

U.S. arms supply will not hit India-Pakistan talks: Mulford

By Our Diplomatic Correspondent

NEW DELHI, DEC. 13. The \$1.2-billion American arms package for Pakistan, including eight P-3C surveillance aircraft, will not have a negative impact on the ongoing India-Pakistan dialogue, the U.S. Ambassador to India, David Mulford, said today.

On December 9, the Indian leadership, after meeting the U.S. Defence Secretary, Donald Rumsfeld, had said the arms sale could have repercussions on its dialogue with Pakistan and "impact on the positive sentiment and goodwill for the U.S. in India."

At a press conference, Mr. Mulford said that Mr. Rumsfeld's visit had taken place with the "blessings" of the U.S. President, George W. Bush. Washington, he stressed, had provided a draft agreement on "inter-operability" of the U.S. and Indian armed forces to New Delhi, and hoped it could be concluded soon.

The U.S., the Ambassador said, had similar agreements with 90 other countries and the accord related to "house-keeping" issues.

Pointing out that the U.S. wanted separate, free-standing relationships with India and Pakistan, Mr. Mulford said it was important to de-hyphenate these ties.

While India was an emerging world power, the same could not be said about Pakistan, which was, however, a key American ally in the war against terror. It should be noted that Mr.

Rumsfeld did not touch Pakistan during his recent visit to India.

Mr. Mulford said the U.S. wanted to become a bigger supplier of arms to India. Referring to the issues of cost and "reliability" raised by the Indian side, he took the view that this could not be a unilateral action. It takes two to tango, he stressed.

He argued that the "reliability" issue was greatly overblown since India and the U.S. now had a strategic relationship. India's desire to play a larger regional and global role was accepted by the Washington, he pointed out. However, he added that given the American system (and the role played by Congress) there could be no "100 per cent insurance."

According to Mr. Mulford, there was no specific discussion on the Patriot system during Mr. Rumsfeld's visit to New Delhi.

The discussions, he said, were part of the Next Steps in Strategic Partnership (NSSP). The Ambassador, however, stopped short of giving details of discussions with India on the issue of missile defence, which is part of the NSSP agenda.

U.N. reforms

On whether the U.S. had a view on India's entry into the U.N. Security Council as a permanent member following the High-Level Panel's report into U.N. reforms, Mr. Mulford said Washington had not yet come out with a statement on the report.

Pointing out that the U.N. Secretary-General, Kofi Annan, would come out with his own "refined" report in March, the Ambassador said the issue of U.N. reforms was complex and Washington had to enunciate its

policy carefully.

About India discussing the issue of transit rights to Afghanistan through Pakistan with Mr. Rumsfeld, the envoy said the Defence Secretary had responded positively to the point that was

made to him.

However, Mr. Rumsfeld had given no commitment on the issue.

Asked about America's "expectations" from India on Iraq, Mr. Mulford said he could not re-

ally "pronounce" on that.

Asserting that the U.S. had not made any specific requests to India for troops or other items, the Ambassador said India would have to determine its own plan towards Iraq.

India 'paranoid' over F-16s: Pakistan

By B. Muralidhar Reddy

ISLAMABAD, DEC. 13. Accusing India of being "paranoid" over its efforts to acquire F-16 fighter aircraft, Pakistan today rejected weapons acquisition programme as disturbing and urged it to maintain symmetry.

"We must restore symmetry and bring stability to the region," the Pakistan Foreign Office spokesman, Masood Khan, told the weekly briefing. He was responding to reported statements by the Indian External Affairs and Defence Ministers voicing concern over the \$1.3-billion assistance programme to Pakistan by the U.S. and the sale of F-16 aircraft.

"By saying that, they are misleading Indian public opinion and misinforming the international community," Mr. Khan said.

"We have assurance from the highest level to continue with the peace process," he added.

'Modest programme'

"Pakistan is pursuing a modest programme to fill up the gap that emerged during the '90s due to U.S. sanctions, which crippled our capability," Mr. Khan said. Pakistan does not want to match India and enter an arms race. "India's shopping list for weapons is non-exhaustive and there should be a sense of balance," he said.

Mr. Khan said while the weapons acquisition of Pakistan was modest, India had a "very ambitious" \$95-billion weapons acquisition programme over the next 15 years. He said defence analysts and international defence think-tanks had noted India's massive purchase of weapons.

Mr. Khan said the

weapons acquisition programme would not have any bearing on nuclear and conventional confidence building measure (CBM) talks between the two neighbours beginning here tomorrow.

Two-day talks on nuclear CBMs begin here tomorrow while parleys on conventional CBMs will be held on December 15-16. This is the first time that the two sides would be holding talks on conventional CBMs.

The Joint Secretary of the Indian External Affairs Ministry, Mira Shankar, would be heading the Indian delegation.

Her Pakistani counterpart, Tariq Usman Haider, would be leading his country's delegation.

The two sides will discuss follow-up measures to an MOU reached in June to start hotline contacts between the Foreign Secretaries and other

measures. The Indian delegation would call on the Pakistan Foreign Minister, Khurshid M. Kasuri, Mr. Khan said.

Elaborating on issues to be taken up in the nuclear CBMs talks, Mr. Khan said being nuclear states, both countries needed an elaborate framework to avoid accidental and unauthorised launch of missiles.

The aim of the talks was to reduce the risk of accidents and hotline contacts would help in this regard, he said.

Mr. Khan said nothing much was expected from the conventional CBM talks, as this was the first time the issue would be discussed. "We would learn each other's perspective on various issues," he said.

The talks would focus more on understanding each other's positions, he said.

Bush II keen on better ties

10/12 HT-2
Rumsfeld told of New Delhi's concerns over America's arms sale to Pakistan

Saurabh Shukla
New Delhi, December 9

VISITING US secretary of defence Donald Rumsfeld sent a strong message on Thursday that the second Bush regime was keen on strengthening strategic ties with India. "The fact that he chose to come to India is the first positive signal from Bush II," remarked a diplomatic source.

During his meeting with Prime Minister Manmohan Singh, Rumsfeld stressed on Bush's seriousness to improve ties with India. Singh said he too was looking forward to the US president's visit next year.

However, India was blunt in conveying its concern over American arms supplies to Pakistan, which include eight Orion Maritime Surveillance aircraft that can detect and attack ships and submarines, anti-tank missiles and rapid-fire guns for warships.

Indian leaders told Rumsfeld that US defence aid to Pakistan was in no way connected to its fight against terror and it may have a serious impact on Indo-Pak dialogue.

Rumsfeld on his part tried to convince New Delhi that the US understood Indian sensitivities and its equation with Islamabad had nothing to do with how it viewed India. He emphasised that the US also wanted to enhance defence ties with India and the sale of PC-3 Orion aircraft, C-130 Hercules and Patriot missile defence system was on the table.

"Military-to-military and defence-to-defence relationship is a strong one.



Defence Minister Pranab Mukherjee with US Secretary of Defence Donald Rumsfeld at South Block in New Delhi on Thursday. PTI



POSITIVE SIGNAL: Donald Rumsfeld said its equation with Pakistan had nothing to do with how it viewed India

INDIAN CONCERN: New Delhi tells Rumsfeld that American defence aid to Pakistan was in no way connected to the fight against terror

AMERICAN DEAL: US placates India with willingness to sell PC-3 Orion aircraft, C-130 Hercules & Patriot missile defences

And this should be further knitted together as we go forward in the months and years ahead," Rumsfeld said.

Singh also told the US defence secretary that India was willing to discuss all outstanding issues with Pakistan as long as it kept its promise of checking cross-border terrorism in J&K. New Delhi also told him that Islamabad's terror infrastructure was still intact.

When Rumsfeld spoke about India's generosity in extending aid to Afghanistan, Singh said: "We can do a

lot more if we are given transit facilities by Pakistan. Transit facility is a normal right extended by neighbours in civilised societies." The prime minister also told Rumsfeld that India would help in the reconstruction of a secular and democratic Iraq.

Rumsfeld also met External Affairs Minister K. Natwar Singh, Defence Minister Pranab Mukherjee and National Security Advisor J.N. Dixit.

Rumsfeld is visiting India after his trip to Kuwait and Afghanistan.

