

# ASIAN SECURITY-II

## Europe Provides A Good Example

By GURMEET KANWAL

52-4  
20/8

A consensus is emerging among Asian countries regarding the need to understand each other's culture so that a better understanding could develop, leading to the ability to conduct an unambiguous dialogue. Diversities should not be a guiding principle, or even the single most important inhibiting factor. Commonalities have to be explored for resolving problems left over by history. Economic development and human development are strong binding factors in Asia. It would be necessary to look at a framework that supports the idea of continuation of the concept of nation states while exploring commonalities for establishing security, trade and cultural linkages. In a huge and diverse landmass like Asia, the empowerment of the state through military, economic or cultural grouping and politics needs to be supplemented by the empowerment of the people as a vital factor to ensure security.

### Nuclear free zones

No discussion of Asian security can be complete without taking into account the impact of nuclear weapons as six of the eight nuclear powers in the world are either Asian countries or have deep linkages with Asian security. The dominant view among Asian security experts today is that no country has the right to possess nuclear weapons and deny these to others. Time-bound, total nuclear disarmament is an idea whose time has come and it should be the endeavour of all Asian countries to work unitedly for the achievement of this goal.

The Start-II process is perceived to be too slow to meet the aspirations of non-nuclear weapons states. There is a consensus among Asian countries that the early elimination of nuclear weapons is unlikely to come about without a pro-active part being played by the non-nuclear weapon states because, in the perception of the nuclear weapons states, nuclear deterrence has become even more relevant in the post-Cold War world. There is now a move to target even non-nuclear forces, primarily to deal with the emerging threat from chemical and biological weapons. At the end of the Cold War, while it can be said that deterrence did not fail, it cannot be categorically stated that deterrence succeeded in preventing a major nuclear war.

In the context of nuclear weapons, the Asian countries must consider radically different and alternative approaches to Asian and world security. Morality, ethics and spiritual values cannot and should not be ignored. Security must be built on mutual trust and mutual accommodation. Substantial confidence building measures need to be put in place. In fact, a stable security environment can exist in Asia only if India and China are part of a cooperative security framework. The concept of proportionality in the reduction of nuclear weapons, introduced by

the Chinese, should not be dismissed out of hand. The capping of Indian and Pakistani nuclear weapons is unavoidably linked with the phased elimination of nuclear weapons of all nuclear weapons states. Indian analysts are of the view that India should be prepared to enter into a process of putting a cap on its nuclear weapons only when all the five nuclear weapons states roughly come down to India's level of nuclear weapons holdings.

Some security experts, particularly those from the Saarc countries, advocate the concept of a nuclear-free zone in



South Asia. They feel that this can be ensured by India and Pakistan agreeing to roll back, dismantle and do away with nuclear weapons. Others recommend that a similar concept of a nuclear weapons free Asia also needs to be considered. In the Middle East also there are moves towards the establishment of a zone free of all weapons of mass destruction. However, at present India has no option but to see the nuclear issue in both the regional as well as the global context. India's nuclear tests of May 1998 were to a large extent in response to the discriminatory international nuclear regime. India can consider the elimination of its nuclear weapons only when the prevalent nuclear apartheid ends.

### Trade real security solvent

The US is moving ahead with its testing and resurrection of the Star Wars programme despite international opposition. This will result in land and space-based ABMs, Laser and particle beam weapons and will threaten the ICBMs of Russia and China. As Russia and China

are unlikely to be able to match the US theatre missile defence programme, these two countries may now have a greater stake in the early elimination of nuclear weapons. If the US takes a lead in the movement towards nuclear disarmament, other countries like France, the UK, India and Pakistan will readily follow. However, a nuclear weapons free zone, limited only to Asia among the nuclear weapons states, is an unworkable idea in the context of Asia's security.

Europe is a willing member of the international economic and financial systems and prefers to manage security

security. The real denominator of collective effort or collective security in Asia is economics. China and the US provide a good example. Trade and economic relations between them have grown, whereas the contradictions are slowly fading away. Economic cooperation is the first step towards solving existing problems and arriving at a collective security framework. The positive dynamics generated by economic cooperation can be expected to contribute to the resolution of long-standing boundary and territorial disputes more than any other single factor.

### US role in Asia

If the US were to play a benign role in ensuring Asian security, much as it did in Europe, its involvement in promoting broad-based, non-polarised Asian security equilibrium through a cooperative framework would hasten the process and act as a stimulant. However, the present domination of the world by the US is seen as a major destabilising factor by many Asian nations. Therefore, most of them welcomed the "strategic triangle" between China, India and Russia proposed by Mr Primakov, the former Russian Prime Minister, even though the concept of a strategic triangle has a balance of power connotation that is now considered inappropriate. Yet, there is consensus that without meaningful US participation, Asia would find it difficult to put in place a workable collective security framework.

The present unipolar concentration of power in the US undoubtedly needs to be moderated to some extent with whatever methods and modalities can be commanded. At the same time, any formal alliance or arrangement such as the "strategic triangle" between India, Russia and China must be rejected. Though there is a need to build better understanding with Russia and China and other Asian countries so as to enhance security in Asia, as also to solve bilateral problems, this must be done without formal alliances. At the same time, it is inevitable that there has to be meaningful cooperation between India, Russia and China if the concept of collective cooperative Asian security in the 21st century is to take shape in this vast continent.

