

# Our nuclear power programme is not vulnerable: Kakodkar

By T.S. Subramanian

CHENNAI, DEC. 6. "We are not vulnerable in our nuclear power programme. Our domestic programme based on self-reliance is robust," Anil Kakodkar, Chairman, Atomic Energy Commission, has said. He made this observation when his reaction was sought on Russia expressing its inability to extend the supply of low enriched uranium (LEU) fuel to the first two nuclear power reactors at Tarapur.

Russia has also said that it would not provide two more reactors for Koodankulam in Tamil Nadu.

Answering a question on whether Tarapur 1 and 2 depended only on the low enriched uranium as fuel and whether they could not be run on the mixed oxide (MOX) fuel which India has already developed, Dr. Kakodkar said: "If we get low enriched uranium, it is the preferred option. If you don't get it, you have to find alternative solutions. We have kept an open approach. Let us see how things move."

Asked what was the problem in running Tarapur 1 and 2 on

the MOX fuel, he said: "We have already proved the MOX fuel. We have made MOX fuel bundles and we have sort of used them in Tarapur. But we have to check out the technology. We have to reengineer the reactor core to make use of the MOX. Of course, we can do that."

The AEC Chairman said that "we have plans at this moment" to use the MOX fuel for the series of fast breeder reactors that India wanted to build. "So, we can take Tarapur in our stride."

Asked if India would build its own reactors at Koodankulam since Russia had decided not to supply more for the site, he said that "it is good to have similar reactors at the same site. We can build our Pressurised Heavy Water Reactors at Koodankulam and also somewhere else." The PHWRs that India would build at Koodankulam or elsewhere would generate 700 MWe.

"The point is that we have always looked upon external inputs to our nuclear power programme as additionalities. But our domestic programme is based on self-reliance. These

two are separate things. We have a policy and we will stick to that policy," he said.

Tarapur 1 and 2 in Maharashtra run on low enriched uranium. Russia provided 50 tonnes of LEU in 2001 to keep them running. At Koodankulam, two reactors called VVER-1000 from Russia, each with a capacity of 1,000 MWe, are under construction. Russia had earlier lobbied hard for selling two more reactors for Koodankulam.

In an interview to *The Hindu* in New Delhi on Sunday, Alexander Rumyantsev, Director of the Russian Federal Atomic Energy, expressed Russia's inability to resume the supply of LEU for Tarapur 1 and 2. He also scotched speculation that Russia would provide two more reactors for Koodankulam.

Mr. Rumyantsev said that the guidelines of the Nuclear Suppliers' Group stood in the way of Russia continuing to supply enriched uranium to Tarapur and selling more reactors for Koodankulam. Russia is a member of the NSG.

DAE surprised: Page 12

07 DEC 2004

THE HINDU

# We are a responsible nuclear power, says Manmohan

● "Natwar Singh's remarks not a policy statement"

By Our Special Correspondent

NEW DELHI, DEC. 16. There is no uncertainty over the country's nuclear policy, the Prime Minister, Manmohan Singh, asserted in the Rajya Sabha today. "India is a nuclear power and a responsible nuclear power," he said.

Dr. Singh was responding to clarifications sought by the Leader of the Opposition, Jaswant Singh, after question hour on a newspaper report about the External Affairs Minister, Natwar Singh's "remarks" to a South Korean newspaper.

The Prime Minister said he had also seen the report and would check its authenticity from Mr. Natwar Singh when he returned from his foreign tour tomorrow. In his assessment, the Minister's reported remarks must have been in the context of replies to questions from journalists. "It was not a policy statement."

Responding to Mr. Jaswant Singh's query on the continuity of the foreign policy, Dr. Singh emphasised that India's defence and foreign policy were

decided on continuity and consensus and "need to be kept out of national politics."

## 'Tradition broken'

Earlier, Mr. Jaswant Singh said that Mr. Natwar Singh's "statement" had broken a tradition followed by successive governments and "taken our domestic policies to foreign shores." According to him, to say that the National Democratic Alliance Government had entered into a nuclear standoff with Pakistan "belittled" the totality of the country's nuclear programme.

Nilotpal Basu of the Communist Party of India (Marxist) countered Mr. Jaswant Singh's assertion and sought to know whether "the great divide across the polity" following the nuclear test by the NDA Government at Pokhran on May 11, 1998 represented a consensus.

## 'He was stating a fact'

Asked about Mr. Natwar Singh's remarks, the External Affairs Ministry spokesman said: "As far as the External Affairs Minister's remarks are

concerned, he has acknowledged that the decision to cross the nuclear threshold was taken by the previous government in 1998. He was merely stating a fact; not expressing any disagreement or agreement with that decision." The spokesman stressed that Mr. Natwar Singh had also pointed out that India was not a party to the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT), as New Delhi considered it discriminatory. However, he had said the countries that had undertaken international treaty obligations should abide by their commitments.

"Therefore, as is obvious from what I have said, the news report that you have seen in the morning is based on misquotation and distortion of facts and I hope that this clarifies the matter," the spokesman said.

In a related development, the Bharatiya Janata Party criticised the "remarks" attributed to Mr. Natwar Singh. "We are proud that the NDA Government made India a nuclear power," V.K. Malhotra, the party spokesman, told presspersons.

Minister clarifies: Page 14

17 DEC 2004

THE HINDU

# 'N-option removed ambiguities'

Statesman News Service

NEW DELHI, Oct. 26. — Indicating a continuity in the country's nuclear doctrine, the Prime Minister told a conference of Army commanders that the decision to go nuclear had "helped remove potentially dangerous strategic ambiguities in the region."

"In fashioning our nuclear doctrine we have been guided by the policy of minimum nuclear deterrence and no first-use, underlined by restraint and responsibility," Dr Manmohan Singh told the Combined Commanders' Conference, which began today, dismissing suggestions that India become party to discriminatory non-proliferation regimes like the nuclear non-proliferation treaty or the Comprehensive Test Ban Treaty.

The Prime Minister expressed concern over the rise in incidents of insurgency and said there has been a steady growth of newer and non-con-



Chief of Air Staff S Krishnaswamy introduces Dr Singh to Air Force officers at the Defence Headquarters on Tuesday. — PTI

ventional challenges in recent years. "In addition to the conventional military threats, there has been a steady growth of newer and non-conventional challenges to national security which need to be responded effectively," he said.

He also took the opportunity to stress the need for joint and coordinated action with India's neighbours to ensure that

insurgent groups active in India did not find sanctuary and sustenance outside the country and that their supply and transit routes were cut off.

"We are for cooperation and dialogue with all our neighbours, including joint or coordinated action on the ground, to ensure that no Indian insurgent group finds willing sanctuary or sustenance and that the supply and transit routes are totally cut off," Dr Singh said. His government's first and preferred resort was diplomacy but "certainly not at the cost of the country's interests."

His government is also determined to put in place measures to reverse the trend of under-utilisation of allotted funds which in some instances had led to avoidable delay in acquiring key defence equipment for the armed forces.

"As our defence purchases are large and substantial, we must leverage them to serve the larger political and diplomatic ends," he said.

THE STATESMAN

27 OCT 2004

## **Nuke authority meets to review security**

*9 nuclear security from 15/10*

**New Delhi:** The Nuclear Command Authority (NCA), responsible for the country's strategic assets held a meeting here on Thursday, chaired by Prime Minister Manmohan Singh, and reviewed the nuclear security scenario.

The meeting did "some serious stock taking", but not in the context of, or retaliation to, any development in the neighbourhood, such as Pakistan's test-firing of its intermediate range ballistic missile 'Hatf-V' earlier this week, informed sources said. It approved steps to sustain the nuclear and missile capabilities within the relevant principles of India's nuclear doctrine.

The NCA reviewed "all aspects" of the country's nuclear capabilities, an official statement here said. TNN

THE TIMES OF INDIA

15 OCT 2004

9. ~~Manmohan~~  
Nuclear Embargo

# Manmohan says time's not ripe to sign NPT now

New Delhi  
7 OCTOBER

**A**SSERTING that India is a responsible nuclear power acting with due restraint, Prime Minister Manmohan Singh on Thursday said "circumstances" were not ripe for the country to sign the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT) now.