Bush, Pervez rewind K-word

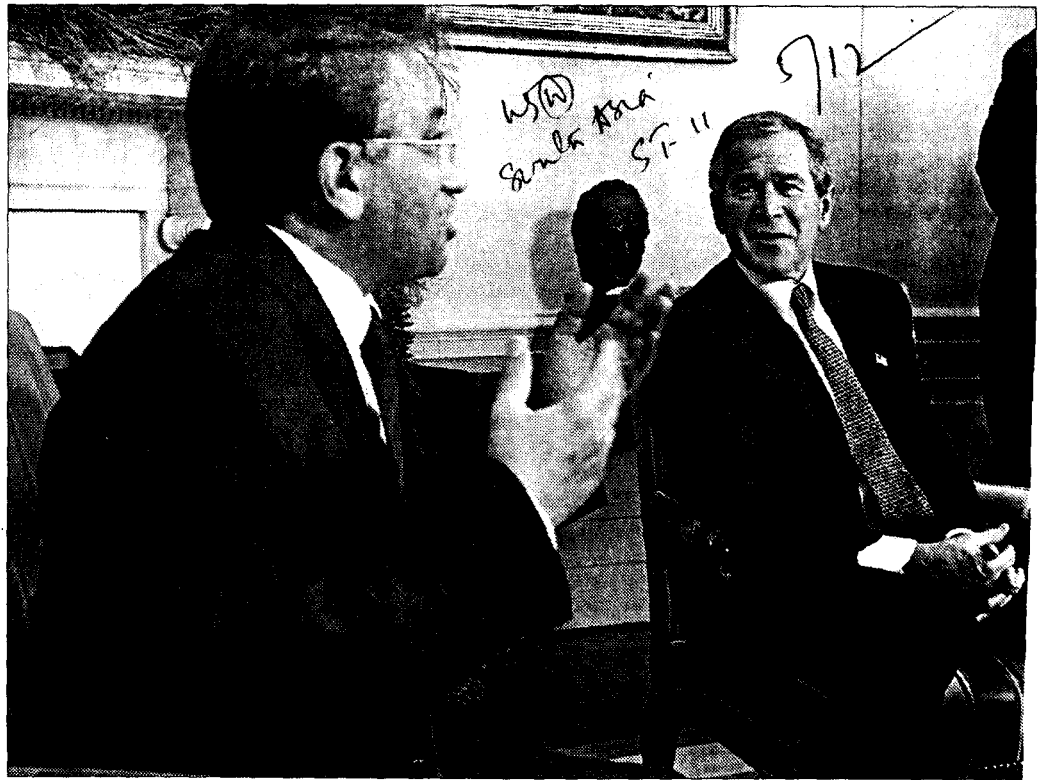
PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

WASHINGTON, Dec. 4. — US President George W. Bush today expressed hope that a solution will be found to the “historically difficult” Kashmir problem even as visiting Pakistani leader Gen. Pervez Musharraf said India and Pakistan are “moving well” in the dialogue process.

“We discussed our bilateral relations and relations between India and Pakistan. We hope there will be a peaceful solution to what has been a historically difficult problem between India and Pakistan,” Mr Bush said, with Gen. Musharraf sitting besides him, after the 40 minute-meeting at the White House. However, Mr Bush did not mention Kashmir by name.

Gen. Musharraf said the dialogue process with India was moving well and that he was “very optimistic of the future” on bilateral relations.

“We are moving well on the issue of confidence building measures. And also the dialogue process towards resolution of disputes, Gen.



George W. Bush with Gen. Pervez Musharraf at the Oval Office of the White House in Washington DC on Saturday. — AFP

Musharraf said after his meeting with Mr Bush. “We hope that we will move forward in all resolution of all

disputes and the core dispute happens to be Kashmir, therefore moving forward on that.”

He also said Mr Bush views the creation of a Palestinian state as “the core issue” for defeating global terrorism.

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THE STATESMAN

পাকিস্তানকে এফ-১৬, দিল্লি হাত গুটিয়ে ছিল

সীমা সিরোহি • ওয়াশিংটন

২২ নভেম্বর: সেপ্টেম্বরেই জানা হয়ে গিয়েছিল, পাকিস্তানকে এফ-১৬ যুদ্ধ বিমান বেচতে চলেছে আমেরিকা। তা সশ্বেও হাত গুটিয়ে বসেছিলেন ভারতীয় কূটনীতিকেরা। বুশ প্রশাসনকে চাপ দেওয়া দূরে থাক, বিষয়টি নিয়ে প্রায় কোনও নড়াচড়াই করেননি তারা। এ দেশে ভারতের রাষ্ট্রদূত রণেন সেন তো গত মাসে বলেই দেন যে, পাকিস্তানকে এফ-১৬ বিক্রি নিয়ে ভারত কোনও আপত্তি করবে না। কারণ তাদের আরও ভাল পরিকল্পনা আছে। সেই ঘোষণার পরেও এ বার ইসলামাবাদের এফ-১৬ পাওয়া ঠেকাতে উদ্যোগী হয়েছে নয়াদিল্লি। ওয়াশিংটনে এসে মার্কিন জাতীয় নিরাপত্তা উপদেষ্টা কন্ডোলিজা রাইসকে সেই আপত্তির কথা জানিয়ে গিয়েছেন ভারতের বিদেশসচিব শ্যাম সারন। স্বাভাবিক ভাবেই কোনও আশ্বাস পাননি। কেননা, অনেক দেরি হয়ে গিয়েছে।

গত বছর পাকিস্তানকে আর্থিক ও সামরিক সাহায্য দেওয়ার কথা ঘোষণা করেন প্রেসিডেন্ট জর্জ বুশ। গত সেপ্টেম্বরে খবর বেরোয়, 'সন্ত্রাসের বিরুদ্ধে যুদ্ধে' সহযোগিতার জন্য ইসলামাবাদের হাতে এফ-১৬ যুদ্ধ বিমান তুলে দিতে চলেছে আমেরিকা। এর পর গত সপ্তাহে ৯৭ কোটি ডলারের অত্যাধুনিক সামরিক সরঞ্জাম বিক্রির সিদ্ধান্ত নিয়েছে বুশ প্রশাসন। সেই প্যাকেজে অবশ্য এফ-১৬ নেই। কিন্তু পাকিস্তানের এই যুদ্ধ বিমান পাওয়া যে এখন শ্রেফ সময়ের অপেক্ষা সেটা স্পষ্ট। বুশ প্রশাসন সূত্র বলেছে, এফ-১৬ আর সামরিক প্যাকেজ নিয়ে নিজেদের অবস্থান স্থির করতেই অযথা সময় নষ্ট করেছে ভারত। এখন যা পরিস্থিতি তাতে এই প্রক্রিয়া বন্ধ করা

তাদের পক্ষে সম্ভব নয়। তারা বড়জোর বুশ প্রশাসনকে চাপ দিয়ে নিজেদের জন্য কিছু আদায় করে নিতে পারে।

ঘটনা হল, ওয়াশিংটনের সঙ্গে সম্পর্কের উন্নতি সশ্বেও বাস্তব অর্থে কিছুই পায়নি নয়াদিল্লি। কৌশলগত সমঝোতার পরবর্তী পদক্ষেপ (এন এস এস পি) নিয়ে দু'পক্ষে আলোচনা চলছে। ভারতকে অত্যাধুনিক প্রযুক্তি সহযোগিতা গোষ্ঠীর (এইচ টি সি জি) সদস্য করেছে আমেরিকা। কিন্তু এই পথে মার্কিন সাহায্য পেতে বহু সময় লেগে যাবে। এ দফার সফরে এইচ টি সি জি-র বৈঠকে যোগ দিয়েছেন সারন। তবে দু'বছর ধরে আলোচনা চললেও কাজের কাজ কিছুই হয়নি। ভারতের দাবি মেনে প্রতিরক্ষা ক্ষেত্রে যৌথ উদ্যোগে নারাজ আমেরিকা।

বিশেষজ্ঞ মহল বলেছে, এমনিতেই এখন বুশ প্রশাসনের যাবতীয় মাথাব্যাথা ইরাক আর ইজরায়েল-প্যালেষ্টাইন নিয়ে। ভারত নিয়ে মাথা ঘামাবার সময় তাদের নেই। সেই অবস্থায় নয়াদিল্লি যদি গা আলগা দেয়, নিজেদের অবস্থান স্থির করতে এত দেরি করে, তা হলে ভারতের ভাঁড়ার শুন্যই থেকে যাবে।

এ দিকে, পাকিস্তানের এফ-১৬ পাওয়া ঠেকাতে না-পারার জন্য মার্কিন মুলুকে ভারতের হয়ে তদ্বিরকারী (ভারত-লবি) সংস্থা একিন গ্যাম্পের 'চাকরি' যায়নি বলে দাবি করেছে এখানকার কূটনৈতিক মহল। তারা বলেছে, কোন কোন বিষয়ে তদ্বির করতে বলা হবে তার তালিকা তৈরি করতেই খানিকটা সময় নিচ্ছে ভারতীয় দূতাবাস। সেই কারণেই খরচা বাঁচাতে মাসিক ৫০ হাজার ডলারের চুক্তি বাতিল করা হয়েছে। পরের মাসে যখন নতুন লবিষ্ট খোঁজা হবে, তখন আরও দু'টি সংস্থার সঙ্গে একিন গ্যাম্পের নামও বিবেচিত হবে বলে কূটনৈতিক মহলের খবর।

No decision yet on F-16s for Pak: US

S. Rajagopalan
Washington, November 20

THE UNITED STATES has informed India that it has taken no decision "so far" on Pakistan's long-pending request for F-16 jets.