A contrary view is that there is no point in making attempts to curb US power. What needs to be done is to explore the possibility of developing a cooperative security framework where the regional and Indian, Russian and Chinese national aspirations can be accommodated amicably with US power. In this quest, all philosophical, ideological and institutional problems and obstructions have to be eventually resolved and removed through a process of dialogue.

(Concluded)

# ASIAN SECURITY-I

## Need For A Collective Approach

519 27/8

By GURMEET KANWA

Asia has been the fountain of the greatest and some of the most ancient civilisations and religions of the world and possesses enormous human and natural resources. However, the continent has never been at the centre-stage of world politics. Indeed, unlike Africans, for example, Asian citizens have never really had a feeling of oneness. When an African is asked where he is from, he seldom says that he is a Kyan, Nigerian or Ugandan — he invariably replies that he is from Africa. Though it was first promoted during Jawaharlal Nehru's time, the concept of Asia as a continent with many commonalities and similar aspirations has gained prominence only in the last 10 to 15 years.

### Asian role in world order

In common western perceptions, Asia is limited to the area east of the Indian Myanmar border. South Asia, the Central Asian Republics and West Asia have only recently emerged as important regions. With China emerging gradually as a major world power, Japan dominating the international economy out of proportion with its size and population, the continuing economic miracle of East Asian dragons and South East Asian tigers despite a bout of currency flu, and India and Pakistan emerging states with nuclear weapons, Asia stands poised for a giant leap forward at the threshold of the 21st century. In fact, some analysts have already declared that this will be the Asian century.

The future security of Asia cannot be considered in isolation and has to be considered within the ambit of the larger issue of global security due to the many complex linkages that have emerged since the end of the Second World War including major military and economic alliances.

Today the globe itself is shrinking. It is not possible for a major event to take place without an impact on the foreign and security policies of every major nation. We are living in a world that is globalised and is getting increasingly integrated. Large-scale inter-state wars are becoming less and less likely because of the "balance of terror" provided by nuclear weapons and the overarching reach of the ongoing revolution in military affairs. At the same time, the geo-strategic environment is one of uncertainty and new forms of asymmetric warfare such as global terrorism are undermining military might.

At the end of the Cold War, there is today only one major power — the United States. In a perceptive essay, Charles Krauthammer had called the period following the collapse of the Soviet Union the "unipolar moment". Five other powers are inter-acting with the US at various levels to ensure a stable world order. These include Russia, the European Union, China, Japan and India. It is necessary for these five powers to im-

prove communications among themselves, apart from the bilateral communications with the US. Similarly, there is a need for better communications between the Asian powers. Out of the six major actors in the world, four belong to Asia and a fifth (the US) is fully engaged (some may say stretched) in Asia at the contiguous oceans.

In the emerging world order



strands of global security are interwoven in a very complex manner across continents. The present unipolar world order is likely to be gradually diffused. It will take time but the process of change that is now under way will ultimately result in the emergence of a polycentric world order.

The Asian continent is likely to emerge as the epicentre of the evolving polycentric world. It can be reasonably expected that in the next 25 to 50 years, Asia will become the centre of gravity of the globe in the economic, strategic and political fields. In terms of human and intellectual resources, the contribution of the Asian population that is approximately 56 per cent of the world total is growing rapidly. In terms of resources and commerce, Asia has a large share and, by the middle of the 21st century, most new wealth is expected to be created in Asia. The growing economic clout of the Asian nations will give rise to a larger number of security options including some viable options within Asia, so that Asian nations are independent on the Western security umbrella and guarantees. However, at present when Asian security is discussed, it has to be discussed in a global context.

### Can Asian nations sit together?

The factors that unite Asia include intra-regional contiguity among Russia, India and China, cultural and civilisational commonalities; inter-dependence for energy and common environmental

trade and inter-regional investment. These factors suggest the need for a cooperative security framework. On the other hand, there are also a number of common challenges that confront Asia, both in the military and the non-military field. These include threats from across the borders, the proliferation of small arms, narco-trafficking, population mig-

an Asian security problems and that the time has come for the US and that consideration of this concept. Some commentators have suggested that an Asian security system could be built on four levels. These are, firstly, an international balance of power, inclusive of the US; secondly, regional groupings with members overlapping in more than one region; thirdly, bilateral ties could be strengthened without jeopardising regional security; lastly, all aspects of security in Asia should be effectively coordinated with the UN system.

### Need for UN reform

The concept of the balance of power needs to be reviewed in the post-Cold War world. While it cannot be denied that there has to be some kind of a balance for a stable world order to prevail, whether the balance of power approach is likely to remain applicable to the Asian continent in this century needs to be deliberated in greater detail. Apart from the complexities and diversities of the different regions of Asia, there is the problem of the historical experience and the attitude of certain powers, even contempt, for the concept of balance of power. History reveals that the balance of power is always manipulated by outside powers that invariably seek domination. The possibility of establishing an economic cooperation framework as a means to replace the balance of power needs to be explored. The western model of security, as mooted by the UN secretary general, Mr Kofi Annan, is not supreme; an allowance has to be made for pluralistic societies to co-exist.

It is certainly possible to establish complementarities in the approach to Asian security as regards intra-state and trans-state security problems. The Asean Regional Forum is a good example of a regional security framework. In recent years it has been gradually proceeding from limiting its activities to confidence building to becoming indirectly involved in conflict resolution. Though Asian security must inevitably be linked with and looked at in terms of the UN framework, this should be done only after the UN system itself has gone through a process of reform and is sufficiently empowered to act as a viable and independent global security framework.

