

“India has proved itself a responsible power”

British Secretary of State for Defence **John Reid** says his country will “stay the course” in supporting India’s bid for a seat on the United Nations Security Council. In an interview, Dr. Reid admitted that military contacts with India had been fitful but said the U.K. was trying to improve that. Excerpts:

Sandeep Dikshit

On the nuclear technology side, the U.K. expressed its support soon for the Indo-U.S. July 18 agreement. Will there be some give and take for India? Will you expect India to give up ballistic missile research for receiving civilian nuclear technology?

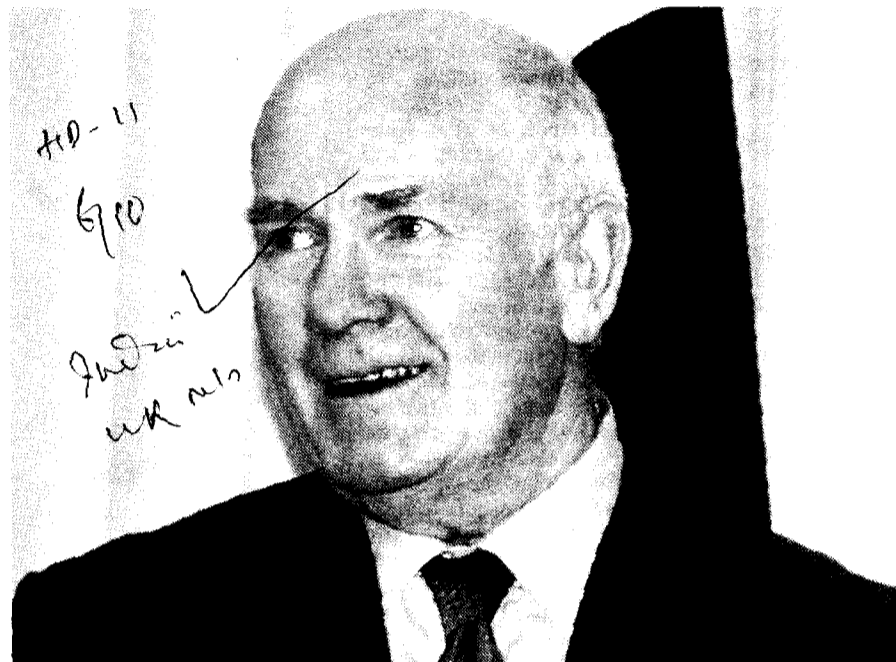
It is not true that our position is an automatic response to that of the U.S. We had been thinking about this for a considerable period of time. It is true that we have shifted our position. We have done it because the circumstances have changed. The terrible tension that the people of India and Pakistan felt a few years ago has to some extent deescalated, Kashmir has taken on a political dimension and India has proved itself a responsible power in the world. It has our backing for a seat on the United Nations Security Council (UNSC).

But do you have reservations about India’s military nuclear technology, especially the research on nuclear capable long-range ballistic missiles?

We want to help Indians develop civilian nuclear technology. We really want to help them do that. That is a clear enough statement of what we want to do. That goes alongside public expression of confidence in the responsibility of the Indian Government. And we are putting our money where our mouth is by backing India for a place in the UNSC which is not our publicly declared position. I hope that is helpful to the Indians. When we say we stand for something, we see it through. Sometimes we are successful. Sometimes we have to go through a very difficult period like in Iraq but we will see it through. We will not be there longer than necessary. With friends it is acceptable to question our judgment but we should not question each other’s sincerity.

In what way will you support India for a seat on the UNSC? What is that route? Will you be convincing your friends to follow your example?

That route is discussion, analysis, logic and persuasion. It is the route of reasonable democratic people. Look at the regional role of India alongside China. The days are gone when the writ of the United Kingdom extended over half the globe. So we can’t de-



John Reid: “Our bonds of friendship with India are very deep.”

— PHOTO: REUTERS

side for anyone. We can only try to persuade them. But you will find that what we say in private is what we say in public. We will do the best we can for our friend.

Britain helped shape the modern Indian military. There is such a long history yet Britain is lagging in holding joint military exercises. The U.K. will hold the first joint naval exercises with India next year whereas the U.S. recently held its eighth. Why is that?

