

India and the Security Council

By Chinmaya R. Gharekhan

INDIA COMPLETED a two-year term as non-permanent member of the United Nations Security Council on December 31, 1992. Judging from present indications, it could be another decade or more before India can aspire to serve on the most prestigious organ of the world organisation.

The predictable defeat of India at the hands of Japan in 1996 for election to the Security Council has left successive Governments in Delhi extremely wary of risking another election contest even with comparatively less heavyweight countries. A practice has developed in recent years whereby members announce their candidature years in advance. In the Asian region, candidatures have been declared, in effect reservations made, almost until 2020! Since India has chosen not to join this race, it is unlikely that India can be elected without a contest. A complicating factor for the Asian group is the understanding reached at the time of the previous expansion of the Council in 1965 that one of the two seats for the group will be reserved for an Asian Arab state every alternate year.

Our defeat in the 1996 election was decisive. India obtained a total of 40 votes, 100 less than Japan. It is interesting to recall that in 1986, when India was not a candidate and had in fact endorsed and voted for Japan, we got 38 unsolicited votes. The Japanese thought we were trying to sabotage their candidature, which was not the case at all. In 1986, Japan was not the favourite of aid-receiving countries that it subsequently became and it was disliked because of its closeness to the apartheid regime. Now, the position is that Japan is universally supported for a permanent seat in the Security Council.

India, a founder member of the U.N., served six terms on the Council until 1992. This worked out to an average of one term every seven years. Japan, which was admitted to

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the U.N. only in December 1956, has already served eight times as non-permanent member and will start another term in a year. Brazil, another aspirant for permanent membership, has also served eight terms in the Council.

After the embarrassment of 1996, instead of withdrawing into a shocked shell, we should have immediately announced our candidature for a year or two later. India might have benefited from the sympathy factor. Some members might have felt tiny pangs of guilt for having misled India after having promised support. All in all, our chances were at their best in the year or two after the 1996 election.

Another good opportunity could arise for the years 2005-6 when Pakistan would have completed a two-year term in December 2004. This would be Pakistan's sixth term on the Council. The world does equate India and Pakistan on most issues and membership of the Security Council is one of them. The two South Asian neighbours have almost always been elected to the Council in quick succession to each other and often they have overlapped, serving together for one year. Though the U.N. is not a place for fair play, there is implicit acceptance of the claim of one of these two countries if the other gets elected first.

It might not be too late to put up our candidature for the 2005-6 term even though another Asian country has already done so.

When Pakistan begins a two year-term in January 2003, we should expect its mission at the U.N. to create opportunities to put India on the defensive. The Indian mission will

certainly deal with Pakistan's machinations in its usual cool and efficient manner but it will need support from headquarters. In this task, India will have to rely on all the friends it can muster to counter Pakistan's mischief. Some friends will have more clout than others but every one of them would be important.

One may ask why it should matter whether or not India serves on the Security Council. It might be argued that it is better for India not to be on the Council since membership of the Council only obliges us to take position on various issues which come before it, in the process alienating some country or the other. Singapore is an excellent example of a significant country which consciously chose not to serve on the Council during the entire Cold War period. Only later, well after the Cold War ended, did Singapore decide it was time for it to take a seat on the Council; it will finish its term in December 2002.

The answer is at two levels. At one level, India is anxious to be perceived as a major power and, as such, not diffident to taking positions. At another level, India can use its membership in the Council to further its interests. Even as a non-permanent member, we can be useful to others and, in the process, to ourselves.

We successfully utilised our membership in the Council in 1991-92 to undo some of the negative fallout caused to our interests in the Persian Gulf following Iraq's invasion of Kuwait in 1990.

It would be a mistake to think that an active desire to secure a non-permanent seat would adversely affect

our quest for a permanent seat. If this were the case, Japan and Germany would not be so keen on getting elected to the Council even on a rotational basis. It is indeed true that support for India's claim for a permanent seat has increased in recent years, especially from some permanent members such as Britain, France and Russia. It is, however, not so extensive as for Germany and Japan. Crucially, the United States is ambivalent at best as far India's aspirations are concerned. The permanent membership is not likely to be increased anytime in the near future. Permanent membership of the Security Council is the last exclusive club in the world, which its present members, despite what they might say about particular candidates, will be loath to expand.

There is a strong and growing sentiment among the general membership in the U.N. against even existing veto provisions; the possibility of adding any more veto-wielding members is close to nil. It is extremely doubtful if a new category of non-veto permanent members can be created.

There does not seem to be much desire left in the U.N. to deal with this question with vigour. Even Japan and Germany seem to have given up on achieving their cherished dream anytime soon.

In these circumstances, India will have to explore the possibilities of getting a non-permanent seat. Perhaps India and other like-minded countries should concentrate on having only non-permanent seats increased for the present. This should not be difficult, considering that the last time the Council's membership was expanded was way back in 1965.

