

# European summit ends in failure to forge Constitution

ASSOCIATED PRESS

BRUSSELS, Dec. 13. — The European Union's effort to seal its first-ever Constitution collapsed today amid bitter infighting over sharing power as the bloc nearly doubles in size to 25 next year.

The key stumbling block on the talks was a proposal to scrap a voting system crafted in 2000 that gave Spain and newcomer Poland almost as many votes as Germany, which has twice as many people as either country. The collapse could exacerbate a split between countries like France and

Germany that want more integration to boost the EU's political weight relative to the USA, and those reluctant to cede national sovereignty to a European superstate.

Danish Prime Minister Mr Anders Fogh Rasmussen called the outcome "a sad day for Europe".

French President Mr Jacques Chirac said the failure of the talks only reinforced his desire to see a "pioneer group" of countries that want to integrate faster than the others. "I still think that's a good solution. It would be a motor that would set an example,"



**FACE OFF: German Chancellor Mr Gerhard Schroeder (left) and Polish Prime Minister Mr Leszek Miller. — AFP**

after first proposing staying an extra day until tomorrow. Talks will be taken up again in 2004.



Irish Prime Minister Mr Bertie Ahern, who takes over the EU presidency from Italy on 1 January, said he was in no hurry to

**THE CORE PROBLEM**

Current member Spain and Poland — the biggest of 10 countries joining the 15-member EU next May — object to provisions in the draft Constitution that change the voting system within EU council meetings. The Constitution would scrap a voting system that was accepted in 2000 and gave Spain and Poland almost as many votes as Germany, which has a population roughly equal to the other two combined. Germany and France say the changes will make the system more democratic and are necessary to streamline decision-making when the EU takes in 10 new members in May. — AP

resume them, but would sound out the others and make a report at the next summit in March. "No one at the table was prepared to span on it," he said. "By March we will see where we are." British Prime Minister Mr Tony Blair suggested it would take a while. "Countries are going to

need some time to find a point of common accord."

Polish Prime Minister Mr Leszek Miller, who had refused to accept a revised voting system, was the first to announce he was leaving early. "We need more time, more discussion, more understanding of the intentions," he said before departing.

The vision of a closely integrated Europe — championed by France and Germany — is not shared by all the others, especially incoming members from the former Communist east only now enjoying genuine sovereignty.

14 DEC 2003

THE STATESMAN

# EU leaders approve defence deal

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13/12  
Associated Press

BRUSSELS, Dec. 12. — European Union leaders agreed today on plans to boost the EU's ability to mount military operations, with or without help from Nato.

The plan, presented by Britain, France and Germany, aims to resolve a seven-month dispute with the USA, which had denounced earlier plans for an EU military headquarters as a serious threat to the unity of the Nato alliance.

"What this gives us is the opportunity to keep the trans-Atlantic, the American alliance very strong," said British Prime Minister Mr Tony Blair.

He said it would keep Nato as the "cornerstone" of Europe's defence, while ensuring the EU can act on its own when "vital European interests" are at stake.

Under the new agreement, the EU will set up a defence planning cell based at Nato's military headquarters in southern Belgium to run European missions with help from the alliance.

The EU will boost its existing military staff in Brussels with more planning officers to coordinate military missions run by French, British or



BONHOMIE TIME: French President Mr Jacques Chirac (left) and British Prime Minister Mr Tony Blair (right) have something to laugh about as German Chancellor Mr Gerhard Schroeder looks on at the start of the EU summit in Brussels on Friday. — AFP

German national headquarters when Nato is not involved. Nato liaison officers will be based at the EU.

According to the text agreed by the summit the new arrangements "should enter into force as early as possible in 2004."

Nato welcomed the proposals when they were submitted by France, Germany and Britain last night.

Lord Robertson, the alliance secretary-general, said implementation of the plan "will be a good deal for the EU and for Nato."

The constitution for Europe, which the Brussels summit struggle to approve this weekend, will set out in detail the rules for running a bloc of 25 countries with a population of nearly half a billion people.

# EU divided on summit-eve

R. Almon  
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12/12

**Brussels, Dec. 11 (Reuters):** Poland cast grave doubt on chances of the European Union agreeing a new constitution at a crucial summit starting tomorrow after failing to find any common ground in talks with Germany.

"If I were to be a prophet today, there seems to be no possibility of an agreement, with such a rigid stance on the part of Germany and Poland's determined and strongly-argued position," Polish President Aleksander Kwasniewski said.

"If Germany's position is unchangeable, then our position is also unchangeable," he said after meeting German Chancellor Gerhard Schroeder in Berlin today. Italian Prime Minister Silvio Berlusconi, host of the summit as Italy holds the bloc's rotating presidency, said on arrival in Brussels it would take a miracle to clinch an agreement, although he added "sometimes miracles happen".

The leaders of all 15 EU members and 10 states due to join in May meet tomorrow for talks likely to drag on into Sunday to try to finalise a draft constitution designed to allow the bloc to function smoothly once it grows

to 450 million people.

Bitter divisions have emerged between the founders, led by France and Germany, which want a radical overhaul of the way voting power is distributed in the EU to reflect population size, and Poland and Spain, which want to retain the status quo. Germany said it would rather delay adopting the text than accept a watered down compromise.

"No result this year is in our opinion clearly better than a bad result that would delay or prevent the work of Europe for years," German foreign minister Joschka Fischer told parliament. The pre-summit mood was dominated by gloom and brinkmanship. A Spanish government official was highly critical of the way Italy had handled the pre-summit negotiations.

"We have not received a single proposal," he said. "Nor have we received a visit from the presidency. We're stunned by the way the Italian presidency has acted the past few months." Prodi said one compromise would be to agree to a constitutional reform now but phase in elements gradually, with some possibly not entering force until 2014.

# Broad support for EU defence plan

59 70 30 11 ASSOCIATED PRESS

NAPLES, Nov. 29. — A plan by France, Britain and Germany to boost the EU's defence capabilities without eroding the Nato alliance was broadly supported today by the other 12 European Union states and the 10 nations joining the bloc next May, officials said.

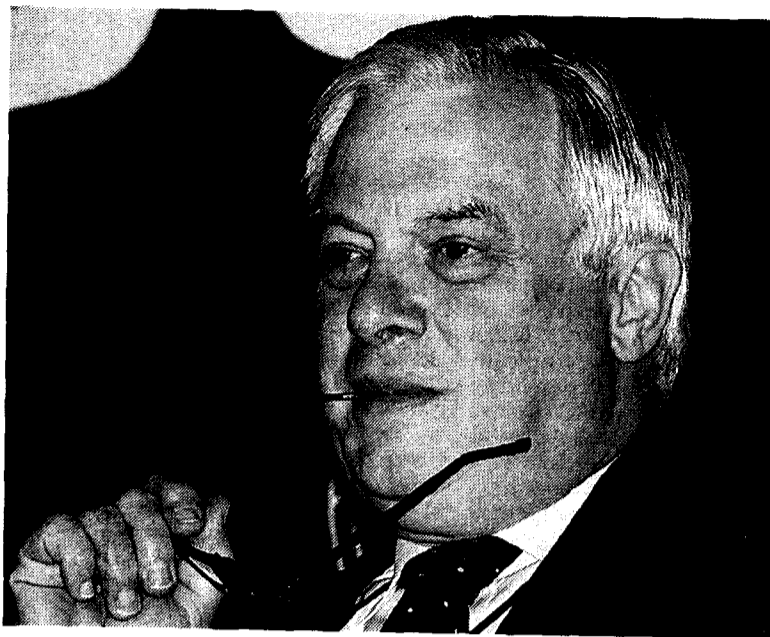
French foreign minister Mr Dominique de Villepin said some details must still be nailed down. Yet he spoke of a "breakthrough" that will let the EU leaders endorse the defence policy at a 12-13 December meeting in Brussels and wrap it into an EU constitution now being drafted.

"Our proposals were very well received by all participants" at an EU foreign ministers meeting, Mr de Villepin said.

At a separate news conference British foreign secretary Mr Jack Straw said the EU's emerging defence policy will not undermine Nato as Europe's primary security provider because "everybody now recognises the primacy ... of Nato. What the EU does is to complement this." His French counterpart echoed the position. "When we speak of a European defence we speak of something that is complementary to something that already exists," Mr de Villepin said.

# 'Sharing sovereignty is hell of an enterprise': Chris Patten

AS THE European Union's Commissioner for External Relations, Chris Patten has been closely engaged with the difficult task of evolving a common foreign and security policy for the Union. Mr. Patten has served as a member of the European Commission since 1999, an assignment he took up after his challenging, controversial and high-profile job as the last Governor of Hong Kong before the colony was returned to China. The former Chairman of the British Conservative Party, who was once strongly tipped to become Prime Minister, was in Chennai for a brief stopover ahead of the E.U.-India summit in New Delhi. In a free-wheeling interview to Mukund Padmanabhan and Nirupama Subramaniam for *The Hindu*, Mr. Patten answered a wide range of questions about the E.U.-India relationship, the E.U.'s foreign policy on Iraq and the Middle-East, its attempts to draft a common Constitution and his recent meeting with the LTTE's chief Prabhakaran in Sri Lanka. Excerpts:



**Question:** The fourth E.U.-India summit has been portrayed in some quarters as an opportunity for these two major global players to exchange their views and concerns on international issues. But isn't it true that the bottomline of this summit is trade?

**Chris Patten:** No. It [trade] is important and important not the least because of the collapse of the Cancun talks and the attempt in mid-December in Geneva to rescue the development round. Of course, the economic relationship is important. We are your biggest market and your biggest trade partner. We are responsible over the last ten years for just over a quarter of the foreign direct investment (FDI) in India.

If you put together the member-States of the European Commission, we are the largest providers of development assistance in grants. If there is to be any chance of getting the Doha development round off the ground again, it will require a good deal of constructive engagement by Europe, India, Brazil, South Africa, United States and China. So the economic relationship is very important.

But I think our relationship goes a lot wider. We are keen to see industrial cooperation between Europe and India over our satellite navigational positioning system. I am also extremely keen that we should share ideas and work more together internationally. We are working through multilateral institutions, for instance, the proposed convention on terrorism in the U.N. We are also working together to help cope with regional issues and problems like Afghanistan. So I think there is also a very important political dimension.

**You referred to the satellite navigation system. India is said to be interested in — even committed to — investing in the Galileo. As a system, there is a measure of agreement that it is technologically superior to the United States' GPS or its Russian equivalent. However, why is there so much wrangling over the funding of the project? And why are third countries more interested in the Galileo than European ones?**

I hope we have put that wrangling behind us. People have to face up to a simple fact about the E.U. It is not a single State but 15, soon to be 25. When we make our minds up and work together, it's pretty formidable doing business with us. But it sometimes takes us a bit of time, as we say, to get all our ducks in a row.

There is agreement now about the funding of Galileo but it took quite a bit of time. [Smiles] This included convincing the country I know best. And now we hope that the talks with India will lead to the sort of conclusion that you have suggested.

**Do you think that India has dragged its feet much too long on the Maritime Agreement that will be signed now?**

Look, we are talking among other things about how we can enhance our trade and investment relations. And a lot of good ideas have been made by business, banks and industry. It is against this background that I see this issue. Does it actually make sense for it to take longer for goods to come from Indian ports than from ports in Thailand or China, which are further away? It's crazy. We should be able to do trade faster and more efficiently. I think a combination of the

Customs Agreement that we are going to sign, which of course has other benefits as well such as dealing with fraud and organised crime and the Maritime Agreement, if we can negotiate it successfully, will make a substantial impact on the facilitation of trade flows. I also happen to think it will be good for Indian seamen who will have terrific employment opportunities with European carriers. It makes sense all around.

**Would you agree that Iraq has totally exposed the E.U.'s aspirations towards a common security policy? You have had a situation where countries such as France and Germany have been pulling in opposite directions from Britain and Spain...**

I think it's shown how difficult it is. We talk about a single currency and we have a single currency that covers 12 countries, though not alas my own. But people don't die for interest rates. But they are prepared to die for crucial issues of foreign and security policy, issues that go right to the heart of national sovereignty. For me the surprise is that we have managed to agree on as much as we have done rather than that we have fallen out on Iraq and one or two other issues.

**Some of the countries in the E.U. like France want the coalition provisional authority to transfer power to the Iraqis as soon as possible and pull out. We have not heard anything about a E.U. position on that? Does the E.U. have one?**

The E.U. was terribly divided over the case for military intervention which some people thought was morally flawed and likely to lead to calamitous results. There's no disagreement in the E.U. on the other hand that the war having happened, the need now is to work for a peaceful, stable prosperous and, I would hope, democratic Iraq. If Iraq is a shambles and acting as a magnet for terrorists, if there's conflict between Shias and Sunni and Kurds, the results for all of us will be a disaster.

**So what do you personally think is the way out in Iraq?**

My own view is that we have to see a transfer to a credible set of Iraqi institutions as soon as possible.

**As a gigantic trading bloc, do the compulsions of trade sometimes excessively influence foreign policy? For instance, with respect to Iran, there was the charge that the E.U. was much too soft on Teheran's nuclear programme.**

If I may use a robust expression, that's drivel. We matter much more to Iran as a potential investor and market than Iran matters to us. Iran is a tiny market for us. We did believe, first of all, that it was important to engage the Iranians in a serious human rights dialogue. We are happy to open negotiations with them on a most favoured nation (MFN) status. But we have always said that progress on these matters is also dependent on signing the additional protocol to the IAEA and being more transparent about their nuclear ambitions.

I actually think while there is some way to go to ensure that the agreement we now have with Iran is watertight, our approach has been extremely successful. And that it is better to engage Iran and Syria than seek to isolate them or bully them.

**Talks on the E.U. constitutional treaty are said to have reached an advanced state. At the same time, the process of getting the draft ready is dogged with all manner of problems. Britain has reservations about some clauses, some countries want Christianity worked into the draft and even the Pope has denounced the possible omission of the word God from the Preamble...**

I think God has enough problems on his plate without adding the European Union to them [laughs].

**But given the wideranging nature of the differences, will it ever see the light of day?**

Probably.

**How probably?**  
I think the likelihood is that there will be an agreement between Governments. I hope before Christmas, but again not necessarily before this. We could stagger on without it but the so-called Nice agreement is not a very good basis for running a Union of 25 [members].

Why is it so difficult and taking so long? Because sharing sovereignty between 25 countries is hell of an enterprise. [Pointedly] And I think some of us know the difficulties of reaching an agreement with one other country. So when you talking about 25, its like playing chess on a multitude of different levels.

**How important is a Constitution to take the concept of European integration that step further? Can this be done without it or through other mechanisms?**

The Constitution is partly an attempt to clear up the confusion left by the fact that we share our sovereignty on the basis of free treaties. We are trying to turn that into one

codifying document. It of course introduces some new elements, which you would expect with 25 countries and a determination to find a clear way of expressing their views about what should be done at the European level and what should be done at the national level.

What we are attempting in Europe is pretty much unique and [at] every stage people say "You won't be able to manage that." But somehow — clunking, clanking, making mistakes and sometimes allowing our rhetoric to run ahead of what we achieve — we have, by and large, managed to do it.

**In criticising U.S. foreign policy post-September 11, you have said many times that the world needs to address the "root causes" of terrorism rather than go after terrorists. You have also advocated the use of "smart aid assistance". Does that mean sanctions?**

It's sometimes the word for sanctions. But don't get me wrong. I think terrorism requires an adequate security response as well as an adequate political response. I was very involved in the peace process in Northern Ireland and I have no doubt at all that we were right to take tough security measures to try to deal with it. I also have no doubt that unless we'd been prepared to try to find political accommodation, unless we had addressed real issues of social grievance, we wouldn't have got a settlement. So I think it's a question of combining all these things.