"I don't know whether the circumstances are ripe right now for us to sign that (NPT). But, we are voluntarily fulfilling all the commitments that go with being a responsible nuclear power acting with due restraint," Dr Singh said at a joint press interaction with visiting German Chancellor Gerhard Schroeder.

When asked about the prospects of India signing the NPT, Dr Singh said: "We are a responsible nuclear power. We act with restraint. We have 'no first use' doctrine in place. We have



**COMBINED EFFORTS:** Manmohan Singh with German Chancellor Gerhard Schroeder at a press conference in New Delhi on Thursday. — AFP

an impeccable record of export control so that any unauthorised use of sensitive nuclear materials can be effectively prevented."

Observing that India was itself a "victim" of the gaps that exist in the present non-proliferation

arrangements, he said: "I don't want to talk about it. We have seen, for example, the clandestine export of nuclear materials in our region. We are also committed to working with like-minded countries."  
—PTI

The Economic Times

8 OCT 2004

Decks cleared for Bush-Singh talks

# US lifts ban on nuke exports

Washington  
18 SEPTEMBER

**T**HE United States in a significant move on Friday agreed to lift export controls on equipment for nuclear facilities in India after

New Delhi assured it would address American non-proliferation concerns. US export licensing policies will also be eased to expand bilateral cooperation in commercial space programmes, officials said after talks in Washington between Indian foreign secretary Shyam Saran and US undersecretary of state for political affairs Marc Grossman.

A joint statement described the agreement, ahead of talks between Prime Minister Manmohan Singh and US President George W Bush on Tuesday, as "major progress". "What this shows is a growing relationship, both in terms of the number of issues we're dealing with, the importance of the issues and the strength of the cooperation," US state department deputy spokesman Adam Ereli said.

The deal was the first phase under the "Next Steps In Strategic Partnership With India" agreed in January between President Bush and the then Prime Minister, Atal Behari Vajpayee. Officials said the agreement marked a major milestone in Indian efforts to break out of the isolation from inter-

national high-technology after US lifted sanctions slapped on India's nuclear and space programmes following New Delhi's nuclear test blasts in 1998. The sanctions resulted in a freeze on exchanges in nuclear and other high-tech sectors such as "dual-use technology" which finds applications in both civilian and military use.

"Implementation of the (agreement) will lead to significant economic benefits for both countries and improve regional and global security," the statement said. In January, the US and India agreed to expand cooperation in three specific areas: civilian nuclear activities, civilian space programmes, and high-technology trade.

In addition, they agreed to expand dialogue on missile defense. The two governments have been locked in talks since then over India's implementation of measures to address proliferation concerns and to ensure compliance with US export controls, officials pointed out.

"These efforts have enabled the US to make modifications to US export licensing policies that will foster cooperation in commercial space programmes and permit certain exports to power plants at safeguarded nuclear facilities," the statement said. Among steps taken by the US was the removal of ISRO headquarters from a so-called "entity list" of the department of commerce. — PTI



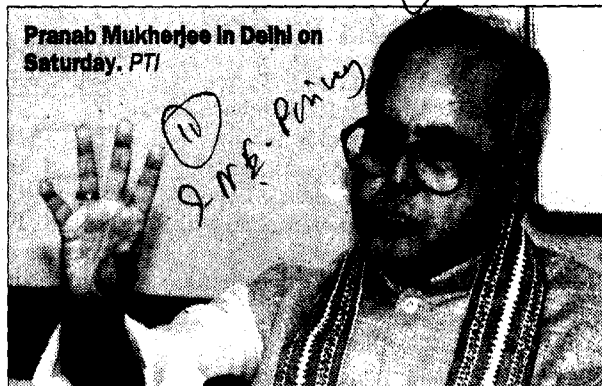
# 'Nuke deterrents in place'

9/2/6  
6/5  
ENS & PTI  
NEW DELHI, SEPTEMBER 5

**D**EFENCE Minister Pranab Mukherjee has said that India has credible nuclear deter-

rence systems in place and the specialised forces were being raised to tackle any nuclear threat.

"Whatever is needed to safeguard the country and to ensure effective deterrence, in line with our nuclear doc-



trine of 'no first use', has been done," Mukherjee said in an interview, adding that India has an understanding with neighbouring countries that information would be shared about missile tests.

Mukherjee has ruled out any scaling down of forces from the Siachen glacier, or from Jammu and Kashmir.

"Our presence in Siachen glacier is limited. The situation in Jammu and Kashmir is not yet conducive for thinning down of forces," he said.

About relations with Pakistan, he said a series of confidence-building measures had been proposed with Pakistan, including opening up of the road from Srinagar to Muzaffarabad in Pakistan-occupied Kashmir," Mukherjee said. On infiltration from across the LoC, he said figures available indicated that it had gone up in June-July which

is the time when it goes up.

While pointing out that the situation on the Sino-India border had considerably eased due to confidence-building measures taken up mutually, Mukherjee said a similar softer border approach on the western side was still distant.

Regarding the situation in Manipur, the Defence Minister for the first time said a Bill to retain the regional character of Assam Rifles would be revived soon. He said a Bill had been introduced by the previous government which had lapsed due to Parliament being dissolved and it was proposed to be revived.

Ruling out apprehensions that there had been de-escalation in military-level ties with the US after assumption of power by the UPA Government, Mukherjee said relations with the US were where it was.

# Technical tune to Agni test before talks

## OUR SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT

New Delhi, Aug. 29: The test-firing of Agni II has little to do with sending diplomatic messages and everything to do with technical requirements, Indian military sources said. But in South Asian militaries, peak, test-firing missiles is a different language altogether, often used to send not-so-subtle diplomatic messages.

Why India should time its test-firing of the Agni II missile now — the missile is already in limited series production and is being readied for induction in the armed forces — is a question that will be answered only by technologists and not the strategists. According to one estimate, it costs between Rs 25 crore and Rs 35

crore to produce the missile. Today's Agni II was test-fired from a mobile launcher at 12.55 this afternoon from the Interim Test Range at Wheeler's Island on the Orissa coast. A defence ministry spokesperson said this was a longer-range version of the Agni II. The Agni II was test-fired twice earlier — in April 11, 1999, and on January 17, 2001.

The range of the solid-propellant Agni II intermediate range ballistic missile can be varied according to payload and trajectory. The objective of today's test would be to reduce the circular error of probability for the longer-range variant, meaning that the missile was probably carrying a reduced payload.

The Agni II is designed to hit targets from 2,000 to 2,500

km and can carry both conventional and nuclear warheads weighing up to 1,000 kg. In military terms, it can be described as a counter to the Pakistani longer-range Ghauri II that Islamabad claims has a range of 2,000-plus km.

Defence sources said the 20-metre-long, two-stage Agni II was fired from a road or rail mobile launcher. The firing was witnessed by defence minister Pranab Mukherjee, the scientific adviser to the defence ministry, V.K. Aatre, and the project director, Agni, R.N. Agrawal, and over more than 100 scientists.

The sources said it was a "contained testfire". This probably means that the Agni II was not flown for the full range it is designed to fire and its trajectory was altered to

simulate the distance. A series of telemetry stations on the ground and on a naval vessel at sea tracked its flight.

Earlier tests were said to have checked the missile's re-entry control and guidance technology, the sources said. It takes the Agni about 12 minutes to travel its full range with a conventional payload.

Today's was the ninth test in the series of Agni missiles. The Agni I (700 km) has already been inducted into the armed forces as has been a variant of the Agni II.

If the timing of the testfire is intended to send a diplomatic message, it cannot augur happy news for the India-Pakistan peace talks. But even the test-firing of the Ghauri by Pakistan in June was just days

ahead of a crucial India-Pakistan secretary-level meet on nuclear confidence-building measures.

Indian foreign minister K. Natwar Singh and his Pakistani counterpart Khurshed Mehmood Kasuri are slated to meet in New Delhi next week after the first round of talks on eight subjects, including nuclear and military confidence-building measures, at the level of secretaries under the composite-dialogue framework.