An expansion in non-permanent membership now would not be prejudicial to an expansion in the permanent membership at some time in future, should that time ever come.

India scores with UN terror edict

PRANAY SHARMA

New Delhi, Oct. 26: At a time when Pakistan has been put on the defensive over reports of clandestine help to North Korea's nuclear programme, India has managed to get a resolution unanimously passed at the UN on the need for urgent measures to prevent terrorists from acquiring weapons of mass destruction.

The resolution was adopted last night without a vote in the first committee of the UN which deals with disarmament related issues. It is an indication of India's growing clout among members of the international community. The last resolution moved by India at the UN in 1998

on de-alerting of nuclear weapons was also passed, but with a very narrow margin.

"Recognising the determination of the international community to combat terrorism, as evident in relevant General Assembly and Security Council resolutions," the document expressed deep concern at the "growing risk of linkages between terrorism and weapons of mass destruction, and especially that terrorists may seek to acquire weapons of mass destruction".

The resolution emphasised that progress is urgently needed in the area of disarmament and non-proliferation to help maintain international peace and security and to contribute to global

efforts against terrorism. It also urged the member states "to undertake and strengthen national measures to prevent terrorists from acquiring weapons of mass destruction, their means of delivery and materials and technologies related to their manufacture" and asked them to "inform, on a voluntary basis, the secretary-general of the measures taken in this regard".

The resolution is non-binding. This means that apart from putting the moral weight on member nations to take urgent steps to ensure terrorists do not lay their hands on these dangerous weapons, it does not call for making UN inspections mandatory on states which are suspects.

In fact, the resolution does not name any country. The thrust of the resolution is on "non-state actors".

Moved by India, the resolution was co-sponsored by Sri Lanka, countries from Latin America and many of the NAM member states. But more important, no country — neither Iraq nor Pakistan — opposed it.

Indian officials point out that since the resolution was adopted without a vote, it is an indication of the inclination of member states to prevent terrorists from acquiring weapons of mass destruction.

"The resolution is a benchmark for its political acceptance," foreign ministry spokesman Navtej Sarna said.

'PAKISTAN INDULGING IN NUCLEAR BLACKMAIL'

We will put an end to cross-border terrorism: PM

By Amit Baruah

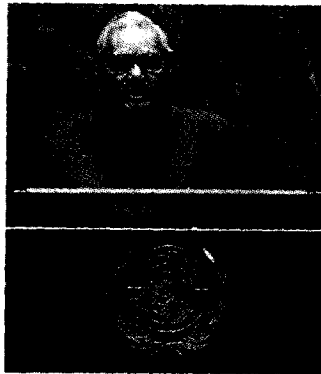
UNITED NATIONS, SEPT. 13. The Prime Minister, Atal Behari Vajpayee, on Friday accused Pakistan of "nuclear blackmail" following India's efforts to stamp out cross-border terrorism and said that to succumb to such "blatant nuclear terrorism" would mean forgetting the bitter lessons of September 11.

Speaking in Hindi at the 57th United Nations General Assembly session, Mr. Vajpayee devoted a major portion of his speech in rebutting the allegations made by the Pakistani President, Pervez Musharraf, in his address on Thursday. India, he said, had repeatedly clarified that no one in the country wanted a war — conventional or otherwise. "Nor are we seeking any territory," he said, adding that New Delhi was committed to putting an end to cross-border terrorism with "all the means at our command".

Mr. Vajpayee said that they heard on Thursday the "patently false and self-serving claim" that Muslims and other minorities in India were the target of "Hindu extremists". Stating that India had a larger Muslim population than Pakistan, he said: "We are proud of the multi-religious character of our society. Equal respect for all faiths, and non-discrimination on the basis of religion, is not just our Constitutional obligation...it is the signature tune of India's civilisation and culture".

'Pak. directed killings'

At a time when the international community wants India and Pakistan to sit down to dialogue, the speeches at the General Assembly can only draw more attention to the problems in South Asia. Mr. Vajpayee, perhaps, was left with little choice but to respond harshly to Gen. Musharraf's remarks. The Prime Minister referred to the extraordinary claim that the brutal murder of innocents was



The Prime Minister, Atal Behari Vajpayee, addressing the 57th session of the United Nations General Assembly on Friday. — AFP

a "freedom struggle" and that the elections in Jammu and Kashmir were a farce. "It requires an effort of legal acrobatics to believe that the carnage of innocents is an instrument of freedom and elections are a symbol of deception and repression!" India's unhappiness with the international community and its new embrace of Pakistan was also made plain by the Prime Minister when he asked: "How can the international community condone Pakistan-directed killings of

thousands of innocent civilians — women and children included — to promote a bizarre version of self-determination".