Our bonds of friendship are very deep. But over the years I suppose the flowers were not tended though the roots were deep. That has changed in recent years. We have tripled the relationship and exchanges over the last five years. We held a headquarters exercise; we have a [naval] carrier group [exercise] coming up. I have discussed [joint exercises] with army chief Gen. J. J. Singh. Our Deputy Chief of Defence will be leading a delegation here to discuss exactly that point — what is it we could be doing better and doing more.

There are a host of issues [on which] we value the view of the soldiers here — on strategic issues and on Nepal, Bangladesh, Kashmir, and Afghanistan. So our officers have been asked to identify areas we can work together and better. We can’t always do it in volume.

We don’t have a navy of the size of the Russians; we don’t have an army of the size of the Americans. But we would like to think our quality is better than that of a vast majority [of countries]. The footprint may be relatively smaller but the quality return is higher. Having said that, I say we are not doing enough.

You were in Pakistan the day the India signed some agreements with Pakistan. How does the U.K. view the composite dialogue process and what are its expectations?

I hugely welcome that because all our historical experience tells us that the defeat of terrorism also requires a political process. I have been involved in that process as Sec-

retary of State for Northern Ireland.

We have come to a resolution due to a combination of two things. One, it was illustrated to the terrorists that force will be met by force, if necessary. Secondly, there was a political process available for them to resolve some of their problems politically. A combination of those two things is the most effective way to undermine terrorism. A solution for Kashmir is not for me to say but ultimately the parties to the problem will be the parties to the solution.

We would do what we can to facilitate this and if I was offering any advice at all, it would be very simple — the peace process is a bit like a bicycle. We can all sit on it as long as it keeps moving forward. If it stops we will all fall off and the men of violence will step into that vacuum. Therefore I was very pleased to see further talks, further discussions, and further areas of exploration. That is important. It is also important if a political solution is available and everyone now recognises that there is no legitimacy for acts of terrorism. So it is the obligation of everybody to do everything they can to dissuade, disrupt, and stop terrorist activity.

Since you are coming from Afghanistan and Pakistan, did you discuss the issue of transit rights for India to send aid to civilians by land to Kabul?

The point you make about civilian side is important. We are in Afghanistan in order to deny terrorists, local and international, using that state as a refuge or place for carrying out acts of terrorism. We cannot achieve that by military means alone. And, in order to make sure they do not come back, the Afghan people should be allowed to build a civil society.

Both of these are driving us to reconstruction to protect the Afghan people’s efforts to extend democratic government and institutions, to build the security forces to protect them, and build the necessary economic infrastructure.

I did not discuss transit rights. In my conversation with General Singh, we shared a similar view that using force against terrorism and preparedness to use force is an absolutely essential thing. But it is not the whole story or the solution because there is injustice, exploitation, poverty, and chaos. I think in the long run this is a role we have to play.

India, Britain target terror together

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Statesman News Service

NEW DELHI, Sept. 8. — On the bilateral leg of the visit of British Prime Minister Mr Tony Blair, it was all warm handshakes and even warmer words, with both sides reaffirming their condemnation of terrorism, while signing three agreements on air services, film co-production and oil and gas.

The discussions between Mr Blair and Dr Manmohan Singh was held in the picturesque five-star Udaivilas Hotel on the banks of Pichola lake in Udaipur. Both leaders flew in separately, with the UK delegation getting a glimpse of the "real" India of teeming crowds and dusty roads during the ride to the hotel. The event was originally planned to be held in Shimla, but inclement weather forced the change of venue.

Mr Blair, visibly impressed by Udaipur, said it was "absolutely fabulous, fantastic. I will come here again with my family and spend some time".

Later at a joint press meet to mark the end of the visit, both leaders condemned terrorism, stating that it stemmed from "perverse ideology" irrespective of the religion of the

£10 m fund for academics

NEW DELHI, Sept. 8. — Britain today announced £10 million to promote academic and educational exchanges with India. Launching the UK-India Education Initiative, Mr Blair said the amount will fund scholarships and short-term exchanges to promote a two-way movement of students, staff and researchers. It would also provide awards for doctoral and post-doctoral research to encourage young Indians to come to Britain and young British researchers to spend time in Indian institutions, the British Prime Minister said. "We have over one million British Indians living in the UK," he pointed out. — SNS

perpetrators. "Terrorism has no religion, terrorists have no religion and they are friends of no religion," Dr Singh asserted.