**Are sanctions counterproductive in addressing the root causes?**

I think sanctions are a Pavlovian

reaction. People react without being sufficiently clear about the impact and effectiveness of sanctions. There has been a tendency in the U.S. Congress to reach for sanctions at every opportunity. If sanctions are going to be effective, they have to be applied comprehensively and you have to recognise that some of those you will hurt are those who can least afford it.

**You said a little while ago how sometimes today's terrorists become tomorrow's leaders...**

Not always. Sometimes...

**Was this thought behind your visit to the Vanni in Sri Lanka to meet Velupillai Prabhakaran, the leader of the Tigers?**

Not entirely. I went because a lot of people wanted me to, including the facilitators, and I think the Government thought it might be helpful.

**There are two arms to the Sri Lankan Government. Which one?**

I think the Government that won the last elections. And nobody said they thought I shouldn't go. I loathe terrorism. I was on a terrorist hit list for 10 years. Two of my best friends were killed by terrorists. I refuse to fudge the difference myself between recourse to the ballot box and the use of semtex and Kalashnikov rifles. I don't think one should fudge that. But I also think that if you can persuade people to give up terror, if you can engage people with a political agenda, it's the first essential step towards peace. And I hope that at the very least I was able to get this through to Mr. Prabhakaran that the international community feels passionately, strongly that he should have turned his back on violence forever.

**Did you go in because Norway pulled out?**

No. Norway hasn't pulled out. Norway has just said that facilitating talks in a power vacuum at the moment is extremely difficult. No, I don't seek to replace the Norwegians. They've done an outstandingly good job. But they were keen that I should go to make it clear that the whole international community is watching what's going on with considerable interest.

**What assurances did Mr. Prabhakaran give you when you raised this?**

He said six times that he was in favour of the peace process and that they would end up fighting only if war was imposed on the LTTE. Do I believe him? [Shrugs] His record isn't very encouraging, but we shall see and I hope he has made the move from struggle and violence to political action.

**How do you respond to critics who say that by visiting him, you have legitimised a man who is wanted for crimes in Sri Lanka, in India, a man whose organisation is banned in Britain...**

I think it is nonsense. I'm not the first international public figure who's met him. And of course at the Oslo conference last year, I think I'm right in recalling that representatives of the LTTE met Mr. Armitage from the U.S. State Department, Clare Short from the British Government as well as others. So it's not the first time. I don't think it would be a good idea to turn his bungalow into a place of pilgrimage for every politician visiting Asia. But from time to time, some messages from Planet Earth make sense.

# China, EU ink pact on satellite system

China Daily/ ANN

BEIJING, Oct. 31. — China and the European Union have inked a co-operation agreement on Galileo, the Civil Global Navigation Satellite System developed by the EU.

During the sixth China-EU summit held yesterday, Prime Minister Mr Wen Jiabao and Prime Minister Mr Silvio Berlusconi of Italy, which holds the rotating EU presidency, witnessed the ceremony of the official signing of the agreement and of other two documents on bilateral co-operation in industry and tourism.

Mr Wen called the three agreements a "milestone" in the development of Sino-EU relations. Mr Berlusconi said the three documents would open up new horizons for co-operation and demonstrate EU determination to strengthen co-operation with China.

"This (the sixth China-EU summit) is a very important step ahead which shows a more mature, stable and strategic relationship," Wen told reporters in a press conference.

The Galileo agreement provides for co-operative activities in satellite navigation covering a

wide range of sectors, notably science and technology, industrial manufacturing, the service industry and market development.

Galileo, scheduled to be operational by 2008, is designed to encircle the globe with 30 satellites in medium Earth orbit, with 27 operational satellites and three in reserve, plus two control centres on the ground.

**The agreements on Galileo and bilateral co-operation in industry and tourism, China and the EU hope, will usher in a 'more mature, stable and strategic relationship' between the two powers**

Both Chinese and EU leaders expressed their satisfaction over the agreement to establish a dialogue on industrial policy and also expressed their confidence in the expansion of China-EU trade and economic ties in the future.

Mr Wen and President of the European Commission Mr Romano Prodi told reporters that they wish to realise the goal "to become each other's largest trade and investment partner".

To realise the goal, Mr Wen said

China has set specific aims: for bilateral trade volume to reach \$150 billion by 2007, and \$200 billion by 2013. Currently, China and the EU have become each other's third largest trade partners. The EU is also the fourth largest foreign direct investment source and the largest technology import source for China. When asked if China would be granted "complete market economy status", Mr Prodi said there are no "major differences" between the two sides, and that he himself was very "confident" about the prospects.

In order to further China-EU relations, during yesterday's meeting Mr Wen put forward four suggestions: to maintain high-level exchanges; to deepen trade and economic co-operation; to establish efficient co-operation mechanisms and to dispose of barriers that block healthy development of relations.

Mr Berlusconi said the EU considers China an important force on today's world stage and an indispensable partner in maintaining world peace and stability, and that the EU is willing to strengthen co-operation with China. Mr Prodi said the EU hopes to expand co-operation with China in finance and investment.

# E.U. allays U.S. fears on defence force

By Batuk Gathani

BRUSSELS, OCT. 21. A spokesman for the North Atlantic Treaty Organisation (NATO) has said that European countries "have gone to great lengths" to reassure the Americans that the proposed European defence project would be designed to "complement NATO and would minimise duplication".

Senior NATO officials met here in an attempt to narrow the divide between the European Union and the United States over issues relating to defence policy matters. The E.U. has taken the initiative to launch an independent defence policy with the proposed creation of a European military command, independent of NATO.

Britain has taken special initiatives to resolve the impasse. Senior British officials argued that the European initiative is essentially aimed at "complementing, rather than threatening" the U.S.-dominated NATO alliance.

The European initiative, launched by France and Germany, became more pronounced since the start of what many European commentators call the "Bush and Blair-initiated" war in Iraq, bypassing the United Nations.

American officials had an opportunity to have a closer look at Europe's defence ambitions at the special meeting of NATO ambassadors here. The meeting was called by the U.S. ambassador to NATO.

U.S. officials have become suspicious of

the E.U. defence strategy after German, French and British leaders met recently in Berlin to put finishing touches to the proposed project. The French Foreign Minister, Dominique de Villepin said, "There will be no Europe without European defence and no European defence without Britain."

Despite Britain's so-called "special relationship" with the Bush administration, the Blair Government is keen to maintain its foothold in the European defence structure. Diplomats too feel that senior U.S. officials, led by the Defence Secretary, Donald Rumsfeld, are pushing the issue too far and "unnecessarily creating fresh divisions in an alliance that has just overcome bitter disputes over Iraq."

THE HINDU

2008  
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# E.U. summit focus on defence, foreign issues

19/10  
R AM

By **Batuk Gathani**

**BRUSSELS, Oct. 18.** The two-day summit of the 25 European Union leaders was held ostensibly to finalise details of the proposed Constitution.

The summit also gave a glimpse of the leaders' yearning for a pan-European superpower status.

Apart from the disagreements with the U.S. over a proposed defence policy, the summit made "steady progress" on major issues.

The highlight of the summit was the agreement in principle to allocate euro 220,000 million to key infrastructure, research and development projects to spur economic growth and create more jobs.

and disciplines without affecting the sovereignty of member states.

The Europeans are also in the process of structuring defence and foreign policy strategies as the leaders try to define the parametres of its place in the world.

The leaders are also grappling with the problem of matching the E.U.'s formidable economic muscle with a global foreign policy clout.

But the E.U. leaders are yet to resolve crucial domestic issues. On the demographic front, the E.U. is fast 'greying' with declining birth rates and people living longer with the prospects of more pensioners than taxpayers within the next few decades. Then there are the emotive and

divisive issues of immigration and the micro-economic management related to problems of bloated welfare states. The leaders are also considering how the E.U. can play a bigger role in the world.

The European Constitutional Treaty has yet to be ratified by individual Parliaments. It may usher in bigger changes in foreign and defence policies.

It is proposed that there should be a new elected president of the European Council of Ministers, with a five-year term of office.

However, smaller states fear that the agenda and function of such a president could be dominated by the big five — Germany, France, Britain, Italy and Spain.



# E.U.-U.S. rift on Iraq persists

By Batuk Gathani

**BRUSSELS, OCT. 15.** The divide between the European Union and the U.S. and its principle ally Britain remains unbridgeable. This was obvious at the meeting of the 15 E.U. Foreign Ministers in Luxembourg on Monday, where they tried to establish a "consensus of a sort" with the U.S. Instead, they came up with tough terms for helping the U.S. in Iraq.

The Ministers are also yet to reach specific conclusions on the quantum of financial assistance they may individually offer. So far, only Britain indicated that it would contribute euro 778 millions

including committed funds. Studies by the World Bank and the U.S. Government indicate that Iraq needs \$55,000 millions over the next four years for reconstruction of which the U.S. has so far pledged \$19,000 millions.

It is felt the Iraq Donors conference at Madrid later this month may also evoke poor response. It may raise between \$1,000 and \$2,000 millions at the most.

The Iraq's U.S.-sponsored interim government has attempted to attract private investors from major European economies, but the response has so far been "less than poor", according to a European official. The

European companies are obviously interested in lucrative construction and rebuilding contracts but they feel that these have already been awarded to American firms close to the Bush administration.

They are also apprehensive of the security situation as the European media highlights the killings of the U.S. soldiers there. The European companies may have to settle for 'leftovers', since rich Saudi and Kuwaiti contractors are also beneficiaries of many service contracts.

The European companies have little interest in contracts or sub-contracts.

17/10  
OPEN SKIES <sup>w/c B</sup>  
For now, let us learn from Asean

**A**SEAN is not a forum to parade <sup>K. Atkinson =</sup> democracy or diversity. It does understand and appreciate military and economic muscle, though. That India is being heard at this forum, therefore, is another proof that the world has begun to take its economic potential seriously; militarily, as Lee Kuan Yew is fond of saying, the country missed the Asian security bus when it took a ride with the Soviet juggernaut. More to the point, perhaps, is that borrowed Soviet ideas set India back economically from which mess the country is only now emerging. But Atal Behari Vajpayee still had to strenuously hawk India's promise at Asean. India's share of global trade is an insulting 0.6 per cent and its customs duties are far higher than average Asean tariffs. China is a bigger market and its aggressive military intent makes Asean nervous and, in true South-east Asian style, eager to please. For Indo-Asean trade to reach \$ 30 billion by 2007, as Vajpayee grandly spoke of at Bali, the bulk of preparatory work, will have to be done by India — slashing general tariffs, rationalising foreign direct investment policy and, as a kick starter, offering zero or low tariff bargains on some tradables. Thankfully, the Prime Minister was prepped and he put his personal authority behind proposals to start an Indo-Asean free trade area.

Given what happened at Cancun, this kind of an offer is these days the excuse for much hand wringing over the supposed coming battle between regional trade blocs and global trade. The issue is overblown. Nafta and EU, not to mention Latin America's Mecrosur and the three continents-spanning Apec have all coexisted with WTO. Indeed, to the extent regional trade blocs help politicians overcome the fear of low tariffs, they can be said to be a good preparation for rule-based global trade. Were India to successfully set up a free trade partnership with Asean — the association boasts of some of the most aggressive trading nations in the post-war world — its often ridiculous apprehensions about low customs duties will perforce have to be addressed. There's evidence of changing Indian mindset already — the unilateral open skies offer to Asean members would have been unthinkable even two years back. May be, a few years down the line, India could gently tell Asean about the virtues of open societies.

# Bali Concord II sets Asean on new course

Jakarta Post/ANN

NUSA DUA (Bali), Oct. 8. — Twenty-seven years after the founding fathers of the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (Asean) from Indonesia, Malaysia, Singapore, Thailand and the Philippines signed the Bali Concord I as the basic framework of cooperation among the countries, on Tuesday the leaders of the now 10-member grouping signed the Declaration of the Bali Concord II, to set a new direction for the organisation to achieve the Asean Community objective before 2020.

"This is the document that will establish an Asean Community. That will make it possible for our children and their children to live in a state of enduring peace, stability, and shared prosperity," President Megawati said after the signing ceremony.

Mr Mahathir said the objective to create the Asean Community could be compared to a degree to the establishment of the European Union. "But it will never become the ASEAN Union," Mr Mahathir said in his speech.

In the concord, the leaders issued a 10-point declaration. Among other things they declared: An Asean Community shall be established comprising three pillars, namely political and security cooperation, economic cooperation, and sociocultural cooperation that are closely intertwined and mutually reinforcing for the purpose of ensuring durable peace, stability and shared prosperity in the region.

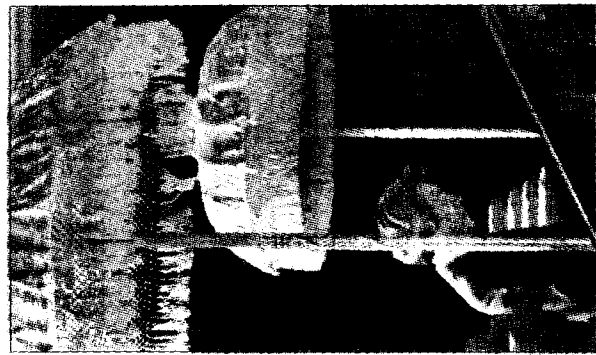
Asean shall nurture common values, such as habit of consultation to discuss political issues and the willingness to share information on matters of common concern, such as environmental degra-

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dation, maritime security cooperation, the enhancement of defence cooperation among member countries, develop a set of sociopolitical values and principles, and settle long-standing disputes through peaceful means.

The Treaty of Amity and Cooperation in Southeast Asia (TAC) is the key code of conduct governing relations between states and a diplomatic instrument for the promotion of peace and stability in the region.

The Asean Regional Forum (ARF) shall remain the primary forum in enhancing political and security cooperation in the Asia-Pacific region, as well as the pivot in building peace and stability in the region.

Asean shall enhance its role in further advancing the stages of cooperation within the ARF to ensure the security of the Asia-Pacific region.



Japanese Prime Minister Mr Junichiro Koizumi on his way to the Asean summit venue in Nusa Dua, Bali, on Wednesday. — AFP

SCA 810  
**Asean inks common market pact** Regional  
 Alliance



Asean leaders with their counterparts from China, Japan and South Korea at Nusa Dua, Bali, on Tuesday. — AFP

Jakarta Post/ANN

**NUSA DUA (Bali), Oct. 7.** — Leaders of 10 south-east Asian nations, ranging from fledgling democracies to an absolute monarchy, today signed a landmark accord aimed at creating an European-style economic community by 2020. The blueprint, dubbed the Bali Concord II, envisions a single market eliminating tariff and non-tariff barriers within an economic grouping encompassing 500 million people and annual trade totalling \$20 billion. The group wants to band together to counter the burgeoning economic might of India and China.

"We've just witnessed a watershed in the history of Asean," Indonesian President Ms Megawati Sukarnoputri said after the signing of the document by leaders from Brunei, Cambodia, Indonesia, Laos, Malaysia, Myanmar, Philippines, Singapore, Thailand and Vietnam. "The accord will make it possible for our children and their children to live in enduring peace, stability and prosperity."

The Bali Concord II was signed as leaders of the regional group concluded their two-day summit, which will be followed by a meeting tomorrow with their four dialogue partners — India, China, Japan and South Korea.