It is of some significance, however, that though the political circles and the foreign ministries of the two countries have been sending out positive signals on the talks, the Indian military establishment, at least, has not been quite so enthused.



A short-range surface-to-surface Agni is paraded on Republic Day. (AFP file picture)

### THE FIREBREATHER

- Range: 2000-2500 km
- Payload: Nuclear and conventional
- Strike time: 12 minutes to full range
- Cost: Rs 25-35 crore each



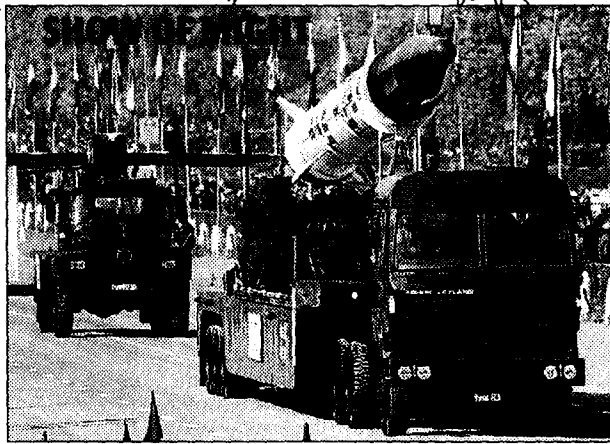
# 3rd Agni II test launch successful

Our Political Bureau  
NEW DELHI 29 AUGUST

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INDIA's quest to develop a solid missile defence took a step forward on Sunday, when it successfully test-fired the surface-to-surface Agni-II missile, which can cover targets in the 2,000-2,500 km-range, from the Integrated Test Range (ITR) at Wheeler's island in the Bay of Bengal off the Orissa coast.

This was the third successful test-firing of the intermediate range ballistic missile, which is capable of carrying both conventional and nuclear warheads. While the first test took place on April 11, 1999, just 11 months after the US and other western nations imposed sanctions against India for going in for the Pokhran nuclear explosions, the second one was conducted on January



17, 2001. The 2,000-2,500 km-range covered by the missile makes it more potent than Pakistan's Ghauri missile, as was evident by defence minister Pranab Mukherjee's statement in Parliament recently.

The rail-mobile Agni-II, according to defence ministry sources, has already entered limited-series production after successful tests and the Army was said to be raising a new missile group to handle this land-based

nuclear-deterrent. The Army has already raised three missile groups. While the 333 and 345 km-range Prithvi missiles, the 334 group is being armed with Agni-I road and rail-launcher batteries. The indigenously-developed ballistic missile's third test-firing was witnessed by the defence minister, defence secretary Ajai Vikram Singh and DRDO secretary A.K. Aatre, besides a host of experts from the various defence establishments.

Sunday's test-firing of the Agni-II variant has, according to defence experts, raised hopes of India being in the final preparatory stage for the launch of intermediate range Agni-III missile, which has a range of 3,000 km. Indian defence scientists have indicated that the country was close to launching the Agni-III missile.



# Hotline to avert nuclear crisis

Statesman News Service

## No pull-out from Pak border: Pranab

NEW DELHI, June 20.— The next time there's a possibility of a confrontation between India and Pakistan, the foreign secretaries of both countries will be able to pick up a "dedicated and secured" phone and avert a nuclear crisis. At the end of the first bilateral two-day meeting of experts and officials to reduce risk perceptions and promote nuclear confidence-building measures (NCBMs), a joint statement outlined various steps forward, including the establishment of a 'hotline' between the foreign secretaries and a moratorium on conducting further nuclear tests.

Conscious of the need to promote a stable environment of peace and security, both countries also agreed to "upgrade" the existing hotline between the Directors General of Military Operations (DGMOs).

"A dedicated and secure hotline would be established between the two foreign secretaries to prevent misunderstanding and reduce risks relevant to nuclear issues," the sev-



KOLKATA, June 20. — Defence minister Mr Pranab Mukherjee said here today that there would be no withdrawal of troops from the Pakistan border. "There is no such proposal," he said.

Ceasefire with Pakistan, however, will continue. — PTI (More reports on KP III)

en-point joint statement said. Details of the talks would be reported to the foreign secretaries before they meet in New Delhi on 27 and 28 June.

Both countries reaffirmed their unilateral moratorium on conducting further nuclear tests "unless, in exercise of national sovereignty," they decide that "extraordinary events have jeopardised" their "supreme interests".

They also decided to work towards

*Nuclear Energy Point*  
an agreement on pre-notification of missile tests. An arrangement exists between India and Pakistan to notify each other of missile tests, and it is mostly adhered to. There was no departure from the practice even when tensions were at their height in 2002.

*SP 21/6*  
The delegations agreed to hold more meetings to implement the measures outlined in the 1999 Lahore memorandum of understanding on nuclear CBMs. The statement said bilateral consultations on security and non-proliferation issues would continue "within the context of these issues in multilateral fora". It also called for regular working-level meetings among all nuclear powers to discuss issues of common concern.

Sources said India did not raise the issue of Pakistan's disgraced nuclear scientist Dr AQ Khan as Delhi did not see the issue as a bilateral one, but as a matter of "much wider" international concern.

**Baglihar talks:** Expert-level talks will be held tomorrow on the Baglihar hydro-power project on the Chenab in Jammu and Kashmir.

SATURDAY, JUNE 19, 2004

## REDUCE NUCLEAR RISK WITH PAKISTAN

THAT NUCLEAR WEAPONS in the hands of India and Pakistan have made the region a much more dangerous place is in the nature of an axiom that only advocates of the discredited doctrine of deterrence will bother to contest. Nuclear weapons are weapons of mass destruction, instruments of genocide. In India, democratic opinion has always regarded such weapons with horror. However, subsequent to the Pokhran and Chagai explosions of mid-1998, there has been a concerted effort by the so-called strategic affairs community and by influential sections of the political establishment to legitimise, even glorify, nuclear weapons as acceptable means of achieving regional and global power. The sophisms of deterrence theory and false claims made to the effect that nuclear bombs are political weapons meant not for use but for self-defence and national empowerment have been recruited to the job of inuring public opinion to the real implications of producing, stockpiling, inducting and deploying these weapons of mass destruction. Until Pokhran-II, official Indian policy ranged itself firmly against the doctrine of nuclear deterrence. That position was subverted by a bizarre South Asian variant: a 'minimum credible nuclear deterrent' not backed by any coherent doctrinal elaboration. An extraordinarily hawkish nuclear doctrine was drafted only to be left on hold; nobody knows what India's nuclear doctrine amounts to in practice. A fallout from Pokhran was that India's voice was virtually silenced on issues of global nuclear disarmament. Indeed its establishment became a late convert to the discriminatory global nuclear bargain, going so far as to welcome the National Missile Defence and Theatre Missile Defence proposals of the United States. There was also dubious posturing: India's nuclear weapons, it was claimed against the evidence, were not Pakistan-centric.

The new Congress-led Government in New Delhi is yet to indicate its nuclear doctrine. However, the Common Minimum Programme adopt-

ed by the United Progressive Alliance promises that while "maintaining a credible nuclear weapons programme," the Government will evolve "demonstrable and verifiable confidence-building measures with its nuclear neighbours" and, on the international stage, "assume a leadership role in promoting universal nuclear disarmament and working for a nuclear weapons-free world." Against this background, External Affairs Minister Natwar Singh's informal advocacy of a "common nuclear doctrine" to be worked out among India, Pakistan and China holds much appeal; so far as the first two neighbours are concerned, it looks like an idea whose time may have come. The first ever official meeting between Indian and Pakistani experts to discuss nuclear confidence building measures, which opens in New Delhi today, provides an opportunity to identify common ground and work on a practical agenda to reduce nuclear risk in South Asia. In this connection, an article by M.V. Ramana and R. Rajaraman, both physicists, published on the editorial page of *The Hindu* (June 4, 2004) made two eminently sensible recommendations that "do not compromise national security in any real sense." The first is that the Indian Government should offer not to deploy nuclear weapons. The second is that it should stop installing early warning systems that clearly, in the specific South Asian context where the response time is dangerously short, increase the risk of accidental or unauthorised nuclear war. These two positive elements could constitute the basis of a common nuclear doctrine with Pakistan — and prove far more credible, as confidence building measures, than repetitions of the 'no-first-use' mantra that has virtually no practical value. But a red herring must be got out of the way: the quest for some kind of nuclear parity with China, which is in a different league and poses no strategic threat of any kind — any more than nuclear weapons in the hands of the United States, the United Kingdom, France or Russia threaten India.