The issue was raised by Foreign secretary Shyam Saran at a meeting here with secretary of state-designate Condoleezza Rice, during which he conveyed India's strong concern over the US's impending \$ 1.2 billion arms sale to Pakistan.

Rice gave no indication of any reconsideration of the package, now before US Congress, but sought to stress that President George W. Bush was personally committed to taking the US-India relations forward.

There has been renewed media speculation that the US is actively considering supply of F-16s to Pakistan. An unnamed Pentagon official had been quoted last month as saying that Congress would be consulted on the issue.

Speaking to reporters after his

meetings with Rice and other top officials, Saran said that he raised both the arms package and F-16 issues.

"I pointed out the repercussions such supplies could have on the ongoing India-Pakistan dialogue, which is poised at a rather sensitive juncture," he said.

Rice came up with the assurance that the US remained very supportive of the Indo-Pak dialogue, and that it would continue to take up New Delhi's concerns about cross-border terrorism

with Islamabad.

On the F-16s issue, she did not go beyond the standard formulation that no decision has yet been taken on the subject. Asked if this did not mean that the subject was very much on the table, Saran said he would not interpret it thus.

Apart from Rice, Saran met Deputy Secretary Richard Armitage, Deputy Defence Secretary Paul Wolfowitz, Under Secretary of State Mark Grossman, Under Secretary of State for Economic Affairs Alan Larson and Under

Secretary of Commerce Kenneth Juster. Saran said that at all these interactions, he could discern a "continuing strengthening commitment" to strengthen US-India ties.

He was confident that many initiatives launched during the first Bush term would be carried forward "with even greater vigour in the second term".

\$1.2 bn US arms deal with Pak

Press Trust of India

WASHINGTON, Nov. 18. — The US is selling Pakistan eight Orion surveillance aircraft, related equipment worth \$970 million and anti-tank missiles. Pakistan has requested other equipment as well which can have no use against terrorists but only against the army and navy of a government enemy, says a media report.

The Pentagon has already notified Congress about the sale of eight P-3C Orion surveillance aircraft, *The Washington Times* said.

In addition, the Defence Security Cooperation Agency was quoted by the paper as saying that it plans to sell Pakistan 2,000 TOW-2A missiles and 14 TOW-2A Fly-to-Buy missiles in a deal valued at \$82 million.

Pakistan had also requested the sale of six Phalanx rapid-fire 20-mm guns for surface ships, and the upgrade of six gun systems, a contract worth up to \$155 million, the agency said. The total value of the package could be as high

as \$1.2 billion.

The notification was silent on any possible sale of F-16 aircraft, eagerly sought by Pakistan. Though it said "the proposed sale of this equipment and support will not affect the basic military balance in the region," the paper suggested that many of the equipment sought by Pakistan had no use against Al-Qaida or Taliban but against enemy countries.

Lawmakers have 30 days to block the proposed arms sales but defence officials and Congressional sources said that such a development is unlikely.

In Islamabad, while declining to react to non-inclusion of the sale of F-16s in the deal, Pakistan foreign office spokesman Mr Masood Khan said that the deal was a good development. "We do not want to go into specifics. There is a proposal transmitted to US Congress. We can express satisfaction over burgeoning relations with US. Pakistan has legitimate defence requirements and we welcome attention being paid to our requirements," he said.

সবার উপরে স্বার্থ সত্য

প্রতিটি নির্বাচনই কিছু প্রশ্ন এবং কিছু উত্তর লইয়া আসে। নির্বাচনের পূর্বে মস্তিষ্কে প্রশ্নেরা উতলা হয়, নির্বাচনোত্তর কালে প্রাপ্ত উত্তরগুলির সহিত বোঝাপড়া করাই রীতি। সাম্প্রতিক মার্কিন প্রেসিডেন্ট নির্বাচন উপলক্ষে সাগরপারে এই ভারতভূমেও সেই প্রশ্নোত্তরের পালা চলিয়াছে। প্রশ্নগুলির মোদ্দা বক্তব্য, রিপাবলিকান জর্জ ডবলিউ বুশের পরিবর্তে জন কেরি হোয়াইট হাউসে আসীন হইলে এই দেশের প্রাপ্তি-অপ্রাপ্তির খতিয়ানটি কী হইবে? এবং বুশ ক্ষমতায় থাকিলেই বা লাভ-ক্ষতির পাল্লা কোন দিকে কী ভাবে উঠিবে নামিবে? কেবির পরাজয় এবং বুশের ক্ষমতায় প্রত্যাবর্তনের পরে ভারতের বিভিন্ন স্তরের অগণিত মানুষ যখন মুচকি হাসিয়া স্বস্তির শ্বাস ফেলিলেন, সেই মুহূর্তটি কার্যত ইতিহাসের একটি পরিহাস। পরিহাস, কারণ চার বৎসর পূর্বে যখন ডেমোক্র্যাট আল গোরকে পরাভূত করিয়া রিপাবলিকান জর্জ ডবলিউ বুশ আসিয়াছিলেন, তৎকালে অনেকেই প্রমাদ গনিয়াছিলেন। পোখরান-পরবর্তী অধ্যায়ে ডেমোক্র্যাট উইলিয়ম জেফারসন ক্লিন্টন ভারতে আসিয়া সৌহার্দের যে বাতাবরণটি সৃষ্টি করিয়াছিলেন, এই বুঝি তাহা ধসিয়া পড়িল। দানটি উল্টাইয়াছে। বুশ থাকিয়া গিয়াছেন বলিয়া ভারতে এক ধরনের স্বস্তিবোধ দেখা যাইতেছে। কেননা আউটসোর্সিং যথাপূর্বং চলিবে, বাণিজ্যে বাধা আসিবে না, পরমাণু অস্ত্র প্রসার রোধ নীতি কিংবা এইচ ওয়ান বি ভিসা লইয়াও দৃষ্টিস্তা থাকিবে না। পুষ্পসম্ভারে একটিই সম্ভাব্য কাঁটা, প্রতিবেশী পাকিস্তানের কর্ণধার মুশারফ হয়তো বেশ কয়েকখানি এফ-১৬ লাভ করিবেন।

নির্বাচনী ফলাফলের এমত বিশ্লেষণ একটি খটকার উদ্বেক করে। সাধারণ ভাবে বলিলে, ওয়াশিংটন ঠিক তাহাই করিবে যাহা ওয়াশিংটনের স্বার্থের পক্ষে অনুকূল। ইহা পূর্বাঙ্কেই স্পষ্ট ছিল যে, বুশ বা কেরি যিনিই লক্ষ্য আসুন না কেন, জাতীয় স্বার্থরক্ষার জন্য নয়াদিল্লিকে যতটুকু আনুকূলা প্রদর্শন করা দরকার, তাহাই প্রদর্শিত হইবে। যতই স্বাভাবিক মিত্রতার ধূয়া উঠুক না কেন, সেই তুলাদণ্ডটি একবিন্দুও নড়চড় হইবে না। পাশাপাশি, মুশারফও যে মিত্রতার সিংহভাগটি দখল করিয়া লইবেন, তাহাও মনে করিবার কোনও কারণ নাই। নিজস্ব স্বার্থের খাতিরে পাকিস্তানকে যে ভাবে ব্যবহার করা দরকার, বুশ তাহাই করিবেন। ইহাই বাস্তবতা। কূটনৈতিক বাস্তবতা। অর্থনৈতিক বাস্তবতাও বটে। সত্য, সংরক্ষণবাদী ডেমোক্র্যাট দলনেতা জন কেরি বাণিজ্য, চাকুরি এবং আউটসোর্সিং লইয়া যে কঠোর নিষেধাজ্ঞা আরোপের কথা ভাবিতেছিলেন, রিপাবলিকান জর্জ বুশের দৃষ্টিভঙ্গি সেই তুলনায় আপাতদৃষ্টিতে অনেক নমনীয়। বাস্তবজ্ঞান বলিতেছে, ঈশং ঘুরিয়া দাঁড়ানো মার্কিন অর্থনীতি যদি আচমকা মন্দার পথে পিছলাইয়া পড়ে, তখন মার্কিন স্বার্থ রক্ষার দায়েই রিপাবলিকান প্রশাসন এমন সব ব্যবস্থা গ্রহণ করিবে, যাহা বস্তুত ডেমোক্র্যাট দলের কর্মসূচির ভিতরে ছিল। তখন আউটসোর্সিং বন্ধ হইতে পারে, মার্কিন ভূখণ্ডে বহির্দেশীয় জনতার চাকুরিলাভ কঠিনতর হইতে পারে, আমেরিকার বিদেশে বিনিয়োগের হারও কমিয়া আসিতে পারে। এই সকল দাবি একদা জন কেরি তুলিয়াছিলেন বলিয়া জর্জ ডবলিউ বুশ ভাবনাগুলিকে বিষবৎ পরিত্যাগ করিবেন, এমন ভাবনা হাস্যকর। আপাত ভাবে যাহাকে লাভ বলিয়া মনে হইল, অর্থনৈতিক চিত্রটি উল্টাইলে সেই দানটি উল্টাইতে বিলম্ব হইবে না। আর, শেষ বিচারে ইহা স্বীকার করাই ভাল যে ভারতের হিতাহিত লইয়া বর্তমান বিশ্বের একমাত্র 'সুপার পাওয়ার' আমেরিকা বিশেষ ভাবিত নয়। মার্কিন বিদেশ নীতির অগ্রাধিকারের তালিকায় ভারতের স্থান এখনও নিতান্তই প্রাস্তিক। চিনের ন্যায় অর্থনৈতিক বৃহৎ শক্তি হইয়া উঠিতে পারিলে আমেরিকা ভারতের হিতাহিত লইয়া চিন্তা করিবে। নহিলে, মার্কিন অর্থনীতির উত্থান-পতনের মুখাপেক্ষী হইয়া থাকা বিনা উপায় নাই। মার্কিন স্বার্থরক্ষার প্রক্ষে জর্জ বুশ-জন কেবির ভিতরে কোনও ফারাক নাই। তাঁহারা সেই কথাটি কিন্তু স্পষ্ট ভাবেই বলিয়া দিয়াছেন। প্রশ্ন হইল, আমরা যথেষ্ট মনোযোগ দিয়া তাহা শুনিয়াছি তো?