## Vajpayee hardsells India

**BALI, Oct. 7.** — The Prime Minister today set the stage for the India-Asean summit here by pitching the country as an attractive investment zone.

Mr Vajpayee told a galaxy of business leaders at an Asean Business and Investment Summit that India was determined to play a key role in Asia, which he said was poised to emerge as a manufacturing hub and a global provider of services.

Even as the Prime Minister urged the businessmen to invest, he warned them not to take Indian consumers for granted. "Companies that have taken the trouble of finding the keys to unlock the doors of the Indian consumer's mind have done well." He evoked laughter by saying: "People tell me that successful investors often paint a deliberately pessimistic picture to discourage competitors from entering a lucrative market!"

— SNS  
 Text of PM's speech, page 7

# Deal to reduce S-E Asian democratic deficit signed

## Nation/ ANN & agencies

NUSU DUA (Bali), Oct. 7. — The Association of Southeast Asian Nations — which includes the military-ruled Myanmar and the communist Laos — signed a pact today pledging support for democracy. The 10-members grouping, however, took a step backward from previously calling the immediate release of Myanmar's Opposition leader Ms Aung San Suu Kyi by hailing as "positive developments" the junta's pledge for transition to

democracy through dialogue and reconciliation.

The Asean, in the Bali Concord II, promised "to live at peace with each other and with the world at large, in a just, democratic and harmonious environment". Sources said several countries, in talks before today's summit, had wanted the word "democratic" removed. The Philippines, however, pressed successfully for it to stay in.

"The introduction of the notion of democratic peace sets the standard of political



Mr Mahathir Mohammed

## Farewell Mahathir

NUSA DUA (Bali), Oct. 7. — Representing Asean heads of state, Indonesian President Ms Megawati Sukarnoputri today officially said goodbye to Malaysian Prime Minister Mr Mahathir Mohammed, who will step down in the near future. "Never before has Prime Minister Mahathir been so reluctant to say something unpleasant for him," Ms Megawati said, without elaborating. Visibly moved as she delivered her message, Ms Megawati said Mr Mahathir has so far shown good intentions to help Asean continue to progress. — Jakarta Post/ ANN

(democracy) is something that member states will aim for." Indonesian President Ms Megawati Sukarnoputri said after the signing that the Bali Concord II was a "watershed in the history of Asean".

She said: "The document will establish an Asean community that will make it possible for our children and their children to live in a state of enduring peace, stability and shared prosperity."

In a reprieve to Myanmar, Ms Megawati, the chairwoman of the summit, said Asean

would give time and chance for the junta to prove its claim that Ms Suu Kyi who had just been released from hospital after an operation is not under house arrest. "Let's us wait and see, possibly in the coming weeks, condition of Ms Suu Kyi."

"Myanmar's Prime Minister Gen. Khin Nyunt informed other Asean counterparts that house arrest is not the situation Ms Suu Kyi is facing now," an Indonesian spokesman said. He

quoted Mr Win Aung as telling his Asean counterparts that Ms Suu Kyi is "recuperating".

# Asean leaders sign free trade zone plan

*R. Thaksin*  
*G-3* *7/10*  
**Bali, Oct. 7 (Reuters):** Southeast Asian leaders today signed a plan to transform the region into a giant free trade zone by 2020, with several urging a faster pace if they are to keep up with the rest of the world.

Leaders of the 10-member Association of South East Nations (Asean) also avoided criticism of fellow member Myanmar and welcomed the junta's recent decision to move democracy icon Aung San Suu Kyi into house arrest from detention.

Security was tight for the annual summit on Indonesia's bomb-scarred tropical island of Bali. Troops were deployed and 13 naval vessels sailed offshore to protect leaders of Asean, to be joined by China, Japan and South Korea and India, at their two-day meeting to endorse plans to create a single market.

"If we join forces, Korea and Asean members and by extension, all of east Asia, will become the engine of growth for the world economy, and the 21st century will be the age of east Asia," South Korean President Roh Moo-hyun told business leaders.

The Asean region has a population of 500 million and annual trade worth \$720 billion.

The urgency for the trading

bloc has been highlighted by the failure of world trade talks in Cancun. Asean's relatively small economies want more influence to compete with China and at the same time are working to set up a free trade zone with their giant northern neighbour.

Chinese Premier Wen Jiabao tackled those worries head-on.

"My answer is that a more developed and stronger China will bring about development opportunities and tangible benefits to other Asian countries," he told the business leaders.

"China's development will bring tremendous immediate and long-term benefits to Asian countries.

It provides a huge market for Asian countries," he said, adding that China would encourage its companies to invest in other Asian countries.

The group is considering advancing the 2020 deadline as it works on free trade agreements to be completed with China in 2010, India in 2011 and Japan in 2012, Asean secretary-general Ong Keng Yong said at the weekend.

"The China-Asean Free Trade Area is a win-win arrangement," Wen said.

By 2010 the world could see a free trade area with nearly two

billion people and total gross domestic product of almost \$3.0 trillion taking shape in Asia, Wen said.

Several leaders urged an earlier deadline for creating the Asean Economic Community endorsed as part of the Bali Concord II, warning Asean's economies risk being left behind. Leaders discussed bringing forward the date and left open the possibility, said a final statement by the chair.

"Seventeen years from now might be too late," Thai Prime Minister Thaksin Shinawatra said yesterday of the goal to cut tariff and non-tariff barriers to trade in the region.

Singapore Prime Minister Goh Chok Tong, a leading advocate of the free trade bloc, poured cold water on high expectations for quick progress by a group that has frequently adopted such plans and failed to follow through. He urged proper implementation.

Asean has long been viewed as a talking shop that stresses consensus over confrontation among members, ranging from nascent democracies to monarchies and a military dictatorship, which can be reluctant or unable to follow through on agreed initiatives.

THE TELEGRAPH

OCT 2003

# EU leaders begin talks on constitution

THE TIMES, LONDON & AFP

ROME, Oct. 4. — The European Union leaders and the heads of incoming member states launched high-stakes talks here today aimed at finalising the bloc's first ever constitution before its historic enlargement next year.

The EU's current 15 members, plus 10 new members due to join next May, aim to narrow differences over the constitution — which will determine who holds power in the expanded Union — in time for a December summit.

The starting point for the talks will be a draft constitution drawn up over 16 months by a convention chaired by former French President Mr Valéry

Giscard d'Estaing.

The current Italian EU presidency hopes that the talks will result in a new Treaty of Rome, echoing the 1957 text which founded the European Economic Community, the EU's forerunner.

Clear disagreement remains on key issues. Smaller countries notably fear moves to bolster the dominance of the bigger EU states, while euro-sceptics are resisting attempts to take power away from national governments.

As the battle lines emerge, it will become even harder for Mr Silvio Berlusconi, who will chair the talks, to meet his target of securing agreement on the new treaty by Christmas.

Now, the Italian Prime Minister is being challenged over his plans to try to prevent attempts to reopen negotiations on the draft text agreed in June by ministers and national and European parliamentarians at a convention.

Already he has been forced to revise the negotiating timetable over the next three months after foreign ministers, led by Mr Jack Straw, objected to meeting in Rome and Brussels on Sundays.

Renewed efforts are also being made to insert a reference to Christian values in the preamble to the future constitution. The initiative is being pushed by Poland, Spain, Ireland and Italy, although a Vatican spokesman sug-

gested that 11 of the 25 governments supported the idea.

Britain, too, has signalled that it will not be able to endorse the constitution unless fundamental changes are made to key sections of the draft text.

As pressure grows for Europe to play a more active role on defence, Mr Tony Blair will insist that nothing should be done to undermine Nato and the collective security guarantee that the transatlantic military alliance provides.

Meanwhile, Poland, backed by Spain, is taking an equally hard line. Warsaw has become increasingly belligerent in its hostility to proposed new qualified majority voting rules.



Mr Silvio Berlusconi:  
Tough task ahead

THE STATESMAN

OCT 1 2005

# India-China-Russia axis on Iraq, UN reform

*SR 4*  
*nb 9*

*Abhinav Ali*

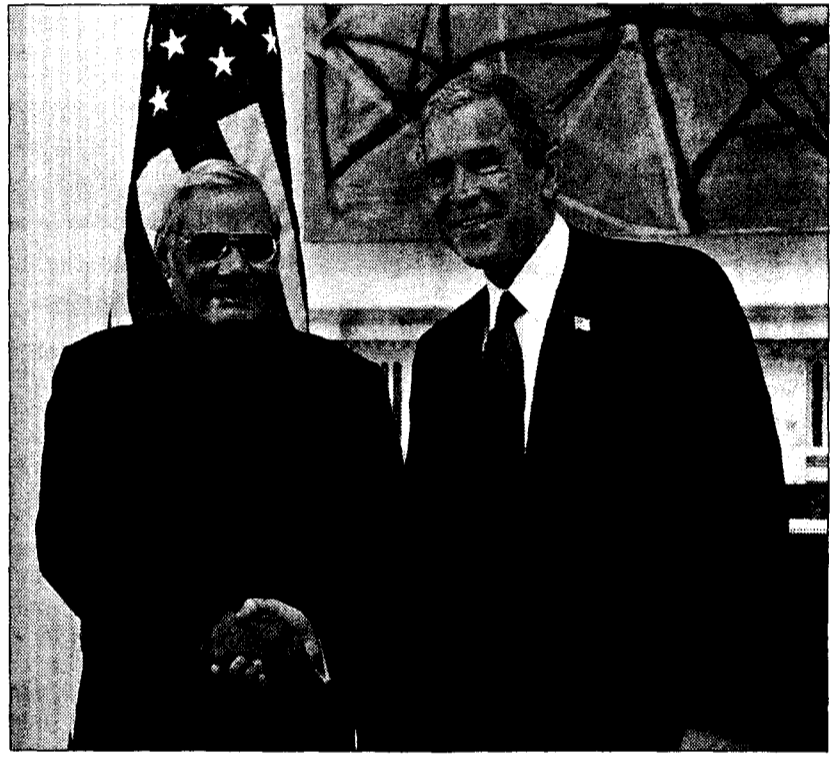
Statesman News Service

NEW YORK, Sept 25. — A significant meeting on the sidelines of the United Nations General Assembly was the “troika” meeting of the foreign ministers of India, Russia and China, at which the three “agreed to adopt a common approach” on a variety of key issues, including Iraq and reforms to the UN system.

Being held for the second year in a row, the “troika” appears set to assume an institutional mechanism, by which India will coordinate with two members of the P-5 (permanent members of the UN Security Council) to form a stronger pressure group for influencing the remaining three “Western” members of the P-5 — the USA, France and Britain — on pressing international issues.

At a “friendly and cordial” lunch meeting hosted by the external affairs minister, Mr Yashwant Sinha, the three foreign ministers “agreed to adopt a common position on Iraq”, and work together to coordinate their approach to the new resolution being prepared by the USA.

They have also decided to form an expert group to look into reforming the UN system, particularly to make the UNSC more representative in character, to reflect changes in the global environment. Also, as a pressure group within the system, they



Mr AB Vajpayee and Mr George W Bush at Waldorf Hotel in New York on Wednesday. — AFP

will press for development.

The Russian foreign minister, Mr Igor Ivanov, has invited Mr Sinha and the Chinese foreign minister, Mr Li Zhao Xing, to Moscow for a meeting to work out the modalities of the trilateral experts group, because, Mr Sinha said, a few hours stolen on the sidelines of the UNGA

was not enough.

On whether the troika had been “institutionalised”, Mr Sinha said: “Our Chinese colleague has promised to take us to a Chinese restaurant next year,” indicating that this would be a regular feature of United Nations General Assembly sessions.



EUROPEAN UNION / ITALIAN PRESIDENCY STARTS ON A STORMY NOTE

## Berlusconi's Nazi remark sparks fury

BRUSSELS, July 2. Launching his European Union presidency, the Italian Premier, Silvio Berlusconi, provoked uproar on Wednesday in the European Parliament by telling a German critic that he should star as a Nazi concentration camp guard in a movie.

The remark drew a rebuke from the Parliament President, Pat Cox, who suspended the session after the flamboyant Mr. Berlusconi refused to withdraw his comments.

During a question and answer session after Mr. Berlusconi's speech, the German socialist, Martin Schultz, referred to the Italian leader's use of an immunity law to sidestep bribery charges in an Italian court. "In Italy, they are making a movie on Nazi concentration camps," Mr. Berlusconi snapped back. "I will propose you for the role of Kapo (guard chosen from among the prisoners)".

The comment triggered out-



through legislation granting legal immunity to top Italian officials.

As Mr. Berlusconi rose to address the 626-member Parliament, seven Green Party members held up placards saying, "Everybody is equal under the law."

Mr. Berlusconi went further to slam his critics in the chamber.

"If this is your idea of democracy, you ought to visit Italy as tourists," Mr. Berlusconi said. "You are behaving as tourists."

Mr. Schultz and Mr. Cox demanded an apology for the Nazi remark, but Mr. Berlusconi would not budge from his comments, which he said were an "ironic joke."

At a news conference, Mr. Berlusconi again refused to apologise, insisting the comment was meant as a joke inspired by the German legislator's "tone and gestures".

—AP

**Euro deputies hold placards reading "The same law for all" as the Italian Prime Minister, Silvio Berlusconi, addresses the European Parliament in Strasbourg on Wednesday.** — AFP

rage among the 626 members of the E.U. assembly.

Mr. Berlusconi's words "debase the presidency of the (E.U.) council and offend Europe," said Graham Watson, leader of the Liberal Democrat group in the European Parliament.

Mr. Schultz said the comment last month pushed

However, attention quickly focused on Mr. Berlusconi's wheeler-dealer image and allegations by his critics that he is unfit to represent Europe.

On Monday, a Milan court suspended Mr. Berlusconi's trial for bribery after the Italian Parliament last month pushed

THE HINDU

3 JUL 2003

# Mending E.U.-U.S. rift Berlusconi priority

R. Alvarado

140.13 117

By Batuk Gathani

**BRUSSELS, JUNE 30.** The Italian Prime Minister, Silvio Berlusconi, who is also the country's richest man and media tycoon, is poised to lead the European Union from Tuesday, as Italy takes over the six-monthly rotating presidency from Greece. Mr. Berlusconi, often regarded as a "highly controversial but untouchable" leader of Italy, has few friends or allies.

He always depended on his charm, instinct and above all his great wealth — \$4 billions — to see him through the never-ending series of personal and political crises.

Despite all that, charges of corruption and conflict of interest in Italian courts refuse to go away.

For a while, Mr. Berlusconi has managed to 'postpone' the alleged corruption trial, almost indefinitely, while he remains the Prime Minister. In Italian political circles, the foregone conclusion is that Mr. Berlusconi will make a bid for a second term in office in 2006. A minor chink in the Berlusconi armour is that his opponents in the left spectrum are, slowly but surely, gaining strength despite his money and influence.

On Tuesday, Mr. Berlusconi realises his ambition of leading the E.U. as he will be responsib-

le for setting its agenda but the omens are not promising. Mr. Berlusconi's top priority is to narrow the chasm between the U.S. and the E.U., as trans-Atlantic relations remain grossly damaged over war and post-war conflict in Iraq.

The second priority is to usher in structural economic, labour and social reforms to give more breathing space to the ailing E.U.'s economic growth prospects. Mr. Berlusconi has campaigned on free-market platform since his advent into politics only a decade ago.

It remains to be seen if the self-made billionaire could also promote radical economic changes at the pan-European level.