His guest described terrorists as a "minority who seek to destroy civilised values" and added that the "evil ideology" comes from the "perversion of the true faith of Islam". "Whether terrorism is in India or Britain, it is always utterly destructive," he concluded.

Stating that Britain was

dealing with "the most extreme fanatical teachings of this kind of perverted Islam," Mr Blair said there should be no compromise on this global menace. "Vast majority of Muslims abhor terrorism", he said, pointing out that most of the people killed in the recent bomb blast in Egypt, or in Iraq or Afghanistan were Muslims.

Dr Singh pointed out in his opening remarks that India had been a victim of terrorism for more than two decades. He said that Britain and India will work together to evolve an international norm for "zero tolerance" of global terrorism.

Appreciating the UK's strong support for India's candidature for UNSC, he said complexities of today's world will not get reflected in the absence of countries like India in the UNSC. Admitting that there were some hurdles to the G-4 resolution, Dr Singh said he was confident that they will be overcome. He said the two countries had set up a Joint Economic Commission to promote trade and investment, besides a science and innovation commission for new high technology areas. Dr Singh also said that UK was ready to co-operate in the civilian nuclear energy sector.

Blair gives word on nuke access

OUR SPECIAL
CORRESPONDENT

New Delhi, Sept. 8: Britain has promised to bring about the required changes in policy and play an active role in the Nuclear Suppliers' Group to give India access to civilian nuclear energy and other dual-use technologies.

The assurance came after a discussion between Britain's



Singh and Blair in Udaipur. The British Prime Minister found the city "fabulous, fantastic" and said he would return with his family. (AFP)

Prime Minister, Tony Blair, and his Indian counterpart, Manmohan Singh, at the retreat in Udaipur where the two met today.

"Britain has agreed to cooperate in India's civilian nuclear energy sector and make a collective effort to ensure India's energy security," Singh said at a joint news conference addressed by the two leaders later in the day at Hyderabad House in Delhi.

Yesterday, the European Union agreed to help India meet its energy needs. These include Delhi's quest for ac-

cess to "clean energy", particularly civilian nuclear energy.

India and the US have already entered into an agreement for cooperation in civilian nuclear energy. The Bush administration has started the process of getting the deal approved by the US Congress. Many other western countries, including the UK, will also have to take steps both domestically and at the Nuclear Suppliers' Group to ensure that India gets access to these technologies.

Britain had adopted a tough policy in 2002 — at the height of the India-Pakistan tension — and sought to prevent Delhi's access to civilian nuclear or dual-use technology. However, with the peace process between Delhi and Islamabad in place, the British government has started looking at steps to remove the impediments and help India play the role of a responsible nuclear power.

A British official explained that, unlike the US, the UK does not have to bring about amendments to its domestic law. "We had made a policy statement. Now we just need to withdraw that statement," he said.

Singh and Blair had a one-to-one meeting in Udaipur this afternoon before other delegation members joined them.

Global terrorism and "management of global interdependence" were two other key areas which the two Prime Ministers highlighted after their discussions. Both leaders stressed the need to defeat global terrorism while clarifying that any attempt to equate it with Islam was only a "perverted understanding" of the religion.

The two sides also signed three agreements for closer cooperation on air services, co-production of films and intellectual property rights. The number of direct passenger flights between the countries will triple this year from the 84-a-week currently allowed.

Singh said a chair funded by India would be set up in Cambridge University in the name of Jawaharlal Nehru. The two sides also discussed student exchange programmes at college and university levels.

India, U.K. to cooperate on civilian nuclear energy front

Security Council without India would not be representative, says Manmohan



PALACE & PRIME MINISTERS: British Prime Minister Tony Blair and Prime Minister Manmohan Singh in the gardens of the Udaivilas Hotel in Udaipur on Thursday after a meeting. The Palace Hotel, once home to the Udaipur Maharana family, is in the background. - PHOTO: AFP

Amit Baruah

NEW DELHI: India and Britain will cooperate in the field of civilian nuclear energy, Prime Minister Manmohan Singh announced on Thursday after talks with his British counterpart, Tony Blair, in Udaipur.

"The United Kingdom recognises the need for a supportive international environment for meeting our pressing energy requirements. We have also agreed that our collective efforts to ensure energy security will be accorded priority," Dr. Singh said at a joint press conference with Mr. Blair at Hyderabad House.