6 NOV 2004

ANADABAZAR PATRIKA

Subcontinent hails Bush win US must help resolve J&K India looks to tangle at least now: Pak strengthen ties

Islamabad: Contending that Kashmir was an "international" issue, Pakistan on Thursday expressed hope that US President George W Bush would help in its resolution during his second term in office.

"Kashmir is no more an issue between India and Pakistan. It has now become an international one," information minister Sheikh Rashid said, adding, "Bush's second term will result in further improvement of ties between Pakistan and the US and might be beneficial for the settlement of the Kashmir imbroglio."

Remarking that Bush's return to the White House would ensure continuity in the war on terror and cement bilateral ties, he hoped the US leader would redress the grievances of the Muslim world and work with Islamic countries in resolving issues like Palestine and Kashmir.



Meanwhile, the opposition seemed disappointed with the US poll results as the Bush has been supporting Pakistan President Pervez Musharraf consistently. Terming the Musharraf-Bush relationship as "intertwined and hurting the cause of restoration of democracy", a senior opposition alliance leader said Bush must take a second look at the "blank cheque" he had provided Musharraf, overriding efforts to restore democracy in the country.

"Before 9/11, the US President refused to meet Musharraf. But now they have become thick friends. If Bush does not change his policy, Musharraf will continue to crush the opposition," he said, adding that the alliance was planning to launch a campaign in the European Union as it was taking a realistic look at the restoration of democracy in Pakistan. PTI

Washington: With President George W Bush returning to the White House for a second term, India has expressed confidence that its strategic relations with the US will gain "new strength".

"With President Bush's re-election, we can look forward with confidence to further strengthening Indo-US relations," India's ambassador to the US Ronen Sen said. He said that Indo-US relations had gained further importance was reflected in the composition of the India caucus in the House of Representatives—the largest for any country and the first and only caucus on India in the Senate.

"We look forward to the relationship gaining new strength and momentum in this process which has been set in motion in developing the strategic relationship between the two countries," Sen added.

Recalling that Bush had promised to visit India during his talks with Prime Minister Manmohan Singh in New York in September, the ambassador said a warm welcome awaited the President in India.

Pointing out that the thaw in Indo-US relations began during the Ronald Reagan presidency and continued during the term of Bush's father George Bush Senior, Sen said, "I personally know how warm the relationship was between Prime Minister Rajiv Gandhi and the two presidents Reagan and Bush was." PTI

5 NOV 2004

THE TIMES OF INDIA

Powell's tall claims fall flat in front of BJP

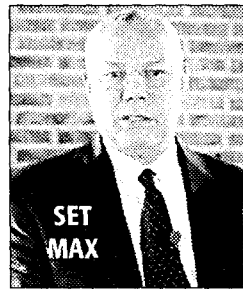
Our Political Bureau
NEW DELHI 26 OCTOBER

THE BJP on Tuesday denied US secretary of state Colin Powell's claim that he had "set up" the talks between Atal Bihari Vajpayee and his Pakistani counterpart Zafarullah Khan Jamali in April last year that triggered the process of normalisation of ties between the two countries. The party also rejected the US secretary of state's charge that the Indo-Pak stand-off following the jehadi attack on the Indian Parliament on December 13, 2001 had "a nuclear dimension."

A day after Mr Vajpayee, the former Indian Prime Minister, issued a strong denial to Mr Powell's purported statement, carried in an American newspaper on October 18, an angry BJP fielded former Union external affairs minister Jaswant Singh to put the record straight. "It'd be entirely incorrect on the part of Mr Powell to infer what he has done," asserted Mr Singh, adding that "the initiative by Mr Vajpayee on April 18 last year during his Srinagar

visit was based entirely on his own assessment and arose from his continuing desire for peace in the sub-continent."

The BJP veteran claimed that the US secretary of state did not have any telephonic conversation with Mr Vajpayee during the period concerned. "Prime Minister Vajpayee at no stage discussed



any issue with Mr Powell over the phone. To suggest that he set up the telephone call between the two prime ministers is totally incorrect. Since when has the US state department started functioning as a telephone exchange? Mr Powell's remarks are entirely fabricated. There is no truth whatsoever in it," Mr Singh insisted.

The way in which Mr Powell has gone about claiming credit for the resumption of the talks is a concoction and a figment of his imagination as the US' assertions about the presence of weapons of mass destruction (WMDs) in Iraq, he added. It also launched an offensive on the government for signing the Next Steps in Strategic Partnership (NSSP) document.

The Economic Times

27 OCT 2001

'Don't judge Indo-US ties solely on NSSP'

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE
NEW DELHI, SEPTEMBER 21

FORMER US deputy secretary of state Strobe Talbott today advised India against seeing Indo-US relations merely in light of developments related to Next Steps in the Strategic Partnership (NSSP).

Given constraints on the US as a member of the Non-Proliferation Treaty, he felt progress on the NSSP could not be the sole criteria to gauge the state of bilateral relationship.

Talbott, who is now the president of the Brookings Institution, was speaking at a roundtable discussion organised by the Observer Research Foundation (ORF) today. "There is a fixation in the Indian side on the acronym NSSP. But it would be wrong

to judge the health of Indo-US relations exclusively on the basis of the how fast or slow was the progress made on it," he said.

While not denying the significance of the NSSP agreed upon between former prime minister Atal Behari Vajpayee and US President George W. Bush, Talbott said there was a need to broaden the scope of the dialogue instead of being narrowly focused on the NSSP.

Restricting matters to the NSSP — which calls for increasing exchange in high technology, civil nuclear and civilian space cooperation — Talbott felt, could lead to disappointment. "As a member of the NPT, the US cannot do certain things that India would like it to do as part of the agreement (NSSP)."

In India to preside over a tie-up be-



As a member of the NPT, the US cannot do certain things that India would like it to do as part of the agreement (NSSP)

tween Brookings Institution and ORF, Talbott also took note of the relentless efforts being made by Prime Minister Manmohan Singh and Bush to improve the relationship.

And this momentum, he added, would be continued by Democrat candidate John Kerry if he were to be elected as the US President. Talbott was clear that Kerry's election to office will not affect the health of the bilateral relationship as he is unlikely to make any drastic changes in his South Asia policy. "And that would be a good thing as the relationship under both Clinton and Bush has improved,"

Talbott also played down the fears over outsourcing under a possible Kerry Administration, lending credence to view that the campaign rhetoric does not necessarily enunciate the policy that he may follow. "His

(Kerry) government's attitude towards outsourcing would be very different to his campaign."

On the Kashmir issue, Talbott said the US had no roadmap. He, however, said he favoured converting the Line of Control to a permanent border. At the same time, he emphasised that Washington can only play the role of a facilitator.

Meanwhile, Brookings and ORF today entered into a partnership. Over the next couple of years, scholars from both sides will collaborate their efforts to bring out studies and reports in areas of energy, international relations, security and governance.

Change of government in India, the impact of the US Presidential elections later this year and the likely shifts in focus of the US policies would also be covered in these studies.