THE HINDU

19 JUN 2004

9 N B P...  
3/6

# Natwar doctrine builds on Rajiv's disarmament plan

HT Political Bureau  
New Delhi, June 3

## Straight talk

CONTRARY TO insinuations in certain quarters, External Affairs Minister K. Natwar Singh's idea of a common nuclear doctrine for India, China and Pakistan isn't a half-baked idea. The concept has its genesis in Rajiv Gandhi's action plan for complete nuclear disarmament.

"The plan has been brought up-to-date (by Singh's Cabinet colleague Mani Shankar Aiyar) and remains a valid document. Within this vision, it is logical that common doctrines which aim ultimately towards a nuclear-free world should at least be discussed with all our interlocutors," an official source said.

Mooted at the UN General Assembly on June 9, 1988, the RG Plan aimed at a binding commitment by all nations to

FOREIGN MINISTER K. Natwar Singh on Thursday called his Pakistani counterpart Khurshid Mehmood Kasuri. Both ministers agreed not to talk to each other through the media in the interest of bilateral ties and the ongoing peace process. Singh told Kasuri that from now onwards the future of Indo-Pak ties "would not lie in the past".

PTI, Islamabad

eliminate nuclear weapons in stages within a practical and realistic time-frame. It said: "Changes are required in doctrines, policies and institutions to sustain a world free of nuclear weapons."

Singh spoke of the need for

a common doctrine at his first press meet after assuming charge. Some of the comments he made in the course of the interaction marked by witty remarks and deep insights into protracted international disputes, were in the nature of sharing perceptions on key issues on which policies might evolve following discussions in the Cabinet.

A source said Singh's remarks were a reaffirmation of the consistent Indian support for a nuclear-free world. "Matters relating to national security should not be trivialised," he said, adding: "The government consists of experienced leaders who would naturally give full consideration to all aspects of a proposal when it is formally made and discussed with the National Security Advisor."

Alluding to BJP leader Jaswant Singh's remark

making light of the common doctrine idea, sources said even Islamabad has underscored deeper examination of the "new and innovative" proposal. "Personal attacks on ministers won't be responded to," an official said.

THE PAKISTAN TIMES  
A JUN 2002

(10-10)  
4/6

# Reducing nuclear risk

By M. V. Ramana & R. Rajaraman

*As a primary risk reduction measure India should not deploy nuclear-armed missiles and aircraft or induct an early warning system.*

THE RECENT change of Government offers an important opportunity to reconsider Indian nuclear policy. The Common Minimum Programme of the United Progressive Alliance (UPA) is brief on this subject and mentions only that India will maintain a credible nuclear programme while evolving demonstrable and verifiable confidence-building measures with its nuclear neighbours. In and of itself, such a statement is not very different from what leaders of the Bharatiya Janata Party have said in the past. If the new Alliance wants to put a distinctive stamp on our nuclear policy, it would have to distinguish itself from the BJP by implementing some concrete changes through policy declarations and directives as well as actual on-the-ground practice. We would like to offer two specific recommendations that do not compromise national security in any real sense but are expressions of the commitment to nuclear disarmament and constitute confidence building measures.

The most important and basic commitment that the UPA should offer is **not to deploy nuclear weapons**. Deployment means keeping the warheads armed with nuclear explosives on delivery vehicles (ballistic missiles or aircraft) and keeping them ready for attacking a designated target. The United States and Russia keep thousands of nuclear weapons deployed on high alert, ready to be launched in a matter of minutes, owing to a combination of Cold War crises, military planning, technological advances, and nuclear doctrines, all tied closely to one another. From all public accounts, India and Pakistan are yet to deploy nuclear-armed missiles and bombers on a regular basis. However, there are early signs of the same factors that led the U.S. and Russia to deploy their weapons. It is this impending change of weapon status that should be explicitly and definitely ruled out by the UPA Government.

At least two dangers would result from such deployment. The first and greatest danger is that deployment opens up the possibility that nuclear weapons may be used accidentally or by unauthorised personnel, especially during a crisis. Deployment will almost inevitably involve delegating some authority to military officers on the field, allowing them to make the vital decision about using nuclear weapons. This is compounded by the poor state of communication obtaining in South Asia. (In November 2001, it was reported that Prime Minister Vajpayee could not make a di-

rect phone call from Air India One.)

It is the threat of unauthorised use that command and control systems are supposed to avert. However, even the most advanced command and control systems are not foolproof. (The many hazards of command and control for South Asia are discussed in Zia Mian's essay in M.V. Ramana and C. Rammanohar Reddy, eds., *Prisoners of The Nuclear Dream* [New Delhi: Orient Longman, 2003]). Deployed nuclear weapons pose conflicting demands. On the one hand, they have to be dispersed and with the military so that they could be used upon warning of an attack. On the other hand, the decision to use these weapons is so momentous that one would like only the highest political levels to be able to order their use, that too after due deliberation. All this is complicated by the widespread, large-scale effects of nuclear war, which could disrupt communication systems that link leaders or commanders with field personnel.

The complexities involved in preparing for all contingencies, especially given the short flying times for Indian and Pakistani missiles and airplanes to each other's territory, would inexorably involve situations where military personnel would have the authority to launch a nuclear attack without explicit orders from the highest levels of political authority. This possibility is ruled out by not deploying nuclear weapons.

The second risk resulting from deployment, over and above the risk of nuclear war from unauthorised use, is of serious accidents involving nuclear weapons themselves or their delivery vehicles such as missiles and aircraft. Such accidents might be initiated by an explosion or fire involving the delivery vehicles, especially missiles. A recent example of a serious accident involving a missile occurred on February 23, 2004 at the Sriharikota High Altitude Range. Engineers were testing a motor for the Agni missile when it caught fire and exploded, killing at least six people. If such an accident were to occur in an Agni missile loaded with a nuclear warhead, it could well lead to the dispersal of fissile material (plutonium or enriched uranium) into the atmosphere, potentially causing thousands of fatal cancers among the nearby population.

The above estimate of casualties is not for a nuclear explosion, but only

for the detonation of the chemical explosive in the weapon. This chemical explosion could well trigger a nuclear explosion. An accidental nuclear explosion with a yield of 15 kilotons, the same as the weapon detonated over Hiroshima, would destroy over 5 square kilometres from the combined effects of blast and firestorms. Over 24 square kilometres would be subject to radioactive fallout at such levels that half the healthy adult population would die of radiation sickness. If this were to happen in the vicinity of a large South Asian city, several hundreds of thousands of people would die. In addition, such an explosion, especially in times of crises, might be assumed to be a nuclear attack and lead to a nuclear response. Thus an accidental nuclear explosion may even initiate a nuclear war, which could cause millions of casualties.

In fact these risks prompt going beyond simply non-deployment of nuclear weapons to actually keeping the weapons disassembled.

Our second recommendation is that the UPA Government immediately stop installing early warning systems. These systems are intended to detect incoming ballistic missiles and, it is hoped, inform decision makers that nuclear war has begun before the warheads themselves explode. The last few years have witnessed the acquisition of key components of an early warning network, including the Green Pine radar from Israel. There have also been reports of attempts to purchase the Arrow anti-ballistic system. However, as we have calculated in some detail elsewhere, these systems simply cannot offer more than a few minutes of warning in the South Asian context. This is grossly insufficient for decision making in any meaningful sense of the term.