The current head of the President of the European Commission is Romano Prodi, a fellow Italian but the two are an odd couple and perhaps political rivals if Mr. Prodi as a left-wing candidate decides to challenge Mr. Berlusconi in the 2006 general election.

The Italian presidency will also pave the way for the smooth acceptance of the E.U.'s 10 new member-states who were ruled by communist governments just over a decade ago and were within the orbit of the now defunct Soviet Union's influence and power.

The debate in the E.U. cap-



The Italian Premier, Silvio Berlusconi (right), and the President of the European Parliament, Pat Cox, in Rome on Friday. — AP

itals today is both about the competence and capability of Mr. Berlusconi, who is an ardent admirer of the U.S., its Presidents and all that goes with it.

Mr. Berlusconi takes over the E.U. presidency with some built-in advantages with the Bush administration. The Italian Government's 'pro-war' stance in the Iraq conflict may be handy in healing the resentment between Europe and the Bush administration though European leaders like the French President, Jacques Chirac, and the German Chancellor, Gerhard Schroeder, have made special efforts to mend the ruptured diplomatic fences with Bush administration.

# China wants pact to seal Asean ties



President Hu Jintao

Straits Times/ ANN

BEIJING, June 20. — China has proposed a new agreement to anchor a strategic partnership with Asean countries, a move which underscores Beijing's growing political and economic interest in South-east Asia.

Separately, Russia yesterday signed a joint declaration with Asean to cement their ties, a first step that could lead Moscow to sign up with the grouping's Treaty of Amity and Coopera-

tion, a code of conduct aimed at strengthening regional security.

For Asean, the forging of closer ties with China and Russia underlines the outward orientation of the 10-member regional grouping and its desire to expand the existing links with its key dialogue partners.

The Chinese proposal for a new pact to promote peace, stability and prosperity in the region came yesterday as Asean members held a series of meetings with its partners, which also includes the USA, Australia and Japan.

Beijing now has a framework agreement on economic cooperation with Asean and negotiations are under way to create an Asean-China free trade area within the next 10 years.

Beijing is also committed to acceding to Asean's Amity Treaty.

**Demobilisation:** Chinese President Mr Hu Jintao has urged the nation to find suitable civilian posts for some 42,000 soon-to-be demobilised military officers, as China's army begins a massive cut in its ranks, a report said today, adds AFP

THE STATESMAN

21 JUN 2003

# EU leaders hail draft constitution at summit

**Porto Carras (Greece):** European Union leaders hailed the EU's first draft constitution on Friday as a "clearer, simpler" legislative backbone for the wealthy bloc, which is set to nearly double in size in the coming years.

Former French President Valéry Giscard d'Estaing ceremonially handed over a copy of the draft, prepared by a 105-member forum over 16 months, to the political chiefs on the second day of their summit in Greece.

Mr d'Estaing, 77, said the document struck a delicate balance between the interests of member states and the EU institutions, and urged leaders not to lobby for wholesale changes.

But with key members such as Spain, Austria, Portugal and Britain all expressing major reservations on issues such as voting rights and the erosion of national sovereignty, the document is in for a bumpy ride.

The 15 current and ten future EU member states will adopt the final wording of the constitution during an inter-governmental conference (IGC) that will begin in Italy



**British Prime Minister Tony Blair (right) and foreign secretary Jack Straw arrive for a EU summit in Porto Carras, Greece, on Friday.**

in October and end by May next year.

The draft represents a thorough shake-up of the EU's institutions, criticised as bureaucratic and inefficient. Reforms include the appointment of a long-term president of the European Council, which groups national leaders, replacing the current system in which the presidency rotates among all member states, regardless of size, every six months.

The draft also envisages a slimmed-down executive Eu-

ropean Commission, a new EU foreign minister and an extension of majority voting at the expense of the national veto.

"We will have a clearer, simpler Union which citizens will be able to understand," commission president Romano Prodi told a news conference.

Mr Prodi, a supporter of closer EU integration, had criticised the draft as too timid, but on Friday he played down his disagreements with Mr d'Estaing.

"Without dialogue and frank exchanges of views, we would not have been able to bring the debate forward," he said.

British Prime Minister Tony Blair welcomed the text, but repeated some of Britain's long-expressed reservations.

"Of particular importance to us is the recognition...that what we want is a Europe of nations, not a federal super-state," Mr Blair told reporters. Mr Blair said Britain would continue to resist any efforts in the IGC to scrap the right of national veto in the sensitive areas of taxation, foreign policy and defence. Reuters

**E.U. SUMMIT / TIGHT SECURITY TO PREVENT VIOLENCE**

## Ties with U.S. high on agenda

PORTO CARRAS (GREECE), JUNE 19. The 15 European Union leaders will debate their tattered ties with Washington, the contentious draft of an E.U. Constitution and the West Asia situation at a two-day summit at this seaside resort in northern Greece.

The summit opened on Thursday in a swank hotel on an Aegean peninsula near the northern Greek city of Thessaloniki where more than 15,000 police and soldiers have been deployed to prevent violent protests that have marred international gatherings including the Group of Eight summit in Evian, France last month.

The E.U. leaders will be joined by their counterparts from 10 European nations that will join the E.U. in 2004.

They will also meet the leaders of Serbia-Montenegro, Croatia, Macedonia, Bosnia-Herzegovina and Albania, which are on a slow track to E.U. membership. Still grappling after the bloody break-up of Yugoslavia, the countries will likely get \$249 millions in extra aid over two years beginning 2004 and of senior officials from the E.U., the United States, Russia and the United Nations — drafters of the so-called “road map” peace plan for West Asia.

The leaders will take a first look at a draft E.U. Constitution that was completed a week ago after 16 months of negotiations. The charter aims to streamline decision-making within the



**BRACING FOR TROUBLE:** Shops are covered with sheets of metal in Thessaloniki, Greece. — AP

E.U. after the new members join next year. It calls for an E.U. president, a foreign minister, and an effective European Commission, the E.U.'s executive.

France, Germany and Italy generally back the text. Britain, Spain and others seek amendments, as do smaller countries such as Luxembourg, the Netherlands and Portugal that fear losing power to the bigger countries.

The E.U. leaders are expected

to set a date to begin final negotiations on the draft charter. Those negotiations, among member Governments, are expected to be completed by the end of the year.

He has warned against a wholesale reopening of the text that has been painstakingly put together over the past 16 months. Doing so could unravel the hard-fought compromise and leave the E.U. in a bureaucratic mess after it expands eastward. — AP

20 JUN 2003

THE HINDU

# Consensus eludes ARF on Pakistan's admission

By P.S. Suryanarayana

*R. A. C. ASEAN*

**SINGAPORE, JUNE 18.** The Association of South East Asian Nations (ASEAN) Regional Forum (ARF) today failed to reach a definitive consensus on the admission of Pakistan as a participant-member at this stage. The sensitive issue was discussed during the ARF's tenth annual session in Phnom Penh. With this question being raised by the ASEAN itself as a core concern of the ARF, the entire episode acquired a touch of high diplomatic drama.

The ARF, an elite entity for security dialogue, consists of all the ASEAN member-states as also major powers like the U.S., Russia, China, Japan, India and the European Union among others.

The overall sense of today's discussion on this subject was summed up by the Cambodian Minister of Foreign Affairs and International Cooperation, Hor Namhong, in his capacity as the Chairman of the ARF's tenth annual session.

The formulation left no room for doubt that the issue of Pakistan's admission had now been delayed and not conclusively settled.

The Cambodian Minister's

statement on this aspect was phrased as follows: "The (ARF) Ministers noted that applications to participate in the ARF (deliberations) had been received from Bangladesh, Pakistan and Timor-Leste. They also noted that (the) ASEAN countries agreed (only yesterday) to lift the moratorium (on new membership of the ARF) and to consider the applications of new (that is, potential) participants ... on a case-by-case basis. They (the ARF Ministers) received the communication that (the) ASEAN Foreign Ministers had reached a consensus (yesterday) to accept a new participant in (regard to) the ARF. They (the ARF Ministers) agreed (now) to keep these two inter-linked issues for further consideration".

Regional diplomats and analysts said the ARF's deliberations on these issues were, at one level, marked by the ASEAN's efforts to explore an imminent expansion of the wider regional forum.

At another level, the non-ASEAN members of the ARF, or at least some among them, were somewhat surprised at the speed at which the ASEAN itself sought to raise the issue of expansion without the benefit of

much preparatory work at the wider level of the larger regional forum.

The "selective" manner in which Pakistan's case acquired a sense of urgency became very transparent during today's ARF session.

India's sensitivities on this score were not so much the clinching factor at work during today's ARF meeting as the congruence of the strategic interests of several key non-ASEAN members of the Forum in a manner that seemed to favour. If, in the end, Pakistan could not make the ARF grade today, the reason was, in part, traceable to the Forum's own processes.

The possibility of an ARF expansion was not discussed as a key issue during the Forum's official-level preparatory meetings that were held several weeks ago. The apparently exponential jump in Pakistan's acceptability quotient at the ARF level derived from the U.S.' patronage of Islamabad in the present global context of "anti-terrorism" issues and the like, besides the strategic links that China and some ASEAN members have maintained with Pakistan over time, according to non-South Asian diplomats and analysts.

## CAS: Govt. may get tough

By Anita Joshua

**NEW DELHI, JUNE 18.** The crucial talks on the Conditional Access System (CAS) broke up today with the Government pulling out, disappointed with the rates quoted by the broadcasters for the pay channels, as the suggested price range would double the cable bill for the average viewer in Delhi, Mumbai, Kolkata and Chennai, where the new regime is to be introduced on July 15. And, with its efforts at persuasion failing to bear fruit, the Government said coercive measures might be adopted to regulate the cable industry.

Though the Information and Broadcasting Secretary, Pawan Chopra, was unwilling to elaborate on the measures being considered, he indicated an amendment to the Cable Act to rein in the main players in the industry.

According to Mr. Chopra, the rates suggested by the broadcasters were "unworkable" as it would take the monthly cable bill to well over Rs. 500 post-CAS, whereas the Government had been

pushing for offering the entire package — inclusive of the free-to-air channels, pay channels and Set-Top Box rentals — for Rs. 200.

What upset the Ministry particularly was the fact that the broadcasters came for the meeting without doing their homework. Not only did the broadcasters turn a deaf ear to the Ministry's plea to keep the prices low, they had not even worked out differences within about revenue sharing.

Mr. Chopra said the broadcasters tried to use the Government's presence at the meeting to conduct negotiations among themselves. Given that price fixing and revenue sharing was primarily a business concern that the broadcasters and MSOs/cable operators had to sort out, the Ministry considered it best to step out.

Stating that a lot of time had been wasted, Mr. Chopra hoped that the broadcasters and MSOs/cable operators would iron out their differences and evolve affordable price structures within a reasonable time so that the Government need not resort to coercive measures.

# Asean calls for Suu Kyi's release

Nation/ANN

PHNOM PENH, June 17. — Southeast Asian foreign ministers today ended their two-day talks with a rare statement expressing concern over the arrest in Myanmar of democracy icon Ms Aung San Suu Kyi and a proposal for a peace mechanism to deal with the North Korean nuclear issue. The Association of Southeast Asian Nations today formally asked Myanmar's ruling military to free Ms Aung San Suu Kyi.

In a joint statement, the foreign ministers of the 10-nation group said they "looked forward to the early lifting of restrictions placed" on the pro-democracy leader and on the members of her Opposition party.

The reference to Myanmar and Ms Suu Kyi in an Asean joint statement is unprecedented given the group's policy of noninterference in each other's affairs.

"It's a step forward," said Singapore foreign minister Mr Shanmugan Jayakumar, referring to the statement.

The Asean ministers also proposed a peace mechanism to deal with the North Korean nuclear crisis, according to the statement.



A man holds his daughter during a demonstration to demand Ms Aung San Suu Kyi's release in front of the Myanmar embassy in Bangkok on Tuesday. — AFP

The mechanism would comprise a security guarantee from the USA, South Korea, China, Russia and Japan "in exchange for the verifiable and irreversible elimination of the North Korea's nuclear programme".

A second component would be an economic package comprising the normalisation of economic relations and the provision of development assistance to the Stalinist state. Discussions among the ministers have also been dominated by the rising threat of terrorism in the region, with Cambodian Prime Minister Hun Sen, who is chairing the week's meet-

ings, calling for firm measures to tackle the threat.

Caught in camera: Journalists got a rare first-hand view into the arcane workings of Asean when a closed debate by foreign ministers was piped live into a press room today before officials found out what was happening and pulled the plug, adds AP.

## Decision on Pak entry today

BANGKOK, June 17. — Pakistan's entry into the high-profile security club Asean Regional Forum will be decided when the group meets tomorrow, even though Asean has lifted its moratorium on accepting new members.

A joint communique issued today by the Asean foreign ministers at Phnom Penh said: "We agreed to lift the moratorium, and to consider the application of new participants of ARF on a case-by-case basis. We agreed to accept Pakistan as a new participant in the ARF. In this regard, we decided to communicate our consensus to non-Asean ARF participants," it said.

But a decision on the inclusion of new countries in ARF will be taken only when the entire grouping meets in Phnom Penh tomorrow.

The foreign ministers also welcomed the recent developments in Indo-Pak relations, particularly the peace initiatives by Mr Atal Bihari Vajpayee. — PTI

# EU to stiffen sanctions against Myanmar

**Luxembourg, June 16** (Reuters): The European Union today decided to stiffen sanctions against Myanmar following the detention of pro-democracy leader Aung San Suu Kyi.

The bloc's sanctions against the country include an arms embargo and visa bans and asset freezes on more than 150 officials in the military-ruled government.

It has also suspended trade privileges because of its alleged use of forced labour.

Officials said foreign ministers meeting in Luxembourg had decided to lengthen the list of targeted individuals immediately instead of waiting until October as originally planned.

"In light of the serious deterioration of the situation in the country, especially over the last weeks, the council (of ministers) decided to implement without delay the strengthened sanctions," the ministers said in a statement.

Suu Kyi has been detained at undisclosed locations for more than two weeks, despite mounting calls from the international community for her release.

Myanmar foreign minister Win Aung, in Cambodia for a regional security meeting, said yesterday that Suu Kyi would be released as soon as the situation in the country returned to nor-



**Protesters demonstrate in front of the Myanmar embassy in Bangkok on Monday. (AFP)**

mal, but gave no time limit.

US secretary of state Colin Powell last week called for the sanctions which Washington has imposed on the junta to be stiffened, and a group of US lawmakers is turning up the heat by pushing for a ban on imports from Myanmar.

The 15-nation bloc's foreign ministers called for the immediate release of Suu Kyi and other members of her National

League for Democracy (NLD).

The EU also urged Yangon to start "substantial and meaningful" dialogue with the NLD, reiterated a call for the release of political prisoners and expressed "deep concern over the noted increase of politically motivated arrests".

It also said the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (Asean) and their key partners, China, India and Japan, should use their influence to promote political change in Myanmar.

Myanmar, which has been under military rule since 1962, joined Asean in 1997.

## Universities reopen

Myanmar students flocked back to universities today after the ruling military allowed classes to restart, ending a two-week suspension amid fears of unrest following the detention of pro-democracy leader Aung San Suu Kyi.

The universities closed as part of a broad crackdown on dissent after May 30 clashes between pro-government groups and Suu Kyi's supporters.

Universities have traditionally been centres of support for the pro-democracy movement and regarded with suspicion by authorities since a 1988 student-led uprising which was brutally crushed by the military.