The Prime Minister revealed that Mr. Blair had been supportive of India's atomic energy re-

quirements. India, Dr. Singh stated, had pointed to the need for changes in the guidelines of the Nuclear Suppliers Group (NSG) for India to meet its civil atomic energy needs. A reference had been made during their discussions to the recent Indo-U.S. nuclear deal.

Describing their talks in Udaipur as successful, the two leaders are said to have spent more than an hour in a one-to-one meeting, where note-takers were not present.

They agreed completely on the need to battle terrorism, which for the U.K. has taken on a new meaning after the July blasts in London.

"We agreed that there can be no justification whatsoever for

terrorism on any grounds — religious, political, ideological or any other. Together with international unity and resolve, we can meet the challenge of this global scourge and work to bring about an international law of zero tolerance for terrorism," the Prime Minister said.

He argued that terrorists have no religion; no religion preached atrocities against innocent men, women and children.

Efforts must be made, the Prime Minister stated, to promote a culture of diversity and tolerance.

According to Dr. Singh, several agreements, including cooperation in the area of hydrocarbons; a new air services accord; an arrangement on co-

production of films and another on intellectual property rights had been given final touches during his meeting with Mr. Blair.

Mr. Blair stated that whatever one thought of the "original decision" of invading Iraq, the situation both in Iraq and Afghanistan was now being backed by the United Nations. The people doing damage to Muslims were the terrorists, he said.

According to the British leader, the objective of the terrorists was to ensure that democracy did not take root in either Iraq or Afghanistan. Mr. Blair said India showed that "Muslim people can live in democracy".

Answering a question on the

relationship between Islam and terrorism, he said this menace emanated from the perversion of the true faith of Islam. This was an issue that could not simply be tackled through security measures, but had to be attacked at its roots.

Calling on India and Britain to cooperate in the fight against terrorism, Mr. Blair said a majority of people killed during a recent terrorist attack in Egypt were Muslims; as were the people dying in Iraq and Afghanistan.

Dr. Singh said India's quest for a permanent U.N. Security Council seat was an essay in persuasion and added that a Security Council without India would not be representative of the new global order.

Britain lifts N-sanctions on India

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By Indrani Bagchi/TNN

New Delhi: In a move that confirms the strength of the UK's trans-Atlantic alliance with the US and a growing partnership with India, the British government has lifted its nuclear sanctions on India. As the first country to respond positively to the Indo-US nuclear agreement signed during PM Manmohan Singh's Washington visit recently, Tony Blair's government notified the British parliament on Wednesday about the significant changes in its laws regarding the export of dual-use technologies to India.

Under the relaxed rules, applications for items under the dual-use list of the Nuclear Suppliers Group (NSG) will now be allowed to India, and Pakistan, on a "case-by-case basis" and only when their end-use will be in an IAEA-safeguarded civilian nuclear facility. Applications for other licensable items, even those under WMD end-use controls, will also be opened on a case-by-case basis.

The criteria for considering these licences will be a clear end-user certification that they will be used in safeguarded nuclear fuel cycles but not in the weapons programme, as well as the country's record in proliferation activities. Of equal importance is the fact that the UK will once again open its doors to Indian nuclear scientists and research organisations, academics and nuclear industry officials.

Sources said India and the UK had been negotiating these relaxations for some time now, but the US deal, in which India publicly committed itself to certain actions, hastened the process.

Meanwhile, Manmohan Singh may stop over in Paris during his annual September

trip to the UN General Assembly for a chat with French President Jacques Chirac. The French, long believed to be India's friend in times of nuclear difficulties like the weeks after Pokhran-II, were stunned by the US deal. The PM is expected to explain the ramifications of the agreement and seek French support. Besides, if India ever gets into the busi-

Under the relaxed rules, applications for items under the dual-use list of the Nuclear Suppliers Group will now be allowed to India – and Pakistan – on a "case-by-case" basis

ness of buying nuclear reactors off-the-shelf, the French Areva is widely acknowledged to be the best in the market.

The British controls were tough because they went beyond the UK's responsibilities under the NPT and NSG guidelines—generally called NSG-plus. Henceforth, only the NSG's "Trigger List" items—which are meant for enrichment and the weapons programme—will be refused to India.

It's a huge step forward as India prepares for a prolonged, and sometimes bitter, battle with the powers upholding the existing nuclear order, to allow for a legitimate break-in.