Some analysts are of the view that it will not be possible to reform the UN system in an optimal manner in the near future because of certain deeply ingrained prejudices. This view appears to be overly pessimistic as it is premised on the assumption that dominant powers, particularly the US and China, will never give up the balance of power approach. It is now becoming clear that realisation is gradually dawning that the balance of power approach is no longer suitable for ensuring a secure and stable world order. Once this problem is resolved, UN reform will naturally follow.

(To be concluded)

The author is a former Senior Fellow, Institute for Defence Studies and Analyses, New Delhi.

THE STATESMAN

27 AUG 2002

# ACD must be clearly defined: Sinha

By Amit Baruah

**CHA-AM (THAILAND), JUNE 18.** India, while supporting the idea of Asian dialogue, believes that the whole concept of the Thai-backed Asia Cooperation Dialogue (ACD) will have to be "clearly defined".

Talking to *The Hindu* as Foreign Ministers from across the Asian continent gathered, the Union Finance Minister, Yashwant Sinha, said this evening that a number of issues relating to the ACD needed to be resolved.

"India has been a supporter of Asian dialogue from the very beginning .... we had taken the initiative to (organise) the Asian Relations Conference (during the early days of Jawaharlal Nehru's Prime Ministership...." he said.

An informal, working dinner being hosted tonight by the Thai Prime Minister, Thaksin Shinawatra, will probably discuss some of the questions raised by Mr. Sinha.

Interestingly, no officials will be present for the dinner.

In all, 16 Ministers will be present for the dinner. While Myanmar has declined to send a representative, the Chinese Foreign Minister, Tang Jiaxuan, will arrive only around midnight.

"One hopes that this meeting will be able to (resolve issues relating to the ACD) and then set the path to a more concrete dialogue.... at the moment, one can only say that this (interaction) is very preliminary and hopefully something will emerge out of the dialogue we will have here," he said.

Saying that India had no problem, in principle, with the ACD idea, Mr. Sinha said it was only that "all this" (the ACD process) will not happen suddenly.

"A lot of work will have to go into this and only then an Asian identity will emerge. But we look at this conference as a preliminary, first step towards the achievement of that objective."

Asked if he believed that Asia was ready for a continent-wide forum given its immense diversity, the Finance Minister again underlined that the meeting in the seaside Cha-am resort was only a preliminary one.

(Asian) "readiness", he said, would depend on a number of factors. "It's very difficult to say whether we are ready now or we'll be ready to-

morrow. It will depend on how it (the ACD) is conducted and how everyone cooperates in this."

## 'No contentious bilateral issues'

In a separate chat with this correspondent, the Thai Foreign Minister, Surakiat Sathirathai, discounted the possibility of contentious bilateral issues being raised at the informal or formal ACD sessions.

(Several Thai newspaper reports have referred to the forum being bogged down by India-Pakistan issues. Interestingly, Pakistan is being represented by its Minister for Minorities, Culture, Sports, Tourism and Youth Affairs, S.K. Tressler.

Earlier, the now-resigned Foreign Minister, Abdul Sattar, was to have attended the ACD.)

Dr. Surakiat said: "I don't think so (that contentious issues will be raised). We are here to have positive thinking about cooperation among Asian countries....I think we would like to encourage positive thinking as to how to strengthen Asia. That's the spirit of the meeting," he said.

Asked if Thailand had been told that contentious issues would not be raised, he said: "Yes, yes. We have discussed (this) with all countries. So, we have a consensus; an understanding that we'll be here exploring ways (in which) we can foster....cooperation."

To a question if Thailand (as host and promoter) wanted the ACD to be an annual affair, Dr. Surakiat said, "We will see. We have no fixed agenda or idea. So, we would like the countries participating to exchange views. But, yes, it's our thinking that we should meet periodically; whether it will be on an annual basis or whatever that is left to the participants to discuss tonight (at the working dinner) and tomorrow."

Asked if there had been informal exchanges on the ACD idea with the U.S. and Europe, the Thai Foreign Minister replied in the affirmative.

Mr. Thaksin had mentioned about the ACD to the U.S. President, George W. Bush, while on a visit to Washington last year, he said, adding that the issue had also been discussed with senior European functionaries such as Romano Prodi and Chris Patten.

13 JUN 2002

# A new Asian forum is born

By Amit Baruah

**CHA-AM (THAILAND), JUNE 19.** Seventeen Asian Ministers today created a new Asia-wide forum — the Thai-promoted Asia Cooperation Dialogue (ACD) — at the end of day-long formal discussions at the Dusit resort in southern Thailand.

With a number of areas identified to set up working groups, a Chairman's statement released by Thailand said that the next ACD Ministerial meeting would be held in Chiang Rai, Thailand, in June 2003. Thailand would act as the "coordinator" for the new forum.

While India and Pakistan did not exchange words at the meeting, the Chinese Foreign Minister, Tang Jiaxuan, raised the India-Pakistan issue at the Minister's "retreat" that took place this morning.

According to officials, Mr. Tang said India and Pakistan should maintain peace and work towards resolving their differences on the question of terrorism and Kashmir.

It is, indeed, bizarre that the Chinese Minister should choose to raise a bilateral issue between third countries at a multilateral forum which the Thais have strived hard to ensure does not become victim to contentious disputes. "He (Mr. Tang) raised the issue in passing while making his intervention," the officials added.