# Asean cautions West on Myanmar

Asia News Network & AP

PHNOM PENH, June 16. — Defending its policy on Myanmar, Asean has cautioned Western powers to handle the issue of restoring democracy in the country "delicately". Meanwhile, Cambodia today urged Asian and Western countries to "work seriously" to prevent terrorism in Southeast Asia, a region many fear is becoming a breeding ground for Islamic militancy.

Asean's secretary-general Mr Ong Keng Yong said yesterday that the group had managed to contain the Myanmar issue within the country's boundaries with its "constructive engagement" policy.

"Speaking as the Asean secretary-general, I am not talking about the right or wrong of the institutions in Myanmar, but what is important is for everyone to understand the complexities of Myanmar," Mr Ong told reporters ahead of a meeting of Asean foreign ministers.

Reacting to a barrage of criticism levelled at the group for what some



UNITED WE STAND: Asean foreign ministers (from left) Mr Nur Hassan Wirajuda of Indonesia, Mr Somsavat Lengsavat of Laos, Datuk Seri Syed Hamid Syed Jaafar Albar of Malaysia and Mr U Win Aung of Myanmar join hands during the opening ceremony of the annual Asean ministerial meeting in Phnom Penh on Monday. — AFP

have called its failure to restore democracy in Myanmar, he said: "The situation there should not be allowed to develop into a ugly confrontation that will destabilise the situation in Southeast Asia."

over... We sometimes forget that this unique piece of geography called Myanmar can be a major destabilizing factor in the Indian ocean, not just in Southeast Asia, which is just a small part of the equation".

In a move seen as a concession to its detractors, Asean secretariat spokesman Mr MC Abad said Asean ministers intended to issue a statement of concern over the recent developments in Myanmar.

The statement, seen as a departure from the group's normal policy of non-interference in members' domestic affairs, was a unanimous issue among members, he said. "This is the first time that Asean has taken a pro-active stand on Myanmar on the record."

In his inaugural speech today, Cambodian Prime Minister Mr Hun Sen told delegates: "Concerns for world security ... require us to exert our best efforts to strengthen our solidarity."

Ministers from the 10-member Asean are meeting today and tomorrow for their annual retreat. They will join other Asian and Western ministers Wednesday in the 23-member Asean Regional Forum meet.

# Accord on E.U. Constitution

BRUSSELS, JUNE 13. Delegates drafting a first-ever constitution for the European Union on Friday on a summit opening <sup>110-14</sup> <sup>14/6</sup> how the growing bloc will be run in the decades ahead, with the aim of building it into a world power.

However, after 16 months of debate, delegates had to leave some key items — including national vetoes on foreign policy and taxation issues — unresolved to meet the deadline of having a text to present to E.U. leaders at their summit next week in Greece.

As champagne glasses clinked to celebrate, the convention Chairman, Valery Giscard d'Estaing, told a packed chamber at the European Parliament that history had been made. "Support was virtually unanimous for the draft Constitution," Mr. Giscard d'Estaing proclaimed. "We were asked to draft a Constitution and we came back with one ... This text stands as the foundation of a treaty embodying the European Constitution."

Many delegates declared the 300-page draft a watershed moment in shaping a new Europe, with new powers needed to make the 15-nation E.U. run more effectively once it takes in 10 new members next year. "This text first of all is a legal revolution, with no precedent," said the Spanish Foreign Minister, Ana Palacio, while the German Foreign Minister, Joschka Fischer, hailed the accord as "worthy of the word historic."

The French Foreign Minister, Dominique de Villepin, said, "we are setting up a new political age, more efficient, more democratic, assuming (Europe's) full role on the world stage," Mr. De Villepin said.

"This will be a good foundation for final negotiations," said Britain's chief negotiator, Peter Hain.

The end result will determine whether the bloc remains a loose alliance of sovereign countries or moves toward a super-state that may someday rival the United States.

Not wanting the convention to end in failure, Mr. Giscard d'Estaing proposed the panel take up that issue in July, when it is set to complete the final third part of the charter.

The Convention, which include representatives of E.U. Governments and institutions as well as national Parliaments, began its work in February 2002.

The E.U.'s founding Treaty of Rome of 1957 has been amended several times but always by E.U. Governments and amid complaints they operated far from the European citizenry.

Once approved by E.U. leaders, the Constitution will have to be ratified by all members to become valid. Some countries, such as Spain, Ireland and Denmark, have already promised to submit it to voters in a referendum. — AP

THE HINDO

14 JUN 2003

# 10/6 Accord reached on E.U. power structure 10-15

By Batuk Gathani

**BRUSSELS, JUNE 9.** After days of tough negotiations, the 105-member 'European Convention' under the chairmanship of the former French President, Valerie Giscard d'Estaing, has reached a compromise on the power structure for the European Union.

The new deal at the Convention was hammered out in the early hours of Sunday and will be presented to the leaders of member states at their summit in Greece on June 20. Mr d'Estaing has tried to ensure that the rights of the smaller member states are protected. For example, each member state, regardless of its size, is guaranteed a seat on the European Commission — the executive arm of the E.U. — and members will also have the privilege of chairing the sectional ministerial councils. Secondly, to make the deci-

sion-making process transparent and efficient, Mr d'Estaing has proposed a mechanism whereby the national veto in foreign affairs could be replaced by majority voting, provided everyone agreed. Even Romano Prodi, the current President of the European Commission, and a prominent critic of Mr d'Estaing, conceded that "important progress" had been made. The Convention's proposals will satisfy those who believe in a Europe of nation states and those who support deeper integration.

Mr d'Estaing's strategy has been to seek a middle way and also to bolster key institutions of the E.U. The ultimate authority will rest with the European Council of Ministers, which will be chaired by the President of the E.U., who will be elected by the member states.

The President will be elected

from among leaders of Government of member states and the two most-talked-about names for the post at present are the British Prime Minister, Tony Blair, and his Spanish counterpart, Jose Maria Aznar.

The Convention will hold one more meeting this week before Mr d'Estaing presents his final proposals to the summit meeting of E.U. heads of Government on June 20. The member states will then further 'refine' the process and a treaty adopting the Constitution of the E.U. will be signed in the first half of 2004. The expanded E.U. will

have a population of nearly half a billion, compared to the current 375 millions. With a GDP of nearly \$8 trillions, the E.U. will be the world's second largest economic power after the U.S. whose economy is likely to reach \$10 trillions by the middle of this decade.

## Shanghai Group denounces misuse of anti-terror war

By Vladimir Radyuhin

**MOSCOW, MAY 29.** In a veiled attack on the United States the leaders of the Shanghai Cooperation Organisation (SCO) denounced the misuse of anti-terror war to target any religion, country or ethnic group and threw their weight behind the United Nations.

The member-states of SCO haven consistently and invariably maintained that the fight against terrorism must be conducted on the basis of norms and principles of international law, (and) it cannot be equated with the fight against any religion, country or ethnic group, the leaders of the Shanghai regional security group said in a joint declaration adopted at a summit in Moscow on Thursday.

SCO, set up two years ago, unites Russia, China, Kazakhstan, Uzbekistan, Kyrgyzstan and Tajikistan.

The Presidents of the six member-states today completed the institutionalisation of SCO, signing a host of documents establishing the organisation's apex and executive bodies — the councils of Heads of State, Heads of Government, Foreign Ministers, and other documents. It was decided that SCO's permanent bodies — a secretariat, based in Beijing, and a regional anti-terror struc-

ture, based in Bishkek, Kyrgyzstan, — will become operational by January 1, 2004. The SCO joint declaration stressed the fundamental importance of recognising the key role of the U.N. and its Security Council in resolving major international problems and called for compliance with the U.N. Charter and international law.

Our shared position is that there is no alternative to the U.N. as a universal organisation in the system of international relations, Russia's President Vladimir Putin, said after the summit. It is only on the basis of international law that global stability can be achieved and local conflicts can be settled.

The SCO leaders called for reforming the U.N. to adapt it to the fast changing global situation and the need for effective solution of problems of global politics and security.

The key to resolving security problems lies in evolving under U.N. aegis a Global strategy of facing new challenges and threats, they said in the joint declaration.

The Shanghai group declared readiness to establish contacts with other international organisations and states irrespective of their geographic location and to participate in building a regional security system in cooperation with all countries and associations in the region.

31 MAY 2003

THE HINDU

# Prodi criticises E.U. statute draft

By Batuk Gathani

**BRUSSELS, MAY 29.** The chasm of divide over the proposed Constitution of the E.U. remains wide but bridgeable though. Smaller European nations continue to grumble about concessions that favour bigger nations. Last night, the debate over the European Union's future took a new turn, when the President of the European Commission, Romano Prodi, criticised the draft of Constitution.

Mr Prodi said the draft is "disappointing, not ambitious and a step backwards". Mr. Prodi's blunt criticism comes exactly a day after publication of all four parts of the draft. Many eyebrows have been raised in major European capitals amid the realisation that Mr. Prodi could also be feeling "insecure and unappreciated" about his own future role in the emerging European Union.

It is also ironical that Mr. Prodi also criticised Valary Giscard d'Estaing, the current chairman of the 105-member European Convention — the forum where the draft was debated and agreed upon. It is also an open secret that there is little love lost between Mr. Prodi and Mr. Giscard d'Estaing. Mr Prodi is the former Prime Minister of Italy.

In the 1970s, Mr. Giscard d'Estaing was a widely admired Finance Minister and later President of France. Both are "pan-European federalists" but currently have differing perceptions on the

future of the E.U. It is now proposed that the future President of the European Commission — the post which Mr. Prodi is currently holding — should be elected by the heads of the governments of the member states and Mr. Prodi may not be heading the popularity list.

Mr. Prodi's supporters in the European Commission have argued that since Mr. Giscard d'Estaing was the President of France and hosted the summit of the E.U. Government leaders in Paris in 1974, he is favouring the interests of the larger E.U. member states such as France and Germany.

While Germany, France and Italy are pursuing the goals of creating a federal, integrated and expanded E.U., Britain is suspected of "sitting on the fence" by the continental Europeans. Last night, the British Prime Minister, Tony Blair, fuelled the furor over the E.U.'s future, when he stated that time was approaching when the British public must decide whether Britain should be in the E.U. or not.

This has become a highly emotive and divisive issue in Britain and if the current British public opinion polls are any criterion, the people remain sharply divided about the country's role in the E.U.

Mr Blair indicated that the current debate over the Constitution was driven by media 'hysteria' and all this raised deeper issues of British membership. However, he agreed that the debate did not warrant a national plebiscite.

30 MAY 2003

THE HINDU

# President, Foreign Minister for E.U. proposed

By **Batuk Gathani**

**BRUSSELS, MAY 27.** The European Union is entering a historical era with the unveiling of the draft Constitution, which creates the posts of a President and Foreign Minister for the E.U. The proposed Constitution has been drafted during 15 tortuous months under the umbrella of the European Convention chaired by Valerie Giscard d'Estaing, the former President of France.

The European Convention of 105 members comprises European parliamentarians, bureaucrats and technocrats. The release of the 47-page draft

Constitution has evoked mixed emotions as Europe struggles to define its Union. The essential quest is to simplify and guide the E.U.'s current labyrinthine bureaucracy and expedite its decision-making process, especially when the E.U. will have 25 member states by 2004.

The European heads of government have yet to agree to a host of critical points, including the shape and size of its leadership — and above all, how it will make its decisions. There is still much scope for academic and political argument as member states ponder over the future of their national sovereignty, amid the reality

that at long last, a European Constitution has been unveiled.

Mr. d'Estaing will present all the drafts and make his final comments by June 4. On June 20, he will deliver the final draft of the European Constitution Treaty to the 15 Government leaders at their summit in Greece, for their final approval. On May 1, 2004, 10 new member states will join the E.U.

The offices of the President and Foreign Minister of the E.U. are being created to enable the Union to have greater coherence and to play a more decisive role on the world stage, without compromising on the sovereignty of member states.

28 MAY 2003

# Efforts on to reach accord on E.U. Constitution

By Batuk Gathani

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**BRUSSELS, MAY 16.** The parameters and scope of the proposed Constitution of the European Union is to be defined before the summit of the E.U. heads of Government, scheduled to be held at the end of June.

Italy will then take over the rotating six-monthly presidency of the Union from Greece. The members of the Convention on the "Future of the European Union" have been told that the days of "political rhetoric" are over and that the 15 member states should start "cutting deals together", if the draft Constitution is to be completed in time before the summit.

The European Convention here meets regularly under the chairmanship of Valerie Giscard d'Estaing, former President of France, who has written individually to the Convention's 104 members.

The members are select E.U. and national parliamentarians, representatives of Governments

and key executives of the European Commission. Mr d'Estaing hopes that different political groups and factions will move from their entrenched positions to reach a compromise.

On April 22, Mr. D'Estaing unveiled his ideas for the E.U. institutions in the enlarged Union, which may have 25 member states by the middle of this decade. He stated that an elected President of the Union should preside over a mini-Cabinet.

The proposals have to be approved by the Convention and then approved by the 15 heads of the member states.

Simultaneously, British Ministers have played down fears about the proposed European Union Treaty, which paves the way for the adoption of the essentially "super-state" Constitution.

Mr. d'Estaing, who aims to present the constitution in a simple language, which can be understood by the common citizen, has expressed the hope

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1975*

that it will clear the tangled web of myriad European Union treaties. For example, the E.U. will have new powers on issues related to asylum seekers and immigration, with national vetoes removed.

With the a large number of economic migrants posing as political asylum seekers from the Third World flooding the member states, the issue has assumed pan-European importance. The Constitution will also ensure that the role of national Parliaments is not undermined. The E.U. may also have a Foreign Secretary who will carry out the current duties of Javier Solana and Chris Patten.

17 MAY 2003

THE HINDU

# E.U. settles for 'compromise' on Iraq

By Amit Baruah

*Times*  
*18/4/03*  
*18/4*  
*P. Ali*

ATHENS, APRIL 17. The European Union may have agreed that the United Nations must play a "central role" in Iraq but the definition of the role itself will be the subject of hard negotiations among the "permanent five" in the Security Council.

Taking a compromise stance, the E.U. statement today did not refer to the United States or Britain nor did it express regret for the tens of hundreds of civilian deaths and injuries in Iraq. The statement, which followed a flurry of meetings here, indicated that both France and Germany were in a softer mode; not keen on being left out of the "reconstruction" of Iraq or take their differences with the U.S. and the U.K. beyond a point. This, in turn, could facilitate Security Council negotiations on Iraq.

The E.U. statement came as the U.N. Secretary-General, Kofi Annan, warned at the European Conference (an EU plus other European nations session) that no issue had "so divided" the world since the end of the Cold War as Iraq. "It is vital that we heal that division now... What we can, and must, do is to define a set of principles and objectives around which all of us can rally, and then move forward," he said.

Referring to the terrible suffering of the people, Mr. Annan said the "coalition", as the "occupying power", must give top priority to fulfilling its obligations under the Fourth Geneva Convention and the Hague regulations. "For our part, we at the United

Nations have already begun to assume our essential humanitarian role. We will do whatever we can to assist the American people, in an independent and impartial manner," he said.

"Other, more fundamental measures will have much greater legitimacy if they are carried out by the Iraqi people themselves — which means they can only be undertaken when the time is ripe," he added. Mr. Annan, it would appear, was referring to U.S. plans to put in place an Iraqi Government of its choice. But he chose to refer to the issue indirectly, a sign of the pressures he faces.