"If Pakistan claims to be a crucial partner in the international coalition against terrorism, how can it continue to use terrorism as an instrument of state policy against India," Mr. Vajpayee asked. "Those who speak of underlying or root-causes of terrorism, offer alibis to the terrorists and absolve them of the responsibility for their heinous actions — such as the September 11 attacks on the U.S. or the December 13 attack on our Parliament," he said.

'Democratic dictator'

Taking a potshot at the "democratic dictator" in India's neighbourhood, Mr. Vajpayee said: "Those who had to adjust voting and counting procedures to win a referendum — and achieved constitutional authority by the simple expedient of writing their own Constitution — are ill-placed to lecture others on freedom and democracy."

"Gen. Musharraf has himself admitted that rigging was responsible for his winning the referendum by a dubious margin of 90 per cent in April this

year. As for the true democracy he intends to establish in Pakistan, he has rendered it impotent even before the elections are held next month."

'Threats to democracy'

Contrasting India with Pakistan, he said: "Democratic societies are far less prone to ideologies based on violence or militarist yearnings, since they do not have their fingers permanently on the trigger of a gun. We have to be vigilant against threats to democracy worldwide arising from forces that are opposed to it, be they rooted in fundamentalist political dogmas or extremist religious ideologies."

He said the international community, which had taken some collective decisions to tackle terrorism and choke off its lifelines, must ensure that the U.N. Counter-Terrorism Committee, under the framework of Resolution 1373, moved beyond "information compilation and legal assistance to enforcing compliance by States known to be sponsoring, sheltering, funding, arming and training terrorists".

Changing tack, Mr. Vajpayee said there was a growing perception — particularly among the weaker and poorer countries — that responses to issues of far-reaching impact often seemed arbitrary or contradictory. "A common destiny is at stake. The world needs collective multilateralism. It needs the United Nations — the coming together and working together of all its nations in the development of a common and collective perspective," he said.

"Conflicts arise when there is no spirit of democracy within and among nations. A genuinely democratic framework enables us to respect alternative points of view, to value diversity, and to fashion solutions responsive to the aspirations of the people," the Prime Minister said.

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'GUJARAT WAS AN ABERRATION'

NEW YORK, SEPT. 13. The Prime Minister, Atal Behari Vajpayee, said here on Thursday that the recent communal violence in Gujarat was an "aberration" and that the situation there was "now under control".

When the Gujarat events came up during Vajpayee's interaction with American Jewish leaders, Mr. Vajpayee said much "misunderstanding" had been spread about the State since the riots. "What happened recently (in Gujarat) was an aberration. However, everything is now under control, things are normal," he said.

Many foreigners visited the State recently and could make judgments about the current situation. In fact, different communities had been living together in Gujarat for centuries, he said, adding they had a history of tolerance in the State and this was the State that produced Mahatma Gandhi and Sardar Patel. — PTI

UN honours Indian peacekeepers killed in action

UNITED NATIONS: India, which has lost a total of 106 soldiers, policemen and other personnel in the cause of world peace since 1955, has been honoured by the UN with the Dag Hammarskjold medals in recognition of sacrifices by its nationals during peacekeeping operations.

The UN recognised the supreme sacrifices by the peacekeepers on Thursday and India was among the first 20 countries to be honoured, with 106 Indian peacekeepers receiving the medals posthumously.

India's acting permanent representative to the UN, A. Gopinathan, received the medal presented posthumously to sepoy Ram Chander Nasim, who served with the UN emergency force in West Asia and was the first Indian casualty in the peacekeeping operations. Nasim died on August 19, 1955.

The medal was presented by under secretary-general for peacekeeping operations Jean-Marie Guehenno at a brief solemn ceremony. The remaining 105 medals were handed over to the Indian officials at the end of the formal ceremony.

The egg-shaped medal is made of clear lead crystal and engraved with the name and date of the death of recipient, the UN logo and the inscriptions 'the Dag Hammarskjold medal: in the service of peace' in English and French. (PTI)

India calls for expansion of Security Council

Press Trust of India

UNHQ, March 12. — Cautioning that "unrepresentative and anachronistic" character of the UN Security Council might hinder its ability to tackle threats to international peace and security in the long run, India called for its faster expansion by including developing countries.

"It is imperative that its reforms be given the highest priority," the Indian deputy permanent representative to the UN, Mr A Gopinathan, said.

Calling for "collective endeavour" to move the process of reforming the council, including its expansion, at a faster pace, he said making developing countries permanent members is essential to ensure its more representative character.

As the council acts mostly on situations in developing countries, the "expansion of the council to include new permanent and non-permanent members is essential," he said.

India is the leading candidate for permanent membership of the council and a large number of countries have expressed support for its candidature.

