

India condemns attack on U.N. office

By Our Diplomatic
Correspondent

NEW DELHI, AUG. 20. India today condemned the killing of the United Nations Special Representative for Iraq, Sergio Vieira de Mello, and several others in Tuesday's bomb attack on the U.N. office in Baghdad.

In a letter to the U.N. Secretary-General, Kofi Annan, the External Affairs Minister, Yashwant Sinha, said: "India joins other nations in reiterating that such mindless acts cannot undermine the determination of the international community to further intensify efforts through the United Nations to help the people of Iraq."

Terming the act as a "reprehensible act of terrorism", Mr. Sinha described de Mello as a "distinguished professional" who had served the United Nations and international peace throughout his career.

In a separate statement, the Ministry of External Affairs said: "We believe, as a matter of principle, that the U.N. and its personnel involved in the pursuit of peace should not be a target of violent action...India conveys its condolences to the U.N. Secretary-General and to the bereaved families."

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'Talks can resolve Indo-Pak. Issue'

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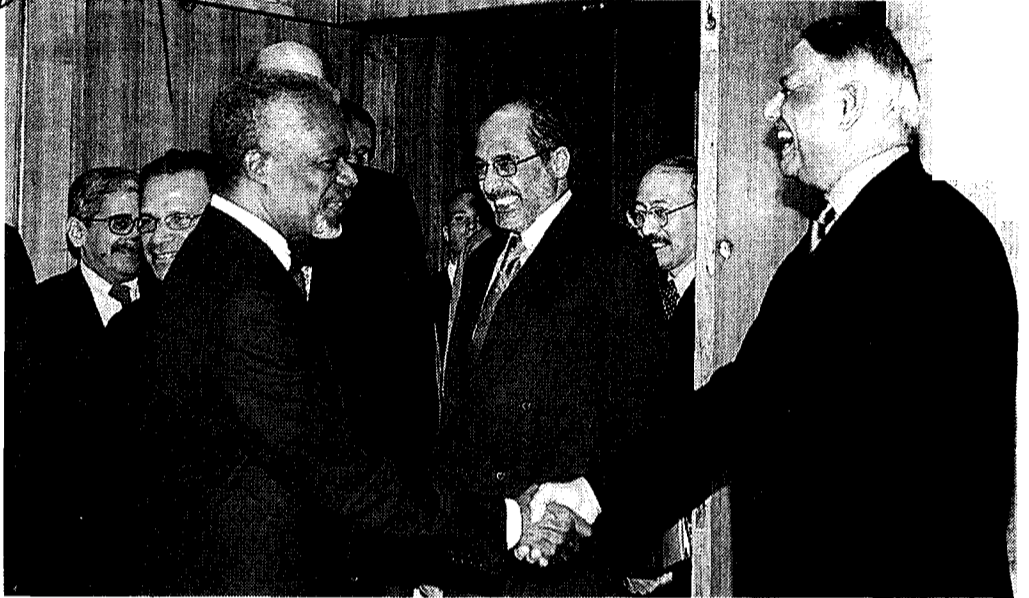
UNITED NATIONS, JUNE 11. Appreciating the Prime Minister, Atal Behari Vajpayee's peace initiative, the United Nations Secretary-General, Kofi Annan, has hoped that both India and Pakistan would be able to resolve all issues through negotiations.

Mr. Annan expressed his appreciation yesterday during a 40-minute meeting with the External Affairs Minister, Yashwant Sinha, who explained to Mr. Annan the salient points of the initiative aimed at improving relations with Pakistan.

During the wide-ranging discussions, Mr. Sinha stressed the need for the United Nations to ensure that contracts under Iraq's 'oil-for-food' programme signed before the United States' military action are honoured.

India is among the countries, which were in the process of executing the contracts signed by the Saddam Hussein Government and approved by the United Nations when the war broke out.

The programme, now being implemented by the United Nations, is to be phased within six months and the money remaining in the "oil for food" programme would be transferred to the Iraq Development Fund which would be run by the United States-led coalition.



The External Affairs Minister, Yashwant Sinha, greeted by the United Nations Secretary-General, Kofi Annan, at the U.N. headquarters in New York on Tuesday. India's permanent representative to the U.N., Vijay Nambiar (centre), is also seen. — AP

The United Nations is now deciding the priority of items that Iraq needs to import. Once the programme is phased out, it would be for the occupying powers to decide how and where to spend the money and oil revenues, which too are to be deposited in the development fund.

Mr. Annan briefed Mr. Sinha on the work being done by the United Nations and his special envoy to help the Iraqi people including at humanitarian level. The United Nations is prepared to participate in the political process, Mr. Annan told the Minister. At present, the United Nations' activities are limited

mostly to humanitarian tasks and the United States and Britain are trying to assemble an Iraqi interim government. The two also discussed Afghanistan where, Mr. Annan said, the security environment is deteriorating and he stressed the need of ensuring stability and security. — PTI

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Global court exemption for U.S. renewed

UNITED NATIONS, JUNE 13. The United States won a new year-long exemption for American peacekeepers from prosecution by the new International War Crimes Tribunal on Thursday, but was warned by the European Union, including close ally Britain, that it should not expect permanent exemption.

Unlike last year, when an initial one-year exemption received unanimous Security Council backing at the end of a bitter battle, this year the United States faced opposition from France, Germany, Syria and the U.N. Secretary-General, Kofi Annan.

The final vote was 12-0, with France, Germany and Syria abstaining on grounds that the International Criminal

Court provide sufficient safeguards for all peacekeepers and there is no need for a special U.S. exemption. France, a permanent Council member, chose not to use its veto.