For its part, the E.U. statement said the central role for the U.N. must include a process leading to self-government in Iraq. "The E.U. welcomes the appointment by the U.N. Secretary-General of a special adviser on Iraq and looks forward to a further strengthening of the U.N.'s involvement in post-conflict Iraq..."

"At this stage, the coalition has the responsibility to ensure a secure environment, including for the provision of humanitarian assistance and the protection of humanitarian assistance and the protection of the cultural heritage and museums." "As part of the process of regional security and stability the E.U. reaffirms its commitment to bring the Israeli/Palestinian peace process to a successful conclusion..." it added.

The E.U. announced that it would set up an "air bridge" to fly wounded Iraqi chil-

dren out — either to neighbouring countries or to hospitals in Europe — as a tangible measure of its commitment to play a role in the political and economic reconstruction of Iraq.

Providing his assessment, the British Foreign Secretary, Jack Straw, told presspersons: "What we are doing is talking about the new Iraq. We are trying to put behind us the questions about whether or not the coalition should have taken military action."

In the meantime, three E.U. members, Denmark, the Netherlands and Spain, said they might send peace-keeping troops to Iraq. Poland and three Baltic states are said to have similar plans.

The E.U. may have agreed to a compromise — a watered-down statement — but the differences are real. The decision of these American supporters of the Iraqi war to act outside the ambit of the E.U. statement (in that no "central" role for the U.N. has yet been defined) is an indicator that the differences have simply been papered over. However, these countries and leaders are well-versed in the art of negotiations and compromise.

The Russian Foreign Minister, Igor Ivanov, too, has favoured a strong role for the U.N. in Iraq — a role that, in all likelihood, can only be defined by negotiations between the P-5 in New York. Interactions in Athens could have set the tone for a larger compromise between the U.S. and the U.K., on the one side, and their European allies, on the other.

18 APR 2003

THE HINDU



# E.U. settles for 'compromise' on Iraq

By Amit Baruah  
 18/4 P.A.A.

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APRIL 17

# UN must play a central role in Iraq, says EU

**Athens:** The European Union said on Thursday the United Nations must play "a central role" in rebuilding Iraq but also stressed that the US-led forces in the country had a responsibility to restore stability.

In a statement carefully worded to avoid refuelling bitter divisions over Iraq among the 15 EU member states, the bloc also reaffirmed its willingness to help in reconstruction.

"The UN must play a central role, including in the process leading towards self-government for the Iraqi people, utilising its unique capacity and experience in post-conflict nation building," said the statement, issued by EU president Greece.

In a nod to the realities on the ground, where the United States is leading efforts to build a post-war administration, the statement said: "At this stage, the coalition has the responsibility to ensure a secure environment, including for the provision of humanitarian assistance and the protection of the cultural heritage and museums."

It said the UN's initial role would be to fo-

cus on coordinating humanitarian assistance. EU leaders have been holding talks with UN secretary-general Kofi Annan on the sidelines of their meeting in Athens, which has been mainly dedicated to enlarging their wealthy bloc into ex-communist eastern Europe.

Mr Annan told the Europeans that the 15-nation Security Council would have to give a mandate for any UN political role in Iraq. EU members France and Britain are permanent members and Germany and Spain rotating members of that body.

The US has made clear it will not allow the Security Council any decisive role in Iraq after the body refused to vote for its invasion of the Arab country.

The EU statement represents a compromise between pro-war members such as Britain and Spain and the anti-war camp led by French President Jacques Chirac and German Chancellor Gerhard Schroeder, diplomats said.

Greek diplomats denied reports that the EU's divisions had delayed agreement on the statement, originally expected on Wednesday. Reuters

1 F 2003

# 10 more members join E.U.

By Amit Baruah

ATHENS, APRIL 16. Iraq was the overriding concern as the European Union, in its most dramatic expansion in 46 years, today added 10 new members, eight of them from the erstwhile Soviet bloc.

Leaders of the Czech Republic, Estonia, Cyprus, Latvia, Lithuania, Hungary, Poland, Slovenia and Slovakia will formally join the E.U. on May 1, 2004, but took a historic first step by attending an informal E.U. summit today. They also signed the accession treaty at the Stoa of Attalos at the foot of the Acropolis.

A significant presence in Athens was that of the U.N. Secretary-General, Kofi Annan, who met the British Prime Minister, Tony Blair, and the Russian Foreign Minister, Igor Ivanov, on the sidelines of the E.U. deliberations.

Talking to presspersons after a meeting with Mr. Ivanov, Mr. Annan was asked what he meant by an important role for the United Nations. Asked if he envisaged a Bonn-type process that was used in Afghanistan, Mr. Annan said that was only "part of the scheme".

"The responsibilities attached to a post-conflict Iraq was much more than just the Bonn process," he said adding that consultations were taking place between the "coalition" and "non-coalition" members of the Security Council. These consultations were to precisely work out and define in functional terms what a "vital role" for the U.N. meant.

Mr. Annan, who plans to meet several leaders including the German Chancellor and the French President, has a tough job on hand especially since the Americans have already gone ahead with discussions on the ground in Iraq about an interim

governing arrangement.

Speaking to the press after his meeting with Mr. Blair, Mr. Annan maintained: "I am confident that the U.N. will play an important role, and as we move ahead in the next few weeks I expect the role to become much clearer".

Mr. Blair, too, said that there should be an "important role" for the U.N. "I think if we approach the thing in the right spirit of goodwill, we will make sure the situation is handled well, not just on behalf of the Iraqi people, but also in respect of the U.N. too."

Though Iraq remained the dominant topic of conversation, the importance of the occasion should not be missed as far as the E.U. is concerned. A population of 75 million has been added to the E.U., taking its total to a grand 450 million.

In an Athens declaration, the 25 countries said: "We believe the Union has an essential role to play in the world. We shall

work for a more open and equitable global economy and a truly shared global information society, to the benefit of all... We will promote relentlessly the dialogue among civilizations and contribute uncompromisingly to strengthening the institutions of global governance and expanding the reach of international law."

"We are committed to facing up to our global responsibilities. We will support conflict prevention...help secure peace and defend global stability. We are determined to work at all levels to tackle global terrorism and stem the weapons of mass destruction.

"To these ends, the Union will continue to enhance its civilian and military capabilities to enhance stability beyond its borders".

"The Union pledges its support to the United Nations and its effort to ensure international legitimacy and global responsibility," it said.

Addressing a press conference, the Greek Presidency of the Union announced that a Constitutional Treaty would be presented at a June 20 summit E.U. summit. Discussions took place on a range of issues, including having a possible Chairman for the European Council, comprising Heads of State / Government.

There appeared to be agreement on having a European Foreign Minister, the former French President, Valery Giscard d'Estaing, who heads the Convention efforts, said at the press conference.

He said a chapter on fundamental rights would form part of the proposed E.U. Constitution. Pointing to the problems associated with the addition of 10 new member States, he said these new members were willing to consider the question of "rotating commissioners" in the European Commission, the principal executive body of the E.U.



The French President, Jacques Chirac (centre), the British Prime Minister, Tony Blair (left), and the French Prime Minister, Jean-Pierre Raffarin, at the E.U. summit in Athens on Wednesday. — AFP

17 APR 2003

REF AINDO

# Iraq shadow over E.U. meet

By Amit Baruah

BRUSSELS, APRIL 15. Iraq has laid bare the fault-lines of an imperfect decision-making process in the European Union and its institutions. Simultaneously, it has put pressure on the principal actors in the European Council to address these issues on a more urgent basis.

As matters come to a head, 10 new members, Estonia, Cyprus, Latvia, Lithuania, Malta, Hungary, Poland, Slovakia, Slovenia and the Czech Republic, — most of them members of the erstwhile Soviet bloc — will attend a ceremony to sign The Treaty of Accession to the European Union in Athens on Wednesday.

What might have been the crowning glory for an ascendant E.U. in Athens threatens to be overshadowed by the Iraq issue. The U.N. Secretary-General, Kofi Annan, and all the leading players from France, Germany, the United Kingdom and Spain will be present in Athens.

The European Council, which comprises the Heads of State/Government, will meet with the President of the European Convention, Valéry Giscard d'Estaing, in an informal session as well.

The Convention, mulling over the issue of E.U. reforms, is debating two key proposals — one of having a European Foreign Minister and the other to alter the six-month rotating "Presidency" of the European Union to a more longer-term "Presidency".

The deep division within the E.U. on the issue of Iraq, with the U.K. and Spain back-

ing the United States to the hilt, and France and Germany refusing to go along with a U.N. resolution to "legalise" a pre-declared war on Iraq, may well hasten this process of reform.

The E.U. is also keen that urgent measures be taken to restore the United Nations "system", one which has been severely undermined by the "unilateral" war undertaken by the U.S. and Britain.

Yet another European desire seems to be to mend trans-Atlantic fences that were affected in all the emotion that preceded the war. The Germans, some reports say, are keen on taking the lead in the issue after the

## NEWS ANALYSIS

open tensions between the German Chancellor, Gerhard Schroeder, and the Bush administration.

A majority of the new entrants to the E.U. have supported American military action in Iraq, leading the French President, Jacques Chirac, to publicly upbraid them for not being "well brought-up".

Here, in Brussels, conversation tends to veer round to Iraq. As the world grapples with the enormity of the changes that have been militarily engineered by the U.S. and the U.K., some here believe that Syria cannot be next on the list.

With the European Union unable to respond to the opinion of the "European street" on Iraq, suggestions that it could be Syria next are met with considerable dismay.

If Syria becomes the next target (the re-

ason is that it won't), European opinion would be further enraged and trans-Atlantic tensions could increase. But opinion here would suggest that the Americans are not about to "take out" the Syrian leadership.

There is also an awareness that the U.N. and the E.U. should play a role in the reconstruction (an ugly term to use given the fact that "coalition" troops haven't lifted a finger to stop the looting) of Iraq.

As "pragmatism" prevails, no one would like all the rebuilding of Iraq to be done by the Americans and the British. Given that the all-important export of Iraq is oil, German, French and Russian companies would not like to be "left out" on decision-making.

In Monday's issue of *The Guardian*, the writer Naomi Klein had this to say on Iraq: "A people, starved and sickened by sanctions, then pulverised by war, is going to emerge from this trauma to find that their country has been sold out from under them."

"They will also discover that their new-found 'freedom' — for which so many of their loved ones perished — comes pre-shackled by irreversible economic decisions that were made in boardrooms while the bombs were still falling. They will then be told to vote for their new leaders, and welcomed to the wonderful world of democracy," she said.

"Some argue that it's too simplistic to say this war is about oil. They're right. It's about oil, water, roads, trains, phones, ports and drugs. And if this process isn't halted, 'free Iraq' will be the most sold country on earth."

16 APR 2003

ONE HINDI

# ASEAN members mull over virus attack

REUTERS  
LAOS, APRIL 3

**SOUTHEAST** Asian trade ministers meeting in Laos on Thursday played down the effect of an outbreak of a deadly flu-like virus on regional trade, saying they saw the impact on economies as short-term.

Their assessments came as tourism operators in key Asian destinations began counting the cost of mass cancellations and the death toll worldwide from the virus, known as Severe Acute Respiratory Syndrome (SARS), climbed to over 80.

Informal discussions between the ministers of the 10 members of the Association of South East Asian Nations (ASEAN) in a remote mountain resort in Northern Laos centred on the SARS outbreak, but they said the mystery disease would hit tourism rather than trade.

"I think we worry only about the impact on the economy. However, we are not worried about the impact on the economy."



European tourists wear masks to protect themselves against Severe Acute Respiratory Syndrome (SARS) in Laos on Thursday. Reuters photo.

haramik, who wore a mask while passing through Bangkok International Airport on his way to Laos, told Reuters.

"Trade shouldn't have any difficulties. It is just preventing travelling, but products and goods will continue to travel anyways."

Singapore's Trade Minister George Yeo said the Severe Acute Respiratory Syndrome outbreak was likely to hit business travel in South-east Asia temporarily.

"Initially of course there is a certain precaution taken, but trade goes on," Yeo informed Reuters. "But if the countries which are less affected are quick to put in measures to contain the problem to prevent its spread, then I think they can spare some unnecessary damage."

Tourism is one of the biggest service industries in Singapore and generates about 7-8 per cent of its gross domestic product.

# Iraq casts shadow over E.U. summit

By Batuk Gathani

**BRUSSELS, MARCH 21.** Friday's summit of the 15 European Union heads of Government is widely rated as the "frostiest" of its kind in background of the current British-French rancour, which spoiled the mood at summit dinner hosted by Greece.

Earlier in the evening, devoid of any bonhomie, the French President, Jacques Chirac and the British Prime Minister, Tony Blair, met and shook hands at the heavily guarded European Council of Ministers building.

The British delegates were angry when Mr. Chirac vetoed any reference to U.N.

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resolution 1441. The outbreak of the Iraq war has underscored Europe's bitter divisions over the issue. Last night on his arrival, Mr. Blair looked haggard and said nothing. The two leaders were seated "diagonally opposite" at the working dinner last night attended by all 15 heads of Government. Mr. Blair talked amiably with the "pro-war" Spanish Prime Minister, Jose Maria Aznar, while Mr. Chirac talked with the German Chancellor, Gerhard Schroeder, who has consistently supported the "no-war" option. However, apart from the formal "coldness", the French and British leaders, according to an E.U. official, "did not cross the boundaries of civilised beha-

viour." The general mood at the E.U. summit was described as "frosty".

The E.U. heads agreed to an uneasy truce in their bitter disagreement over the Iraq war and agreed to pull together to arrange a package of humanitarian aid for the Iraqi people.

They deliberately left the issue whether the use of military force by Britain and U.S. was justified.

The communiqué was issued after policy experts of the 15 countries worked for hours to thrash out differences in text over Iraq. In final communiqué, at the French insistence, the word "military conflict" replaced "war".

R. Am

**BRUSSELS / CRISIS BLOWS OVER**

HD 14

# Turkey to get NATO cover

**BRUSSELS, FEB. 19.** NATO on Wednesday brought to a close one of the stormiest chapters in its 54-year history, approving the deployment of defence equipment in Turkey, which fears counter-attack in the event of a war in Iraq.

The decision was taken by the Defence Planning Committee — a forum of the 19-nation alliance on which France does not sit. France had blocked for a month military planning to bolster the defences of NATO member Turkey.

Diplomats said the United States and some other NATO members sought a statement welcoming the move at a meeting of all 19 allied ambassadors later, but retreated quickly when it became clear that France was prepared only to "take note" of it.

The 18-nation Defence Planning Committee agreed to deploy AWACS early warning aircraft, Patriot air defence missile systems and chemical-biological response units in southern Turkey, a likely launchpad for any U.S.-led strike on Baghdad.

"Defensive measures will now be implemented as a matter of urgency," said one NATO official.

