

Gorshkov sinks navy's pride

SUJAN DUTTA

New Delhi, Dec. 3: The voyage of the Gorshkov to Indian shores is in jeopardy even before it could be made seaworthy.

Top echelons of the defence ministry were red-faced after Russia last night issued a denial to the claim made by the chief of the Indian Navy, Admiral Madhvendra Singh, that the deal to buy the aircraft carrier Admiral Gorshkov had been clinched. But Delhi still claims the differences are minor and were being ironed out.

Within hours of the navy chief announcing that India had negotiated the price of the Gorshkov for less than Rs 3,000 crore — which he described as a “very good price” — the Russian defence ministry said in a late night statement that “the final amount of the contract, as well as issues pertaining to the supply of foreign origin weapon systems and changes required in the ship’s systems for their integration, are yet to be resolved”.

In a report from Moscow late on Tuesday night, PTI quoted a Russian defence ministry source as saying: “The proposal of the Indian partners for fitting a third-party air defence system on the ship was to an extent a surprise for the Russian side, as it would inevitably create the problem of its operational compatibility with the battleship’s combat systems.”

Delhi, however, still believes that the negotiation of the price has been completed. A spokesman for the ministry of defence said “price negotiations have been completed in a comprehensive manner” to buy the 44,500-tonne carrier.

The spokesman said the differences that remained were “minor” and could be resolved before the signing of the contract. Moreover, it would take an estimated 52 weeks for the ship to be refitted to Indian demands and changes could be carried out even then.

MONDAY, NOVEMBER 17, 2003

REAFFIRMING A PARTNERSHIP

INDIA AND RUSSIA took a step towards re-establishing multipolarity in international politics by reaffirming their longstanding strategic partnership during the visit of Prime Minister Atal Bihari Vajpayee. This is of special relevance in an international context in which the United States has exploited concerns over the menace of terrorism to further its hegemonistic ambitions. The two countries signalled that they would not allow the U.S. to harness their resources for the achievement of this aim. In insisting that the fight against terrorism should be based on rules of international law and the Charter of the United Nations, they distanced themselves from Washington's policy of tacking the terrorist label on to a country that it wants to attack for other reasons. The two countries refrained from any pointed criticism of U.S. actions in Iraq even as they left no doubt that they wanted a swift end to the illegal occupation. They proposed that a concrete and time-bound action plan be drawn up under the aegis of the U.N. so that Iraq's sovereignty could be restored as early as possible. While India had not subscribed to Washington's policy on the issue, it had refrained from lining up with Russia and other countries that were firmly opposed. Mr. Vajpayee hinted at a preparedness to shed this inhibition by making oblique references to the positions taken by two sets of "big countries". The Prime Minister reiterated the point that given its own requirements and interests, India had no troops to spare for deployment in Iraq and his statement should end all speculation on this matter.

The two countries opposed Washington's tendency to concentrate the 'global campaign against terror' solely on manifestations of what concerned it. They insisted that the campaign against terror should be uniform, comprehensive, continuous and multi-faceted. They urged

that confidence be built among members of the anti-terror coalition by giving due consideration to the interests of each of them. Russia agreed with India's view that Pakistan must stop cross-border terrorism and dismantle the terrorist infrastructure on territory under its control before a meaningful dialogue could be started. At the same time, it expressed appreciation and support for the Vajpayee Government's peace initiative and called on Pakistan to respond positively. In the process President Vladimir Putin put to rest the speculation that he had evolved a new formulation on the Kashmir issue after talks with his Pakistani counterpart a few weeks ago. In turn, India reiterated its support for Russia's efforts to protect its territorial integrity and constitutional order in Chechnya.

The strategic partnership between India and Russia was kept intact even as the international order underwent a tremendous transformation at the end of the Cold War. The two countries have also discovered that their enduring ties have a new relevance. However, content has to be added to the partnership if it is to realise its full potential in the international arena. Linkages in the field of defence are not likely to atrophy at any time in the near future as Russia is by far the preferred source for India's military purchases. A serious effort to boost scientific exchanges was made during the Prime Minister's visit, with the two countries considering plans for cooperation in the exploration of Outer Space. However, the lack of progress towards the enhancement of economic ties is a matter of concern. Both Governments appear to have realised that an economic relationship based on trade in select commodities does not have much of a future. They need to encourage their business houses to invest in the economy of the other so as to give the political relationship a firmer footing.

THE HINDU

17 NOV 2003

17 NOV 2003

17 NOV 2003

MOSCOW MINUET

598 Messages and the message 1611

AMONG the routine messages emanating from Prime Minister Vajpayee's trip to Moscow — reiteration of a "strategic" partnership and cooperation in trade and defence — there was one specific message. It registers disenchantment with the US approach towards the war on terror which is "unilateralist" and replete with "double standards", and called for a multilateral approach towards global security and other problems where the UN would play a central role. American unilateralism is on its last legs in Iraq, with President Bush now looking for ways to declare victory and pull out before his chances of re-election in November 2004 are damaged beyond repair — one has to be willing to adjust and adapt to new circumstances on the ground, is the latest word from Scott McClellan, spokesman for the White House. Delhi and Moscow are not breaking startlingly fresh ground by suggesting that Bush-style unilateralism is headed for disaster. But there is cause for concern, shared by both Delhi and Moscow, about the fallout from the failed strategy: whether it is — in the words of defence secretary Rumsfeld's leaked memo — creating more terrorists than it is destroying.

In general, it is evident that Delhi-Moscow ties continue in their usual mould rather than marking out fresh territory. One possible departure is that the economic aspect will receive a fillip with the inclusion of a hundred businessmen in Vajpayee's retinue. Two-way trade between the nations came to \$1.87 billion in the first seven months this year, not high given that the Russian economy is growing at a rapid clip under Putin's stewardship. In recent times Delhi has realised the importance of trade and investment ties in diplomacy, and it is only fitting that relations with an old ally should have its economic dimension. Certain other agreements arrived at should be lucrative for Moscow — for instance the assistance to Delhi for a mission to the moon, Delhi's need for one being stimulated by Beijing's latest space exploits. The latter was made possible by Russian help, paid for in hard currency; more of the same will, no doubt, have to be forthcoming for Delhi. Talks were also advanced on the Admiral Gorshkov, an ageing and mothballed aircraft carrier which Delhi does not need, but whose sale is tied to the leasing of Tu-22 supersonic bombers and Akula-class nuclear submarines, which Delhi does want. In short, it's business as usual between the two capitals.

THE STATESMAN

16 NOV 2003

Russia reassures old friend on new links

BHARAT BHUSHAN

Moscow, Nov. 13: Prime Minister Atal Bihari Vajpayee described the strategic partnership between Russia and India as "being aware of each other's concerns, tackling them with wisdom... and a desire to work together".

The two countries demonstrated this by strengthening their traditional economic, science and technology, defence and space ties during the Indian Prime Minister's visit. They also demonstrated their commonality of view in dealing with regional and international issues in a detailed joint statement. They declared they were convinced that their strategic partnership had "served as a factor in global peace and security".

Russia more than lived up to

the definition of Vajpayee about being sensitive to each other's concerns. It came out in unequivocal support of the Indian position that there can be no purposeful dialogue with Pakistan until Islamabad implements its assurance "in full" to prevent "the infiltration of terrorists across the Line of Control in the state of Jammu and Kashmir and at other points across the border".

That this was the basic prerequisite for peace in South Asia was listed clearly in the joint statement issued at the end of Vajpayee's visit to Russia.

This sets at rest speculation that increased contact between Russia and Pakistan of late should have India worried. Nothing has changed in the Russian position on Pakistan for any misgivings on India's part — this

was the message that both countries sought to convey today.

The joint statement also said that purposeful dialogue between the two neighbours is possible only when Islamabad "dismantles the terrorist infrastructure in Pakistan and Pakistan-controlled territory". The basic framework for the dialogue, it said, was envisaged in the Simla Agreement of 1972 and the Lahore Declaration of 1999.

The Russian federation has also come out in open support of Vajpayee's initiatives of April and October 2003, which have resulted in the return of Pakistani and Indian high com-

missioners in the respective countries, the restoration of the Delhi-Lahore-Delhi bus service and increased people-to-people contact.

At the same time, Russia also supported the steps taken by India in combating terrorism in Jammu and Kashmir. India, too, was aware of Russian worries and vulnerabilities when in turn it reiterated its support to the measures taken by Moscow in Chechnya.

While recognising terrorism as a major menace being faced by the international community, in the joint statement the two sides noted "with deep concern the growing transnational link-

ages of terrorist organisations and also the role of transborder organised crime and illicit trade in arms and drugs in supporting terrorism, particularly by financial means".

The two countries have demanded action under UN resolutions dealing with the issue "against those who aid and abet terrorism across borders, harbour and provide sanctuary to terrorists and provide them with financial means, training or patronage". Such international action against terrorism, they said, "cannot be selective, but has to be uniform, comprehensive, continuous and multifaceted".

The two sides said in the statement that they were convinced that their strategic partnership had served as a factor in global peace and security and reaffirmed their commitment to

cooperate bilaterally and at international fora for a more representative multipolar world. Such a world order, they said, would be based on "sovereign equality of all states, their territorial integrity and non-interference in their internal affairs".

There was also a complete understanding on the importance and centrality of the UN for preserving world security and stability. They declared "their opposition to unilateral use or threat of force in violation of the UN charter" while emphasising the need to strengthen the UN system further.

On its part, while arguing for expansion of the Security Council, Russia "reaffirmed its support to India as a deserving and strong candidate for the permanent membership of the UN Security Council".



Vajpayee in Moscow on Thursday. (PTI)

in turn it reiterated its support to the measures taken by Moscow in Chechnya.

While recognising terrorism as a major menace being faced by the international community, in the joint statement the two sides noted "with deep concern the growing transnational link-

PM sees sky as the limit for Indo-Russian relations

Press Trust of India

MOSCOW, Nov. 13 — "Sky is the limit" for the strategic partnership and cooperation between India and Russia, Prime Minister Mr Atal Behari Vajpayee said today, adding that the friendship between the countries has become a "stabilising force" in the changed world scenario.

The friendship has remained unchanged in spite of economic problems and political instability, Mr Vajpayee told members of the Indian community at a reception here. His previous visit was in 2001 for the Summit meeting with President Vladimir Putin but then he had hardly expected that he would be back so soon, he said. "Maybe, I am sticking to my post for too long," he said in a lighter vein but quickly added that relations with Russia were not linked to any posts.

His discussion centred on issues including of defence, science, space, in-

dustry and trade. "Our friendship is called strategic partnership," Mr Vajpayee said.

External affairs minister Mr Yashwant Sinha today termed Pakistani information minister Sk Rashid's comment on Prime Minister Mr AB Vajpayee as reflective of his "class".

Mr Rashid had said that he did not know Mr Vajpayee was heard of hearing. He had made the remark after Mr Vajpayee denied that Mr Rashid had verbally invited him to attend the Saarc summit in Islamabad in January after shaking hands with him at the Saarc information ministers conference in New Delhi on Monday.

Mr Sinha said "this shows his class and the class of Pakistani politicians in general".]

India had no desire to match Pakistani politicians in their behaviour but would like them to know that "we hear clearly and speak clearly," he said.

THE STATESMAN

14 NOV 2003

RUSSIA BACKS INDIA'S STAND ON PAKISTAN

Call to end double standards in war against terrorism

Quoted
Summa

By Amit Baruah and
Vladimir Radyuhin

MOSCOW, NOV. 12. India and Russia today called for giving up "double standards" in the war against terrorism and proposed a "consistent and uncompromising" approach in tackling the menace.

In a declaration signed by the Prime Minister, Atal Bihari Vajpayee, and the Russian President, Vladimir Putin, the two countries said a "concrete and time-bound" action plan under the aegis of the United Nations should be adopted for the "earliest restoration" of Iraq's sovereignty. A key agreement on cooperation in space research, which includes Russian assistance in an Indian lunar mission, was among the 10 accords signed in the Kremlin this afternoon after detailed talks between the two leaders.