Last week, the U.S. warned the E.U. that its criticism over the exemption request was further straining the bitter trans-Atlantic division over the war against Iraq. France and Germany were at the forefront of opposition to the U.S.-led war and strongly support the court.

The court will prosecute cases of genocide, war crimes and crimes against humanity committed after July 1, 2002, but will step in only when countries are unwilling or unable to dispense justice themselves. It is the culmination of a

campaign for a permanent war crimes tribunal that began with the Nuremberg trials after World War II.

The Clinton administration signed the 1988 Rome Treaty establishing the court, but the Bush administration rescinded the U.S. signature.

The U.S. argues the court could be used for frivolous or politically motivated prosecution of American troops.

In addition to seeking the U.N. exemption, Washington has also signed bilateral agreements with 37 countries not to prosecute American officials — and is seeking more.

After Thursday's vote, U.S. deputy ambassador, James Cunningham, called the court "a fatally flawed institution" and

made clear that the U.S. will seek to continue the one-year exemptions. He insisted the U.N. resolution adhere to international law.

"We have heard the arguments that this resolution is not necessary, and we do not agree," Mr. Cunningham said. "I would suggest that even one instance of the ICC attempting to exercise jurisdiction over those involved in a U.N. operation would have a seriously damaging impact on future U.N. operations."

"We are disappointed, of course, that not every Council member shares our view but we are not at all persuaded that our concerns are overstated or lack validity," he said. — AP

14 JUN 2003

India, China working on CBMs

By Amit Baruah

NEW DELHI, MAY 22. India and China are working on a set of confidence-building measures (not related to the Line of Actual Control) that could be agreed upon during the upcoming visit of the Prime Minister, Atal Behari Vajpayee, to Beijing.

Mr. Vajpayee's visit has still not been officially announced, but it could be in the third week of June.

Official sources said the CBMs were expected to provide substance to the Prime Minister's visit. The two countries are also expected to sign three or four agreements, including one on visas.

However, the sources are sceptical about the exchange of maps on the crucial western sector of the Line of Actual Control before the Prime Minister's visit.

"If the Chinese want to send a positive signal, they should not block the exchange of maps in this sector," the sources said expressing frustration with the approach adopted by Beijing on the issue.

After the last meeting of the Joint Working Group (JWG) in November 2002 in New Delhi failed to resolve the issue

of exchange of maps, an expert group meeting was to have been held in January 2003. The meeting has still not taken place. Obviously, the two sides have hit a difficult obstacle in the path of clarifying their positions in the western sector.

The sources also said that yet another positive indicator would be if the Chinese side took steps towards recognising Arunachal Pradesh as part of India. "The Chinese lay claim to the entire State of Arunachal Pradesh. Arunachal is a part of India. The Chinese must recognise this reality," they maintained.

In their official position, as posted on the website of the Chinese Foreign Ministry, Beijing holds: "In February 1987, India established the so-called Arunachal Pradesh in its illegally occupied Chinese territories south of the McMahon Line. The Chinese side made solemn statements on many occasions that China would never recognise the illegal McMahon Line and the so-called Arunachal Pradesh, and demanded that India withdraw all its military personnel who have crossed the border line and set up guard posts in Chinese territories."

Clearly, the two sides remain far apart

on crucial questions relating to their boundary dispute like Arunachal Pradesh even as they have made strenuous efforts to ensure that this dispute does not come in the way of improved bilateral relations.

In his book, *Protracted Contest*, John W. Garver writes: "If the Sino-Indian territorial dispute is to be solved peacefully through negotiations, the solution must come from the very highest level.

"The top leaders of China and India will have to decide that, simply in order to reduce the possibility of war between the two countries, they must reach an agreement and then impose it on their respective countries.

"When they agree to do this and proceed to draw a line on a map, they will probably need to keep their specialists on the border issue out of the room — their soldiers and strategists too."

Fifteen years after India and China began discussing their boundary dispute, tranquillity and the absence of incident are to be welcomed. But the two countries appear to be far away from reconciling their differences and in approaching a final settlement.

2 MAY 2003

INDIA

Delhi for UN-mandated troops in Iraq

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Nilova Roy Chaudhury
in New Delhi

April 13. — Baghdad and many parts of Iraq may have descended into chaos and looting, with no functional administration after the collapse of the Saddam Hussein regime, but India favours a swift withdrawal of the US-led coalition forces from that country. And, it would prefer the deployment of a multi-lateral force, mandated by the United Nations, to replace the coalition forces at the earliest, South Block sources indicated.

Officials explained that while that did not mean the coalition troops should leave immediately (as they will not), a proposal could be made to gradually take in multi-lateral troops into Iraq before the coalition forces withdraw, as soon as "within some weeks". Unlike in Afghanistan, India would not be averse to taking part in such a force in Iraq.

UN peacekeepers ("blue hats") are normally sent in to maintain peace once it has been established in a war zone. But in recent times, the UN has

modified this mandate to include peacemaking as one of the functions of the UN's "blue hats", including in Kosovo and Sierra Leone, where they have been required to make peace between warring factions.

Though Iraq is not Kosovo, officials were quick to point out that a UN-mandated force would carry greater legitimacy among Arab countries, specially among dissident groups that have the support of one or the other of Iraq's neighbouring countries like Syria and Iran.

The unanimous resolution adopted by Parliament earlier

this week sought the immediate end to hostilities and the withdrawal of coalition forces from Iraq.

The US President, Mr George W Bush, and the British Prime Minister, Mr Tony Blair, have said they favour a more "vital" role for multi-lateral agencies, "including the UN" in Iraq. This, according to observers, could mean the deployment of UN peacekeepers, and not merely a role in reconstruction efforts for war-ravaged Iraq.

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multi-lateral force**

14 APR 2003

THE STATESMAN