The NATO Secretary-General, George Robertson, resorted to the same committee on Sunday to break a deadlock over when to start the planning,

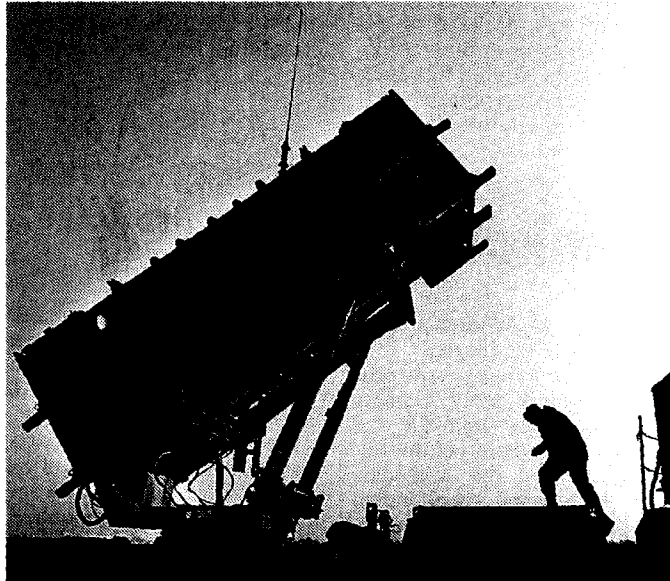
which he said in interviews published on Wednesday had dented the alliance's credibility.

"Our credibility has been damaged, as have U.S. relations with some members — particularly those who blocked agreement — but I trust this will be overcome," Spain's *El Pais* quoted him as saying.

The U.S. ambassador to NATO, Nicholas Burns, welcomed today's decision as a sign that the alliance had lived up to its responsibility to respond to an ally in a time of threat. "Alliance

solidarity has prevailed," he said in a statement. France, Belgium and Germany had all held out until last weekend against asking military planners for advice on Turkey's defence, arguing that this would be an implicit acceptance that military action was inevitable.

Their veto exacerbated tensions both across the Atlantic and within Europe over how best to ensure that the Iraqi President, Saddam Hussein, gives up alleged weapons of mass destruction. — Reuters



**CLEARED:** A Patriot missile launcher is seen in the picture. The missiles will be deployed in Turkey for its defence. AFP

**THE HINDU**

20 FEB 2003

**WAR PLAN / EUROPE TALKS TOUGH**

# Last chance, E.U. tells Baghdad

R. Am  
H2-19  
1912

By Batuk Gathani

**BRUSSELS, FEB. 18.** At a special meeting of the 15 European Union heads of government, the E.U. leaders made a bold attempt to patch up their differences over Iraq.

Late last night, the E.U. delivered a surprisingly tough warning to the Iraqi President, Saddam Hussein's regime in Baghdad to either seize the 'last chance' to disarm or face war.

The French President, Jacques Chirac, also insisted that France would veto a second United Nations resolution, to explicitly authorise an Anglo-American initiated U.N. sponsored military action against Iraq. Mr. Chirac said: "There is no need for a second resolution today, which France would have no choice but to oppose."

At the E. U. summit, the British Prime Minister, Tony Blair's popularity has plummeted as he toed the U.S. line on Iraq, which antagonised the European Union's largest and most influential member-states, France and Germany. The European hawks led by Britain include Spain, Italy, Portugal and the Netherlands. The doves, besides France and Germany, are Belgium, Luxembourg, Greece and Austria. At the middle are Ireland, Sweden and Finland

The stark reality, even at the end of the "compromising and cosmetic" summit is that the divide remains as wide as ever. But amid a quest to display European unity and let the Euro-American relations remain unscathed, the compromise formula is based on reaching an accord. Hence, the European Union warning to Mr. Hussein's regime of its 'last chance.'

According to informed observers here, Mr. Chirac was instrumental in persuading the German Government to agree to a more aggressive stance towards Iraq. The final E.U. communiqué states: "Baghdad should have no illusions. It must disarm and cooperate immediately and fully. Iraq has a final opportunity to resolve the crisis peacefully." The E.U. leaders statement followed an earlier warning by the U.S. Secretary General, Kofi Annan, that the E.U. should avoid internal rifts. The E. U. leaders agreed that the U.N. weapons inspectors be given more time and resources they needed to complete their job.



**IRAQ / E.U. LEADERS STRUGGLE TO NARROW RIFT**

# NATO reaches accord on Turkey

**BRUSSELS, FEB. 17.** A deeply divided Europe struggled today to close a rift over Iraq and speak with one voice to the Iraqi leader, Saddam Hussein, though leaders were encouraged after resolving a month-long NATO deadlock on defending Turkey.

European Union leaders were called to an emergency summit amid warnings that continued disagreement over Iraq could impede European integration and dilute the continent's influence on the world stage.

NATO broke the month-long impasse, reaffirming alliance solidarity while supporting U.N. efforts for a peaceful solution.

"Alliance solidarity has prevailed," the NATO Secretary-General, Lord Robertson, said. "We have been able to collectively overcome the impasse."

After France was shut out of the room, the other two holdouts — Germany and Belgium — dropped their objections to starting planning for Turkey's defence immediately, NATO officials said.

Belgium threw a last-minute wrench into the works by insisting on linking any eventual NATO deployment to developments at the U.N. Security Council. But the final statement says only, "We continue to support efforts in the United Nations to find a peaceful solution to the crisis."

Foreign Ministers at the meeting were united that Iraq must disarm. However, with Washington pushing for military action, differences remained over how much more time to give U.N. weapons inspectors.

Javier Solana, E.U.'s foreign policy chief, called for continuing inspections for weapons of mass destruction — a position that was boosted by millions of anti-war protesters around the world this weekend.

"I think everybody has recognised that war is the last resort," he said. "I think everyone agrees war may be necessary at a given moment but we have not at this point



**RELIEF:** The Turkish Prime Minister, Abdullah Gul (left), with the Belgian Prime Minister, Guy Verhofstadt, after the resolution of the Turkish problem, in Brussels on Monday. — AP

reached the time for that." But the British Foreign Secretary, Jack Straw, Washington's key ally, stood firm, saying, "Time is running out."

The United Nations "set out very clearly that this was the final opportunity for Iraq to comply," Mr. Straw said. "That involves hard decisions for everyone across Europe. It is only by fighting tyranny that we are able to enjoy the freedoms that we do."

The French Foreign Minister appeared defiant as he arrived for the meeting, hailing Belgium's stand supporting U.N. efforts to avert war during a contentious NATO meeting over defensive planning.

Meanwhile, the Prime Minister of Turkey, Abdullah Gul, hinted in Ankara today that the U.S. might yet have to wait for the permission it urgently seeks to deploy troops on Turkish soil for a possible inva-

sion of Iraq. Down on the Iraqi border, military sources said the Turkish and U.S. military were meeting Iraqi Kurdish group who control northern Iraq. Witnesses saw a helicopter arc over the border to an arm base for talks aimed at easing tension between Turkey and the Iraqi Kurds that could hamper any U.S. action.

Washington expects Turkey's Parliament to approve dispatch of tens of thousands of troops, but the weekend has seen Ankara casting doubt on that plan. Time is running short for preparation of a secondary northern front to smooth U.S. action many here see in the next month. "There are certain points we give importance to," Mr. Gul told journalists before departing for Brussels. "Without reaching an agreement on those points, I believe it will be difficult to persuade Parliament..." he said. — AP, Reuters

18 FEB 2003

# No compromises: France Split EU seeks unity on Iraq

PAUL TAYLOR

Brussels, Feb. 17 (Reuters): European Union leaders, deeply divided over Iraq, sought a united front at an emergency summit today, while Nato military planners moved to defend Turkey after breaking their deadlock over the pace of war planning.

After a decade of dramatic progress on common political goals and, for many members, a common currency, the 15-nation EU has split on foreign policy and how to disarm Iraq.

Divisions run deep. Britain has troops with US forces in the Gulf for a possible war on Iraqi President Saddam Hussein. Germany says it will not participate in any war against Iraq.

The hastily arranged Brussels summit may be a defining test of whether the EU can speak with one voice when it counts.

"The future of Europe lies not only in the euro (currency) but having a European defence policy," Belgian Prime Minister Guy Verhofstadt said.

But President Jacques Chirac signalled he had not come to the summit to compromise.

The French President said while arms inspections continued he saw no need for a second UN resolution sought by Britain authorising the use of force against Iraq.

"We consider that war is always, always, the worst solution," he said on arrival in Brussels.

PAW 5.3 187  
"That is our position which leads us to conclude that it is not necessary today to have a second resolution, which France could only oppose."

For a month, Belgium, France and Germany had blocked another Western alliance, the 19-nation Nato military group, from making plans to defend Turkey in the event of war against Iraq.

The trio argued that planning would be seen as preparing for war. But a deal was struck on Sunday and Nato secretary-general George Robertson said: "Alliance solidarity has prevailed."

Turkey, which opposes war, is a reluctant US ally and said it would not accept US troops for an Iraq campaign without a deal on financial aid to help cover the cost of the conflict.

The US wants urgent Turkish approval for plans to launch a northern military front to drive towards Baghdad from Turkey's border.

But foreign minister Yasar Yakis said any proposal to accept US troops would go to parliament "only after an agreement" on financial aid.

~~THE TELEGRAPH~~

THE TELEGRAPH

18 FEB 2003

# NATO poised for Iraq deal, rifts remain

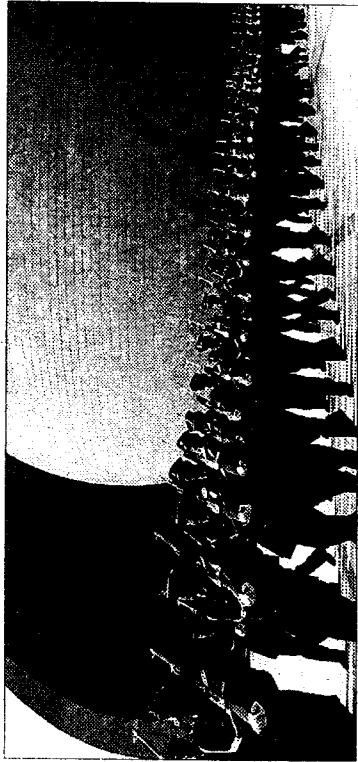
JOHN CHALMERS  
BRUSSELS, FEBRUARY 16

NATO looked set on Sunday to strike a compromise deal to break its deadlock over planning for the defence of Turkey in the event of a US-led war against Iraq, but deep divides remained after four weeks of wrangling. With Paris refusing to back a decision it sees as implicit acceptance that war is inevitable, the 19-nation alliance decided to take the crisis to its Defence Planning Committee (DPC), where France does not have a seat.

"What the DPC is being asked is to agree basically the package which has been on the table for four weeks or so," a senior NATO diplomat said before the committee's meeting began at

0930 GMT. "So I hope this morning we will be back on good sense and that 18 countries will agree that we should do these measures." The decision to call the meeting suggested that Belgium and Germany — which stuck by France through a crisis which has dealt a heavy blow to NATO's credibility — had backtracked.

The measures under discussion include the possible deployment of AWACS surveillance planes, Patriot air defence missiles and anti-chemical and anti-biological warfare units to NATO ally Turkey, a likely launchpad for war on Iraq, Belgian Prime Minister Guy Verhofstadt pointed to a compromise on Saturday. He told reporters Belgium would be in favour of allowing NATO military aid to Turkey as long as it did not constitute an escalation



**Iraqi soldiers at Martyrs' monument in Baghdad on Sunday.** *Reuters*

in a military operation against Iraq. France is not included on the Defence Planning Committee because it withdrew from the integrated military structure of the alliance in 1966. A French NATO mission spokesman said there would be a meeting of the alliance

liance's 19 ambassadors immediately after the military committee session.

But, in a sign of the continued rancour at the veto wielded by France, Germany and Belgium, a senior diplomat from one of the 16-strong majority said he would not back a "fig leaf" statement on solidarity with Turkey for Paris to stand behind.

"I am not going to be party to some sort of framework shell of a...decision sheet which purports to show solidarity when actually the people who are drafting it have done everything in the last four weeks that demonstrates their claim to solidarity is totally empty," he said. "So if they're looking for a fig leaf, that doesn't seem relevant to the experience of the last four weeks." — *Reuters*

to prevent is that this decision would constitute the first step in the build-up to war," Verhofstadt said. "It needs to be implicitly clear in this decision that it would not entail a NATO involvement

# NATO divided

RAM  
SRD  
Europe will not rush to war. 14/2 ✓

NATO is now confronting one of the worst crises in its history, with the French, Germans and Belgians vetoing plans to shore up Turkish defences in preparation for a war in Iraq. The French and Germans say that it is premature to do that as the UN inspection process has not run its course, whereas the Americans and British think it has, and Iraq is already in material breach of Security Council resolution 1441. The French position also gives warning that they are prepared to veto military action against Iraq if it comes to a vote in the UN Security Council, which may encourage the Russians and the Chinese to follow suit.

President Bush appears in an almighty hurry to get the war started by early March, when moonless nights are supposed to give US forces equipped with night-fighting technology an advantage. Alan Greenspan, chairman of the US Federal Reserve, has said that the uncertainty over Iraq is the biggest obstacle to the struggling American economy moving forward, which may be another impulse behind what looks like an American attempt to rush the UN into a resolution authorizing war. But that leaves significant questions unanswered, and the French are right to be wary. Neither Washington and London have done a good job of convincing the world that there is a case for war. If it is weapons of mass destruction, solid evidence that Iraq still retains any has not come to light, Secretary of State Colin Powell's exertions at the UN notwithstanding.

A British dossier on Iraqi WMDs, supposedly based on intelligence inputs, was found to have been plagiarized from a student research thesis; a public opinion poll in Britain shows that 86 per cent believe that UN weapons inspectors should be given more time. Neither are matters helped much by Bush's doctrine of preemption, which is dangerously destabilizing as it looks like a formula for endless war, a sort rightwing counterpart to Mao's "permanent revolution".

If the objective of the war is "regime change", a phrase Washington likes to bandy about, then apart from a commitment that Iraq's territorial integrity will be preserved, there hasn't been any clear articulation of what comes after President Hussein, nor whether Washington is ready to back broad-based democratic change in the Arab world, even if that works against its short-term interests. There isn't the trace of an acknowledgement, for example, that Washington's backing for the corrupt and autocratic Saudi royal family, which in turn shores up its credibility by flogging the all-too-living horse of religious fundamentalism, is at least partially responsible for the world's current problems in the area.

Neither have postwar reconstruction efforts in Afghanistan, where Gulbuddin Hekmatyar is reported to be regrouping with Al Qaeda and Taliban forces, been particularly inspiring. The *Los Angeles Times* has carried disquieting reports about Washington considering even the use of nuclear weapons to destroy WMD facilities in deep underground bunkers in Iraq. If such an attack is actually carried out, that will bring the day terrorists resort to WMDs nearer, not further away. By saying 'non' Paris is giving voice to the disquiet many people all over the world feel about Washington's plans. Washington and London will proceed at their peril.

## OLD AND UNWILLING

Europe seems to be perilously divided over what to do with Iraq. The North Atlantic Treaty Organization is trying to work out new proposals to persuade France, Germany and Belgium to agree to defend Turkey against possible attacks by Iraq. The three European countries are, so far, firm about interpreting such military support as indirectly assenting to the "logic of war", which they are still unwilling to do. They want to intensify and prolong the weapons-inspection approach in Iraq, pressing for more time before finally abandoning the way of peace. But this is not only a question of choosing between war and peace, but also a rather momentous gesture at the United States of America. "Old Europe" — as the US defence secretary put it, not without scorn — is refusing to fall in with the growing authority and unilateralism of the New World. This also implies that there is a "new" Europe, led by Britain, which has its own reasons for being part of what the US calls the "coalition of the willing". What is deepening, therefore, is the division within Europe, and this will have a profound effect on the integrity and functioning of the European Union, the United Nations and NATO. R. A. M. NATO

If the US remains adamant about its plans to wage war on Iraq, without UN sanction and in spite of Old Europe's opposition, then this will not only leave an awkwardly divided EU, but also put the UN and NATO on the brink of an ignominious irrelevance. (NATO played no role in the Afghan war.) Set up in 1949 to counter Soviet expansion in Europe, NATO's occupation was gone after the Cold War ended. September 11, and the US, gave it a new enemy, and a new reason for existing; the "war against terror" needed its foreign legion. Meanwhile, NATO had starting getting on with Russia and had incorporated large swathes of eastern Europe. But in this disagreement over defending Turkey, Russia seems to be on the side of Old Europe, and the eastern European NATO countries are still too insecure to take a stand for peace against the US. France has been a problem before, with Charles de Gaulle pulling out of NATO's military structure in the mid-Sixties in protest against the dominance of the American commanders. The Suez crisis in 1956 — of which many are being reminded now — saw Washington and the UN condemning British and French military action. NATO is caught again in the fault-line between peace-keeping, as in the Balkans, and more aggressive means of disarming "rogue" nations. Europe, old and new, will certainly need to provide for its own defence and security, and must learn to do so in concert with the US perhaps, but not under its direction.

