summer, Mr Berlusconi's centre-Right coalition has proved much more sceptical in its dealings with the E.U., provoking the resignation of Renato Ruggiero, its pro-

European foreign minister, last month.

The key document on Friday was an eight-page labour manifesto emphasising the need to encourage the growth of part-time employment, flexible working hours, and of tax incentives for low-income jobs. The document calls in particular for an end to rigid and obsolete rules governing the workplace.

Lying behind the closer relations between the two countries is said to be Mr Blair's hope that Italy may back him in his desire for Europe to become a looser "nation-state". Mr Berlusconi also hopes that the European Constitution enshrining reforms may be signed in Rome during Italy's E.U. duty presidency late next year, thus bestowing glory on both him and his country.

Despite all this, many Italians are at a loss to understand a pact between such strange bedfellows as Mr Blair and Mr Berlusconi. The latter, who said that he and Mr Blair had "seen eye-

to-eye" on every matter they discussed on Friday, is Italy's most powerful media baron.

He has strong conservative views and even more reactionary political allies, including Italy's "post-fascists" and its anti-immigration Northern League. Moreover, his glaring conflict of interests has been compounded by his involvement in corruption charges.

Italy's main financial paper, *Il Sole-24 Ore*, said that with Germany preoccupied with her economic problems, Mr Blair was keen to find a new partner in Italy, to oppose France in Europe. His aim, it said, was to initiate a process of European reform to make the euro appear more compatible to the British.

Observers here believe that by joining Britain, Mr Berlusconi is readying himself for a convincing argument to use in a looming clash with Italy's unions over his proposals for domestic labour reform, which may trigger a general strike. — ©Telegraph Group Limited, London, 2002

THE HINDU

# Shanghai group to set up anti-terrorism forum

By Amit Baruah *R. AW*

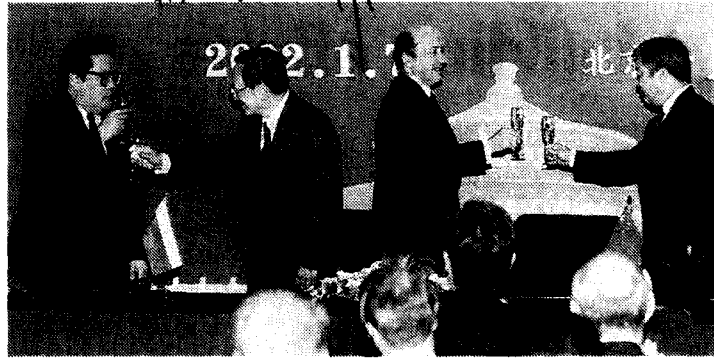
SINGAPORE, JAN. 8. The China-led Shanghai Cooperation Organisation (SCO), whose Foreign Ministers met in Beijing yesterday, has made it clear that it does not favour the arbitrary expansion of military action beyond Afghanistan.

The SCO, which includes Russia, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan and Uzbekistan, said in a statement that they would take steps to set up an anti-terrorism organisation in Bishkek, Kyrgyzstan.

There is little doubt that the SCO, an update of the original "Shanghai Five", is marginal to the ongoing U.S.-led anti-terrorist operations in Afghanistan. Along with Russia, some Central Asian States which are part of the SCO, have backed the U.S. military operations to the hilt.

This post-Sept. 11 development has not gone unnoticed in China, which launched the SCO with much fanfare on June 15 last year. In fact, China is known to have concerns about the long-term presence of the United States in Afghanistan.

In his remarks to the Foreign Ministers, the Chinese President, Jiang Zemin, made it clear that the six countries in the SCO should make greater efforts in



Foreign Ministers from the member countries of the Shanghai Cooperation Organisation (from left), Kyrgyzstan's Muratbek Imanaliev, China's Tang Jiaxuan, Russia's Igor Ivanov and Kazakhstan's Erian Idrisov toast each other at the end of their meeting in Beijing on Monday. — AP

safeguarding their common security.

According to the official *People's Daily*, newspaper, Mr. Jiang stressed that the key to the role of the SCO was "self-construction", unity and cooperation among members, quickly working out the organisation's constitution and improving cooperation and operational mechanisms.

Mr. Jiang's remarks could be interpreted as concern about the direction in which the SCO is headed. There is little doubt that the U.S. and its military operations have detracted from the projected role of the SCO in fight-

ing terrorism, separatism and extremism.

In their statement, the SCO Foreign Ministers stated that the collapse of the Taliban regime in Afghanistan did not mean that international terrorist organisations had disappeared forever.

The statement said the anti-terrorism campaign should be carried out at the global, regional and national levels and not be "prejudiced" or have double standards.

Reiterating the position that the United Nations and the Security Council should play a leading role in the anti-terrorist operation,

the statement said the scope of military action should not be expanded arbitrarily, the operation should not lead to intervention in the internal affairs of any nation and should safeguard long-term regional and world peace.

The Ministers took the view that there was an urgent need for the international community to enter into agreements on international terrorism, given the current situation. They should also reach agreement on the prevention of possible nuclear-related terrorist acts.

According to the *People's Daily*, in his speech, the Chinese Foreign Minister, Tang Jiaxuan, said the SCO must maintain close coordination on Afghanistan and enhance cooperation in combating "East Turkestan", Chechen and Islamist terrorists in Uzbekistan.

China, which had been wary of bringing too much attention to its separatist problems in Xingjiang province, today openly talks about the "East Turkestan" terrorist problem and wants the international community to show greater understanding on the issue.

There is little doubt that the SCO's current focus is solely on anti-terrorism efforts and Beijing is interested in retaining and promoting that focus.

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