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21 SEP 2004

21 SEP 2004

U.S. to ease curbs on space, n-facilities

By Sridhar Krishnaswami

WASHINGTON, SEPT. 19. India and the United States have come to a successful conclusion of the first phase in the Next Step in Strategic Partnership (NSSP) initiative. "The implementation of the NSSP will lead to significant economic benefits for both countries and improve regional and global security," a joint press statement says.

The successful conclusion of the first phase means that the Bush administration will ease export controls on Indian civilian nuclear and space facilities. The joint statement makes pointed reference to the fact that since January the two Governments have been closely working to conclude Phase 1 and this included implementation of measures to address pro-

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liferation concerns and compliance with American export controls.

"These efforts have enabled the United States to make modifications to U.S. export licensing policies that will foster cooperation in commercial space programmes and permit certain exports to power plants at safeguarded nuclear facilities. These modifications, including removing the Indian Space Research Organisation (ISRO) headquarters from the Department of Commerce Entity List, are fully consistent with U.S. Government non-proliferation laws, obligations and objectives," the statement reads.

Implementation group

"The United States and India will continue to move forward under the NSSP and have a joint

WS(N) Sridhar Krishna
implementation group for this purpose. The progress announced today is only the first phase in this important effort which is a significant part of transforming our strategic relationship," it says.

India's Foreign Secretary, Shyam Saran, who was in Washington for the "significant" reason of concluding Phase 1 of the NSSP said at a press briefing that this development on Phase 1 opens the door for "more expanded interaction" in the space and nuclear fields; and according to the senior Indian official the "nitty-gritty details" will become available after certain administrative procedures are out of the way.

From India's point of view, the emerging licensing regime is "far more liberal and predictable," says Mr. Saran stressing

in the process that in the whole exercise there is nothing like a "more iron clad" or a "less iron clad" guarantees.

"It is a cooperative venture" one in which both India and the United States are looking at "shared concerns," he maintained. One other thing that was pointed out by the Foreign Secretary was that the NSSP is a process and is not static; only the first phase of this process has been completed which will be followed by the second and the third.

No fixed agenda

All of this implying that the full process would go on for years and months and not necessarily confined to the currently identified fields. "We have certain broad contours of a road map."

Bush sees progress in India-Pakistan ties

By Sridhar Krishnaswami

W. Powell

WASHINGTON, APRIL 22. The United States President, George W. Bush has said that the situation in the subcontinent is much different than what it was in 2001 and that progress being made held out the hope that India and Pakistan will be able to sort out some of the "sticky issues."

that we had shuttle diplomacy to convince Pakistan and India not to go to war with each other. Powell went, then Straw went from Great Britain and then Armitage went and then whoever his equivalent is from Great Britain went. And it was the idea of the kind of talking everybody down.

Prior to his comments on the sub-continent, Mr. Bush talked about getting "good cooperation" from Pakistan and reminded the audience to think what "life was like prior to September the 11th" with Pakistan. "Pakistan was friendly to the Taliban. And fortunately our Government, thanks to the good work of Colin Powell, convinced President Musharraf that that was not in his interests. His interests were to be working with us and fighting off the terror. Of course since then the Al-Qaeda tried to kill him twice," he noted.

He was speaking at the Newspaper Association of America/American Society of Newspaper Editors Joint Conference. The question was the extent to which Mr. Bush was satisfied

with the "level of cooperation" among the Governments in combating terror attacks. Speaking of Pakistan, Mr. Bush made a remark about getting "good cooperation." He then turned generally to the goings on in that part of the world, once again taking credit for the easing of tensions between the two south Asian nations.

And now it's quite the opposite. They're talking with each other in a positive way and hopefully can get some — some sticky issues resolved for the sake of world peace and stability in that part of the world. I think progress is being made."

Mr. Bush said: "And I am pleased with the fact that progress is now being made on the relationship between Pakistan and India. I don't know if you remember, I think it was in the year '01...

And now it's quite the opposite. They're talking with each other in a positive way and hopefully can get some — some sticky issues resolved for the sake of world peace and stability in that part of the world. I think progress is being made."

And now it's quite the opposite. They're talking with each other in a positive way and hopefully can get some — some sticky issues resolved for the sake of world peace and stability in that part of the world. I think progress is being made."

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Grant of new status will affect India-Pakistan ties: Pallone

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By Sridhar Krishnaswami

WASHINGTON, MARCH 31. A senior Democratic law-maker has questioned the Bush Administration granting the status of "major non-NATO ally" to Pakistan arguing that this would, among other things, set back the emerging ties between India and Pakistan.

Frank Pallone, founder of the Congressional Caucus on India and Indian Americans, said on the floor of the House of Representatives that although India and Pakistan were on a slow and yet steady path for improved political, economic and defence relations "unfortunately that balance has been damaged by the Bush Administration's favourable treatment of Pakistan in naming it a major non-NATO ally."

Mr. Pallone sought to draw a distinction between the two South Asian countries. "India is a strong vibrant democracy of over 50 years and Pakistan is a rogue nation under military rule," Mr. Pallone said going on to stress that while New Delhi's nuclear programme is civilian-controlled, Pakistan's programme was sold to such nations as Libya, Iran and North Korea to assist in illegal and covert weapons programmes. Further, the New Jersey Democrat said, "India is protecting its

citizens from terrorism in Kashmir and Pakistan is sponsoring terrorist activity in its own backyard."

According to him, naming Pakistan a 'major non-NATO ally' is completely inconsistent with U.S. policies. "Pakistan is not a democratic nation, Pakistan supports terrorism in Kashmir and Pakistan has engaged in nuclear activity for which it has recently pardoned the key scientist who aided covert nuclear programmes in rogue nations. The results of this new designation will be devastating," Mr. Pallone said.

The lawmaker said the most

immediate concern of the designation is the rapid and large-scale supply of military equipment from the United States to Pakistan, including possibly F-16s.

He said this was cause for concern because "U.S. military supplies that were given to Pakistan for use against Russia and China have been historically used against India."

"...I cannot understand why the U.S. has accorded Pakistan MNNA status. Pakistan has a history of abusing military and nuclear equipment and yet we are allowing them to have access to depleted uranium am-

munition, special privilege in bidding for certain U.S. government contracts, radar systems, attack helicopters and airborne early warning systems," he said.

Mr. Pallone said that Pakistan had already been allocated \$3 billion in assistance — 50 per cent of which is for military equipment — for its assistance in the war against terrorism.

"The Bush Administration must re-evaluate its policies towards Pakistan — the new designation of MNNA is unfair, inappropriate and most importantly dangerous given the volatile nature of the South Asia region," he added.

'Friends of India' group in U.S. Senate

By Sridhar Krishnaswami

WASHINGTON, MARCH 31. The 'Friends of India' group, with both Republicans and Democrats, has been formally organised in the United States Senate and is similar to the Congressional Caucus on India and Indian Americans, which is in existence in the House of Representatives for the last decade.

The announcement of the move in the Senate came from Senator John Cornyn, the force behind the idea and a freshman Republican lawmaker from Texas.

This is the first time in the history of the Senate that a country-focussed caucus has been constituted.

Senator Cornyn is said to have announced at a

function of the American Association of Physicians of Indian Origin that the 'Friends of India' group in the Senate would be co-chaired by Senator Hillary Rodham Clinton of New York.

It is being said that the idea of the 'Friends of India' group in the Senate has the active support and blessings of several leading law-makers in that chamber that would include the Senate Majority Leader, Bill Frist, and the Minority leader, Thomas Daschle.

One report says that 20 Senators, including Mr. Frist and Mr. Daschle, have agreed to become members of the group. Prominent Democrats would include Senators Joseph Lieberman, Paul Sarbanes and Edward Kennedy; and on the Republican side would be Senators Orrin Hatch, Charles Grassley and Thad Cochran.

Old wine in old bottles

By Harold A. Gould

“THE MORE things change, the more they remain the same.” This is the oldest political cliché in the books. Yet when it comes to U.S. diplomacy in South Asia, it is clearly the most accurate. It always seems that just at the moment when a real turning point has been reached in relations between India and the United States, the ‘Pakistan obsession’ rears its ugly head and shatters the dream. It is threatening to happen again, for the umpteenth time.

The designation of Pakistan as a “major non-NATO ally” has obviously been cooked up by the neo-cons in the White House and their unreconstructed Cold Warrior cohorts lodged in the bowels of the State and Defence departments who simply never have got the point about South Asia — that addressing security threats in the region by putting guns in the hands of Pakistani military dictators destroys any chance of securing rapprochement and peace between India and Pakistan. For in the end, somewhere down this road, it reinforces the power of the wrong political elements in Pakistan: the Punjabi-dominated military, bureaucratic and oligopolistic elites who deplore democracy, hate India, and yearn for the chance to act out their political obsessions on the battlefield.