In the first debate of the season in the open ended working group on council reforms yesterday, France strongly supported India being given a permanent seat. Referring to the peace-keeping operations in which Indian participation is substantial, Mr Gopinathan said there was need for enhanced cooperation between the troops contributing countries, the council which set the mandates and the secretariat which draw up the plans.

THE STATESMAN

UN to take up India's terror document

HT Correspondent
New Delhi, January 28

THE INDIA-SPONSORED Comprehensive Convention on Terrorism (CCT) will be taken up for discussion over the next five days at the United Nations. The open-ended working group, which sat for its second round of talks today, is expected to work out legally acceptable language on issues like "state terrorism".

CCT was first moved by India in 1996. Though most UN member nations paid lip service to the need for a comprehensive resolution covering all aspects of terrorism, nothing much happened till the September 11 World Trade Center attacks.

Since then, the working group has held one round of talks. A number of contentious issues like hostage taking, hijacking, the financing of terrorism, asylum and refugee status have been ironed out, sources here said.

"The Indian draft does not split much hair on the definition of terrorism. The emphasis lies on the act of terrorism — whether or not it causes damage and death to civilian life and property. It is not complicated like other resolutions on terrorism," a foreign diplomat here said.

There has been the usual one-step-forward-two-step-backward movement with the draft. The US, Israel despite over-arching support to the Indian effort, have stressed the need to secure the future resolution against interpretations of the term "state terrorism".

Israel's concern is rooted in the Palestinian effort to factor in a debate over "armed conflict". Discussion on CCT was held during last week's meeting of the Indo-US Joint Working Group on counter-terrorism in New Delhi.

"As is typical, members bring

THE HINDUSTAN TIMES

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ANNAN'S TWO-TRACK FORMULA

✓ THE UNITED NATIONS Secretary-General, Kofi Annan, has spelt out a "twin-track approach" for long-term peace between India and Pakistan. Holding talks with Pakistan's leaders in Islamabad on his way to Afghanistan, Mr. Annan outlined on Thursday some meaningful but not really novel ideas. He called for "sustained and determined action against (the) extremist armed groups" in Pakistan. The "action" should be "of the kind (already) announced by (the) President (Pervez Musharraf" of Pakistan, he indicated. As for the other side of the spectrum, he pleaded for "an equally sustained and determined dialogue between Pakistan and India to resolve their differences by peaceful means". While the two-track formula is obviously designed to ease the present high-voltage tensions and improve ties with India in a calibrated fashion as seen from Pakistan, the U.N.'s top mandarin spoke about the "immediate need" for "military de-escalation" on the Pakistan-India border.

In a subtle sense, a specific suggestion that Mr. Annan made during the course of his public diplomacy in Islamabad at this time was spun in a generalised language. It was a call for the "withdrawal of the troops". With India and Pakistan having massed their military personnel along their border in the context of last month's terrorist assault on India's Parliament, it is debatable whether Mr. Annan really kept both these countries in mind for the purposes of a desired troop pullback. Nevertheless, he was in essence responding to media questions in a context dominated by Official Pakistan's offer to respond to a definitive initiative of military de-escalation from the Indian side. More importantly, and also independently of Mr. Annan's public statements, it bears repetition that New Delhi should take the lead in bringing about a military de-escalation in the present context of Pakistan's actions against some of the anti-India terrorist

groups and the larger climate of international opinion. As a victim of externally-generated terrorism, India can indeed enhance its moral stature and widen its diplomatic space by being the first to move towards a military de-escalation at this stage. To say this is not to argue that India can afford to lower its vigil or diminish its overall military profile. India's success in test-firing an Agni-class missile on Friday, as part of an ongoing series, may have caused new concerns in Pakistan. Noteworthy, nonetheless, is New Delhi's line that the pre-planned test of a short-range ballistic missile of this kind will not dramatically alter the military dynamics in South Asia. India has, therefore, done well to indicate that the missile test should not be construed as a provocative political message to its neighbours. It is a different question whether this test might at all herald a new signature tune of strategic autonomy in New Delhi's foreign and defence policies.

On a different plane of strategic political importance to India, Mr. Annan has now reaffirmed the status of the old U.N. resolutions on Kashmir under the relevant international law. Mincing no words, he said that "these resolutions cannot be self-fulfilling or self-implementing". Nor was he willing at this stage to characterise those bygone era documents as some "valid" framework. The farthest he would go was to note that the U.N.'s old pronouncements on Kashmir might "offer a certain useful path" in the overall search for peace on the India-Pakistan front. While expressing the "hope" that "elements" of those resolutions could be of some help, Mr. Annan took care to underline bilateralism in India-Pakistan ties. Two of his other India-friendly observations relate to the unlikelihood of a U.N. peace force in respect of Kashmir and the implied message that there are no specific rewards for Pakistan which "is (only) doing its part" under the U.N.'s latest anti-terror mandate of universal applicability.

THE HINDU

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