1 3 FEB 2003

THE TELEGRAPH

# Nato fails again to end crisis

SF-2 1212 R Am NATO

## Associated Press

BRUSSELS Feb. 11. — France, Germany and Belgium today refused to lift their veto of U.S.-backed plans to bolster Turkish defences against a possible Iraqi missile attack, leaving the Nato mired in one of the worst crises in the alliance's 53-year history.

After two postponements while "intensive" talks were held informally, ambassadors from the 19 Nato countries came together for a second day of emergency talks this evening, only to adjourn 20 minutes later.

"Right now we don't have a conclusion," Nato spokesman Mr Yves Brodeur said. "Consultations between capitals" would

continue through the night and the ambassadors would reconvene tomorrow. Asked if there were any new proposals, Mr Brodeur said: "There are a number of options that have been discussed."

Diplomats said France, Germany and Belgium had not changed their positions.

The division in the alliance threatens the Bush administration's attempts to muster support in the UN Security Council for military action against Iraq. France and Germany, joined by Russia and China, are seeking more time for beefed-up UN inspections in a proposal opposed by Washington.

The crisis, which has been bubbling for almost a month, came to a head yesterday when, in

an unprecedented move, the French, Germans and Belgians rebuffed a direct appeal for help from Turkey issued under Nato's mutual defence treaty.

Diplomats today suggested that a change in the wording of the Turkish request to stress the need to reassure anxious civilians, rather than preparing for war, could clear the way for a compromise, though they added that any final decision could still be delayed until the end of this week.

Washington, backed by 15 allies, wants Nato to begin planning to send Turkey AWACS early warning planes, Patriot anti-missile batteries and units trained to counter chemical and biological weapons.

They say those measures are

needed urgently to protect Turkey — the only Nato nation bordering Iraq — from an Iraqi missile strike, as the USA prepares to move troops into Turkey that could be used to open up a northern front in any Iraq war.

France and its supporters argue that starting the military planning would set Nato on a path to war and undermine efforts to find a peaceful solution.

The split has plunged Nato into what some say is its worst crisis since the dispute over the deployment in Europe of US tactical nuclear weapons in the early 1980s.

The veto by France, Germany and Belgium was condemned by the USA and most other

European allies, who fear it sends a signal of disunity to Mr Saddam Hussein and strikes at the heart of NATO's all-for-one, one-for-all defence pledge.

In Washington, President George W. Bush, said: "It affects the alliance in a negative way when you are not able to make a statement of mutual defence."

"There is no doubt that Turkey is not the target here," Mr Gul told reporters in Ankara. "A diplomatic battle is going on."

In the wider context, NATO will not play a direct role in any U.S.-led offensive war against Iraq. Instead, as in 1991, Washington will rely on help from a coalition of willing allies, such as Britain and Australia.

# 'Crisis of credibility' rocks divided Nato

JOHN CHALMERS

**Brussels, Feb. 10 (Reuters):** France, Germany and Belgium split Nato today by blocking a plan to strengthen Turkish defences against Iraq in readiness for war, provoking Washington to accuse the rebels of plunging the alliance into crisis.

US defence secretary Donald Rumsfeld insisted, however, that the dispute would not delay any attack on Iraq and did not threaten the survival of the 19-member military alliance.

The three European states, trying to slow the rush to war, argued that sending the military aid to Turkey would be a "bad signal" that conflict had begun. Turkey, which borders Iraq, promptly invoked Nato's founding treaty to demand consultations on the defence of its territory.

Behind the spat over Turkey lies a deeper division among Nato members over whether to go to war to disarm Iraq or use more diplomacy and more time. Chief UN arms inspector Hans Blix said he saw little new evidence on Iraqi weapons in documents Baghdad gave him at the weekend.

"This time they presented some papers to us in which they focused upon new issues. Not new evidence, really, as far as I can see, but they have nevertheless focused on real open issues and that is welcome," Blix said on arriving in Athens from Baghdad.

In Brussels, France, Germany and Belgium blocked proposals to start planning for the deployment of Awacs surveillance planes, Patriot missiles and anti-chemical and anti-biological warfare teams to Turkey.

Turkey responded by invoking Nato's Article IV, which says that "parties will consult together whenever, in the opinion of any of them, the territorial integrity, political independence or security of any of the parties is threatened".

The US ambassador to Nato denounced what he called "a most unfortunate decision by three allies to prevent Nato from assisting the legitimate defence needs of Turkey," which fears reprisals if US forces invade Iraq from its territory.

"Because of their actions, Nato is now facing a crisis of credibility," the envoy, Nicholas Burns, told reporters.

Anticipating the blocking move, Rumsfeld had earlier denounced it as "a disgrace". Asked at a news conference later if it would delay a possible attack, he said: "No, because the planning's going to go forward outside of Nato if necessary."

France, Germany and Belgium issued a one-sentence statement affirming their solidarity with Turkey and determination to meet Nato obligations, without indicating any shift in their stance.

Nato secretary-general George Robertson called the deadlock "very serious" but said a solution could be at hand. Turkish foreign minister Yasar Yakis called it a dispute over timing and predicted the blocking countries would fall into line.

Europe has been deeply divided over US threats to attack Iraq within the next few weeks unless Baghdad declares its alleged chemical, biological and nuclear arms programmes.

Britain, Italy, Spain, Portugal and new Nato members from eastern Europe have supported the tough US line.

Pope John Paul sent an envoy, French Cardinal Roger Etchegaray, to Iraq today. Iraq's



**Nato secretary-general George Robertson in Brussels.** (AFP)

Vatican ambassador, A. Amir Alambari, said in an interview that Baghdad would welcome a visit by the pope himself.

A key date will be Friday, when Blix and his fellow inspection chief, Mohamed ElBaradei, report to the UN Security Council on Baghdad's cooperation with arms inspectors in Iraq.

## Can we do it alone? Yes, we can: US navy

strong." Germany and France, backed by Russia, have said they want to beef up UN weapons inspections rather than rush to war but US President George W. Bush has repeatedly indicated that time is running out for Iraq.

The *Lincoln* has just arrived back in the Gulf to join the *USS Constellation* in support of Operation Southern Watch, patrolling a "no-fly" zone over southern Iraq.

The *Lincoln's* crew were heading home at the end of last year when they were ordered to turn around off the coast of Australia and return to the Gulf as part of a US buildup for possible war on Iraq over its alleged weapons of mass destruction.

With more than 70 aircraft aboard and accompanied by a group of warships armed with cruise missiles, the *Lincoln*

could play a key role in an air war. "I wouldn't hazard a guess to say (how long the air war will be)," Swift said.

"I think we have got overwhelming force. But with combat there is no way to make a prediction on that."

Swift said the US now had a much larger naval presence in the region than in the run-up to the 1991 Gulf War.

"There is a significant navy presence here now. That's because you are never quite sure if we will be able to fly off land bases and of course the Navy doesn't have those kinds of restraints," he said.

"The expectation is we will have three carriers in the Gulf and two in the Med."

The key development since the last Gulf War has been the improvement in precision weapons, Swift said.

PILAR WOLFSTELLER

**Aboard USS Abraham Lincoln, Feb. 10 (Reuters):** As some of Washington's allies hesitate to send forces to join a war against Iraq, US navy pilots in the Gulf say their warplanes could overwhelm Iraq without help if necessary.

"It would be much more difficult to fight a conflict without a coalition than if we would fight it with a coalition. Could we do it without a coalition? Yes," Scott "Nots" Swift, deputy commander of the air wing on the aircraft carrier *USS Abraham Lincoln*, said yesterday.

"Could we do it alone with Naval Forces? Yes, we could do it alone with the Air Force as well. But that is not the way we fight," he said.

"I don't foresee that happening at all. The coalition is very

419-15

# U.S. puts pressure on E.U. nations

2/1

By Batuk Gathani

**BRUSSELS, JAN. 27.** As Iraq's fate hangs in balance, the countdown to war has begun in earnest in major European capitals. Most Europeans are sceptical if the U.N. inspectors will ever produce the "smoking gun". With the U.S. military going ahead with a ground campaign against the Iraqi President, Saddam Hussein,

most European officials have come to a reluctant conclusion that the U.S. President, George Bush's patience is wearing thin.

The only silverlining on the otherwise depressing scenario is that the Bush administration may agree to calls for U.N. weapons inspectors to be given more time — only days but not months. Last night, the U.S. Secretary of State, Colin Powell, left his audience in no doubt

that the Bush administration was prepared to take a solo military initiative against Iraq. The American diplomats and officials in major European capitals are today seen putting pressure on European Union countries not to join the Franco-German alliance. The Americans are concerned that it may lead to a more independent European defence and foreign policy. According to informed European

diplomatic sources, the U.S. envoys have already raised their concerns in bilateral meetings with European officials as Germany and France make bold attempts to give the E.U. a greater political clout. The E.U. Foreign Ministers met here today with Iraq dominating the agenda.

The Central European states which propose to join the E.U. are in a quandary about their future relationship with the U.S.

THE HINDU

2687 JAN 28 2003



# E.U. for consensus on Iraq

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By Batuk Gathani

28/1

**BRUSSELS, JAN. 22.** The German Chancellor, Gerhard Schroeder, has hinted at a 'no' vote in the United Nations over Iraq. Germany might vote 'no' or abstain in the event of a U.N. resolution authorising the Bush administration to launch a military campaign.

The Europeans are watching the unfolding scenario in Iraq with some trepidation as the Bush administration has rejected a prolonged inspection time by the U.N. weapons inspectors.

The Europeans do not share the U.S. perception that Iraq has failed to comply with the U.N. resolutions and feel strongly that military action against Iraq should not be taken.

Both Germany and France are leading the 'no' campaign while Greece — which is currently holding the routine six-monthly rotating presidency of the European Union — is trying to evolve a consensus in the European forums. Greece has even proposed a E.U. mission to West Asia to seek a better dialogue with Arab and Muslim states.

On the other hand, Italy and Spain may go along with a strong pro-U.S. British line. In the face of the dissensions within the E.U., the French Foreign Minister, Dominique de Villepin, has appealed to Europe to adopt a "common position" and stand up to American pressure for an early military move.

Mr. Schroeder faces crucial State elections next month. He said in a campaign speech over the weekend that "We will not take part in a military intervention in Iraq, and this is exactly how our voting behaviour will be in all international bodies." The German public opposition to war against Iraq has hardened and according to the latest opinion polls, more than 80 per cent Germans believe an attack against Iraq is not justified. The popular German magazine, *Der Spiegel*, today carried a bold front-page headline "Blood for Oil" and this sums up the feeling of the Germans.

## Iraq 'downs' U.S. drone

**BAGHDAD, JAN. 22.** Iraqi anti-aircraft fire today downed a U.S. pilotless Predator drone which entered the country from Kuwait, in the second such incident in just under a month, a military spokesman said.

"Our heroic air defence soldiers succeeded in downing a U.S. intelligence plane, a Predator, coming from Kuwait," the spokesman said, quoted by the official INA news agency. "The U.S. surveillance plane that violated Iraq's international airspace is used by the U.S. enemy to spy on our civilian and military installations

and it is a very sophisticated plane with advanced electronic equipment," he said.

He said Iraq's defence forces "renewed their pledge to President Saddam Hussein to remain the striking force against any hand that wants to harm the security and sovereignty of Iraq's land, water and airspace."

At least three other drones, which fly at relatively low speeds of about 240 km an hour or less, have been shot down over Iraq in the past two years, the last on December 23. — AFP

# Franco-German move criticised

By Batuk Gathani

*R. K. W. B. V.* *HD-14*  
**BRUSSELS, JAN. 17.** The latest Franco-German agreement on the future of Europe has triggered some criticism. The European Commission — the executive arm of the European Union — sharpened its criticism of the deal to create a dual presidency for the “expanded” European Union, which may have 25 member states from current 15 in 2004.

The European Commission’s chief spokesman said: “While we do not see this move as completely negative, we should not have two chief executives in Brussels. The strategy should be to make the European Union more efficient and accountable”.

Senior European Commission officials here are also wondering if the German-French initiative will provide the solution for administration and power sharing in the expanded European Union. Obviously, the European Commission’s 17,000-odd civil servants are also concerned about their future in a fast changing profile of the E.U.

Germany insisted that the joint initiative with France would make the European foreign policy more effective. It would also strengthen the European Commission and give it greater legitimacy. Many Europeans are concerned about the fast unfolding military scenario over Iraq. In European forums, it is argued that the E.U. should speak with “one voice” and member states should coordinate their strategy on Iraq, oil and global trade matters. Germany reiterated its policy that its troops would not participate in a military offensive against Iraq.

A broad strategy on the future of Europe will be discussed next week. There is consensus to create a new post of European Union Foreign Minister. At present, Javier Solana is in charge of the E.U.’s foreign and security policies and Chris Patten is the Commissioner (Minister) for External Affairs. The new European Foreign Minister would also be supported by a “European diplomatic service”. The concept of a dual presidency has yet to sink in with many Europeans suspecting that it is

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a barter deal between Paris and Berlin, rather than a genuine agreement. The concept would marry France’s “nation state” version with Germany’s more federal concept. Britain is not enthusiastic about the dual presidency and places greater emphasis on its own idea of a president of the European Council.

The member states have broadly welcomed the idea of a common foreign policy and are eager for a common strategy over matters related to tax, economy and defence. Romano Prodi, the current nominated President of the European Commission, has opposed the idea of a President of the European Council. Mr. Prodi warned that the E.U. should not end up with two power centres. It is also argued that the Franco-German initiative is in an evolutionary process and member states should not behave as if these were final proposals. At next week’s European Convention, delegates will have an opportunity to voice their feelings and also put counter-proposals about the contours of the E.U.

Apart from the evolution and working of the “expanded” E.U., there is also concern about the lack of a healthy and vigorous economic growth in the region. Germany, often described as the ‘locomotive’ economy, is the new “sick man of Europe”. This echoes Britain’s economic malaise of the 1970s.

Germany’s economic “supreme”, Wolfgang Clement, has said that 2003 would be the “make-or-break” year for Government of the Chancellor, Gerhard Schroeder.

Mr Clement said Germany’s proposed economic reforms should be initiated this year to boost investments and employment. Some of Germany’s economic problems are structural. Germans are over-taxed and over regulated and archaic labour laws are discouraging employers from creating new jobs. A skilled German worker is rated as the most expensive in the developed world — costing the employer some 40 euros per hour. It is in this background, 2003 could be a “make or break” year for Mr. Schroeder’s Government.

THE HINDU

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