Ahhh, the proponents of making Pakistan a *de facto* NATO ally are saying: This time the situation is different. Has not General a.k.a. President Pervez Musharraf changed his ways? In the aftermath of the assassination attempts on him, ordained by the very Islamic fanatics whose favour until recently he and his predecessors so zealously curried, has not General Musharraf veered back toward the political centre, sent his army into the Waziristan sanctuaries whose existence he and the Inter-Services Intelligence winked at for such a long while, and even responded to the peace-dialogue initiated by Atal Bihari Vajpayee?

All of these things are true, up to a point, and indeed are to be encouraged. It was not infusions of the U.S. military wherewithal that prompted this, however. It was the terrorist backlash that finally got General Musharraf’s attention. India certainly saw signs that things in the Subcontinent might at last change for the bet-

In designating Pakistan as a “major non-NATO ally,” once again the U.S. has opted for short-term gains over long-term consequences.

ter, and acted. The Indian Prime Minister deserves great credit for seizing the moment and encouraging the development of a deliberative structure within which long-standing hopes might be transformed into substantive reality. Behind these initiatives has lain a deep-seated confidence held by perceptive observers of South Asian affairs that if outside powers bent on pursuing their self-centred global strategic agendas left these two countries to their own devices, India and Pakistan might indeed successfully resolve their outstanding differences and bring peace and stability to the region.

In the past, all hope of conflict resolution was repeatedly shattered by misguided U.S. foreign policy. Incorporating Pakistan into the anti-communist crusade tipped the scales toward the military as the country’s dominant political force in the 1950s when the choice between democracy and dictatorship hung in the balance. Subsequent decades of U.S. military assistance to Pakistan nurtured General Ayub Khan’s hegemonic dreams in the 1960s, and induced him to attack India in 1965. It emboldened General Yahya Khan to perpetrate genocide on his own people in the 1970s in order to accommodate Henry Kissinger’s ‘opening to China.’ It fed General Zia ul Haq’s megalomania from the 1980s into the early 1990s in order to rent out Pakistan as a staging area for the Afghan war. It was the infrastructural lubricant which enabled General Musharraf to once more impose ‘one-man democracy’ on his country following Kargil in the early 1990s.

In all these instances, the U.S. traded short-term gains for long-term consequences. In the end, these short-term gains always proved marginal in any event. The long-term consequences always proved to range from nil to disastrous. Twice they resulted in war between India and Pakistan. During the Afghan war, they admittedly helped to defeat the Soviet invasion, but the methods employed unleashed the Taliban and Al Qaeda in its wake. Now, it is the war

on terrorism which has generated the latest version of the old ways, and regrettably will most probably yield many of the same old long-range consequences.

Promising a new round of military assistance to Pakistan’s ruling elites is already being explained away as necessary in the short run to keep General Musharraf in the anti-terrorist campaign. No one can quarrel with the basic premise that offering inducements and encouragement to the Pakistanis to stay the course is a consummation devoutly to be wished. But the question is why this way, when all indications based on past experience indicate that it is the wrong way, and even more to the point, the unnecessary way. The answer is that the Cold War style of doing business in South Asia persists in the American political psyche. It evokes knee-jerk responses every time a new crisis arises.

By the time he reached New Delhi, Colin Powell was already in an obfuscation mode. He knew, but declined to mention, that Pakistan was, as in the Cold War and the Afghan war, going to be offered the status of ‘loyal ally’ all over again in the latest version of American apocalyptic foreign policy. His unwillingness to be truthful about this, while he and Mr. Vajpayee were sharing the podium in New Delhi, is stark testimony to the fact that the U.S. is well aware of the eventual negative consequences this manoeuvre will have for U.S.-Indian relations, and almost inevitably will have in the long run for regional peace and stability. Once again, the U.S. has opted for short-term gains over long-term consequences! Even if that means jeopardising the much-touted “new strategic relationship” with India.

If the new alliance materialises, and if it leads to the importing of new and improved F-16s, and perhaps a fleet of Abrams tanks, it almost certainly will lead as well to a revitalisation of the Pakistani military elite, and with it to a reigniting of their anti-Indian obsessions, to sabre-rattling and diplomatic intransigence, and to

a mortal wounding of the regional peace process.

All of which is so tragically unnecessary in the present context. Gen. Musharraf and his supporters are politically desperate men. Now that their purported Islamist surrogates have irrevocably turned against them, and are out for Gen. Musharraf’s scalp, the U.S. has no need to dole out blood money and military largesse to lure Pakistan’s President into the American camp. They have no place else to go if they want to politically, indeed even physically, survive.

This fact has given the U.S. an unprecedented opportunity to use its influence to try and achieve the long-needed and long-awaited higher good for South Asia. That is, not to encourage another arms race behind the facade of the war on terror which down the road can only lead to another nuclear-tipped confrontation between India and Pakistan. Instead, Secretary Powell should have come to South Asia with a plan for steering Pakistan out of the morass of militarism, politically expedient anti-Indian jingoism, and enervating authoritarianism in which it has been mired for half a century. He could have suggested that the U.S. adopt an actively cooperative role in supporting Mr. Vajpayee’s recent initiatives to which Pakistan, in fact, has shown some receptivity. He could sprinkle it with a pinch of military assistance sufficient to meet the needs of a limited campaign against Osama’s montane bailiwick.

This could have been, and still can be, accomplished so easily in the face of the forces now playing on Gen. Musharraf, instead of coming to South Asia with just another sop to Pakistani political vanity and militarism at India’s expense. Every sign points to the readiness of an increasing proportion of the Pakistani people to support social and political reforms that will terminate their country’s role as a marketplace for Islamic extremism and terrorism, and propel them instead into the genteel embrace of the global marketplace where the rewards are prosperity and political civility, not death and destruction.

(Harold Gould is a Visiting Scholar in the Center for South Asian Studies at the University of Virginia.)

US lifts Musharraf sanctions

WJ (2) G. W. Bush
T. A. 2/6/04

IMTIAZ GULAND AGENCIES

Islamabad/Washington, March 25: US President George W. Bush has waived all sanctions on Pakistan imposed after President Pervez Musharraf seized power in a 1999 bloodless coup, rewarding a key ally in America's war on terrorism.

The waiver, which clears the way for Pakistan to receive hundreds of millions of dollars in direct economic aid, follows last week's granting of a major non-Nato ally status for Pakistan.

Bush, who has already removed most of the nuclear-related sanctions against Pakistan, yesterday issued an order waiving the coup-related restrictions, saying it "is important to (the) US' efforts to respond to, deter, or prevent acts of international terrorism".

This would facilitate the transition to democratic rule in Pakistan, Bush said in a written statement and instructed secretary of state Colin Powell to

transmit "this determination to the Congress and to arrange for its publication in the federal register".

However, most of the sanctions were either suspended or relaxed since 2001 onward.

The US President renews the waiver every year until the sanctions go away for good through a legislation from the Congress.

Pakistan welcomed the waiver. "This is a good decision and we welcome it," foreign ministry spokesperson Masood Khan said in Islamabad.

"The latest decision reflects the increasing co-operation between the two countries in many areas," Khan added.

The US President had last year announced a \$3 billion economic assistance package for Pakistan, including over a billion dollars to enable it to repay old loans.

Last week, Powell, during his visit to Islamabad, had announced that Pakistan would be designated a major non-Nato

ally by America in recognition of its invaluable contribution to the war on terror.

Pakistan has so far arrested and handed over more than 500 al Qaida and Taliban fugitives to the US.

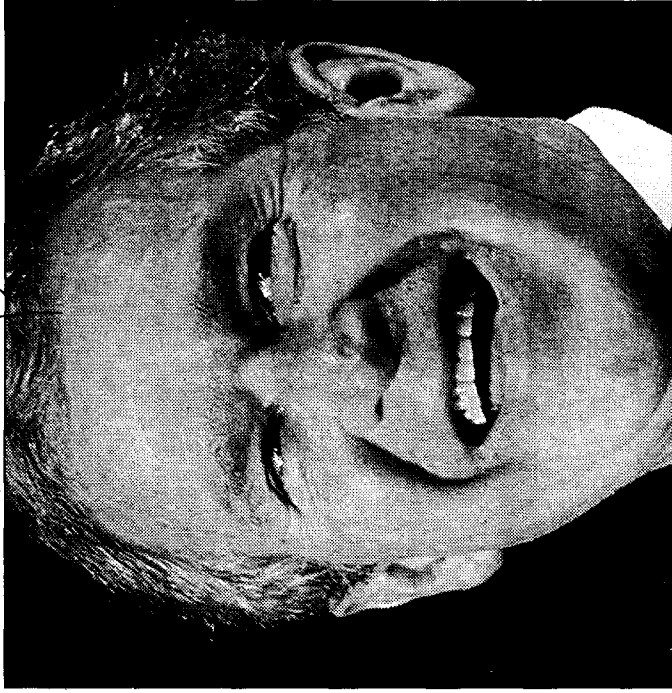
As an acknowledgement of Islamabad's move against religious extremists, terrorists and nuclear proliferators, the US government has allowed the Exim Bank to finance short, medium and long-term projects.