Addressing a press conference, the Thai Foreign Minister, Surakiat Sathirathai, said the ACD's main focus was on economic cooperation and not conflict resolution. He said he was happy to see that countries which had some problems (a

reference to the presence of India and Pakistan) had "started to talk about cooperation in various fields without raising the issue of conflict at all". This, in his view, was a "very good start".

If the ACD could help create an atmosphere where conflicts could be mitigated that would make Thailand very happy, he said. "But the intention of the ACD is not to resolve any bilateral conflict," Mr. Surakiat said.

Speaking at the meeting, the Japanese Foreign Minister, Yoriko Kawaguchi, suggested that the ACD should take up "non-traditional" security issues such as tackling piracy, trafficking in persons and environment-related questions.

In his statement as ACD Chairman, Mr. Surakiat said the ACD would serve to complement existing cooperative mechanisms and arrangements in Asia. "The Ministers identified key areas that may lend themselves to such cooperation, including poverty alleviation, human resource development, bridging the digital divide, science and technology, promotion of Asian culture and tourism, development of SMEs (small and medium enterprises), resource management, energy security, transportation and communication linkages, non-traditional security issues, enhancing the role of the business and academic sectors, and infrastructure development," the statement said.

## Dialogue fruitful: Sinha

Referring to the ACD meeting, the Union Finance Minister, Yashwant Sinha, said the

dialogue was "fruitful" and should be continued. "We have succeeded in identifying some of the areas of cooperation, and quite clearly the consensus was that we should concentrate on economic cooperation," he said. He stressed at the meeting that the removal of poverty and disparities should be the "overarching goal". Mr. Sinha said he had suggested four areas of cooperation — transport and communication, human resource development, science and technology and in the energy sector.

Mr. Sinha said there was also consensus in evolving common positions at the international fora, especially at the World Trade Organisation (WTO). "It has been agreed that in the areas that have been identified Thailand will take the initiative to get concept or position papers prepared...." he said.

The Finance Minister said the ACD was an inclusive, not exclusive process. "It's not going to be confined merely to these 17 countries. They will hold further consultations amongst these 17 countries in order to include more members....(the ACD) will concentrate on the positives and the commonalities rather than on the negatives or areas of friction."

Talking to this correspondent, the Malaysian Foreign Minister, Syed Hamid Albar, said the ACD would complement sub-regional groupings like the ASEAN. "We have agreed to move step by step. The process should be allowed to evolve and next year there should be another meeting and we should try to concretise....so that it does not become a talk shop"

20 JUN 2002

HD-12

# Thais 'vague' about ACD process

Asia

By Amit Baruah

**CHA-AM (THAILAND), JUNE 17.** It's the season for dialogue. Eighteen Ministers, a majority of them handling the Foreign portfolio, will begin a two-day meeting from tomorrow — to lay the foundation for what the Thais have called the Asia Cooperation Dialogue (ACD). A fortnight ago, Defence Ministers from East and South-East Asia, the U.S. and Britain were in Singapore for an 'Asia Security Conference' organised by the London-based International Institute for Strategic Studies (IISS). India was a notable invitee to the conference. "This is a historic event for Asia, that all of Asia agrees to form a group to come for talks on finding joint trade, investment, tourism and cultural strategies, all for the goal of strengthening Asia and helping it cope with trade discrimination by other groups," the Thai Prime Minister, Thaksin Shinawatra, said in his weekly radio address about the ACD meet. "There has never been a real pan-Asian grouping...why can't we sit down for talks on promoting trade and strategic cooperation," he wanted to know.

Along with the ASEAN Regional Forum (ARF), the latest Thai initiative points to the emergence of Asian forums, which were seen to be lacking in the past. However, even a forum like the ARF, which has powerful players such as the U.S., China, Russia, Japan, South Korea and India in it, has been unable to play any kind of role beyond that of confidence-building.

The traditional conservatism of ASEAN-driven forums is clearly reflected in the ARF and

if the ACD, which will see the participation of all 10 ASEAN nations, is steered by ASEAN, then the possibility of a vibrant, new forum is doubtful. Bangkok-based diplomats told this correspondent that the Thais, while enthusiastic about the ACD idea promoted by Mr. Thaksin, are themselves a "little vague" about the whole process.

Several countries, which are sending representatives for the conference, remain unsure about the exact form the ACD might take or the need to have such a forum in the first place. Interestingly, from the number of questions the Chinese representative to the 'Asia Security

Conference' faced from Western strategic experts in Singapore, it is evident that the developed world is keen to draw Beijing into more debating and discussion forums. China is one of the invitees to the inaugural ACD meeting and the "idea" of the discussion forum has reportedly been discussed with the Chinese in advance by the Thai authorities.

The ARF is one of the few regional organisations in which the Chinese participate; they were also present for what looks like a new forum for Defence Ministers emerging after the 'Asia Security Conference'. Given Thailand's close diplomatic and military relations with the

U.S., it would hardly be surprising if the ACD idea has been discussed informally between Bangkok and Washington. Military dialogues, confidence-building discussions, preventive diplomacy and multilateral discussion forums are all favoured by the U.S. and its Western allies. Though there are no direct interactions between the ACD participants and the United States, it is likely that if the ACD were to emerge as a full-fledged forum after this meeting, then the possibility of other regional entities interacting with it would emerge.