The Foreign Secretary, Kanwal Sibal, told presspersons that Russia had backed to the hilt the Indian position on Pakistan — by reiterating that an end to cross-border terrorism and the dismantling of the terrorist infrastructure in Pakistan was a pre-requisite for a purposeful dialogue.

In brief remarks to the press, the Russian President welcomed the recent initiative taken by Mr. Vajpayee to improve relations with Pakistan. Mr. Putin also said the Indian and Russian approaches to international problems "practically coincide".

The two countries were also unanimous that serious results in resolving international problems could only be attained through collective action on the part of the United Nations, he added.

Mr. Vajpayee announced that India and Russia had agreed to increase the frequency of air connections between the two countries. "Russian airlines are also being granted fifth freedom rights to Kabul from India subject to the agreement of the Afghan Government," he said.

"India-Russia defence cooperation has acquired great versatility, and encompasses a wide range of joint research, design, development and co-production. The fifth successful trial launch of the BrahMos missile a few days ago is an example of this. We discussed other projects and areas of defence cooperation," the Prime Minister said.

In a quantum jump for the Indo-Russian strategic partnership, the two countries agreed to coordinate positions on key global issues by issuing the detailed Declaration on Global Challenges and Threats to World Security and Stability. Defence, space and science and technology were described as the "building blocks" of the bilateral strategic partnership by Mr. Sibal.

By emphasising the need to give up "double standards" in the war against terrorism, Russia has agreed to an Indian formulation on the issue and sent a "joint" message to the Western world on counter-terrorism.

They also called for the promotion of confidence among members of the anti-terrorist coalition by giving due consideration to the interests of each one of them and ensuring that the fight against terrorism was based on "rules of international law and the U.N. Charter".

India and Russia favoured the effective implementation of the U.N. Security Council Resolution 1373 aimed against "those" who support, fund, or abet terrorists or provide them shelter or asylum to engage in cross-border terrorism.

On the Israeli-Palestinian conflict, the two countries called for the "prevention of the failure of the roadmap" to settle the problem. Any failure of the roadmap, backed by the quartet of Russia, the United States, the United Nations and the European Union, may result in the situation in Israel and Palestine, as also the entire West Asia, spiralling beyond control.

Supporting the efforts of the transitional Afghan Government in bringing peace and stability to the country, the declaration said it was important that the time-frame envisaged in the Bonn Agreement was adhered to. "India and the Russian Federation strongly believe that Afghanistan should emerge as a peaceful, strong, prosperous, united and independent nation that would be free from external interference and living in peace and harmony with its neighbours," it stressed.

Both nations favoured the efforts of the "countries concerned" and the international community for a peaceful settlement of the nuclear issue on the Korean peninsula and maintaining its non-nuclear status.

"India and the Russian Federation affirm that the future international order based on multipolarity should be determined by collective and multilateral processes rather than unilateral ones," it said.

More reports on Page 11

BHARAT BHUSHAN

Moscow, Nov. 12: Russia and India are keen to enhance cooperation in the field of sensitive civilian technologies.

In a step in that direction, India is to collaborate with Russia on the design and fabrication of its satellite navigation system called the Global Navigation Sputnik System or Glonass.

The Indian Space Research Organisation and the Russian aviation and space agency, Rosaviakosmos, today signed a memorandum of understanding for the exploration and use of outer space for peaceful purposes. This is one of the most significant of a raft of agreements signed between the two countries to deepen their cooperation.

Russia has apparently also shown some interest in assisting India with its proposed lunar

mission. However, nothing more than a showing of "interest in principle" by Russia should be read into it, foreign secretary Kanwal Sibal said.

India's involvement in Glonass is significant because it is a rival to the US Global Positioning System (GPS) and, like it, is under military control.

The only civilian system to do the same job commercially as the GPS and the Glonass is being put into place in Europe — the Galileo global satellite system.

India is expected to be a stakeholder of about \$300 million in the Galileo system and this issue is scheduled to figure in the EU-India summit in New Delhi at the end of this month. The Galileo, a joint venture be-

tween the EU and the European Space Agency, is expected to outperform the American GPS.

Global navigation satellite systems have been described as virtually the Internet of global navigation and are used for mobile telephony, air traffic control and surveillance and almost invariably have a military aspect.

The agreement signed between India and Russia today, however, deals only with cooperation for the peaceful uses of outer space.

In the field of sensitive civilian technologies, the two sides also discussed the ongoing Russian assistance in the construction of two 1,000-mega watt each nuclear reactors for generating electricity at the Kudankulam

Nuclear Power Plant in Tamil Nadu. The first plant is already operational and the second one will go on line in December 2007.

The fuel for the reactors — uranium enriched to about 4 per cent — is supplied by Russia and will be returned to it after it is burned.

Russia has been under pressure from the Nuclear Suppliers Group (NSG) not to assist India in this filed as it refuses to accept full-scope safeguards. Such safeguards would require a detailed accounting of the nuclear fuels in all Indian nuclear installations by the Vienna-based International Atomic Energy Agency. Delhi does not accept full-scope safeguards — preferring only facility-specific ones.

India, Russia plot space path

The question of continuing access to nuclear material and technology is of significant interest to India given its burgeoning energy demand. "There is considerable scope for Indo-Russian cooperation in this area provided the problems that we all know exist can be overcome," Sibal said.

Russia is a member of the NSG and keen on selling civilian nuclear reactors to India. It justifies its assistance to Kudankulam on the ground that it joined the NSG in 1992 after the deal was signed in 1988. But if it desires to sell more nuclear power reactors to India, it needs to overcome the NSG's objections. For this, Russia needs to successfully solicit the help of other mem-

bers of the NSG to make an exception in the case of India.

India is not known to have been involved in any transfer of sensitive technologies to third countries. However, just exactly when at came out of today's discussions on cooperation in the field of nuclear energy was not known.

The other agreements signed today were on scientific cooperation and exchange between the department of science and technology and the Russian Academy of Sciences; for setting up a centre for gas hydrate studies and another on earthquake research; on cooperation between the Indian National Science Academy and its Russian counterpart; for regional cooperation between Tartaristan and Andhra Pradesh; for facilitating export credit and for seeing that steps recommended in the past for enhancing economic cooperation are speedily implemented.

Moscow message on day of massacre

quote from

Atal, Putin warning to US

BHARAT BHUSHAN

Moscow, Nov. 12: Laying out the roadmap of their evolving strategic partnership, Indian and Russia today argued for shunning "double standards" in fighting terrorism, giving due consideration to the interests of each member of the international coalition against terrorism and following international law in dealing with the terrorist menace.

If there were niggling doubts in anyone's mind about a section of the Indian establishment hoping against hope to somehow cosy up to the sole superpower, the US, they were given a burial today. Russia and India waved the flag of a multi-polar and pluralistic world order. Anything else was seen as unjust and, therefore, likely to be ineffective.

The building blocks of the Indo-Russian strategic partnership were not seen only in the growing cooperation in defence, science, high technology and commerce. The clear community of interests and a shared vision of regional and international issues were emphasised as the most vital component of the relationship. The India-Russia joint declaration on global challenges and threats to world security and stability signed by Prime Minister Atal Bihari Vajpayee and President Vladimir Putin is, therefore, an important milestone in



AB Vajpayee and Vladimir Putin in Moscow on Wednesday. (AFP)

emphasising the core values that underscore the ties between the two countries. The major global challenges were identified as international terrorism, transnational organised crime, illicit drug trafficking, money laundering, aspects of globalisation that tend to erode pluralism, and environment and development. Dialogue, consultation and cooperation alone could promote global peace and security, the two countries noted.

They argued that only by

preserving pluralism in all its aspects would a multipolar world become possible. Therefore, the declaration said, there should be no place for extremist ideology and intolerance.

The two countries vowed to "resist with their full might all forms of terrorism, including religious extremism, which has proved to be a hotbed of terrorism in their common neighbourhood". The significance of the declaration does not lie in the detailed listing of the litany of com-

plaints against the US the two countries share. Its importance lies, as Putin pointed out, in defining "the major direction of the interaction between the two countries in the international arena in the twenty-first century".

After signing the declaration, Putin said that since one of the most dangerous trends of modern times was terrorism, the two countries "were working together to elaborate the international legal basis of anti-terrorism cooperation".

Russia's approach, he said, was that in dealing with a majority of international problems, "serious results can be obtained through coordinated and collective action with a central role being played by the UN".

The declaration echoed these sentiments by stressing the vital role of the UN and affirming that "the future international order based on multipolarity should be determined by collective and multilateral processes rather than unilateral ones".

See Page 8

Italian blood soaks Iraq soil

Nassiriya, Nov. 12 (Reuters): A car bomb ripped through an Italian military police base here today, killing at least 17 Italians and eight Iraqis in what appeared to be a fresh suicide attack.

The attack came as President George W. Bush and Iraq's US governor Paul Bremer discussed ways to speed the handover of power to the Iraqis in a second day of talks in Washington.

The blast tore off the front of the three-storey concrete building used by the Carabinieri on the Euphrates riverfront, set cars on fire and sent a plume of black smoke into the air.

"A truck crashed into the entrance of the military police unit, closely followed by a car which detonated," a spokesman for the British-led multinational force in southern Iraq said.

Italian defence minister Antonio Martino said the Italian dead were 11 Carabinieri military police personnel, four soldiers and two civilians — Italy's highest military death toll since World War II.

Khudair al-Hazbar, the director of Nassiriya General Hospital, said at least eight Iraqis were killed and more than 80 wounded.

One of the wounded was a one-year-old child who lost his eyes and nose. "He will die for sure," Hazbar said.

Ambulances and fire engines rushed to the scene with sirens

wailing. The explosion shattered windows hundreds of metres away, and houses near the base were badly damaged.

"The front of my house is destroyed," Jamal Kadhim Shwail, a doctor who lives near the base, said on telephone. "I have just come back from the hospital where I operated on my own two daughters. It was a huge explosion. We are all in shock."

Martino said fighters loyal to Saddam Hussein were behind the attack.

"Evidence on the ground and intelligence reports lead us to believe that today's attack was planned and carried out by remnants loyal to Saddam... united with Arab extremists," he said.

The bombing, described by Pope John Paul as a "vile attack" against a mission of peace, was the bloodiest single attack in Iraq since August when at least 80 Iraqis were killed by a car bomb outside a mosque in Najaf. The Italian deaths were the first among non-British members of the southern multinational force in hostile fire.

Around 2,300 Italian troops are in southern Iraq, many based in Nassiriya which had been relatively calm since the war. Italian and Romanian forces in the city, part of the British-led force, have been generally well received by locals.

Italian Prime Minister Silvio Berlusconi said the troops would stay.

See Page 4

Help evolve multipolar world: PM

By Amit Baruah

MOSCOW, NOV. 12. India and Russia have a common interest in the evolution of a multipolar world based on a "cooperative security order", the Prime Minister, Atal Bihari Vajpayee, said in an address to the Russian Academy of Sciences today.

"We are both opposed to unilateralism in international matters," the Prime Minister said, pointing out that the Indo-Russian relationship was unaffected by the tumultuous changes that had taken place in the world.

Visualising a bright future for India-Russia relations, the Prime Minister, however made it clear that the two countries should not rest on "past laurels" since this would lead to "stagnation" and must strengthen the economic basis of their relationship.

Mr. Vajpayee said there were no divisive issues in the bilateral relationship. "Neither India nor Russia perceives a threat from the strength of the other. On the contrary, each sees a benefit for itself in the increased political and economic strength of the other."

"This is best illustrated by Russia's public and unambiguous support to India's permanent membership of the United Nations Security Council," Mr. Vajpayee said. The Indo-Russian "strategic partnership" was a reliable factor in promoting peace, security and stability both in Asia and the world.