Air support

Pakistan has decided to allow US forces to use five of its bases and give landing rights to American aircraft anywhere in the country during an emergency.

It has also granted two-thirds of its airspace to be used as an air corridor by the US-led coalition forces.

"By doing so, Pakistan has had to reschedule or redirect many of its commercial flights", *The News* said quoting a US central command report.



George W. Bush laughs during the 60th Annual Radio and Television Correspondents' Dinner in Washington. (AFP)

HO-19

Our ties with India, Pakistan different: U.S.

27/3

By Sridhar Krishnaswami

WASHINGTON, MARCH 24. The State Department has taken the position that the United States' relations with India and Pakistan are different; and that if New Delhi does not see an interest in the status of a major non-NATO ally that is "fine" with Washington.

"The major non-NATO ally status is a particular aspect of our relationship with Pakistan... We are de-hyphenating the relationships that we have with India and Pakistan and ... consigning the hyphen to history so that we have different relationships with Pakistan and with India," the State Department spokesman, Richard Boucher, said.

"The relationship we have with India is based on a number of factors: economic, strategic cooperation in a whole variety of areas. The most recent development, in fact, is a major step forward with what

is called the next steps in the strategic partnership," the spokesman said. The cooperation with Pakistan was a separate one based on a separate set of activities that includes economics and terrorism.

"... Where the major non-NATO ally status recommends itself is in terms of what we do with Pakistan as various military sales and cooperation efforts against terrorism," Mr. Boucher said.

"So the answer to this is more that the relationships are different and therefore it was appropriate to do it with Pakistan. I take it India is saying they do not see an interest in it, and that is fine," he said.

When asked whether New Delhi had said "No, Thank You" to the status, the spokesman responded: "We have, I think, made it clear to them that it is available for discussion if they should be interested..."

NYT questions Pakistan as ally

S. Rajagopalaan
Washington, March 21

THE UNITED States's decision to grant "major non-Nato ally" status to Pakistan has drawn flak from the country's most influential newspaper, *The New York Times*.

Amid growing doubts whether the "high-value target" currently being pursued by the Pakistani forces is al-Qaida's No. 2 Ayman al-Zawahiri, the paper termed the US offer "excessive".

Raising a question on Islamabad's credentials for the honour, the NYT said: "Pakistan's efforts to capture Dr Zawahiri are welcome, but it is excessive to offer even a symbolic promotion to one of America's least reliable allies." It attacked Secretary of State Colin Powell for striking "a somewhat surreal note" in Islamabad when he announced that the Bush administration was preparing to confer the special status on Pakistan.

Powell also came in for at-

tack for "lavishing undeserved praise" on President Pervez Musharraf for democratic progress instead of urging him to stop "manoeuvring" against unfettered elections and the country's main secular parties. "Such declarations (by Powell) diminish American credibility as a consistent force for democracy," it noted.

American media in the last few days have been saturated with reports of Musharraf's military offensive in the rugged terrain close to the Afghan border. By Saturday, however, doubts cropped up whether the man "cornered" by Pakistani forces was indeed Zawahiri.

The NYT itself felt Musharraf has succeeded in distracting American attention from many legitimate questions vis-a-vis Pakistan. Americans, it commented, are as threatened by rogue states and terrorists armed with Pakistani nuclear blueprints as they are by al-Qaida fugitives currently holed up in South Waziristan.

Let the cricket spirit influence Indo-Pak ties: Powell

Statesman News Service

NEW DELHI, March 17. — The American Secretary of State, General Colin Powell, hoped the spirit of the ongoing cricket series would permeate the India-Pakistan composite dialogue, much like the "ping-pong match" which resulted in a thaw, decades ago, in US-China relations.

"You know it's fascinating what sports can do. I can go back through the years longer and tell you that it's a simple ping-pong match that got the US and China into a discussion that led to the kind of relationship we

now have with China," Gen. Powell said in an interview to *Doordarshan*.

Clarifying that this was not exactly the same, "but when people come together, go to each other's country, and watch a conflict being played out on the field of sport, as opposed to the field of battle... then why can't that same spirit, that same philosophy infect other aspects of relations," he said. Praising Mr Atal Behari Vajpayee's peace initiative before leaving New Delhi for Kabul and Islamabad, he added: "And let that be a hope, let's hope that the spirit of cricket that we have seen in the last few days, affects the whole comprehen-

sive dialogue between the two sides." But the thrust of Gen. Powell's visceral relations which, he said, echoing the Mr Yashwant Sinha, were "at their best, ever".

Asked how the American public and the Bush administration viewed the Indian elections, he said: "With great interest, you have a fascinating electoral system". The electronic voting system in India was perhaps superior to the many systems in the USA, the Secretary of State said. "So we're watching a democracy in action again. And we hope it will be a well-fought battle between those who're

vying for political power and the people of India will speak as to how they wish for it to be done in the future".

"The United States will respond in a way to whoever prevails in this contest, because we know that in the democratic contest, the results will rest on a solid democratic base", he said. "We also know that the relationship now existing between India and the United States is so strong, that we look forward to working with whatever leadership the Indian people decide to put it on."

Promising that USA will remain a "steadfast friend" of peacemakers in both India and Pakistan, the Secre-

tary of State said that American interests in Pakistan were not defined by the state of Indo-Pak relations, but by Pakistan's "regional and global importance," adds PTI. And he assured Pakistanis that "like you, we want to see Mohammed Ali Jinnah's vision fulfilled — a peaceful, prosperous, democratic Pakistan contributing to the well-being of South Asia and the world."

Gen. Powell, who arrived in Afghanistan's capital Kabul today ahead of his Pakistan visit, wrote in an opinion piece in Pakistan's *The News* daily: "As India and Pakistan work to resolve their differences, the

United States will remain a steadfast friend to the peace-makers on both sides and we will continue to build strong bilateral ties with each country in its own right."

The USA has "enthusiastically" supported the "far-sighted steps" towards reconciliation taken by President Pervez Musharraf and Mr Vajpayee, he said. "Two years ago, India and Pakistan were spiralling towards conflict. Now, both leaders are shaping a composite dialogue, looking for ways to expand bilateral trade and promoting people-to-people ties, such as the cricket matches," Gen. Powell said.

THE STATESMAN

18 MAR 2004

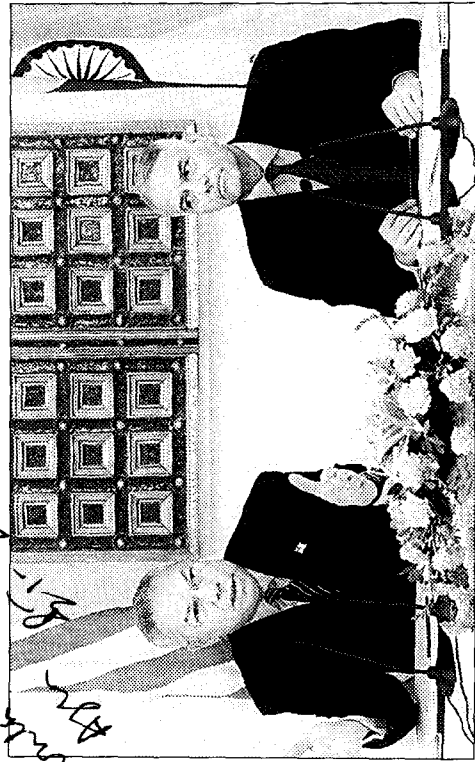
Powell eases fears over nuke leakage from Pak

Our Political Bureau
NEW DELHI 16 MARCH

SEEKING to ease India's concerns over possibility of nuclear proliferation in the neighbourhood, US secretary of state Colin Powell said on Tuesday that his country would see to it that nuclear hawking from Pakistan was dismantled completely.

"We can't be satisfied until the entire network is gone, branch and root," he said at a joint press conference with external-affairs minister Yashwant Sinha here. New Delhi voiced apprehensions about nuclear weapons falling into the hands of non-state actors and terror outfits. Mr Powell also asserted that he would speak to President Pervez Musharraf about the possibility of involving others in the operation.

The US Secretary of State said he was



TWO OF A KIND: US secretary of state Colin Powell and external affairs minister Yashwant Sinha in New Delhi on Tuesday. — APP

confident that Mr Musharraf was determined to remove this evil "as we all should be, to get to the heart of this and to make sure that there are no residual elements of this network left."