On the first day of the conference (June 18), the Thai Prime Minister will host an "informal working dinner" for the attending Ministers. The second and concluding day of the conference will see an opening address by Mr. Thaksin and then a "closed session". According to present indications, there will be no agenda, no assigned speakers, no specific topics and no joint communiqué prepared and agreed in advance by senior officials (as is the ASEAN practice). "Nevertheless, as host and with consensus of the meeting, Thailand will prepare and issue a Chairman's statement for reference," a Thai Foreign Ministry announcement said.

It is possible that much of the spadework for the dialogue will be done outside the formal meetings. The opening address of Mr. Thaksin will be open to the press. There is considerable curiosity among diplomats in the region to see what finally emerges out of this new initiative as Foreign and other Ministers arrive at this picturesque beach resort in southern Thailand.

## Sinha to represent India at ACD meet

By Our Special Correspondent

**NEW DELHI, JUNE 17.** The Finance Minister, Yashwant Sinha, will stand in for the External Affairs Minister, Jaswant Singh, at the two-day meeting of the Asian Cooperation Dialogue (ACD) in Bangkok.

The inaugural meeting of the ACD, which will be an informal forum for Asian Foreign Ministers to exchange views on issues of mutual interest, will be attended by representatives of select Asian countries, including Pakistan and China.

The June 18 and 19 meeting is aimed at promoting independence among Asian countries in all areas of cooperation.

This is expected to help expand the market within Asia and increase the bargaining power of Asian countries instead of competing among themselves.

The forum will also aim to build upon Asia's potentials and strengths by supplementing and complementing existing cooperative frameworks as well as filling in the missing linkages for Asia-wide cooperation.

Though the ACD meeting's essential focus is economic cooperation, there were indications that Thailand would be "happy" to provide an opportunity to India and Pakistan to hold a bilateral dialogue on the sidelines of the meeting.

THE HINDU

18 JUN 2002

## India, Pak. Foreign Ministers invited for ACD meet

BY Amit Baruah

110-17  
1A/6

**SINGAPORE, JUNE 13.** The Indian and Pakistani External Affairs Ministers are among 17 Foreign Ministers invited by Thailand to attend the inaugural Asia Cooperation Dialogue (ACD) meeting at the Dusit resort in the country's Chaam district on June 18 and 19.

Sources said that while the Pakistani Foreign Minister, Abdul Sattar, had confirmed his attendance, it was not clear whether the External Affairs Minister, Jaswant Singh, would travel to Thailand for what was being touted as a new Asia-wide discussion forum. "If Mr. Singh does not attend, India will be represented at a senior level."

For its part, Thailand will be quite happy to provide an opportunity for India and Pakistan to hold bilateral discussions on the sidelines of the first-ever ACD meeting, which is the brainchild of the Thai Prime Minister, Thaksin Shinawatra. The Thais are also keen that Mr. Jaswant Singh travel to their country for the meeting.

After Almaty, the meeting at the Dusit resort will provide yet another opportunity for India and Pakistan to meet across the table at a senior level as they move to reduce heightened tensions.

It is, perhaps, a first for Pakistan in recent times that Islamabad has received an invitation to take part in an Asian forum in this part of the world. Pakistan is not a dialogue partner of ASEAN, nor is it a member of the ASEAN Regional Forum it has sought participation in both forums in the past.

Other than Thailand, Foreign Ministers from Indonesia, Brunei, the Philippines, Vietnam, Cambodia, Laos, Malaysia, Myanmar, Singapore (the ASEAN-10), China, Japan, South Korea, India, Pakistan, Bangladesh, Bahrain and Qatar have been invited to attend the Thailand conference.

The first-ever ACD meeting is being promoted as an informal, non-institutional and evolving arrangement for the exchange of ideas and experiences, and where possible, a coherent approach to issues of common interest to Asia.

Speaking in Singapore in July 2001, the Thai Foreign Minister, Surakiat Sathirathai, has appreciated the suggestion made by Jaswant Singh (after a meeting between the two in New Delhi) that a core group of seven nations prepare for such a meeting.

Clearly, a G-7 for Asia has not proved possible given the fact that all 10 ASEAN nations have been invited for the meeting. The Thais have been careful in taking all the

ASEAN countries along and have discussed the issue with many other countries as well.

It is clear that the whole exercise is evolving and open. The ACD is being envisaged as a loose discussion forum and will not be preceded by a meeting of senior officials, as is the practice in ASEAN. In fact, Foreign Ministry officials set the general tone for ASEAN meetings. The Thai Foreign Ministry's website said that the idea of the ACD was first raised at a meeting of Asian political parties held in Manila in September 2000. It was formally brought up by the Thais at the ASEAN Ministerial Meeting in Hanoi in July 2001 and further elaborated upon by Dr. Surakiat at the ASEAN Foreign Ministers retreat in February 2002.

Initially, ACD will be held in a retreat-style, informal atmosphere aimed to promote free-flow discussions. But ACD is indeed an evolving process and belongs to every participant. The website said these 18 countries could decide on the pattern of subsequent meetings. Geared by a positive approach, ACD was an effective way of identifying Asia's strengths and opportunities. A new landscape was being drawn up for the continent of Asia that included all sub-regional meetings into a bigger framework, the Thai statement on the ACD added.