"The fundamental factor behind the stability of Indo-Russian ties is the sensitivity both countries show to each other's concerns, including security concerns."

Deeply appreciative of Russia's support and strong support to India's campaign against terrorism, Mr. Vajpayee said this phenomenon posed a threat to the entire civilised world.

"Specifically, it is threatening the unity,

territorial integrity and sovereignty of both India and Russia. President Putin minced no words in his address to the Indian Parliament three years ago, when he said the same individuals, the same terrorist and extremist organisations are involved in terrorist acts from the Philippines to Kosovo, including in Kashmir, Afghanistan and Chechnya," he said.

Mr. Vajpayee pointed out that the two countries had established a sound legal basis and a useful institutional mechanism for cooperation in the "struggle" against international terrorism.

Pointing to the less than desired progress in economic cooperation, the Prime Minister said there was a need to convert the extraordinary goodwill between India and Russia into a thriving, visible, vigorous and mutually beneficial economic relationship. "In this endeavour, we need to show both innovation and a sense of urgency."

Calling for a synergy between scientific endeavours and business enterprises of the two countries, Mr. Vajpayee recalled that India's pharmaceutical industry, recognised the world over today, was established "largely through our bilateral cooperation with Russia several decades ago".

"I see no reason why such an example cannot be emulated in the widest possible range of opportunities that can be identified in regular interaction between the Academy and its partner institutions in India," he said, adding that the India-made PARAM supercomputer was being used at the Academy's Institute for Computer-Aided Design.

Scientific exchanges

Mr. Vajpayee said the Integrated Long Term Programme (ILTP) in science and technology was one of the most elaborate

programmes in the world — over 2,500 scientific exchanges had taken place during its 15-year existence.

"Keeping with the challenges of modern times, our scientific cooperation now extends to frontier areas of scientific research including bio-technology, informatics, nano technology, environmental protection, drugs and development of new materials. This is in addition to the traditional areas of cooperation in space, atomic energy and defence technologies," he said.

It was a matter of pride that more than 1,400 Russian scholars and students were studying Hindi in Russia, he said. "Perhaps in no other foreign language has so much of great Indian literature, both ancient and modern, been translated as in Russian."

"One thing is certain. The tree of our friendship does not have its roots in the thin top soil of politics and ideology. For it has continued to grow in spite of the political upheavals and structural changes in our two countries."

Leo Tolstoy had an immense influence on Mahatma Gandhi in his early years in South Africa, Rabindranath Tagore was widely revered in Russia, Mr. Vajpayee said, adding a long list of Russians who had excelled in Indian studies.

"Nikolai Roerich, one of the greatest painters in the 20th century, not only travelled to India, but also made the Himalayas his home. His older son and fellow-explorer George Roerich has left behind scholarly work on Tibetan Buddhism. Next year marks the birth centenary of his younger son, Svetoslav Roerich, the great artist who lived in Bangalore.

"We are taking steps to restore his beautiful estate and turn it into a befitting cultural park. We are planning to establish an International Roerich Art School in India," he said.

India, Russia plan unmanned moon mission

By Amit Baruah and Vladimir Radyuhin

MOSCOW, NOV. 12. Joint space research is emerging as a thrust area of Indo-Russian cooperation in science and technology, with India and Russia agreeing to pool efforts for an unmanned space mission to the moon and the setting up of a space navigation system.

A memorandum of understanding signed today between ISRO and the Russian Aviation and Space Agency, Rosaviakosmos, on the sidelines of the Prime Minister, Atal Bihari Vajpayee's visit to Russia, calls for massive Russian input in ISRO's moon mission programme.

India and Russia would join hands to develop new missile boosters and space probes, the Rosaviakosmos chief said after the signing ceremony in the Kremlin. Russia will throw open for India, Soviet experience in

lunar expeditions, the head of Rosaviakosmos, Yuri Koptev, told *The Hindu*. The Soviet Union was the first to send automatic probes to the moon, photograph its back side, and to bring lunar rock probes to the earth, even though the United States was later the first to land a man on the moon.

Russia has also agreed to help India to construct space antennas and build electrical rocket engines needed for lunar missions. In the next six months the two sides will identify specific aspects and the format of cooperation in the lunar programme and update an intergovernmental agreement on space cooperation signed earlier.

Our cooperation would not be a buyer-seller relationship, but full-fledged partnership in joint development and construction of space hardware, Mr. Koptev said. He praised the high level of the Indian space

programme.

The Indian ambition of sending an automatic probe to the moon was quite a realistic goal, the Rosaviakosmos chief noted. India had a better array of communication satellites in orbit and far more powerful earth monitoring satellites than Russia had. Rosaviakosmos would probably put some Russian scientific instruments aboard the Indian moon-bound rocket.

India will also take part in upgrading the Russian global space navigation system Glonass. The MoU provides for joint fabrication and launch of navigation satellites.

In another breakthrough for Indo-Russian cooperation in science and technology the two sides agreed to set up two joint research centres in India. A centre for gas hydrate studies will be established in Chennai and an earthquake research centre will open in Delhi.

Vajpayee, Putin hold informal talks

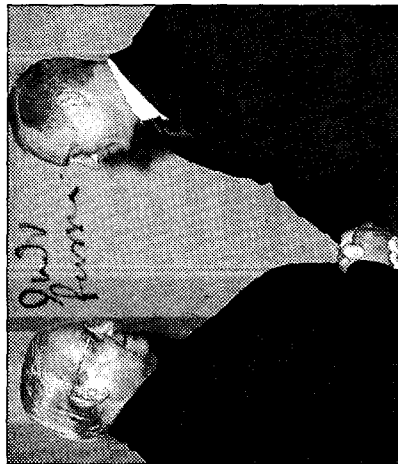
M.K. Razdan
MOSCOW 11 NOVEMBER

SEEKING to build on India's strategic partnership with Russia, Prime Minister Atal Behari Vajpayee on Tuesday held informal talks with President Vladimir Putin shortly after arriving in Moscow to a red carpet welcome. In an honour reserved only for a select few world leaders, Mr Putin hosted a private dinner for Mr Vajpayee at Novoo Gareva dacha located in a sprawling forest area, 15 kms outside this capital city.

External affairs minister Yashwant Sinha and Prime Minister's principal secretary Brajesh Mishra were present at the dinner. The 78-year old Indian leader and Mr Putin, 27 years younger, greeted each other warmly at the dacha before the informal talks in the presence of only the interpreters.

No official word was available on the discussions as the formal summit talks are scheduled on Wednesday when as many as 10 agreements and a joint declaration on global challenges posed by issues such as terrorism will be signed.

Landing at Vunkovo airport on a breezy cold evening after an eight-hour flight that avoided Pakistani airspace, Mr Vajpayee was received by Russian deputy prime minister Boris Alyoshin and deputy foreign minister Alexander Losyukov, sen-



Old Friends: Prime Minister Atal Behari Vajpayee and Russian President Vladimir Putin during their meeting at Novo-Ogaryovo residence outside Moscow on Tuesday. — AP

Gorshkov deal unlikely

MOSCOW
11 NOVEMBER

A deal for the purchase of Russian aircraft carrier Admiral Gorshkov by the Indian navy is unlikely to be signed during Prime Minister Atal Behari Vajpayee's trip to Russia.

India and Russia are still discussing the specifics of the deal and it may take a little more time to finalise it, a top Indian official said here on Tuesday night on condition of anonymity. India is in talks with Russia for quite some time for the acquisition of the 44,000-tonne aircraft carrier as well as other defence equipment.

ior officials and the Indian ambassador K. Raghunath. He inspected an inter-services ceremonial guard of honour on the tarmac as temperatures dipped to three degrees celsius. This is the fourth meeting between the two leaders in the last 12 months.

PTI

Russia's priority for economic ties

By Vladimir Radyuhin

MOSCOW, NOV. 11. India and Russia must assign top priority to bilateral economic ties in order to sustain their strategic partnership, a senior Russian diplomat said.

"India and Russia are strategic partners with a dynamic political agenda and strong defence ties, so the main task today is to give a powerful impulse to our economic cooperation which still falls far short of its potential," the First Deputy Foreign Minister, Vyacheslav Trubnikov, said in the run-up to the Indo-Russian summit talks in Moscow on Wednesday.

With Russia transiting from a centralised to market economy, and India making great economic strides in recent years, both sides should take a fresh

look at their trade and economic links to identify new opportunities, the Russian Minister said.

One such opportunity was investment in each other's economies, as had been showcased by ONGC-Videsh's \$1.7-billion involvement in Russia's Sakhalin-1 oil and gas project and the construction of two Russian nuclear reactors at Koodankulam. "There is also great scope for collaboration in science-intensive technologies," Mr. Trubnikov said.

Indo-Russian trade has stagnated at about \$1.5 billion in recent years, and fears have been voiced that it may fall even lower after India completes repaying the bulk of old Soviet rupee debts to Russia next year. Over the past 10 years rupee debt funds helped

finance more than 80 per cent of Indian exports to Russia.

However, Mr. Trubnikov does not share these concerns.

"The sooner we switch from rupees to dollars in our trade, the better," he said. "This would give a strong fillip to our ties."

What was needed today, was "aggressive advertising" to whet the appetite of Indian and Russian businessmen for market opportunities in our countries, the Minister said.

The FICCI president, A.C. Muthiah, who is in Moscow at the head of a 40-men business delegation, the biggest the FICCI has ever brought here, said his interactions with Russian businessmen encouraged him to predict a threefold growth in Indo-Russian trade to \$5 billion in two-three years.

PM's Moscow visit to yield 10 agreements and a joint statement

Srinjoy Chowdhury & Nilova Ray Chaudhury in New Delhi

Nov. 10. — Despite recent tie-ups with Britain, Israel and France, Russia is still India's strongest defence partner and on the eve of the Prime Minister's visit, deals amounting to more than \$2 billion are on the anvil.

During his visit, Mr Atal Behari Vajpayee will sign 10 agreements and will also issue a joint statement along with Russian President Mr Vladimir Putin. The two countries will also sign

a Declaration on Global Challenges relating to stability and security, foreign secretary Mr Kanwal Sibal said.

The "security" and military issues are not just about the acquisition of Admiral Gorshkov, the 44,000 ton aircraft carrier, and 16 MiG-29 aircraft for over \$1 billion. Negotiations for a number of other purchases too are going on.

■ The Army is looking at two regiments of Tunguska air-defence missiles. The Army has one regiment of

these highly mobile systems that fire both short-range missiles and guns. A Tunguska regiment is to protect an armoured division when moving into battle against helicopter-guns and warplanes. Once two more of these very expensive regiments are purchased, the strike corps will be safer as the Shilkas they are replacing are aging.

■ The Army wants Smerch multiple-launch rocket systems, a fearful weapon, from Russia. This is a more effective version of the GRAD and

the Indian-made Pinaka and has a range of 70 km, almost twice that of the Bofors gun. Besides, the T-90 tank deal has already been signed and the tanks are arriving.

■ The Gorshkov and the planes apart, the Navy is looking at four Tu-22 long-range marine reconnaissance aircraft that can be used as bombers. These are likely to be leased for a few years with the option to purchase them after that. So far, there is a delay, but partly because of internal issues on the Rus-

an side.

Talks on the joint development of the Fifth Generation Fighter are on. Air Chief Marshal S Krishnaswamy had recently visited Russia and the fighter is a frontline issue between the two air forces and research organisations. Besides, the Sukhoi-30 programme is continuing.

Mr Vajpayee's visit to Moscow is for the annual summit with Mr Vladimir Putin, who will be his host at a private dinner at a dacha and at a banquet. The first leg of his three-

nation week-long tour will see him spend three days in Moscow, also attempting to set in place institutional mechanisms that can take the bilateral economic relationship forward.

Impediments such as the Rs 2,792 crore outstanding debt in the rupee-rouble trade and inter-banking norms will be addressed, while agreements relating to cooperation in space, atomic energy, science and technology, earthquake research and joint publication of archives will be signed.