Sharing the Indian view on dismantling terror camps across the border, Mr Powell, while indicating a positive feedback, emphasised that they should be of a permanent nature. On the issue of the sale of F-16 fighters to Pakistan, he said the US had not yet taken a decision. "No decisions have been taken with respect to any particular military package, especially F-16s," he said.

Mr Sinha, who continued discussions with Mr Powell over a working lunch after their 90-minute meeting, said the two sides had agreed to follow up "energetically and expeditiously" the agreement on the next steps to be taken on "quarrel issues" by the two countries.

US wants cricket spirit in talks

New Delhi
16 MARCH

AWARE of the wave created by the current India-Pakistan cricket series, visiting US Secretary of State Colin Powell on Tuesday hoped the spirit of the game would "influence" the composite dialogue between India and Pakistan.

"It's fascinating what sports can do. I can take you to 30 or more years back when a pingpong match between the US and China led to a discussion, which resulted in the kind of relationship we have with China today," Mr Powell told Doordarshan. —PTI

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OUR BUREAU

New Delhi, March 12: Four days before he reaches the sub-continent, Colin Powell has predicted a "Bollywood blockbuster" of a relation with India but with an outsourcing twist.

At the same conference where the US secretary of state spoke through videoconferencing, Prime Minister Atal Bihari Vajpayee threw his weight behind outsourcing. He said it is a "natural consequence" of "the very process of liberalisation (that) has created competitive skills, which are available for utilisation by businesses everywhere".

Powell said "in the years ahead, I see the US-Indian relationship becoming rich and vibrant as a Bollywood blockbuster" but foresaw "twists and turns of plot and some challenges for the characters to overcome".

The "challenges" he spoke about were perhaps a reference to outsourcing, an issue that has been of late a hiccup in the otherwise excellent relations between the two countries.

"The American people will find it less difficult to accept outsourcing if India helps generate more American jobs by supporting trade liberalisation in the World Trade Organisation and further opening its markets to US exports," Powell said at the 'India Tomorrow 2004' conclave here organised by *India Today*.

"The US market remains much more open to Indian firms and their products than is the Indian market to US trade and investment," he added.

Vajpayee indicated he was not a votary of unbridled liberalisation but said "we should not now drive a reverse process" as "the world has spent the last decade trying to make sensible economics prevail over the temptation for short-term political gains".

Trying to tread the tricky path of unveiling the government's future economic agenda in the run-up to the general elections, the Prime Minister said "understood and followed properly, it (liberalisation) brings about national resurgence and takes the nation to strength, prosperity and greatness".

"A thriving, peaceful, democratic India is taking its place on the world stage, and the United States looks forward to acting in close partnership with her," said the US secretary of state, who is expected in Delhi on Monday night. "I have no doubt that there will be a happily-ever-after result for India, for America and for the world community."

Powell will hold detailed discussions with foreign minister Yashwant Sinha — and other senior leaders like the Prime Minister — on bilateral, regional and global issues of mutual concern.

He would then go to Pakistan for talks with President Pervez Musharraf and other leaders in Islamabad. Powell's last stop would be Afghanistan, where he would assess the country's political process and reconstruction.

Powell, who had in the recent past taken credit for nudging

THE TELEGRAPH

13 MAR 2004

U.S. welcomes India-Pakistan joint statement

By Sridhar Krishnaswami

WASHINGTON, FEB. 20. The Bush administration has applauded the "vision and determination" of India and Pakistan to seek a peaceful settlement of all bilateral issues.

"...We saw the joint statement that was put out at the end of the initial talks between the Foreign Secretaries of India and Pakistan. And that lays out a schedule for bilateral discussions. And we welcome these efforts and applaud the vision and the determination of the governments of India and Pakistan to seek a peaceful settlement of all bilateral issues," the White House spokesman, Scott McClellan, said.

The U.S. has been in "close contact" with leaders in India and Pakistan for quite some time "There was certainly a period where tensions were on the up-rise and now I think you are seeing that tensions are decreasing in the region," he said.

Russia happy

By Vladimir Radyuhin

MOSCOW, FEB. 20. Russia has hailed the India-Pakistan agreement to carry forward a

composite dialogue as a road-map for full normalisation between the two countries.

"Moscow welcomes the outcome of the Islamabad round of Indo-Pakistani talks and hopes that they will create a basis for promoting mutual understanding and full normalisation of relations between the two leading nations of South Asia," the Russian Foreign Ministry said referring to the joint statement of the Foreign Secretaries of India and Pakistan defining the modalities and timeframe for bilateral dialogue.

"The strengthening of peace and stability in the Indian sub-continent will no doubt make a weighty contribution to creating a healthier international climate in the region and throughout the world."

A leading Russian expert on South Asia warned against pinning too much hope on quick progress towards lasting peace in the region.

"India and Pakistan will try to arrive at some sort of compromise at their talks, but there have been no visible shifts in their specific differences," Vyacheslav Belokrenitsky of the Oriental Studies Institute said in an interview.

THE HINDU

29 FEB 2001

America junks Pervez claim

Pak knew of proliferation earlier: Boucher

Press Trust of India
Washington, February 11

SEEKING TO disprove Pakistan President Pervez Musharraf's claim that the US had not given him convincing proof about nuclear proliferation activities, the State Department has said that it provided "pieces of information" from time to time as part of the "ongoing dialogue" on the issue.

"We have talked to them at different moments about different issues that might have arisen which we might have learned about. So it is not a single moment of information," State Department spokesman Richard Boucher said.

It's rather an ongoing dialogue that covered both the general concerns that we have had about possibilities, and then from time to time, pieces of information that related to different aspects of things that we might have encountered or known were going on," he said.

In an interview with the *New York Times* on Monday, Musharraf shared the blame for the delay with Washington, saying it was not until October that American officials provided him with evidence of the activities of Abdul Qadeer Khan.

But, Boucher said the US non-proliferation dialogue with Pakistan certainly goes back much farther than October (when Deputy Secretary of State Richard Armitage went to Pakistan).

"What I would say is that we have had longstanding concerns about proliferation that could come from Pakistan. We

have discussed non-proliferation issues with Pakistan repeatedly over a long period of time and it has been an issue of concern to us and President Musharraf as well", he said.

Boucher said that he was not in a position to go into what the Department said to the Pakistan Government at different times, because "that gets into what we knew at different times about activity that was going on."

"Once again, I'd say that Pakistan has taken the matter seriously over time and particularly with regard to the current investigation and what they are doing to make sure that Pakistan is not a source of proliferation, he said. "We welcome that progress and will continue to work with Pakistan as Pakistan investigates and also works itself with the international community," he added.

At this point, said Boucher, the investigation is still ongoing. "I believe they shared some information with the international community, with the International Atomic Energy Agency, but I am not in a position to describe the results of their investigation. Obviously, they are the ones to do that when it is appropriate," he said.

"We have seen a series of commitments from Pakistan," said Boucher. "I refer specifically to the ones in October of 2002 when President Musharraf made clear that he did not want Pakistan to be a source of proliferation activity, and then steps such as the current investigation that he has taken to make sure that did not occur," he said.

Powell to quiz Pervez on Khan's pardon

Agence France-Press
UNHQ, February 7

US SECRETARY of State Colin Powell has said that Washington accepted Pakistan President Pervez Musharraf's decision to pardon nuclear scientist Dr Abdul Qadeer Khan for clandestine proliferation of knowhow.

But, Powell added, he would raise the "circumstances" of the pardon of Khan, father of Pakistan's nuclear bomb, in talks with Musharraf in the days to come.

"This is a matter between Mr Khan, who is a Pakistani citizen, and his government. But it is a matter also that I'll be talking to President Musharraf about," he told reporters at UN Headquarters in New York on Friday.

"The action he took with respect to pardoning Khan is something that he felt it was appropriate for him to do and he has explained his position thoroughly," Powell said.

"I expect to be talking to President Musharraf over the next



Colin Powell
'Pervez-talk'

several days to make sure that there is a full understanding of what the AQ Khan network has done over the years so that there are no remnants of it left, and then there's no possibility of further proliferating activities coming out of that network."

Powell said the desire to make sure there was no more nuclear proliferation was "goal number one with respect to his

accountability".

Powell refused to be drawn by a reporter's question about whether the pardon sent the wrong message to other would-be proliferators of sensitive nuclear technology and expertise. "The biggest (proliferator) is now gone," he said, "so I think that is a remarkable success."

UN Secretary-General Kofi Annan said the Khan affair indicated that nuclear proliferation is "alive" and said that Musharraf was faced with a "difficult situation" because of his hero status to many in the country. "There has been quite a lot of black market activities that we have not been aware of or have not been able to contain," Annan said.

Admitting that it "sounds rather odd" to have pardoned Khan amid efforts to stop the spread of nukes, Annan said: "Obviously the President of the country has to manage his own national situation. What is important is the commitment that they are going to plug the loopholes and deal with everyone involved severely."