THE HINDU

13 JUNE 2002

SATURDAY, JUNE 8, 2002

Asia 11.10.10  
A NEW ASIAN IDENTITY

THE ALMATY ACT, which was signed by 15 sovereign states and Palestine as a state-aspirant on June 4, marks the latest effort in multilateral diplomacy to create a new sense of regional identity for the purposes of international peace and stability. In a political sense, the core group of this regional association consists of the Central Asian states and Russia which still retains much of its Soviet-era relationship with these countries. However, the inaugural Conference on Interaction and Confidence-Building Measures in Asia (CICA) has brought together several other Asian countries as well — notably India, China, Israel, Iran, Egypt, Turkey and Pakistan among others. Discernible indeed is a certain geopolitical impetus that has led to the formation of the CICA forum which was launched through the Almaty Act in the Kazakh city by the same name. The new entity covers a part of Asia which certainly faces dramatic challenges to its political order and economic inter-dependence in the unfolding context of terrorism. In a broad sense, several key countries belonging to all parts of Asia (including Russia as a Eurasian state) have for long wanted a collective forum for political engagement and economic interactions in the overall global climate of enormous uncertainties. This alone explains the emergence of the CICA entity.

There has been a long felt need for “a forum for dialogue” on security issues — one definition of the CICA spirit as outlined in the Almaty Act. In East Asia and the contiguous Asia-Pacific region, the requirement of inter-state discussions is being met, for some years now, by the proactive Association of South East Asian Nations’ Regional Forum (ARF). The ARF’s elite membership is a virtual roll-call of powers that matter in today’s globalising inter-state politics. Although the nucleus of the ARF consists of states in South East Asia, the forum’s global reach is exemplified by the presence of the United States as also Russia as nuclear superpowers and by the membership

of such other key players as China, India, the European Union, Canada and Australia. In contrast, the fledgling CICA club has yet to define itself with any degree of coherence. Yet, the fact remains that the disparate CICA members have set out to see themselves at this stage as a core group for worldwide security and stability.

Three aspects of larger international concerns fall within the purview of the CICA grouping which can, therefore, hope to contribute to a lessening of tensions as regards such issues. First, the U.S.-led global “coalition” against international terrorism has brought within its sights some of the areas that come under the new forum’s jurisdiction. With Washington repeatedly expressing a desire to neutralise the “terrorist infrastructures” which are located within the territorial spread of the CICA entity, the members of this new club can certainly address this question. The forum provides for bilateral exchanges and multilateral interactions among its members, and it has projected its anti-terror declaration as a collective testament. Second, another area of prime concern to the nascent club pertains to issues of nuclear non-proliferation as also the control and elimination of all weapons of mass destruction over time. The CICA fraternity includes four countries with atomic weapons — Russia, China, India and Pakistan — besides Israel which prefers a certain degree of political ambiguity about its nuclear-weaponisation agenda. The Almaty Act addresses the issue of mass-destructive weapons by echoing the global discourse on it. The third key aspect of the CICA identity is that the forum has brought together some West Asian adversaries for a shared membership of the club as also India and Pakistan. It is in this context that each CICA member has pledged to refrain from fomenting separatism on the territory of any other member. Overall, though, the success of the CICA experiment will depend as much on economic cooperation within the association as on its collective political will.

INDIA WANTS MUSHARRAF TO IMPLEMENT HIS STATEMENTS ■ PAKISTAN FOR RESUMPTION OF TALKS

# PM trashes Pervez Musharraf

Nilova Roy Chaudhury in Almaty

June 4. — The more General Pervez Musharraf tried to justify himself, the more he ended up in a bind at today's session of the Conference on Interaction and Confidence-building measures in Asia.

The Pakistan President was all aggression towards India. He said: "The people of South Asia continue to pay a heavy price for the refusal by India to solve the Kashmir dispute," (where India was indulging in "state terrorism"). "Instead of accusations, threats and dangerous escalation, India should return to dialogue and negotiations."

Speaking later at the summit (of leaders from 16 nations), Mr Atal Behari Vajpayee reiterated that Gen Musharraf had made certain public statements, which India wanted to see implemented on the ground. India, he said, had always taken the initiative for dialogue with Pakistan, and "we are willing to discuss all issues with Pakistan, including Jammu and Kashmir. But for that, cross-border stopping infiltration of terrorists and ending state assistance to them but also closure of ultra training camps, the PM's Principal Secretary, Mr Brajesh Mishra, said. It is not just a question of monitoring the actual level of infiltration, but the closure of the terrorist-support network that has to be verified."

After Gen Musharraf addressed the press later this evening at the Kazakh Friendship House, the Indian government did not feel it necessary for a riposte from the Prime Minister.

The General devoted a great deal of his time to questions from Indian journalists. The world, he said, "was greatly disappointed" by the fact that no meeting had taken place between him and Mr Vajpayee. India was continuously threatening Pakistan with attacks and is "continuously refusing dialogue."

On infiltration "India cannot be both the accuser and the judge... There is nothing happening along the LoC. The attack on Kaluchak was "intended to destabilise Pakistan," Gen Musharraf said. The list of 20 was presented after the attack on the Indian Parliament, he said, but not a single person on it was connected to the raid. Some of those named committed crimes in 1980, so "let's bury the past and look to the future," because otherwise "Pakistan can well present a list of 40."