Anti-terror tips swap with Russia

PRANAY SHARMA

Q and A
Pranay
New Delhi, Sept. 28: A team of Indian experts is in Moscow to learn how the Russians quelled the siege of the Bolshoi Theatre by Chechen terrorists earlier this year. In their footsteps, a Russian team will arrive in Delhi to find out how the Indian forces handled the raid on Parliament two years ago.

These exchanges are part of a programme the two sides have agreed on for better coordination to deal with the threat of terrorism. On their return, the Indian experts will impart their experience and the lessons learnt from the Russians to commandos and other security personnel engaged in counter-terrorism.

"It is likely to be an interesting and educative experience for our experts as it will teach us not only how the Russians dealt with the siege of the Bolshoi Theatre, but also tell us about their mistakes which should be avoided in future," a foreign ministry official said.

India is also seeking special and sophisticated equipment from the Russians to fight terrorists more effectively.

These initiatives and plans will come up when the Joint Working Group on counter-terrorism meets in Moscow on September 29 for two days. But the main aim of the interaction is to gather more inputs for a meeting between the two sides on "global challenges".

The first meeting of the "global challenges" group — which was expanded from the Joint Working Group on Afghanistan — will be held in Delhi next month between for-

Gr-5 *25/9*
eign secretary Kanwal Sibal and Russian first deputy foreign minister Y. Trubnikov.

Officials in South Block pointed out that the scope of the Afghanistan group was expanded to accommodate developments in southeast Asia as well as Russia's interaction with the US and other major western countries like Britain, France and Germany.

One of the thrusts of the newly-formed group will be on terrorist camps and financing to outlawed groups. While closer interaction on the issue will help both sides coordinate their positions to deal effectively with the menace of terrorism, the main aim seems more political.

Russia is in a committee that will review the progress made by each country on the UN Security Council resolution 1373 passed in the wake of 9/11. Under the resolution, the member countries are supposed to submit reports on steps taken to deal with terrorists within their territories.

India wants to take this opportunity to put pressure on Pakistan by giving details about continuing terrorist camps on Pakistani soil and Islamabad's support and financing for the outlawed groups over the past two years.

Though the US and the international community have not done much yet to force Pakistan to dismantle the terror apparatus aimed at India, South Block officials feel Russia, as part of the review panel, can play a major role in exposing the double-speak of the Pervez Musharraf regime on terrorists.

Russia wants closer anti-terror ties with India

By Vladimir Radyuhin

MOSCOW, JUNE 4. Russia favours closer cooperation with India in the fight against terrorism, crime and drug trafficking, the Russian national security chief said. Speaking after two-day Indo-Russian consultations on international terrorism, global and regional security here today, the Russian Security Council Secretary, Vladimir Rushailo, said the two countries saw eye-to-eye on the fight against international terrorism, which linked up with religious extremism, cross-border organised crime and drug trafficking.

"We stand for further enhancing our cooperation in these fields," the *RIA Novosti*

news agency quoted Mr. Rushailo as saying. He said the Indo-Russian cooperation was "steadily progressing on the basis of shared long-term national and geopolitical interests of the two countries and common stand on key global and regional problems."

The Russian security chief cited recent "unprecedented" joint war games of the Indian and Russian navies in the Indian Ocean as an example of successful bilateral cooperation.

A Russian military source said the Indo-Russian joint war games will henceforth be held annually. The proposal came from the Indian side and was readily endorsed by Russians, the source told *RIA Novosti*.

THE HINDU

5 JUN 2003

Busy Putin to take time out for PM

By Manoj Joshi
TIMES NEWS NETWORK

St Petersburg: Prime Minister Atal Bihari Vajpayee arrived here on Friday evening on the second leg of his three-nation tour. Although he is here to celebrate the 300th year of the founding of this northern Russian city, he has important bilateral meetings. The most important ones are scheduled for Saturday with Russian President Vladimir Putin and Chinese leader Hu Jintao, the latter being significant because of the PM's upcoming official visit to China.

Given the veritable crush of world leaders gathered here, even the PM has to burn the midnight oil. According to officials, after the gala banquet for the leaders aboard the 'Silver Whisper', Mr Vajpayee is scheduled to hold bilateral talks with French President Jacques Chirac and British PM Tony Blair that could stretch well beyond midnight.

According to foreign secretary Kanwal Sibal, it is significant that Mr Putin has found time to have a bilateral meeting with Mr Vajpayee.

considering that he is hosting 43 world leaders, including President George W. Bush, Prime Ministers Koizumi (Japan) and Berlusconi (Italy), in addition to the French, Chinese and British leaders.

According to the foreign secretary, the applause that has greeted the PM's initiative on Pakistan in Germany indicates the positive mood that already exists vis-a-vis India.

Iraq will be another issue that is likely to come up at the PM's bilateral meetings in view of the recent UN Security Council resolution calling for various countries to contribute to the reconstruction, stability and security of that country.

But Mr Vajpayee's meetings will be a sideshow in the massive celebrations that have attracted so many world leaders here for the 300th anniversary of the city, that is being billed as a world summit by the Russian government. The city, at the head of the Baltic Sea, was founded by Peter the Great and nurtured by Catherine, also the Great.

Founded as a Russian window to Europe, it is a storehouse of Russian culture, being the home of Pushkin and scores of modern artists, and

houses the Hermitage Museum.

But while Mr Putin will have important bilateral meetings with western leaders, his focus will be on repairing ties with the US. Of the three major powers that opposed the Iraq war, Mr Putin is the only one who has managed to get back into America's good books. This is undoubtedly because Mr Bush needs Mr Putin as an ally for his war on terror as well as to deal with intractable problem areas like North Korea.

The Russian economy has been doing well and Mr Putin's popularity is high. An added positive fallout of the Iraq war has been that Mr Putin has improved his country's ties with France and Germany, which are vital for Russia's economic regeneration.

But problems persist. The US wants Russia to turn the screws on Iran and Syria. Russia is keen to ensure that it does not lose its valuable oil concessions in Iraq. Russia is also unhappy with the EU's refusal to consider its request for visa-free travel as well as a formal political dialogue to bring Russia into the EU framework.

31 MAY 2003

THE TIMES OF INDIA

India keen on revamping trade with Russia

By Vladimir Radyuhin

MOSCOW, MAY 17. India has mounted a serious effort to improve the mechanism of government-to-government interaction with Russia to promote bilateral trade and economic cooperation. The External Affairs Minister, Yashwant Sinha, last night called for revamping the Indo-Russian Inter-Governmental Commission (IRIGC) for trade, economic, scientific and technological cooperation to make it more efficient and result-oriented. He told the 9th session of the IRIGC, which he co-chaired with the Russian Minister for Industry, Science and Technology, Ilya Klebanov, that the commission needed to invite private sector participation and set up a decision-monitoring mechanism.

"The most important thing that is missing in the IRIGC is business-to-business contacts. These contacts must be intensified to remove the mental blocs on both sides that hamper bilateral trade growth."

During his visit Mr. Sinha met the leaders of Russia's two biggest business associations, the Chamber of Commerce and Industry and the Union of Industrialists and

Entrepreneurs, to discuss establishing closer working contacts with India's CII and FICCI.

The Indo-Russian commission, made up of Government officials from various Ministries, has been in existence for 10 years now, but has failed to boost the sluggish bilateral trade, which has been stagnating at about \$1.5 billion every since the break-up of the Soviet Union. Part of the problem lies in the fact that the bulk of Indian exports to Russia are financed from the rupee funds generated through the repayment of the old Indian debt to the erstwhile Soviet Union.

"We should move as quickly as possible to a free-currency trade which will put Indian exporters in Russia in a more competitive environment," Mr. Sinha told Indian presspersons after the commission concluded two days of deliberations on Friday. One way of speeding up the transition to dollar-denominated trade would be to convert part of the rupee debt funds into Russian equity in India.

The Minister also suggested that a review be undertaken to see whether some of the commission's 11 working groups could be

scrapped or new ones added. He proposed setting up a sub-working group to promote interaction between the medium and small business sectors and forming a venture capital fund to help them jointly commercialise high-end technologies developed under the Indo-Russian programme for scientific cooperation. The IRIGC should also pay more attention to business interaction at regional level.

Mr. Sinha laid special emphasis on ensuring implementation of decisions taken by the commission through close monitoring. It has been decided to set up a monitoring task force within the commission. The Indian side proposed a more thorough scheduling of the working group meetings that precede plenary sessions of the IRIGC, so that there is no last-minute rush.

It would also help if the heads of the working groups meet every other month to review progress and resolve emerging problems.

Mr. Sinha said he was happy with the results of the IRIGC work. "We have not only added incrementally to the relations between our two countries but have broken new ground in IRIGC," he said.

THE HINDU

18 MAY 2003

JOINT TASK FORCE TO CONVERT RUPEE DEBT INTO RUSSIAN EQUITY

Indo-Russian protocol signed

Press Trust of India

MOSCOW, May 16. — India and Russia have agreed to set up a joint task force to convert part of the rupee debt funds into Russian equity in India as Moscow said it would seriously consider New Delhi's proposal for setting up a joint venture capital fund to invest in commercialising technology.

"Russia has identified certain areas in the Indian economy where it would like to invest a part of the rupee debt funds, while we have proposed to use another part of it for setting up a special joint venture capital fund for investments in the commercialisation of cutting edge technologies in both countries," the external affairs minister, Mr Yashwant Sinha, said.

Russia is to get \$3-4 billion equivalent of Indian rupees in the next 3-4 years towards debt repayment and during his India visit last December President Putin had proposed to convert debt into equity in hi-tech areas.

"This issue has been pending for some years.

The Russian side has now formulated its views and the issue was discussed during my meeting with the DPM and finance minister, Mr Alexei Kudrin," Mr Sinha told reporters after signing of the protocol of the ninth session of the Indo-Russian inter-governmental commission on trade, economic, scientific, technological and cultural cooperation.

"This is a very decisive step forward, it is a breakthrough in ending the stagnation in bilateral economic cooperation," he underscored.

"Russia has identified metallurgy, modernisation of Soviet-built steel mills, coal mining, transport and telecom sectors in India, where our public and private sectors are willing to invest part of rupee debt funds," the Russian minister for industry, science and technology, Ilya Klebanov, who signed the protocol from the Russian side as co-chairman of IRIGC, said.

Before the Indo-Russian summit planned towards the end of this year, the two co-chairpersons are planning to meet in September-October to finalise the projects, Klebanov said.

Mr Sinha also announced that India would name the members of a larger task force to monitor and coordinate the economic cooperation under the Joint Declaration signed in New Delhi in December 2002 by the Prime Minister, Mr Atal Behari Vajpayee and President Putin.

During the two-day deliberations at the IRIGC session energy, including oil, gas and power was identified as an area of enormous potential for bilateral investments.

Special attention was paid to deep and vast cooperation in science and technology and a blueprint of Technology Incubator in Hyderabad for commercialisation of cutting-edge Russian technologies is under consideration, secretary S&T, Prof VS Ramamurthi said in Moscow.

In the course of his talks with the Russian leaders, Mr Sinha had strongly raised the issue of simplifying visa procedures for business persons and scientists to give a new fillip to bilateral cooperation. The Russian side has promised to streamline visa regime for bona fide persons.

Russia ready to build more reactors in India

By Vladimir Radyuhin

MOSCOW, MAY 16. Russia is willing to expand nuclear energy cooperation with India, a senior Russian Government member has said.

"We are constructing two nuclear reactors at Koodankulam and are ready to build more," Russia's Minister for Industry, Science and Technology, Ilya Klebanov, said at the end of the 9th session of the Indo-Russian Inter-Governmental Commission (IRIGC) on trade, economic, scientific and technological cooperation held here on May 15-16. "We are aware of India's ambitious programme of nuclear power generation and are holding preliminary discussions on our participation."