The deployment of a hugely expensive early warning system is worse than useless. It brings with it the danger of accidental nuclear war due to false alarms and miscalculations. There are numerous examples from the experience of the U.S. and Russia. Over the decades, the U.S. built an elaborate and sophisticated system, involving a worldwide network of satellites and radars and using state-of-the-art technology, with layers of filters to remove false signals. Yet from 1977 through 1984, the only period for which official infor-

mation has been released, the early warning systems gave an average of 2,598 warnings each year of potential incoming missiles attacks. Of these about 5 per cent required further evaluation. Needless to say, all of them were false.

Information about the Russian experience is limited, but there have been many false alarms there too. In 1995, for instance, a Norwegian scientific rocket launch was interpreted by the Russian early warning system as a possible attack and the matter went all the way up the command chain to President Yeltsin.

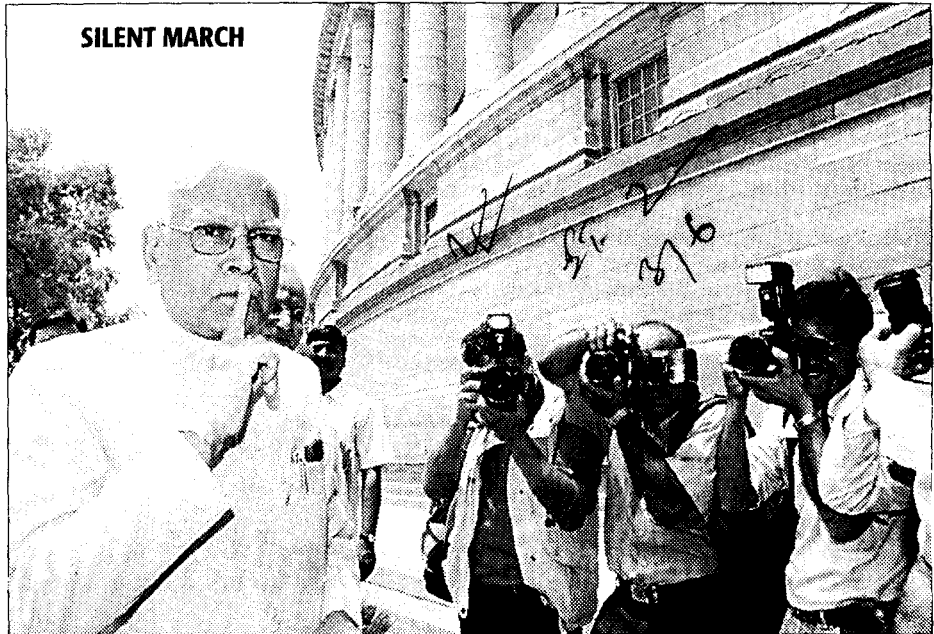
Fortunately in all these cases, the mistake was discovered in time to forestall any counter attack decision. Nevertheless, the shocking fact is that on many of these occasions, the world was just minutes away from a possible nuclear holocaust through error. The geographical proximity of Pakistan and India does not allow us even the minor reassurance that may be sought from the much greater distance between the U.S. and USSR, and longer missile flight times.

The only sure way to eliminate nuclear risks is to abolish all nuclear weapons, regionally and globally. This should be the goal of all rational and peace loving people. The CMP assurance that the new Government "will take a leadership role in promoting universal, nuclear disarmament and working for a nuclear weapons-free world" is therefore welcome. But India and Pakistan already possess dozens of nuclear weapons. With every additional day that they exist they continue to pose the serious dangers we have outlined. Therefore even as we strive to eliminate them altogether, it would in the meantime be prudent to institute various risk reduction measures, which would lower the chances of a destructive nuclear war. The primary risk reduction measures we recommend is that India not deploy, as a matter of stated formal policy and practice, nuclear-armed missiles and aircraft, or induct an early warning system. This requires no new technologies or organisations — indeed not deploying would reduce enormously the demands on nuclear infrastructure while increasing safety and national security.

(M. V. Ramana is Fellow, Centre for Interdisciplinary Studies in Environment and Development and co-editor of *Prisoners of the Nuclear Dream*. R. Rajaraman is Professor Emeritus of Theoretical Physics, Jawaharlal Nehru University and Visiting Research Scholar at the Program on Science and Global Security, Princeton University, U.S.)

J-N E Pakistan

## South Block Fails To Cover Common Ground



SILENT MARCH

### Natwar's nuke stand turns off Jaswant...

Our Political Bureau  
NEW DELHI 2 JUNE

IT'S not every day that you see Jaswant Singh overreacting. But even the normally reticent former external affairs minister couldn't hide his surprise on Wednesday at one of the grandest statements that has come out from South Block after the new government took charge.

Mr Singh, who had overseen radical policy shifts regarding India's stand towards China, Pakistan and US, on Wednesday joined the political and analyst chorus bewildered at the new external affairs minister Natwar Singh's proposal for an Indo-Sino-Pak Common Nuclear Doctrine.

"I don't have a problem if it is a personal view or fanciful outpouring," Jaswant Singh said. "If there is a serious intent then we would have expected some elaboration. It is important that we understand the underlying rationale that the doctrines of all the three countries are altogether different."

While the external affairs ministry is yet to come out with any more details on this, the issue is sure to be taken up in higher policy circles to the embarrassment of the new UPA government. Behind the noise of a common doctrine, the glaring incompatibility factor is not lost on any one.

For starters, there's the deterrence. India has a clear "no-first use" policy on nukes while Pakistan has clearly stated that it doesn't subscribe to the idea. As for China, "no-first" use has been voiced many times but has been blunted by the country's ambiguity regarding how it links its weapons of mass destruction capabilities to its foreign policy.

While a nuclear blackmail-free South Asia is in everyone's interests, a possible Indo-Sino-Pak nuclear bandwagon veers round the point of absurdity. After all, here are two states whom India for long, and even the West in recent times, have accused of violating international norms and trading nuclear secrets.

### ...gives security experts cause for worry too

Our Political Bureau  
NEW DELHI 2 JUNE

EVEN as Beijing and Islamabad preferred silence, security experts in the capital came out strongly against external affairs minister K. Natwar Singh's call on Tuesday for a common nuclear doctrine for India, China and Pakistan.

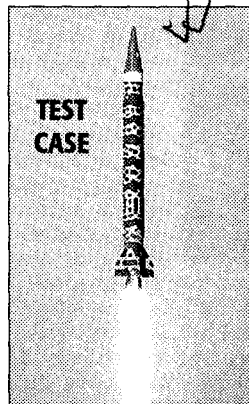
Mr Singh's prescription to evolve a common N-doctrine "to bring peace and stability" in the region had few takers, with most experts pointing to the non-feasibility of the proposal. There was no official response from Islamabad, while Beijing, being one of the five recognised nuclear powers, obviously did not want to say anything that would decrease the distance in acknowledging India's nuclear status.

"It is not possible to have a nuclear doctrine with Pakistan because there is conventional imbalance in our favour. That is the precise reason why Pakistan had refused to have a no-first use policy," a former envoy, who did not wish to be quoted, said.

Experts pointed out that China did have a no-first use policy, but had amended it to make it applicable only to those countries which had signed the NPT. As far as China was concerned, this clause was not applicable in India's case, as the latter is not a signatory to the NPT. A more compelling reason for Beijing is that it is already a signatory to the NPT and as such cannot pursue any other nuclear doctrine.

There was also some surprise over the manner in which Mr Singh announced the proposal at his press conference on Tuesday. "It is astonishing that the external affairs minister should air such views without the clearance of the cabinet committee on security. At least, the Prime Minister's approval should have been taken," a former diplomat said.

China's response, too, made it clear that it did not share the external affairs minister's enthusiasm. A statement from the Chinese foreign ministry said: "China always stands for complete prohibition and thorough destruction of nuclear weapons."



# Talks with Pakistan on nuclear issues on June 19, 20

*J. Nuclear  
issues  
P. 11*

By Amit Baruah

**NEW DELHI, JUNE 1.** The External Affairs Minister, Natwar Singh, announced today that India-Pakistan expert-level talks on nuclear confidence building measures (CBMs) would take place here on June 19-20 while the Foreign Secretaries would meet for the first round of their resumed composite dialogue on June 27-28.