NO MEETING GROUND: Mr Atal Behari Vajpayee and General Pervez Musharraf with Mr Vladimir Putin, Mr Jiang Zemin and other leaders in Almaty on Tuesday. — AFP

The speculation about Pakistan deploying nuclear missiles, he said, was "completely baseless," and "never in the history of Pakistan had such weapons been deployed. "How could anyone be so irresponsible?"

On Kashmir, he said it was up to the people of the region to decide their future, but he was sure they would not participate in elections unless

were with Pakistan. Mediation, he said, was already happening, and India should shed its hypocrisy and accept it.

India does not want a war, it wants an end to the 13-year-old proxy war, Mr Mishra said. The current efforts by world leaders was to defuse tensions and reduce the possibility of a conflict.

CICA signs declaration, page 3

# Putin rejects Pak plea on mediation

PTI & AP

Pakistani leader that Western leaders had authorised him to convey their concerns about the Indo-Pak tension. "Russia had meetings with the European Union and Nato where concern was expressed at the prevailing situation," Mr Putin told Gen. Musharraf at the opening of their meeting televised by the Russian state TV RTR.

Earlier in the day, Mr Putin had informed Mr Atal Behari Vajpayee that the Pakistani President had given him "certain serious and positive signals" to break the current stand-off.

**Russia said it was not only imperative the conflict was defused, but also that the two sides moved away from confrontation.**

After the meeting, Gen. Musharraf told reporters that Mr Putin had "invited me in principle" for talks in Moscow and would invite Mr Vajpayee, too.

Mr Vajpayee at the guest house here for bilateral talks, the Russian President said: "Respected Mr Prime Minister, the Pakistani President has given me some positive signals and I will elaborate them to you during our discussions."

In his talks with Gen. Musharraf earlier, Mr Putin told the

# Not really, General

Statesman News Service

ALMATY, June 4. — The most polite form of categorising General Musharraf's statements and declarations at a press conference today would be to say that he was economical with the truth. Unfortunately for him, it was not just the national security adviser, Mr Brajesh Mishra, but also President Putin, who exposed the Pakistani President's liberties with the truth.

General Musharraf said he had been invited by Mr Putin (to whom he was very thankful for his special efforts) to Moscow. The "Indian PM", he claimed, had also been called to Moscow to help defuse tensions.

The Pakistani leader would go, he said, but he couldn't speak for the "Indian PM."

Shortly after, at a bilateral meeting with the Russian President, Mr Atal Behari Vajpayee invited him to Delhi, an invitation he accepted with alacrity, according to Indian officials, and he is expected to be in Delhi by the end of the year.

There was no question of Mr Vajpayee going to Moscow because no such invitation, as spoken by General Musharraf, had been made. President Putin confirmed as much at a press conference for the Russian media soon after.

The reason the Pakistani President made such a fuss over an invitation to Moscow was because, after he took over in the October 1999 coup, Russia had said there was no question of his being invited to Moscow.

To try and counter some of the overwhelming international pressure, General Musharraf tried to project President Putin as the future hope and sought his mediation, for which, he told the Russian President, invitations were necessary both for him and Mr Vajpayee.

Unfortunately, it has not quite worked out for him.

THE STATESMAN

05 JUN 2002



Give Peace A Chance: Asian Confidence-Building Conference Harps On Stability

# It's time for action, India tells Pakistan

Almaty  
3 JUNE

**D**ECLARING that it wanted to avoid a military conflict with Pakistan, India on Monday night insisted that President Pervez Musharraf, however, would first have to implement the promises he had made to the US and other interlocutors before. New Delhi could respond with "appropriate steps".

The US, Britain and other countries had conveyed to India the promises made by Gen Musharraf, national security advisor Brajesh Mishra said here, adding that "if these promises are implemented and we can verify them, then we will take appropriate steps."

With both Prime Minister Atal Behari Vajpayee and Gen Musharraf present in this Kazakhstan city, India made it clear that it would not be persuaded by other countries to open a dialogue with Pakistan till border terrorism in Jammu & Kashmir ended. Such a meeting would be "unproductive," officials said.

Gen Musharraf, after holding talks with Kazakh President Nursultan Nazarbaev ahead of Tuesday's 16-nation Conference on Interaction and Confidence Building Measures in Asia (CICA), said he was ready for "unconditional" talks with Mr Vajpayee. "I don't have any conditions (for a meeting). You need to ask this question to Vajpayee," he told reporters.

In fact, an offer by the Kazakh President to make arrangements for talks between



**Right Moves:** Kazakh President Nursultan Nazarbaev welcomes Prime Minister A.B. Vajpayee in Almaty on Monday. — AFP

Mr Vajpayee and Gen Musharraf, who are staying a short distance away in different hotels, was politely turned down by the Indian side. The offer was made by Mr Nazarbaev during a meeting with Mr Vajpayee. Notwithstanding what other countries felt, there could be no dialogue till Islamabad stopped cross-border terrorism, minister of state for external affairs Omar Abdullah, who is accompanying Mr Vajpayee on his four-day visit to Kazakhstan, told reporters here. — Agencies

## India rules out use of N-weapons

New Delhi  
3 JUNE

INDIA'S defence ministry in an official statement on Monday ruled out the use of nuclear weapons, amid heightened tensions with Pakistan. "India categorically rules out the use of nuclear weapons. India is a responsible country and it feels that it will be imprudent to use such weapons," the defence ministry statement said.