The two-day IRIGC session, co-chaired by the External Affairs Minister, Yashwant Sinha, and Mr. Klebanov, decided to try and end the stalemate in bilateral trade through joint investment projects in core and high-tech industries. The projects will be financed from rupee funds accumulated through India's repayment of old Soviet debts. Out of \$10 billions of Soviet rupee debts India has been repaying to Russia under a 1993 accord, about \$3 billions are still to be disbursed till 2005. So far the rupee funds have been used to finance Indian goods exports to Russia.

Mr. Klebanov said the Rus-

1775 10-11
sian side had proposed using rupee debt funds for investment in modernisation and expansion of Indian steel plants built with Soviet assistance, in the Indian coal industry, transport and in high-tech telecommunications ventures. Mr. Sinha has also called for setting up a joint venture capital fund to promote commercialisation of high-end technology projects developed jointly under the Integrated Long-Term Programme (ILTP) of Indo-Russian cooperation in science and technology.

Both co-chairmen hailed the investment plan as a road map to boost bilateral trade and economic cooperation. "Joint ventures to be set up using rupee debt funds will help end stagnation in our economic and trade relations," Mr. Sinha said, describing the plan as a "very decisive step forward."

Indo-Russian trade has been fluctuating around \$1.3-\$1.6 billion since the break-up of the erstwhile Soviet Union in 1991, defying all efforts to increase it.

Mr. Klebanov described the investment plan as "the main ideological thrust" of a joint protocol signed today at the end of the IRIGC session.

The two sides will shortly set up a task force to draw up a list of joint investment projects and the two co-chairmen of the Inter-Governmental Commission will meet in autumn to discuss the list.

THE HINDU

17 MAY 2003

Joint naval games will enhance stability: Russia

By Vladimir Radyuhin

MOSCOW, APRIL 5. Indo-Russian joint naval games in the Indian Ocean will enhance stability in the region and strengthen cooperation between the countries, the Russian Defence Ministry said today.

Russia will shortly dispatch nine warships of the Pacific and Black Sea fleets to the Indian Ocean for joint training with the Indian Navy, the RIA Novosti news agency said quoting the press service of the Russian Defence Ministry. It will be the largest naval deployment in the Indian Ocean after the break-up of the Soviet Union and the first joint war games by the Indian and Russian navies.

"The coming exercise will play a major role in strengthening cooperation, trust and mutual understanding between the two nations and in enhancing stability in the Indian Ocean," the Russian Defence Ministry said. The two navies will practice "interaction in achieving a wide range of tasks".

Russia denied the naval games were linked to the war in Iraq. "We planned a joint naval exercise with our strategic partner, India, long before the Iraq crisis came to a head," Mr. Ivanov told reporters on Friday. He said the Russian warships had no plans to enter the Persian Gulf.

The Black Sea Fleet is sent to the Indian Ocean its flagship, the missile cruiser Moskva, two patrol boats, a large landing ship, as well as auxiliary ships. The Pacific Fleet will despatch two large anti-submarine destroyers and a tanker. A media report said at least three Russian nuclear submarines armed with nuclear-tipped missiles would also be deployed in the Indian Ocean. The Russian Defence Minister today refused to confirm or deny the report.

6 APR 2003

THE HINDI

Kanwal Sibal in Russia to discuss Iraq, Afghanistan situation

By Vladimir Radyuhin

MOSCOW, MARCH 27. India and Russia on Friday will discuss the war in Iraq and its likely negative impact on the situation in Afghanistan and the anti-terror campaign in the region. The Foreign Secretary, Kanwal Sibal, arrived in Moscow on Thursday for the first high-level contact between the two countries since the start of the Iraq war. He will meet the First Deputy Foreign Minister, Vyacheslav Trubnikov, under the framework of a Joint Working Group (JWG) on Afghanistan and will call on the Russian Foreign Minister, Igor Ivanov.

Discussions will focus on joint efforts to promote stability, unity and reconstruction of

Afghanistan without outside interference, said the Indian Ambassador to Russia, Krishnan Raghunath. India and Russia are expected to articulate shared deep concern over the war in Iraq and its destabilising effect on the situation in Afghanistan and the region.

The Russian President, Vladimir Putin, has warned that the war could provoke instability in a large region, from Palestine to Pakistan. With India and Russia fearing an upsurge in terrorism and Islamic extremism in the region, the JWG on Afghanistan is expected to discuss Pakistan's role in Afghanistan, including ISI's continuing contacts with the Taliban, and unending terrorist activity against India. In connection with the recent

Kashmir massacre, Russia has strongly backed India's efforts to curb the activity of terrorist groups. The two sides will also discuss humanitarian assistance to Iraq and the role of the international community in resolving the crisis, Mr. Raghunath said.

Earlier this week, the Indian Ambassador and the Russian Deputy Foreign Minister, Alexander Losyukov, stressed the need for urgently returning to political settlement of the Iraq issue within the ambit of the U.N. Security Council. In an effort to intensify their interaction on the problem of terrorism, India and Russia will shortly establish a separate JWG on counter-terrorism, the Indian envoy said.

THE HINDU

28 MAR 2003

Fresh breeze from Moscow

By Pran Chopra

110-10
2/9/2

THE ANGRY exchanges between Pervez Musharraf and Atal Behari Vajpayee at the NAM summit in Kuala Lumpur make it difficult to expect that the two leaders can hold a peaceful bilateral summit anytime soon. But other things are also happening which permit one to hope.

Gen. Musharraf recently paid an extended state visit to Moscow, the first by a Pakistani leader since Zulfikar Ali Bhutto went there more than 30 years ago. There was a time not so long ago when such an event would have disturbed many in India and elated many more in Pakistan with the belief that Pakistan had made a breach in an Indian diplomatic stronghold. Gen. Musharraf's visit to Moscow has done neither. There has been realistic comment in the Pakistan press, and India has shown quiet self-confidence. Both countries have noted that Russia has been sensitive and discreet in handling them and the problems between them, avoiding the American mistakes of promising too much and doing too little.

It is quite likely that in response to an invitation extended already by Gen. Musharraf, Vladimir Putin will go to Pakistan, thus becoming the first Russian leader ever to do so. There is no reason why he should not and every reason why he should. If the same constructive mood prevails in India, Pakistan and Russia on that occasion as well, it will be a sign that a timely maturity has been reached in this latest diplomatic triangle in this part of the world. But it is not too soon even now to welcome a fresh breeze that has blown in from Moscow via the Pakistan press.

For instance, it was not only the Indian media but also a Pakistan newspaper, the *Pakistan Daily Times*, of February 8, which said that Mr. Putin was briefing Mr. Vajpayee on his talks with Gen. Musharraf even while the talks were going on, and that Mr. Vajpayee was "very satisfied that President Putin conveyed to Pakistan that cross-border terrorism should stop" and that terrorists hiding in Pakistan should be prosecuted. Noting that some people in Pakistan might have been disappointed that Gen. Musharraf got nothing on Kashmir out of

Russia has been sensitive and discreet in handling India and Pakistan and the problems between them, avoiding the American mistakes of promising too much and doing too little.

this visit, the paper candidly underlined three basic truths. First, "Russia has strongly stood by India in its dispute with Islamabad over Kashmir". Second, "like America, Russia too is India's strategic partner". And third, "it is a measure of Pakistan's gradual isolation in the region to note that Iran too has become a kind of strategic partner of India".

Another Pakistani newspaper, the *Dawn*, editorially advised Pakistan on February 8, "given Russia's longstanding friendship with India, it would be unrealistic for Pakistan to expect Moscow to shift its position on Kashmir and other India-Pakistan disputes", and "Islamabad's close relationship with the Taliban in the 1990s had created problems for Russia in Central Asia... Islamabad needs to continue to (combat) terrorists in Pakistan". Only the previous day, in welcoming a call by Mr. Putin to India and Pakistan "to resume a dialogue", the *Dawn* had editorially pointed out that Mr. Putin had coupled this with "asking Pakistan to stop militants from crossing the Line of Control".

This rider by Mr. Putin did not evoke any adverse reaction in the Pakistan press, which makes an interesting contrast with what happened when the same demand was made by the American Ambassador in Pakistan, Nancy Powell. She said Pakistan must live up to its pledges to stop terrorists from crossing into Jammu and Kashmir, and she was greeted by a huge protest in the press. The reason for the difference appears to be that Mr. Putin was discreet in adding the rider, while taking care to inform India that he had done so.

There is also an interesting contrast on another issue. In urging India and Pakistan to resume talking, America did indeed emphasise that the issues at stake were a bilateral matter between India and Pakistan and that America would intervene

only if the two countries invited it to do so. But Mr. Putin went an important step further. He said talks must take place on the basis of the Shimla Agreement and the Lahore documents. These had been rudely dismissed by Gen. Musharraf when he seized power. But they, particularly the Declaration made in Lahore and the MoU the two countries signed there, are the best agreements ever reached by them.

First, they are the only India-Pakistan documents which have publicly opened the door for talks between the two countries on nuclear safety in South Asia. Second, they comprehensively cover all disputes between them as India wanted, while also giving the central place to the Kashmir dispute as Pakistan wanted. Third, what happens to them has become the touchstone for the prospects for future talks, because India insists, rightly, that talks can be useful only if the parties are committed to respecting such agreements as may result.

The importance India attaches to the sanctity of the agreements will become greater if Russia sticks to the position Mr. Putin is said to have taken when Pakistan offered to buy some \$5 billion worth of Russian military weaponry. He said this could be considered after Pakistan's relations with India became normal, and the road to normality lay through Shimla and Lahore. Hence the advice a commentator in a Pakistani newspaper, *The Nation*, gave to Gen. Musharraf on February 7: "If foreign policy is taken away from the ISI and given back to the foreign office, where it rightly belongs, it could save us much embarrassment and loss of face in the future."

It needs to be noted, however, that the Pakistan Foreign Office, more so while it was stewarded by Abdul Sattar as Foreign Minister, was not always on the side of peace between the two countries, and the ISI was not

always an evil genius, as both showed during a Pugwash conference on South Asian security in Geneva last November. A former and powerful head of the ISI, Durrani, presented a paper there which differed widely from the position taken by Gen. Musharraf about the India-Pakistan agreements since 1997, which culminated in the Lahore documents. They had been jointly steered by the Pakistan Prime Minister, Nawaz Sharif, and his opposite numbers in India. Gen. Musharraf threw them out of the window as rubbish precisely because Mr. Sharif, whom he was to oust in a military coup, had played a part in shaping them. But at the Geneva conference Lt. Gen. Durrani described them as an "opportunity" which was not only "lost" but "squandered".

In fact, the whole tenor of his paper and presentation was so constructive that I suggested the conference should invite him to sit with a few Indian participants of his choice to see what could be done to retrieve the opportunity. But before any of that could happen the mandarins of the Pakistan Foreign Office succeeded in muddying the waters by raising issues which were not germane to the conference.

Can the breeze from Moscow revive the "opportunity"? Perhaps not. But the chances are better now than at any time since Mr. Vajpayee took the bus to Lahore, where the Declaration and the MoU were signed. This is partly because of the change of mood in Pakistan, as reflected in the press comments quoted above; partly because of the style and chemistry of Mr. Putin's diplomacy, which Gen. Musharraf too has now had the chance to taste; partly because of the new compulsions created for both by the long saga of terrorism and by the dangerous crisis over Iraq. Perhaps the new circumstances can be energised by India giving a clear signal to Moscow that it is willing to pick up the thread from where it was left in Lahore provided Pakistan too shows unambiguous commitment to it, even if it be that those documents are restored to the table for the preliminary task of discussing where they need to be modified and updated.

THE HINDU

25 FEB 2003

THE HINDU

India, Russia 'rejoice' in each other's strength

By Vladimir Radyuhin

MOSCOW, FEB. 22. New global challenges and regional instability are driving India and Russia closer together, as evidenced by the visit of the External Affairs Minister, Yashwant Sinha, to Moscow this week.