The British relaxation will also be a signal to other members of the NSG because India expects a full-throated battle with Scandinavian and other northern European countries. British support will be welcome there.

Childhood's End

PM's Oxford speech is the voice
of a mature India

THE BJP and the CPI(M) are upset that prime minister Manmohan Singh was gracious in acknowledging the imprint of British rule in some of our cherished public institutions in his speech at Oxford University. They have sought an apology from Singh for his positive remarks. Both the political parties — rarely do they agree on any issue — have missed Singh's point and the historical logic of his argument. First, Singh did not extol colonial rule as an example of good governance in his speech. In fact, he began by saying that "our grievance against the British empire had a sound basis" and recalled Cambridge historian Angus Madison's work which showed the collapse of the Indian economy under colonial rule. His remark, as a matter of contextualising a slogan of the freedom movement "self-government is more precious than good government", was "we did not entirely reject the British claim to good governance". Singh elaborated the claim: "Our notions of the rule of law, of a constitutional government, of a free press, of a professional civil service, of modern universities and research laboratories have all been fashioned in the crucible where an age-old civilisation of India met the dominant empire of the day. These are all elements which we still value and cherish". Those who believe in the idea of a pluralistic, democratic India will agree with Singh. It is a different matter that we failed to improve them to address more effectively the needs of an independent nation. Our ruling classes are as responsible as the colonial legacy of these institutions for the failure.

History will always remain a contested terrain. But, it can't be read as a simplistic morality tale of the good and the bad. Mature nations come to terms with the complexity of nation-building. The popular nationalist discourse on the road to freedom paints the colonial encounter as a tryst with evil. But the institutions of governance introduced by the Raj, including social and legal reforms, were instrumental in rupturing the caste-ridden Indian polity. They were, as much as the pressure from the grass roots, responsible for the unshackling of a highly unequal society. Social reformers like Sree Narayana Guru to Mahatma Phule have highlighted the emancipatory role, even if unintended, of British institutions in addressing the concerns of the oppressed castes. That said the economic and ecological destruction the empire unleashed on us stands condemned. The point to be kept in mind is that history is a mixture of positives and negatives, intended and unintended acts.

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THE TIMES OF INDIA

Of Oxford, economics, empire, and freedom

India and Britain have learnt from each other and have much to teach the world. This is the most enduring aspect of the Indo-British encounter

Manmohan Singh

This is an emotional moment for me. Oxford brings back many fond memories I cherish. For this reason, as much as for the intrinsic value of the honour you bestow upon me, I am truly overwhelmed. There can be nothing more valuable than receiving an honorary degree from one's own alma mater. To be so honoured by a university where one has burnt the proverbial midnight oil to earn a regular degree is a most fulfilling experience.

New India, new hope

The world has changed beyond recognition since I was a student here. Yet, some age-old problems endure. Developing countries have found a new voice, a new status, and have acquired a new sense of confidence over the last few decades. As an Indian, I see a new sense of hope and purpose. This new optimism gives us Indians a new sense of self-confidence and it shapes our world view today. It would be no exaggeration to suggest that the success of hundreds of young Indian students and professionals in Universities like Oxford, and elsewhere across the world, has contributed to this renewed self-confidence of a new India.

The economics we learnt at Oxford in the 1950s was also marked by optimism about the economic prospects for the post-War and post-colonial world. But in the 1960s and 1970s, much of the focus of development economics shifted to concerns about the limits to growth. There was considerable doubt about the benefits of international trade for developing countries. I must confess that when I returned home to India, I was struck by the deep distrust of the world displayed by many of my countrymen. We were overwhelmed by the legacy of our immediate past. Not just by the perceived negative consequences of British imperial rule, but also by the sense that we were left out in the cold by the Cold War.

There is no doubt that our grievances against the British Empire had a sound basis. As the painstaking statistical work of the Cambridge historian Angus Maddison has shown, India's share of world income collapsed from 22.6 per cent in 1700, almost equal to Europe's share of 23.3 per cent at that time, to as low as 3.8 per cent in 1952.