"The government makes it clear that India does not believe in the use of nuclear weapons. Neither does it visualise that it will be used by any other country," it added.

The ministry said it made the statement in response to some reports about the possible use of nuclear weapons.

Indian and Pakistani troops along the border have been exchanging artillery fire in the past two weeks, and analysts have warned that heightened tensions between the two could grow into a wider conflict. — PTI

## Musharraf offers open dialogue

Sebastian Alison  
ALMATY 3 JUNE



**Musharraf:** Talkathon

But Mr Vajpayee, demanding an end to cross-border raids by Islamic militants, has so far ruled out a face-to-face meeting during a 16-nation Asian summit in Kazakhstan.

Tensions flared after militants raided an Army camp in Kashmir on May 14, killing more than 30 people. Mr Musharraf said he has proposed meeting Mr Vajpayee several times without success. Mr Vajpayee, however, said he has no such plan. They last exchanged a cold handshake and a few words in Nepal in January. Asked at a Monday news briefing under what conditions he would be willing to talk to Mr Vajpayee, the Pakistan military ruler replied: "Unconditional." — Reuters

PAKISTAN'S President Pervez Musharraf on Monday reiterated an offer to hold "unconditional" talks with India's Prime Minister to resolve the military standoff between the two nuclear-armed rivals.

0 4 JUN 2002

# U.S. envisages new role for India in East Asia

Asso  
FD-1

4/6

By Amit Baruah

**SINGAPORE, JUNE 3.** The United States is promoting India's role in the task of maintaining a strategic balance in East Asia. As China's economy booms and Beijing's ambitions expand, the U.S. sees India as a useful counterfoil to China.

Speaking at the "Asia Security Conference" organised by the International Institute of Strategic Studies (IISS), the U.S. Deputy Defence Secretary, Paul Wolfowitz, said here on Saturday: "Russia and China are positioned to play important and positive roles in East Asian security." Clearly, the U.S. sees India as an emerging strategic player in East Asia and is encouraging New Delhi to increase its profile in the region.

The duties assigned to the Indian Navy to escort select American vessels through the Straits of Malacca appear to be part of that effort. In the past, no such role for India was spelt out by the U.S. But, now, with India-U.S. relations at a different plane and levels of cooperation diversifying and increasing across the board, Washington seems confident of envisaging a new role for India in South-East and East Asia.

In his formal address at the inaugural "Asia Security Conference", the Defence Minister, George Fernandes, who led the charge against China before the May 1998 nuclear tests, has not quite shed his suspicions about the role that Beijing might play.

"Much of Asia's security future will depend on the way China's leadership shapes its policies, vis-a-vis many of its neighbouring countries. China has embarked upon a path of rapid modernisation and ambitious economic growth. It is our hope that economic development in China will help it play a benign role in all

Asian matters, including the peaceful settlement of its boundary disputes with some countries in the region."

Mr. Fernandes is saying that India expects China to play a "benign role" in all Asian matters and not just relating to the desired peaceful settlement of China's boundary disputes with neighbouring countries (including India).

So, India's interest, he maintained, is not limited to China pursuing a policy of peace towards India, but extend to "all Asian matters" in which, say, the U.S. may also have a stake.

Mr. Fernandes, while referring China's economic growth, said in his address: "India too has been busy in its quest for modernisation. Compared to our level of development only a few decades ago — we have made rapid progress in all sectors of our economy...."

"We seek to build bridges of economic cooperation with all countries in Asia. We sincerely believe that such cooperation serves the twin objective of mutual economic benefits and a strong matrix which enhances the stake of all nations in secure, peaceful and mutually supportive co-existence," he said.

While the BJP-led Government is seeking to build on the "Look East" policy formulated by the former Prime Minister, P.V. Narasimha Rao, it is clear that India's current approach to East Asia has strong strategic underpinnings.

The Prime Minister, Atal Behari Vajpayee, has visited five of the ten ASEAN countries. He has been to Japan and has plans to visit China.

All these visits signal just one thing — that India wants to be recognised as a "player" in this region.

That China has deep suspicions about the U.S. role in Asia was evident from the answers that Major General Zhan Maohai,

Director-General, Foreign Affairs Office, Chinese Ministry of National Defence, provided at the Asia Security Conference in response to a barrage of questions. While China is seeing a renewed presence of American troops in the Philippines, it is wary of U.S. forces setting up permanent shop in Afghanistan and Central Asia.

Major-General Zhan, for instance, hoped that the U.S. would abide by its commitment of not staying permanently in Central Asia. In response to queries from Western security experts about the kind of cooperation China was providing in the American "war against terrorism", the official did not give details, but said the question should be posed to U.S. officials.

On relations with Pakistan, he said Beijing had "normal State to State" and "very good military" relations with Islamabad, but denied that China had supplied sensitive missile and weapons' technology to Pakistan.

He also said that like any other country in the world, China had to strengthen its military defence, especially as Chinese weaponry was "20-30 years" behind the developed world.

The Major-General also took issue with and categorically denied suggestions at the conference that China exported sensitive materials used for the possible production of weapons of mass destruction by Iraq and Iran.

Dialogue at this new forum, floated by the IISS with the concurrence of Defence Ministries within and outside the region, indicates that talking about security issues is a preferred method of profile projection for influential nations.

A new forum for Defence Ministers is in the making — Foreign Ministers in the Asia-Pacific region already have their talk shop in the form of the ASEAN Regional Forum.