Mr. Singh said at his first press conference that the National Security Adviser, J.N. Dixit, would be India's pointman for discussions with China — taking over as Special Representative from Brajesh Mishra. The Special Representatives would meet very soon. The Minister also said that India, China and Pakistan could work out a common nuclear doctrine.

With the fixing of the dates for talks on the nuclear CBMs and the first round of resumed Foreign Secretary-level talks, any uncertainty surrounding the composite dialogue process has ended. The Foreign Secretaries will discuss the issues of peace and security, including CBMs, as well as Jammu and Kashmir.

Mr. Singh made it clear that while India would play a role in the reconstruction and rehabilitation of Sri Lanka's northern and eastern regions, New Delhi would not agree to "Tamil Eelam" under any circumstances.

While the request for the extradition of the Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam chief, Velupillai Prabhakaran, remained on the table, India did not want to give it priority to ensure it did not become an impediment in the current peace process in Sri Lanka.

The future of India-Pakistan relations, he said, did not lie in the past. "We cannot forget the past, neither can we be prisoners of the past," Mr. Singh said, stressing that the past was strewn with booby-traps and high-tension wires. "We want to put an end to that." Asked about the Pakistan President, Pervez Musharraf's recent statements that progress on Kashmir was a must, Mr. Singh said India was not shying away from discussing anything. However, there could be difficulties if the approach was that without progress on Kashmir nothing could move forward, he said adding that India, too, had a point of view on Kashmir.

Referring to the points raised by his Pakistani counterpart, Khurshid Mahmud Kasuri, Mr. Singh said no public announcement had been made by India that the border could not be altered; the plebiscite issue was dead, the Shimla Agreement was the bedrock of bilateral relations and that no formal proposal had been made about applying the India-China model to Pakistan.

India was committed to the Shimla

Agreement, the Lahore Declaration of 1999 as well as the January 6 joint press statement issued by the two countries, Mr. Singh said adding that he had made these points at every meeting and referred to a "continuous chain" in India-Pakistan agreements.

"We are not running a static or sterile foreign policy," he said. About turning the Line of Control into an international border, he stated that no policy statement had been made. Mr. Singh said the Congress had given broad support to the Vajpayee Government on Pakistan even though the policy was not consistent. For instance, the Congress, while favouring a suspension of the bilateral dialogue with Pakistan after the December 2001 Parliament attack, did not want that bus, train and air links, overflights or cricket matches between the two countries be stopped. "The diplomatic drawer should not be shut," he said

On the agreement between Mr. Vajpayee and Gen. Musharraf during last night's telephone conversation that statements and counter-statements should be avoided, Mr. Singh said it would take "50 years" to reach the level of belligerent statements made by the former Prime Minister on Pakistan.

To a question, he said that if Gen. Musharraf wanted friendship with the new Indian leadership, it, too, would be friendly.

Missile defence talks: Page 11





# Politics of Security

## When Vajpayee said 'No' to Going Nuclear

By K Subrahmanyam

Though the British Labour Party took the decision to go nuclear in 1946, the first British nuclear test took place under the Conservative administration in October 1952. The Labour and Conservative parties did not fight over who should get the credit. In the US, Democrat Harry Truman decided to build the H-bomb and the first test happened in 1954 under Republican Eisenhower. There was no partisan clamour to appropriate credit.

In India, the nuclear weapons programme was sustained by all prime ministers in office since Indira Gandhi except Morarji Desai. He renounced the nuclear weapon option and peaceful nuclear explosions in his statement to the UN special session on disarmament in June 1978. Since the Congress party was in office for well over 44 years in the period 1947-98, most of the nuclear weapon development took place under Congress prime ministers. The Janata Dal and United Front prime ministers also contributed their share to the programme. When the Shakti tests were carried out in May, 1998 by the Vajpayee government, they were beneficiaries of the weapons programme supported by seven previous prime ministers.

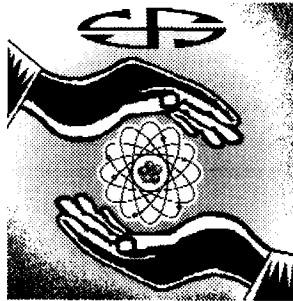
But after 1974, no prime minister could successfully carry out the test and declare India a nuclear weapon state as Vajpayee was able to do. Indira Gandhi's attempt in 1983 and Narasimha Rao's in 1995 had to be called off because of external pressure. The credit for conducting the test and making India a nuclear weapon state, braving international pressures, can be rightfully claimed by the Vajpayee government. However the two efforts — building the bomb and testing it would have been hailed in other democracies as a single integrated national mission successfully carried out. Unfortunately, the Indian nuclear security strategy has become a divisive poll issue.

While the BJP cadres attempted to monopolise the credit for nuclear tests, was it not odd that Congressmen who should have hailed the tests and asserted the role of their party in making them possible came out against them and criticised them? In truth, India's successive prime ministers never bothered to share their concepts of nuclear strategy even with their senior-most colleagues. The result was a welter of confusion among all other parties, with the BJP appropriating all the credit.

Now let me turn to what happened in the CCPA (Cabinet Committee on Political Affairs) meeting of 1979, where Vajpayee went along with Morarji Desai, against the stand taken by Jagjivan Ram, H M Patel and Charan Singh that India should restart its nuclear weapons programme. I was then the chairman of the joint intelligence committee (JIC) and additional secretary, cabinet

secretariat. I was the minutes writer for all the CCPA meetings. Cabinet secretary Nirmal Mukherji asked me to stay out of that particular meeting. Apart from the five cabinet ministers only three officials, Mukherji, principal secretary to PM, V Shankar, and chairman AEC, Homi Sethna were present. The agenda was the JIC report that Pakistan was well on its way to producing nuclear weapons using the uranium enrichment method. JIC only provides intelligence and does not make policy recommendations.

After the meeting, Nirmal Mukherji briefed me to write the minutes. He told me that it was a divided decision — three to two. He expressed surprise that Vajpayee went along with Morarji. The minutes were handwritten by me to record that the CCPA after discussions issued appropriate instructions to the chairman, AEC. It should be one of the rarest occasions when the CCPA minutes were recorded in hand and not typed. The prime minister approved them. There would have been no voting in the CCPA. Usually, the PM would have summed up the consensus. In this case, he could not do that since the majority three took a strong stand against his view. The next day I met Vajpayee and asked him how he could take such a stand. He said that at that moment, priority should be given to prevent Pakistan going nuclear and we should not provoke Pakistan. This reply was in consonance with his other efforts at that stage to improve relations with the Zia government. As chairman, JIC, my assessment was different.



The Congress spokesperson recently called Vajpayee a nuclear dove. It is to be presumed that a nuclear dove is to be differentiated from an ordinary dove or a nuclear hawk. On this understanding, Vajpayee is a nuclear dove. Mere doves would not be able to ensure this country's security in a world of proliferating nuclear hawks all around us. A nuclear hawk in charge of Indian nuclear button will be a disaster. One hopes there are no nuclear hawks among the leaderships of any of our major political parties.

In 1978, Vajpayee as foreign minister initiated the Indian resolution in the UN general assembly that use and threat of use of nuclear weapons should be outlawed and nuclear weapon powers should commit themselves to a no-first-use policy. This was the origin of the Indian doctrine of no-first-use. This was again recommended by a group under Arun Singh in 1990 when the Indian deterrent came into being covertly. In January 1994, foreign secretary J N Dixit on behalf of the Narasimha Rao government presented the 'no-first-use' proposal to Pakistan in a nonpaper.

There is more consensus in the country on our nuclear security strategy than divisiveness and the issue should not be politicised for narrow electoral considerations.

# Covertly horizontal

J.N. DIXIT

*Nuclear Energy Forum 8/11*

**T**he covert horizontal proliferation of nuclear weapons material and technology by Pakistani scientists has been a matter of concern and debate in the international community, both at the governmental and non-governmental levels. Details of these clandestine activities orchestrated by A.Q. Khan are coming to public knowledge. The characteristics of this development need to be defined.