Indeed, at the beginning of the 20th Century, "the brightest jewel in the British Crown" was the poorest country in the world in terms of per capita income. However, what is significant about the Indo-British relationship is the fact that despite the economic impact of colonial rule, the relationship between individual Indians and Britons,



DISTINGUISHED ALUMNUS: Prime Minister Manmohan Singh, accompanied by Oxford University Vice-Chancellor Lord Patten of Barnes, on his way to the Convocation House in Oxford on Friday after he was awarded an Honorary Degree of Doctor of Civil Law. - PHOTO: PTI

even at the time of our Independence, was relaxed and, I may even say, benign.

Mahatma and empire

This was best exemplified by the exchange Mahatma Gandhi had here at Oxford in 1931 when he met members of the Raleigh Club and the Indian Majlis. The Mahatma was in England then for the Round Table Conference and during its recess, he spent two weekends at the home of A.D. Lindsay, the Master of Balliol. At this meeting, the Mahatma was asked: "How far would you cut India off from the Empire?" His reply was precise: "From the Empire, entirely; from the British nation not at all, if I want India to gain and not to grieve." He added: "The

British Empire is an Empire only because of India. The Emperors must go and I should love to be an equal partner with Britain, sharing her joys and sorrows. But it must be a part-

nership on equal terms." This remarkable statement by the Mahatma has defined the basis of our relationship with Britain.

Jawaharlal Nehru echoed this sentiment when he urged the Indian Constituent Assembly in 1949 to vote in favour of India's membership of the Commonwealth. Nehru set the tone for independent India's relations with its former master when he intervened in the Constituent Assembly's debate on India joining the Commonwealth and said:

"I wanted the world to see that India did not lack faith in herself, and that India was prepared to co-operate even with those with whom she had been fighting in the past provided the basis of the cooperation today was honourable, that it was a free basis, a basis which would lead to the good not only of ourselves, but of the world also. That is to say, we would not deny that cooperation simply

because in the past we had fought and thus carry on the trail of our past karma along with us. We have to wash out the past with all its evil."

India, Britain as partners

India and Britain set an example to the rest of the world in the way they sought to relate to each other, thanks to the wisdom and foresight of Mahatma Gandhi and Jawaharlal Nehru. When I became the Finance Minister of India in 1991, our Government launched the Indo-British Partnership Initiative. Our relationship had by then evolved to a stage where we had come to regard each other as partners. Today, there is no doubt in my mind that Britain and India are indeed partners and have much in common in their approach to a wide range of global issues.

What impelled the Mahatma to take such a positive view of Britain and the British people even as he challenged the Em-

pire and colonial rule? It was, undoubtedly, his recognition of the elements of fair play that characterised so much of the ways of the British in India. Consider the fact that an important slogan of India's struggle for freedom was that "Self Government is more precious than Good Government." That, of course, is the essence of democracy. But the slogan suggests that even at the height of our campaign for freedom from colonial rule, we did not entirely reject the British claim to good governance. We merely asserted our natural right to self-governance.

Today, with the balance and perspective offered by the passage of time and the benefit of hindsight, it is possible for an Indian Prime Minister to assert that India's experience with Britain had its beneficial consequences too. Our notions of the rule of law, of a constitutional government, of a free press, of a

professional civil service, of modern universities and research laboratories have all been fashioned in the crucible where an age-old civilisation met the dominant Empire of the day. These are all elements which we still value and cherish. Our judiciary, our legal system, our bureaucracy, and our police are all great institutions, derived from British-Indian administration and they have served the country well.

Legacies of the Raj

Of all the legacies of the Raj, none is more important than the English language and the modern school system. That is, if you leave out cricket! Of course, people here may not recognise the language we speak, but let me assure you that it is English. In indigenising English, as so many people have done in so many nations across the world, we have made the language our own. Our choice of prepositions may not always be the Queen's English; we might occasionally split the infinitive; and we may drop an article here and add an extra one there. I am sure everyone will agree, however, that English has been enriched by Indian creativity as well and we have given you R.K. Narayan and Salman Rushdie. Today, English in India is seen as just another Indian language.

The idea of India as enshrined in our Constitution, with its emphasis on the principles of secularism, democracy, the rule of law, and, above all, the equality of all human beings irrespective of caste, community, language or ethnicity, has deep roots in India's ancient civilisation. However, it is undeniable that the founding fathers of our republic were also greatly influenced by the ideas associated with the age of enlightenment in Europe. Our Constitution remains a testimony to the enduring interplay between what is essentially Indian and what is very British in our intellectual heritage.