The high point of Mr. Sinha's visit was a 65-minute meeting with the Russian President, Vladimir Putin, which was extraordinary not only for its length and warmth, but also for the fact that it had been fixed even before the former reached Moscow.

"Mr. Putin is clearly very keen to carry forward the momentum of his December visit to India and to boost bilateral ties," diplomatic sources said. Mr. Sinha's meeting with the President, as well as substantive interactions with the Defence Minister, Sergei Ivanov, and the Foreign Minister, Igor Ivanov, reconfirmed the commonality of views India and Russia share on major international issues, such as Iraq, North Korea and Afghanistan as well as the situation in South and Central Asia.

The Indian side particularly appreciated the candid and detailed briefing it received on the recent visit of the Pakistani leader, Pervez Musharraf, to Moscow. "It was a measure of transparency consistent with our strategic partnership," the sources said. Mr. Sinha said he was satisfied that Russia had put pressure on Pakistan to stop cross-border terrorism.

The growing Indo-Russian interaction in Central Asia adds a new dimension to their strategic partnership. Russia has welcomed India's increased activity in Central Asia, which Mr. Sinha toured last month.

"They are not suspicious of our moves in Central Asia, as we wouldn't be suspicious of their moves anywhere in the world," he said after talks in Moscow.

Russia is also lending full support to India's membership of the Shanghai Cooperation Organisation (SCO), which unites Russia, China and four Central Asian countries. "Russia clearly understands the role and importance of India in SCO," Mr. Sinha said.

Pakistan is anxious to join the SCO and its application has been backed by China, whereas Russia wants priority to be given to India to avoid it being equated with Pakistan.

On the bilateral front, Mr. Sinha's visit demonstrated political will on both sides to carry forward their defence cooperation and expand trade and economic ties in keeping with the Joint Declaration signed during Mr. Putin's visit to India. Russia has agreed to explore ways of expanding bilateral

cooperation in nuclear energy, hampered by the Nuclear Suppliers Group restrictions. The ninth session of the Inter-Governmental Commission, co-chaired by Mr. Sinha and the Russian Minister for Industry, Science and Technology, Ilya Klebanov, will meet in Moscow in mid-May.

Analysts say that closer Indo-Russian cooperation is to some extent being driven by the desire of both countries to balance unipolar tendencies in international politics.

Neither country perceives a threat from the strength of the other and each perceives a stake in the increased political and economic power of the other," Mr. Sinha said in Moscow. "We rejoice in each other's strength."

23 FEB 2003

SEE FIND

Taliban resurgence worries India, Russia

By Vladimir Radyuhin

MOSCOW, FEB. 20. India and Russia are concerned over the resurgence of the Taliban and Al-Qaeda in Afghanistan and are willing to render all-round support to the Hamid Karzai Government to prevent a comeback of the extremist forces.

"We cannot but feel concerned that forces bent on destabilisation are still active inside and outside Afghanistan," the Russian Foreign Minister, Igor Ivanov, said after two-and-a-half-hour talks with the External Affairs Minister, Yashwant Sinha, here today.

"It would be a great tragedy for Afghanistan and the international community if extremist forces came back to power in that country. Russia and India have done a lot to ensure that the Taliban and Al-Qaeda are removed from power and we intend to continue our cooperation with other countries to support the Karzai Government

in its efforts to stabilise the situation in the country," Mr. Ivanov said.

The two sides also agreed that the current West Asian crisis could still be resolved politically on the basis of Security Council Resolution 1441.

Mr. Ivanov said both Russia and India favour political settlement of the problem of North Korea and are willing to help facilitate direct dialogue between Washington and Pyongyang.

Mr. Sinha said he was "extremely satisfied" with his discussions he had in Moscow with the President, Vladimir Putin, and other Russian leaders.

He thanked Mr. Ivanov for briefing him in "greater detail" on the Pakistan President, Pervez Musharraf's talks in Moscow earlier this month and on "what transpired in the course of those talks."

"We are both convinced that the extreme cordiality which marks our relationship of strategic partnership, the complete

understanding of global issues remain absolutely intact," Mr. Sinha said. Asked about the defence cooperation between the two countries, Mr. Sinha said it had "very bright prospects" and will "move from strength to strength" and from a buyer-seller relationship to technology sharing and joint research and production.

Indo-Russian high-level contacts have gained unprecedented intensity in the wake of Mr. Putin's visit to India in December. The Defence Minister, George Fernandes visited Russia in January and Mr. Sinha will visit Moscow again in mid-May for a session of the Inter-Governmental Commission. The Prime Minister, A.B. Vajpayee, will visit Russia in the second half of May to attend tricentennial celebrations of St. Petersburg. In June the Russian Foreign Minister may visit India. Visits by the Deputy Prime Minister, L.K. Advani, and the Lok Sabha Speaker are also on the cards.

Curb terror, Russia tells Pak

Press Trust of India

MOSCOW, Feb. 18. Ahead of external affairs minister Mr Yashwant Sinha's Moscow visit, Russia today asked Pakistan to stop cross-border terrorism against India and disband terrorist outfits in Pakistan.

"Islamabad must fulfil all its obligations on putting an end to cross-border terrorism in Jammu and Kashmir, as well as disband the terrorist infrastructure, to help create the required pre-conditions for resumption of a peace dialogue between

the two countries," Russian foreign ministry spokesman Mr Alexander Yakovenko said, on the eve of Mr Sinha's arrival for a two-day visit.

Mr Yakovenko said particular attention will be paid to the situation in South Asia in the context of the need to de-escalate tensions in Indo-Pak relations during Mr Sinha's Moscow talks.

Mr Sinha is the first senior Indian leader to visit Russia after Pakistani President Gen Pervez Musharraf's talks with President Putin in Moscow earlier this month.

Mr Yakovenko's statement reflects Kremlin's disappointment at the talks with Gen Musharraf, who denied that Islamabad was abetting terrorism across the LoC.

On the first day of his Moscow talks tomorrow, Mr Sinha is scheduled to hold a wide-ranging exchange of views on crucial security issues with President Mr Vladimir Putin and defence minister Mr Sergei Ivanov.

On Thursday, Mr Sinha will hold parleys with his Russian host, foreign minister Mr Igor Ivanov.

19 FEB 2003

THE STATESMAN

Russia to stress on de-escalation

By Vladimir Radyuhin

gudkova
MOSCOW, FEB. 18. The Russian leadership will emphasise the need for defusing Indo-Pak. tensions at the coming talks here with the External Affairs Minister, Yashwant Sinha.

Mr. Sinha's visit to Russia from February 19 to 21 will be the first high-level interaction between New Delhi and Moscow after the Pakistan President, Pervez Musharraf's visit earlier this month. "The situation in South Asia will be given special attention at the talks in the context of the need to reduce tension in Indo-Pakistani relations," a Russian Foreign Ministry spokesman told the RIA Novosti news agency today.

"As before, the Russian side takes the view that Islamabad must fully implement its obligations to stop cross-border terrorism in Jammu and Kashmir and eliminate the terrorist infrastructure," Alexander Yakovenko said, adding this would create the necessary conditions for resumption of dialogue between India and Pakistan.

The Russian spokesman said the talks would also cover Afghanistan, Iraq, North Korea and West Asia as well as bilateral relations, terrorism and strategic stability.

India's ambassador to Russia, Krishnan Raghunath, said Mr. Sinha would also discuss the situation in Central Asia and India's growing

HO-11 19/2
involvement in the region, which the Minister visited recently. Mr. Sinha's visit is also part of preparations for an annual meeting in April of the Indo-Russian Inter-Governmental Commission for Trade, Economic, Scientific-Technical and Cultural Cooperation, which he co-chairs with the Russian Minister for Industry, Science and Technology, Ilya Klebanov.

In the run-up to Mr. Sinha's visit, the Indo-Russian Joint Business Council met here today under the co-chairmanship of the president of the Russian Chamber of Trade and Industry, Yevgeny Primakov, and the Indian Minister of State for Commerce and Industry, Rajiv Pratap Rudy, who is leading a 25-member FICCI delegation to Russia. It is the first session of JBC in six years, which reflected a low ebb in bilateral commercial ties.

Indo-Russian trade had been stagnating at about \$1.5 billion a year; Russian investment in India in 1991-2001 amounted to a meagre \$129 million, while Indian investment in Russia was altogether negligible at \$2.3 million.

Citing these figures Mr. Primakov called for invigorating the work of the JBC to promote greater awareness about business opportunities in both countries. The JBC decided to hold its sessions henceforth on an annual basis and to set up working groups for investment, trade and sector-wise cooperation.

19 FEB 2003

ONE HINDU

India, Russia to set up two centres to produce defence spares

By Our Special Correspondent

ON BOARD THE CGS VAJRA, FEB. 7. The Defence Minister, George Fernandes, said today that India and Russia had agreed to set up "two production centres" in India to "take care of product support and joint production of spares" for the Indian forces. A special marine repair facility would also be set up at Visakhapatnam.

These were the main outcomes of the third session of the Indo-Russian Inter-Government Commission on Military-Technical Cooperation, which met in Moscow in mid-January. Mr. Fernandes and the Russian Minister, Ilya Klebanov, chaired the annual review of bilateral defence agenda for Industry, Science and Technology.

Dismissing speculation that multi-million dollar protocols were discussed at the meet, he said this was mainly a media build-up to the event. The real problem on the ground — for India as well as countries in Asia and Africa that depended on Russia for defence equipment — was that Russia had either discontinued or totally stopped production of spares for the military hardware that these countries had employed.

"Russia has moved on to newer generation technologies and hence many countries, including India, have a problem with spares. This was taken up at the meeting," he said.

Setting up of the centres was



The Advanced Light Helicopter landing on CGS Sarang during the demonstration by the Coast Guard off the Chennai Coast on Friday. — Photo: Vino John.

still in the initial stages and hence, no decision had yet been taken on the location. But once the production centres come up, the export potential would also be explored.

Commenting on the thinking in a section of the Government that India should give up its no-first-use policy on nuclear weapons, Mr. Fernandes said the nuclear doctrine of the country did not get "revised overnight". Unless there was an extraordinary situation, "there could be no change as far as the nuclear doctrine was concerned. It remains as it was."

On the renewed threat of terrorism, he said that India had set up institutions and structures

to cope with the challenge. "I do not think any nation is better equipped than India is (in handling terrorism)." Personnel from some foreign Special Forces were undergoing training in facilities in India.

On the approval of the Coast Guard's perspective plan for the next 15 years, now pending with the Defence Ministry, Mr. Fernandes avoided a direct reply and said that the importance of the need to secure the sea frontiers and the Exclusive Economic Zone was felt only after the Group of Ministers recommendations following the Kargil conflict.

Ever since the Government had been looking at the "hard-

ware and personnel" needs of the Coast Guard.

Mr. Fernandes conducted a Coast Guard fleet review on board the Fast Patrol Vessel as part of its 26th anniversary celebrations. As many as 16 ships, two hovercraft, eight dorniers, four chetak helicopters and the Advanced Light Helicopter (ALH) were part of the demonstrations aimed at showcasing the force's capabilities.

This was the first time that the ALH was on public display at sea. The first indigenous twin-engine helicopter made a perfect landing on CGS Sarang's moving deck and repeated the feat a few times, before pulling away for other demonstrations.

8 FEB 2003

Putin calls up Vajpayee

By Amit Baruah

NEW DELHI, FEB. 4. The Russian President, Vladimir Putin, telephoned the Prime Minister, Atal Behari Vajpayee, on the eve of the Pakistan President, Pervez Musharraf's visit to Moscow.

According to official sources, the main focus of today's 12-minute-long telephone conversation between the two leaders was the current state of bilateral relationship between Russia and India.

Mr. Putin was learnt to have reiterated his understanding of the Indian position that dialogue between New Delhi and Islamabad could only be resumed once cross-border terrorism comes to an end.