First, a number of countries in the world made the acquisition of nuclear weapons an integral part of their strategic and defence planning. Second, Pakistan, China and North Korea — for political, strategic and economic motives — functioned as catalysts for the systematic horizontal proliferation of technology and material related to weapons of mass destruction. Third, Khan functioned as the key, as macro-level manager of this activity. Fourth, whatever the obfuscations, successive governments of Pakistan since Zia-ul-Haq's time were either active participants in these horizontal proliferation activities, or connived at these activities. Fifth, the campaign against the Russian invasion of Afghanistan and that against Saddam Hussein in Iraq resulted in the United States of America and major Western powers tolerating Pakistan's nuclear weaponization and its acquisition of nuclear and missile technology, and nuclear material.

Sixth, companies in western Europe, North America, Canada and south east Asia contributed to Pakistan's illegal sale of nuclear technology and nuclear material. It is inconceivable that the democracies did not have an inkling of this ongoing skulduggery. Seventh, the irrelevance of the Nuclear Non-Proliferation treaty, in terms of its stipulations or its capacity to enforce these stipulations, stands affirmed, given the fact that North Korea, Iran and Libya are signatories of the NPT. But they still carried on the acquisition of WMD material illegally. Eighth, these successful illegal transactions or horizontal proliferation by Pakistan and other countries bring out either the inefficiency or negative political influences affecting the safeguards and inspection procedures of the International Atomic Energy Agency. That the agency, which has been perfecting its safeguards arrangements since the late Sixties, still needs to draft and implement additional protocol for safeguarding nuclear facilities, emphasizes its shortcomings.

India's reaction to this critical development has been very measured and restrained. The government of India has declared that this is a very dangerous and pernicious development. India has also clarified that it does not consider this phenomenon of horizontal proliferation a bilateral, India-Pakistan issue. India correctly

assesses that it is an issue affecting regional security and that it has international implications in terms of nuclear security and safeguards.

It is clear that the major nuclear powers of the world, under the leadership of the US, would not only be taking remedial action against the phenomenon of horizontal proliferation engineered by Pakistan, but they would also be putting in place measures and regimes to prevent such proliferation in the future. Some indications of what these measures and remedial safeguards would be were given by George W. Bush in a speech to the National Defence University in Washington on February 11.

First, he suggested that the prolifer-

ernments which are not entitled to have such materials within the framework of the NPT and related arrangements.

Fourth, he indicated that the US would increase its allocation of \$20 billion over 10 years to support such programmes, which would focus on giving safe employment to scientists and technicians, who have specialized in WMD, in western Europe and countries like Iraq and Libya. The US would assist countries to stop the use of weapons-grade Uranium in their research reactors. Fifth, Bush indicated that the US policy would be to structure meaningful international cooperation to implement provisions of the NPT. He desired this cooperation to



Abdul Qadeer Khan: key to the clandestine

ation security initiatives, which he had announced a few months ago, should be expanded to cover covert transactions including shipments and transfers of nuclear material and technologies. He suggested that the expanded proliferation security initiative should be implemented with structured and greater cooperation between intelligence agencies, military services and law enforcement agencies. Second, he suggested a strengthening of the international legal system and the international controls governing proliferation.

He recommended a United Nations security council resolution stipulating that all UN member states should modify and expand their domestic laws to criminalize proliferation activities, to provide structured export controls and to ensure full-proof security of all sensitive materials and technologies within their borders.

Third, he proposed international arrangements to prevent weapons and technologies left over from the Cold War falling into the hands of non-government actors or into the hands of gov-

ernments which are not entitled to have such materials within the framework of the NPT and related arrangements.

He suggested that the 40-member Nuclear Suppliers Group should refuse to sell enrichment and re-processing equipment and technology to any state that does not already possess full-scale functioning equipment and re-processing plants. An important point Bush made within the framework of this fourth suggestion was that the IAEA should be equipped with a mandate to cover banned nuclear activities around the world and to report these violations to the UN security council.

Bush also suggested that an additional protocol should be provided and implemented by the IAEA requiring all states to declare details of their nuclear activities and facilities, and that the IAEA should inspect these facilities and apply safeguards. Bush's fifth recommendation is that only such countries which sign this protocol should be allowed to import equipment for their nuclear programmes.

The sixth remedial measure is the

recommendation to create a special committee of the board of governors of the IAEA with focused responsibilities to implement safeguards and verification procedures. This committee should be made up of governments in good standing with the IAEA. The seventh recommendation is that the countries which have violated nuclear proliferation obligations accepted by the international community, should not be allowed to become members of the board of governors of the IAEA.

While assessing the possible impact of these measures one must note the fact that India does not fall under the category of signatories of the NPT, nor has it acquired its nuclear and missile capacities clandestinely. India is also unique in that its nuclear and missile capacities are essentially indigenous. An additional fact is that India has an unimpeachable record of preventing horizontal proliferation to other countries.

**D**espite these facts, the prospects are of India's remaining under pressure on its nuclear weapons status. As long as the US and its nuclear weapons allies remain categorical in their commitment to the provisions of the NPT and its derivative international regimes, the fundamental objective of the US would be to persuade India to cap its nuclear and missile weapons capacities and then to roll back and eliminate these capacities. As India has not violated any international treaty or agreement, this objective would be pursued through a process of insistent negotiations. India would certainly be pressurized to sign the proposed additional protocol, which would require it to make public practically all its nuclear activities and facilities and to allow international inspections.

This is Bush's fourth proposal. The fifth proposal would have an equal impact on India as it suggests that only countries which sign this additional protocol would be allowed to import nuclear equipment, technology and material.

So it would not be enough if India wishes to import nuclear material and equipment for peaceful purposes under international safeguards. It would become mandatory for India to abide by the provisions of the additional protocol with intrusive expanded jurisdiction. India cannot blindly accept this additional protocol and make public those nuclear and technological facilities involved in its nuclear weapons and missile programmes.

The prospects for India are to move towards complete self-reliance regarding its nuclear and missiles technologies, instead of depending on external inputs. India should continue a constructive process of negotiations with the US and other nuclear weapons powers. It should improve and tighten technology management and export-control laws to fall in line with the requirement of preventing a horizontal proliferation of such capacities to others.

The author is former foreign secretary of India

8 APR

# Vajpayee opposed move to resume nuclear programme in 1979: Congress

By Our New Delhi Bureau

**NEW DELHI, APRIL 2.** The Congress today demanded that the Prime Minister, Atal Bihari Vajpayee, publicly state why as the External Affairs Minister in 1979 he had opposed the move to resume the country's nuclear programme, while later taking credit for the nuclear tests in May 1998.

The party spokesperson, Kapil Sibal, said that the defence analyst, K. Subrahmanyam, had mentioned that the Indian intelligence in 1979 picked up information on the rapid progress in Pakistan's covert nuclear weapons programme. The matter was reported to the Cabinet Secretariat by the Joint Intelligence Committee, of which Mr. Subrahmanyam was the chairman, with the recommendation that India resume its own nuclear programme, frozen after the peaceful explosion in Pokhran in 1974.

The matter, the Congress said, went to the Cabinet Committee on Political Affairs, comprising the then Prime Minister, Morarji Desai, Charan Singh, Jagjivan Ram, H.M. Patel and Mr. Vajpayee. "The issue was voted upon and by a thin majority of 3:2, India's nuclear programme was put back on track. Those who voted for it were Charan Singh, Jagjivan Ram and H.M. Patel. It is ironic that those who voted against India resuming its nuclear programme were the then Prime Minister Morarji Desai and his Foreign Minister, A.B. Vajpayee," the Congress said in a statement.

The party charged that had Mr. Vajpayee had his way, the country would never have continued with its nuclear programme. Mr. Sibal also said that the May 11 and May 13, 1998, nuclear tests, for which the Bharatiya Janata Party and Mr. Vajpayee were taking credit, would not have occurred.

"Mr. Vajpayee must explain why he voted against India's nuclear programme being put back on track. He owes an explanation to the people, especially in the context of his unjust criticism of the Congress party and his appropriating for himself the credit for the nuclear tests in 1998."

The BJP joined issue with the Congress and charged the main Opposition party with "politicising" an important national security issue. The BJP spokesperson, Mukhtar Abbas Naqvi, wondered whether the

self and for the BJP the credit for detonation of the nuclear devices in 1998," the party said.

The Congress asserted that credit, if at all, must go to itself. It said the courage and conviction of Indira Gandhi should be lauded — she had decreed that the experiment for the peaceful explosion be carried out on May 18, 1974.

The BJP joined issue with the Congress and charged the main Opposition party with "politicising" an important national security issue. The BJP

spokesperson, Mukhtar Abbas Naqvi, wondered whether the

Congress wanted to place the "nuclear button" in the hands of a "foreigner."

Mr. Naqvi said the Vajpayee Government had fulfilled its promise of making India a nuclear power "within 100 days" of coming to power. This the Government had done despite international pressure and the threat of economic sanctions. It had made "no compromise with national security", he asserted.

"We do not need a certificate from the Congress; since the Jana Sangh days, the party's views on the subject are clear."

He dismissed as "not credible" the Congress assertion that Mr. Vajpayee, as the External Affairs Minister in the Janata Party Government, had expressed himself against India continuing with its nuclear programme.

Mr. Naqvi described this as compromising the national security interests and "politicising" the matter.

Asked whether the people had the right to know, he replied in the affirmative. He "doubted" Mr. Subrahmanyam's assertion and said that this was "not credible."

## Expert puzzled over timing

By Neena Vyas

**NEW DELHI, APRIL 2.** What exactly was the decision taken on restarting India's nuclear weaponisation programme in a top Cabinet Committee in 1979 when Morarji Desai was the Prime Minister and Atal Bihari Vajpayee was the External Affairs Minister?

The issue was raised by the Congress today and the Bharatiya Janata Party reacted to it saying that the "story" attributed to the defence analyst, K. Subrahmanyam — that the Prime Minister, Atal Bihari Vajpayee, who was then External Affairs Minister, had opposed restarting and accelerating India's nuclear weaponisation programme — was "doubtful" and "not credible".

This is what Mr. Subrahmanyam told *The Hindu*: "In 1979 the Joint Intelligence Committee [Mr. Subrahmanyam was

then its chairman] produced a paper pointing out that Pakistan was on to a vigorous nuclear programme. The paper was placed before the five-member Cabinet Committee on Political Affairs — [Prime Minister] Morarji Desai, Vajpayee, Charan Singh, Jagjivan Ram and H.M. Patel were its members — and the question before the Committee was what action should be taken."

"Morarji and Vajpayee did not want our nuclear weaponisation programme to be restarted or accelerated and the other three members were in favour of restarting the programme, which had come to a standstill after Pokhran-I in 1974. The Cabinet Committee was divided but it decided by a majority of 3 to 2 in favour of restarting the programme. However, nothing was in fact done till Indira Gandhi became Prime Minister [in 1980]."

"These facts have been mentioned in several books — Raj Chengappa and

Bharat Karnad have written about it — and I mentioned this a few months ago at a function in Delhi."

"Two things happened. In April 1998, Pakistan conducted tests for its North Korean Ghauri missile, and that was the time the Government decided to go ahead with Pokhran-II. It felt compelled to go ahead and test the bomb. More than 95 per cent of the bomb was readied by the Congress, the remaining 5 per cent by the V.P. Singh and other Governments. Before 1998, the shafts at Pokhran and other works had been completed. During the Narasimha Rao Government's time everything was ready for testing, but the Americans held him back."

Mr. Subrahmanyam, who headed the Committee on Kargil appointed by the Vajpayee Government, was more than a bit puzzled that this had now become a hot political issue being debated by the Congress and the BJP.

# India determined to contribute to new nuclear order

By C. Raja Mohan

**NEW DELHI, FEB. 18.** While India has cautiously welcomed the seven-point nuclear agenda unveiled by the United States President, George W. Bush, last week, concrete cooperation with the U.S. awaits many clarifications from Washington.

As a new nuclear order begins to take shape in response to revelations about Pakistan's proliferation activity, India is determined to contribute. Exactly four decades ago this year, shocked by China's first nuclear weapon test in October 1964, India initiated the international debate on non-proliferation.

But the outcome of that negotiation, the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT), did not address India's concerns and New Delhi has remained an outsider. India was never impressed with the NPT. But India is not gloating today over its demise for, it always shared the objective of non-proliferation. And India's record shows.

India was informed of the broad thrust of the Bush initiative in advance and its officials have pored over the seven-point agenda outlined by Mr. Bush. On the face of it, India should have few difficulties with the U.S. formulations. But the devil is in the detail.

India's positive response last week to the Bush initiative was presented in general terms without going into the specifics. It highlighted the inadequacy of the present regime, supported the principle of effective non-proliferation and called for consultations on the new Bush initiative.

The first proposal from Mr. Bush relates to the expansion of the Proliferation Security Initiative that was initiated last year and has steadily gained international support. The PSI calls for interdiction of international traffic in sensitive nuclear materials through cooperative action by the naval and air forces of friendly nations.

Mr. Bush wants to extend the lessons from the war on terrorism by drawing in law enforcement agencies to crack down on networks of nuclear smuggling of the type developed by Dr. A.Q. Khan

## NEW NUCLEAR ORDER

in Pakistan.

Until now, India has neither criticised nor endorsed the PSI. As the victim of clandestine nuclear flows between Pakistan and North Korea, India understands the importance of addressing the challenge of international traffic in sensitive materials.

New Delhi, like Beijing which has now agreed to discuss the PSI with the U.S., wants clarity on the procedures to be adopted and the decision-making in the PSI coalition on whom and when to interdict.

The U.S. is aware of the vital role that the Indian Navy could play in monitoring and interdicting international commercial traffic in the Indian Ocean region. But questions remain to be addressed on the terms and conditions under which India could become a part of the PSI, either for

ally or informally. India is unlikely to object to the second Bush proposal calling for a United Nations Security Council Resolution criminalising proliferation and strengthening export controls and tightening security over sensitive materials.

With full governmental control over all nuclear-related activity, New Delhi has a record much better than that of many nations in Europe in preventing proliferation. Dr. Khan could not have acquired nuclear weapons for Pakistan and spread the technology around without active cooperation from many companies in Europe.

Third, on dismantling weapons programmes in problem countries and retraining personnel there to civilian research, India with its experience and technological capability could play a useful role.

The fourth proposal relates to a ban on selling "enrichment and reprocessing equipment and technologies to any state that does not already possess full-scale functioning enrichment and reprocessing plants."

India will not be affected by this ban since it already has a fully developed nuclear fuel cycle, including enrichment and reprocessing. More important, operational support from India, which is a potential exporter of these technologies, is critical in making the ban stick.

The fifth proposal from Mr. Bush is trickier. He demands that "only states that have signed the Additional Protocol be allowed to import equipment for their civilian nuclear programmes."

The Additional Protocol designed by the International Atomic Energy Agency applies tighter safeguards on the national nuclear programmes. At the first cut, this could be seen as affecting India's search for international cooperation in producing nuclear electricity.

But there may be options for India to address the issue as a nuclear weapon state and bring its many non-military nuclear facilities under international inspection.

The Prime Minister, Atal Bihari Vajpayee, had made such an offer in his address to the Bhabha Atomic Research Centre in Trombay at the end of 2002.

India could easily work with the U.S. on the last two proposals on reforming the IAEA. India has a permanent seat on the Board of Governors of the IAEA.

In responding positively to the Bush initiative, New Delhi has signalled its intent to be a partner in developing more nuclear rules. It is up to Washington to differentiate between the non-proliferation policies of India and Pakistan and acknowledge New Delhi's role as an equal partner in shaping the new nuclear order.

While there is new common ground with the U.S., India cannot articulate its nuclear policy merely as a response to American initiatives. India needs to develop a comprehensive approach, on its own, to the new challenges from the spread of nuclear weapons and call for a global debate. (Concluded)