Mr. Putin and the Prime Minister had a cordial and friendly exchange of views and expressed full satisfaction at the development of the bilateral relations between the two countries.

They looked forward to meeting each other for celebrations in St. Petersburg in May.

Mr. Putin's call is an indicator of the strength of the Russia-India relationship and reflects the high level of trust between the

two leaders and two nations. It is clear that Russia wants to keep India in the picture as far as Gen. Musharraf's visit to Moscow is concerned.

And, by keeping the Prime Minister briefed, Mr. Putin has demonstrated the high level of importance Russia attaches to its relationship with India.

Yesterday, the Russian Foreign Ministry spokesman said in Moscow that normalisation of relations between India and Pakistan would be in the interest of both countries and also strengthen stability and security in South Asia.

"Islamabad fulfilling its commitments to stop the infiltration of militants into Jammu & Kash-

mir through the LoC and also to destroy the terrorist infrastructure would provide the necessary pre-requisites for renewing the peaceful dialogue between the two countries," he said.

"Our concerns regarding the threats of terrorism, extremism and illegal drug trafficking emanating from Afghanistan and Pakistan have been made known to Islamabad. We give due credit to Pakistan for participating in the anti-terrorist operations in Afghanistan and to the steps taken by Gen. Musharraf's administration to neutralise the activities of militant Islamic organisations in Pakistan," the spokesman stated.

"We expect that Islamabad

fulfilling the commitments made to the international community to combat terrorism will put an end to the movement... (of) terrorists penetrating other countries," he added.

There is a clear consistency in the Russian position on Pakistan and cross-border terrorism in relation to India. A joint statement issued on December 5 during Mr. Putin's visit to New Delhi in December 2002 used the language similar to what the spokesman used in Moscow.

"Both sides discussed in detail the situation in South Asia. They stressed the importance of Islamabad implementing in full its obligations and promises to prevent the infiltration of terrorists across the LoC into the State of Jammu & Kashmir...as well as to eliminate the terrorist infrastructure in Pakistan...as a prerequisite for the renewal of peaceful dialogue between the two countries...." it said.

The spokesman's remarks are in keeping with the spirit of the joint statement issued during Mr. Putin's visit to India.

In the current context, it is difficult for India to find a more supportive partner on Pakistan and related issues than Russia.

Musharraf arrives in Moscow

MOSCOW, FEB. 4. Undertaking the first ever visit by a Pakistani head of state to Russia in more than three decades, the Pakistan President, Pervez Musharraf, arrived here today for talks with Russian leaders during which he is expected to seek Moscow's help in resumption of dialogue with India. During his visit, Gen. Musharraf would hold talks with the Russian President, Vladimir Putin, and other leaders.

Earlier, before leaving for Moscow, Gen. Musharraf said in Islamabad that Russia, as a friend of India, was well-placed to play a 'key role' in resolving the dispute between India and Pakistan. — PTI

STRATEGIC PARTNER

Sr 6 29/11

New Delhi Will Profit From Moscow's Proposal

gud. Ruma

By VIKTOR LITOVKIN

India's Defence Minister George Fernandes completed his Russian visit on Monday. According to Fernandes, he negotiated preparations to draft a new military-technical contract, which stipulates New Delhi's participation in the Russian fifth-generation fighter R&D programme.

This became India's first official statement concerning its intention to join this ambitious military project. This event is also quite important because Russia has invited a foreign investor and partner to help develop a 21st century weapons system for the first time ever. Incidentally, even the United States doesn't do this. US defence industry corporations turned into multi-national entities a long time ago; however, Washington prefers to develop JSF (F-35) and F-22 Raptor fighters all on its own.

Gesture

It is easy to understand why Russia made this move. New Delhi is seen as Moscow's full-fledged strategic partner in just about any foreign policy sphere. This is confirmed by President Vladimir Putin's latest Indian visit. The annual volume of bilateral military-technical cooperation is estimated at \$2 billion. It does not suffer from any time-serving considerations, is not spearheaded against any third countries and aims at defending both countries' national interests. Moreover, neither party has ever speculated on each other's temporary difficulties and domestic problems; nor did the two countries voice any mutual political claims; they also didn't impose any mutual economic sanctions whatsoever. Relations have always been even and friendly, irrespective of who was at the helm in Moscow and Delhi.

Russian-made combat hardware, i.e., state-of-the-art tanks, frigates and submarines, the entire family of Sukhoi fighters and ground-attack jets, as well as multi-role Su-30-MKI fighters, account for almost 80 per cent of all weapons being wielded by the Indian armed forces. Most of the Su-30-MKI-s will be assembled at HAL Corporation's enterprises.

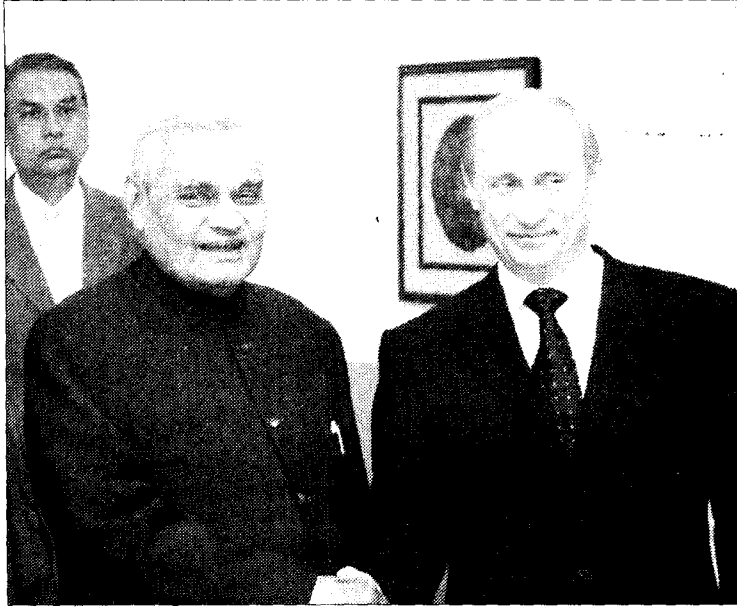
And here is yet another tell-tale aspect. The Russian Air Force still lacks the hard-hitting and sophisticated Su-30-MKI (generation four-plus) fighter. Nonetheless, Moscow didn't refuse to supply this warplane to New Delhi, agreeing to install Indian and other foreign avionics, instruments and software inside the fighter's cockpit. The Russian side armed the Su-30-MKI with those specific missiles, which are needed by India in order to reliably shield its territory. Consequently, the Indian Air Force now boasts a fighter, which can out-fly and out-gun any other Asian warplane.

The Su-30-MKI's overall com-

The author is a Ria Novosti military analyst.

bat-efficiency parameters place it among the best generation four-plus warplanes, such as the F/A-18-F, the F-15-E, the Rafal and the Typhoon Euro-Fighter, as well as America's F-22 Raptor fighter, which still remains to be adopted. According to experts, the Su-30-MKI is the best air-superiority fighter of them all. This concerns its super-agility during close-range dog-fights; such a remarkable performance is ensured by the

New Delhi becoming Moscow's equitable partner within the framework of new-generation weapons programmes. Both countries developed the state-of-the-art Su-30-MKI version for the first time ever. Moreover, New Delhi has now been authorised to service this aircraft. It has been decided to jointly service Sukhoi warplanes, to establish a specialised regional service centre and to use this "bridge-head" for invading



plane's variable-thrust vector engine. As a matter of fact, variable-thrust vector engines have always been a strong feature of the Russian aircraft-designer school. Moreover, the Su-30-MKI is fitted with the N-011-M Bars (Snow Leopard) phased-array radar and unique air-to-air missiles, as well as air-to-surface weapons.

Equitable partner

It is an open secret that the Russian Air Force would also like to overhaul its Su-27 fleet in line with this Indian project. This Su-30 version will become a model intermediate-generation fighter for the next few years. Acting on New Delhi's orders, the Russian side installed a French-made inertial laser-gyroscope navigation system, which is coupled with navigation satellites, as well as multi-role colour VDU-s (visual display units). The fighter also features the Israeli-made HUD (heads-up display) system and an optical-electronic sighting system for the first time in the history of cooperation between the Sukhoi warplane concern and any particular foreign client.

Add to this Indian-made components of the friend-or-foe system. The custom-made fighter equipment of this kind is not ordered frequently, and practically never on the world market.

Experts also note the following detail. Previously, India used to merely buy Russian warplanes on a regular basis. However, the situation has now changed, what with

other aviation markets all over Asia. Incidentally, this is already happening in Malaysia.

One can safely say that the Su-30-MKI contract has facilitated a new kind of aggressive military-aviation business operation using up-to-date financial instruments. The parties, which are ready to take their chances, can attract investment, also streamlining trans-border cooperation with Oriental and Western countries alike. This, too, is a tell-tale aspect of bilateral economic ties.

The Su-30-MKI has won a reputation for its remarkable performance and specifications; moreover, Russia and India maintain impressive military-technical cooperation levels. Still one should not forget that all this amounts to current developments alone. However, we should not rest on our laurels, thinking about specific prospects, all the more so as the defence capability and security of our two countries must be enhanced.

Russia and its Sukhoi warplane concern have already started developing the fifth-generation fighter. The Russian Government has passed its resolution on this issue, with President Putin also issuing his decree. The new warplane's initial concept and electronic mock-up have already been completed. Meanwhile, its design, performance and specifications still remain classified. Nonetheless, it turns out that the new plane will be able to hit aerial and ground-based (naval) targets

alike. The fifth-generation fighter will also possess super-agility characteristics, ensuring controllable low-speed flights and operating at high angles of attack. It will also possess short take-off and landing and low visibility in the optical, infrared and radar bands.

The Sukhoi concern's general director Mikhail Pogosyan believes that the cost-effective Russian fifth-generation fighter will have better engineering solutions and an even more impressive design than the American JSF (F-35) and the F-22 Raptor.

India profits

By the way, Russian specialists have always been renowned for their ability to find optimal engineering solutions. The new fighter will become part and parcel of an advanced weapons system, operating on a par with satellite clusters, long-range Awacs-type planes, drones (i.e., remotely piloted aircraft), ground-based reconnaissance and target-acquisition networks, computer and navigation centres. Such an inexpensive weapons system will be just about enough to ward off aerospace, naval and ground threats, eventually becoming quite popular with Russian and foreign clients.

Russia estimates its fifth-generation fighter programme at \$5-6 billion; meanwhile a similar US aircraft will cost at least \$35-50 billion. Moscow is inviting foreign investors to take part in this programme for the first time in Russian history.

Such investors will be developing the fifth-generation fighter on a parity basis. It goes without saying that Russia will cooperate with only those countries which don't voice territorial or any other claims to it, and which are completely trusted by Moscow. Well, India is the first on the list.

Will New Delhi profit from Moscow's proposal? Russian experts believe that the answer is "yes". This is also proved by George Fernandes' statement. By cooperating with the Sukhoi firm, India would obtain an entirely new multi-role fighter 10 years from now, thus outpacing Asian countries and most industrial European states. For their own part, Sukhoi experts would master the most advanced warplane design-and-production concepts, expanding their own production base and upgrading operational Russian military aircraft.

The latter would be matching the fifth-generation fighter's specifications. India would therefore receive this state-of-the-art warplane, as well as the Su-30-MKI-plus fighter. Quite possibly, New Delhi will start exporting such aircraft.

This means that India can become a full-fledged aviation power after the United States, Russia, Great Britain, France and Sweden. No country is going to miss this chance.

Fernandes briefs PM on Russia visit

By Sandeep Dikshit

NEW DELHI, JAN. 23. The Defence Minister, George Fernandes, today briefed the Prime Minister, Atal Behari Vajpayee, on the outcome of his Russia visit. Besides firming up plans to acquire dedicated platforms for delivery of nuclear weapons, the two sides resolved to reinforce defence ties in other equally crucial areas from the point of view of Indian armed forces.

Mr. Fernandes was understood to have apprised Mr. Vajpayee of these initiatives which include plans to accelerate a trilateral partnership between India, Israel and Russia on an airborne warning and control system (AWACS), setting up of servicing facilities for Russian equipment, modernisation of the ageing T-72 tanks and early transfer of technology for the T-90 tanks, informed sources told this correspondent.

New Delhi and Moscow also agreed to open discussions on purchasing

MiG-29 K fighters for the aircraft carrier Admiral Gorshkov and cooperate in designing and producing a fifth-generation fighter aircraft. Mr. Fernandes also utilised the visit to discuss the decade-long problem of spares with progress being made on setting up of a servicing facility in India.

Public discourse on Indo-Russian military deals has so far centred around three major military platforms — aircraft carrier, long-range bomber and nuclear-powered submarines. However, the AWACS, whose purchase was approved in 2000, would give India a decisive military edge over Pakistan as well as China since its radars can track up to 60 targets over a 800-km radius to support both defensive and offensive operations.

Their importance can be gauged from the fact that Israel cancelled the sale of Elta's Phalcon radars to China since the U.S. feared that they would allow Beijing to track Taiwanese and U.S. fighters in any conflict over the

Taiwan issue. India plans to source the radars from Israel and the IL-76 from Russia. Close cooperation of all the three sides is required since the integration of Israeli avionics with IL-76, instead of the Boeing series, has not been heard of too often.

The agreement to begin talks on MiG-29K planes virtually ends efforts by other aircraft companies to market their fighters for the deck of Admiral Gorshkov.

Another major deal that has kept arms dealers on tenterhooks has been the upgradation of T-72 tanks. In this respect, India has been circumspect to Moscow's overtures. During the visit, it was agreed that the Indian Army would first witness the performance of a couple of upgraded T-72 tanks before committing itself to having the whole fleet upgraded.

The field is presently crowded with several companies eyeing the lucrative deal.

Discussions on T-90 tanks basically centred around speeding up the

transfer of technology documents so that India would begin manufacturing them at the earliest. Russia is currently supplying the tanks in a semi-knocked down condition and several of these were deployed on the western border where they performed for extended spells through summer and monsoon.

As is the case with Sukhoi-30 MKI multi-role aircraft, India is keen to advance the schedule for producing them in the country.

The Russians have also firmly committed themselves to look and resolving product-support problems on a "priority basis" which will include permanently stationing experts in India to look into the issues on a real-time basis.

The two sides also agreed to pursue the possibility of setting up facilities for servicing Russian equipment in India as well as setting up joint servicing centres that could also cater for similar equipment managed by armed forces of other countries.

Gorshkov deal by April

19/11 By Vladimir Radyuhin HD-1

MOSCOW, JAN. 18. The long-awaited package deal for the acquisition of the Gorshkov aircraft carrier, as well as nuclear-capable long-range bombers and submarines may be sealed by April.

"We have agreed that all efforts will be made to complete the three contracts by the end of March," the Defence Minister, George Fernandes, said at the end of the third annual session of the Indo-Russian Inter-Governmental Commission (IRIGC) for Military-Technical Cooperation. Mr. Fernandes conceded that the Gorshkov price remained the sticking point, but said there was "a sense of urgency on both sides to implement the deals".

Under an intergovernmental agreement signed several years ago, the acquisition of the 44,500-tonne Kiev-class Admiral Gorshkov aircraft carrier was tied to the supply of four Tu-22M3 Backfire strategic bombers and two Akula-class nuclear-powered submarines.

A protocol of the IRIGC signed on Friday also provides for the joint research, design and development of the fifth generation combat aircraft. "Initial steps in this direction are to be taken in the first quarter of this year," Mr. Fernandes told the Indian media.

Indo-Russia
The IRIGC also decided to set up service centres in India for the logistic and product support, including the manufacture of spares, of Russian-built combat aircraft, and a facility at Visakhapatnam for medium repair and modernisation of Russian-built submarines.

Following the successful joint development of the Brahmos anti-ship missile, the two sides decided to increase capital investment in the joint venture handling the project by \$50 million to \$300 to meet the production costs.

Mr. Fernandes said the first of three stealth frigates Russia was building for the Indian Navy would be delivered by the end of April. The induction of the Krivak-class frigates has been delayed due to problems with a missile system specially designed for the vessel. India will purchase three more frigates of the same type and Amur-class diesel submarines from Russia.

Joint naval manoeuvres

India and Russia will hold their first joint naval exercises in the Indian Ocean and the Arabian Sea later this year. The Russian Defence Minister, Sergei Ivanov, proposed the idea to Mr. Fernandes during their meeting in Moscow on Thursday.

"It will take us three-four months to prepare the games," Mr. Fernandes said.

THE HINDU

30 JAN 2003

INDO-RUSSIA PROTOCOL / LANDMARK DEAL: FERNANDES

HD-11
1871

Pak. nukes may fall into Al-Qaeda hands: Moscow

By Vladimir Radyuhin

MOSCOW, JAN. 17. Pakistan's nuclear arms may fall into the hands of the Al-Qaeda and the Taliban, the Russian Defence Minister, Sergei Ivanov has said.

"The potential danger of this happening is there and members of the anti-terror coalition should step up coordination and strengthen control regimes to prevent terrorists from obtaining not only nuclear arms, but weapons of mass destruction," Mr. Ivanov said after talks with the visiting Defence Minister, George Fernandes, on Friday.

Without mentioning Pakistan by name the Russian defence chief said "a number of States would rather talk than do something about this problem". A day earlier, a senior Russian diplomat said Moscow was concerned about the safety of Pakistani nuclear arms despite assurances from Islamabad. "Moscow has information that some Al-Qaeda outfits have reorganised and partially infiltrated into Pakistani territory," the Deputy Foreign Minister, Georgy Mamedov, said on Thursday at the end of one-day Russian-Pakistani consultations on strategic stability. "This is a cause for special concern in the light of Pakistan possessing nuclear weapons."

The fight against terrorism

dominated the agenda of today's talks between the Defence Ministers of India and Russia. "We have exchanged information on the situation in Kashmir and Chechnya and discussed in detail developments in Afghanistan and in adjacent territories," Mr. Ivanov said.

"The fact that our views on issues of international security are close or identical goes to show that we are strategic partners in this crucial area as well," he told reporters.

Terrorism was a matter for mutual concern for India and Russia, Mr. Fernandes said. "We have a joint commitment to fight and defeat terrorism. We are partners in the global coalition against terrorism," he said. "The anti-terror war is likely to

be fought over a long-long time and we face similar challenges and share similar perceptions in this war." Commenting on the work of the Indo-Russian Intergovernmental Commission for Military-Technical Cooperation, which concluded in Moscow today, Mr. Fernandes said the two sides had signed a protocol which covered "all major issues of procurement and related questions".

Mr. Fernandes described the protocol as a "landmark document". He did not give any details apart from mentioning that it envisaged India's involvement in the Russian programme for the development of a fifth-generation combat aircraft and plans to set up joint ventures in defence industry

patterned after the Indo-Russia BrahMos company for the production and marketing of a supersonic cruise missile.

"We have succeeded in sorting out smoothly all issues that had to be ironed out," Mr. Fernandes said, without specifying whether the purchase of the Gorshkov aircraft carrier was among the issues resolved.

Mr. Ivanov said, in turn, that the two sides had discussed "big and serious plans" for defence cooperation between the two countries. "We are placing emphasis on developing high-end technologies and establishing service centres and knowledge-intensive joint ventures that will yield spin-off for both the defence and civilian sectors," he said.

'Pak. must end cross-border terrorism'

By Vladimir Radyuhin

MOSCOW, JAN. 17. Russia has reiterated its support for India's demand that Pakistan fulfil its obligations to end cross-border terrorism.

The Russian Security Council Secretary, Vladimir Rushailo, said Moscow shared Delhi's demand that Islamabad must "end infiltration of militants across the Line of Control and eliminate the terrorist infrastructure in Pakistan-controlled Kashmir".

Meeting the Defence Minister, George Fernandes, in the Kremlin today, the Russian security chief called for coordination of action by India

and Russia to stabilise the situation in South Asia. "The situation both globally and in the region between Russia and India — in Afghanistan and South Asia, which directly affects the interests of our two countries, requires constant coordination of our activities," Mr. Rushailo said.

The two sides came out in support of a peaceful settlement of the Iraqi problem.

The RIA Novosti news agency said Mr. Fernandes and Mr. Rushailo shared the view that "maximum use should be made of political and diplomatic resources of resolving the Iraqi problem through the United Nations".

18 JAN 2003

India, Russia sign accord on n-safety

By Our Special Correspondent

CHENNAI, JAN.16. The atomic power regulatory agencies of India and Russia signed an agreement of cooperation on January 15 in the field of safety regulation in the peaceful uses of nuclear energy.

The chairman of the Indian Atomic Energy Regulatory Board, S. P. Sukhatme, and the Russian Federal Nuclear and Radiation Safety Authority chairman, Yuri Vishnevskiy, signed the agreement which will allow personnel from either country to familiarise themselves with the practices of both countries. The agreement is valid till the beginning of the regular operation of the Koodankulam plants.

The agreement was a follow-up to the understanding reached between the erstwhile Union of Soviet Socialist Republics and India on November 20, 1988, and the supplement to the Inter-Governmental Agreement of June 21, 1998, to set up two 1000 Mwe Russian reactors at Koodankulam.

INDIA

Hard bargaining at Indo-Russian defence meet

HD-12 17/1
By Vladimir Radyuhin

MOSCOW, JAN. 16. The Indo-Russian Inter-Government Commission on Military-Technical Cooperation has met in Moscow for an annual review of bilateral defence agenda, dominated by a multi-billion package deal involving the Gorshkov aircraft-carrier as well as nuclear-capable bombers and submarines.

The third session of the IRIGC meeting from January 15-17, co-chaired by the Defence Minister, George Fernandes, and the Russian Minister for Industry, Science and Technology, Ilya Klebanov, is being conducted in tight secrecy.

Russian sources attributed this to hard bargaining over the terms of the package deal. Taking advantage of India's keenness to get four Tu-22M3 backfire strategic bombers and two Akula-class nuclear submarines, Russia is trying to get India pay a higher price for the Gorshkov refit and add more items to the deal, the sources said.

While the two sides have agreed on the price of MiG-29K fighter planes and Ka-series helicopters to be based on Gorshkov, differences persist over the cost of the warship's refit, valued differently at between \$400 to \$800 million. Also, Moscow wants to link the supply of the bombers and nuclear submarines to the sale of MiG-AT trainers for the IAF.



The Defence Minister, George Fernandes, with the Russian Foreign Minister, Igor Ivanov (left), in Moscow on Thursday. — Photo: Vladimir Radyuhin

Undaunted by India's declared preference for the British Hawk aircraft, the MiG aircraft corporation has not abandoned hopes of winning the contract for the supply of 66 trainers to the IAF and will display its MiG-AT at the Bangalore airshow next month.

Another possible reason for the secrecy is that Mr. Klebanov is under fire for his handling of defence cooperation with India. Experts say that Russia is

ceding positions on the Indian weapons market to Western companies because it is neglecting such a mainstream tendency in defence cooperation as international production cooperation and mergers.

"With a rare exception, Russian companies have fallen behind West European and Israeli firms in setting up direct business links (with Indian defence factories)," the *Nezavisimaya Gazeta* said today, adding that Russian

arms manufacturers account for a mere 25 per cent share in India's \$4-billion defence acquisitions budget.

Experts blame Mr. Klebanov for this situation. "As long as Klebanov is in charge of defence ties with India, there won't be any coherent government policy of promoting factory-to-factory production ties between the two countries," said Konstantin Makienko, deputy head of the Centre for Analysis of Strategies and Technologies.