The idea of India as an inclusive and plural society draws on both these traditions. The success of our experiment of building a democracy within the framework of a multi-cultural, multi-ethnic, multi-lingual, and multi-religious society will encourage all societies to walk the path we have trodden. In this journey, both Britain and India have learnt from each other and have much to teach the world. This is perhaps the most enduring aspect of the Indo-British encounter.

It used to be said that the sun never sets on the British Empire. I am afraid I was partly responsible for sending that adage out of fashion. But if there is one phenomenon on which the sun cannot set, it is the world of the English-speaking people, in

which the people of Indian origin are the single largest component.

'Give and take'

No Indian has paid a more poetic and generous tribute to Britain for this inheritance than Rabindranath Tagore. In the opening lines of his Gitanjali, Gurudev says:

"The West has today opened its door,

There are treasures for us to take,

We will take and we will also give,

From the open shores of India's immense humanity."

To see the India-British relationship as one of 'give and take' at the time he first did was an act of courage and statesmanship. It was, however, also an act of great foresight. As we look back and also look ahead, it is clear the Indo-British relationship is one of 'give and take.' The challenge before us today is to see how we can take this mutually beneficial relationship forward in an increasingly inter-dependent world.

My alma mater

I wish to end by returning to my alma mater, Oxford, since the 19th century, has been a centre for Sanskrit learning and the study of Indian culture. The Boden professorship in Sanskrit, and the Spalding professorship in Eastern Religions and Ethics stand testimony to the university's commitment to India and Indian culture. I recall with pride the fact that the Spalding professorship was held by two very distinguished Indians: Dr. S. Radhakrishnan, who later became the President of India, and by Dr. Bimal Krishna Matilal. In the context of the study and preservation of Indian culture, I also wish to recall the contribution of another Oxonian, Lord Curzon, about whose project to preserve and restore Indian monuments, Jawaharlal Nehru said:

"After every other Viceroy has been forgotten, Curzon will be remembered because he restored all that was beautiful in India."

Oxford has sent out many men to rule India. Some stayed behind to become India's friends. Men like Edward Thompson, Verrier Elwin, and many others are remembered in India for their contribution to our life and society.

I always come back to the city of dreaming spires and of lost causes as a student. I am here this time in all humility as the representative of a great nation and a great people.

(Excerpted from Prime Minister Manmohan Singh's address in acceptance of an Honorary Degree of Doctor of Civil Law from the University of Oxford, July 8, 2005.)

U.N. seat: U.K. gives active support

Britain to be a vocal and public supporter of India's cause

Amit Baruah

NEW DELHI: London is an active, not passive, supporter of India's entry into the United Nations' Security Council as a permanent member, British High Commissioner Michael Arthur told presspersons here on Friday.

Sir Michael clarified that the British decision not to co-sponsor the G-4 resolution, seeking expansion of the Security Council, was a "technical, New York-specific issue".

However, the High Commissioner stressed that Britain would vote in favour of the G-4 resolution in New York.

The High Commissioner was speaking on the occasion of Britain taking over the rotating presidency of the European Union.

According to him, the decision not to co-sponsor the resolution was related to sentiments towards other member States and not a sign of lack of support to the Indian case for a permanent Security Council seat.

The High Commissioner was at pains to emphasise that Britain had been one of the strongest supporters of India's entry into the Security Council.

If the Security Council was to enjoy legitimacy then India must have a place in it, Sir Michael said. Britain, he added,

had been a vocal and public supporter of India's cause.

He said that London had no problem in reviewing its advisory that warned British citizens against travelling to Jammu & Kashmir.

'Entire J&K not disturbed'

Sir Michael was quick to point out that the advisory was not for the entire State of Jammu & Kashmir.

"My wife has just returned from Ladakh this morning," he said to drive home this point.

The British travel advisory was not for political reasons but for the safety of citizens.

The High Commissioner also pointed out that the annual European Union-India summit would take place under the British E.U. presidency in the first week of September. The two sides were preparing to issue an "action plan" for what they planned to do in the future during this summit meeting.

Sir Michael was hopeful that India would also be associated with the International Thermonuclear Experimental Reactor (ITER), which is to be constructed in France.

India would be welcomed as a partner, he maintained.

European Commission official, Alexander Spachis, was also present.

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ভারতের ভেটো ক্ষমতায় নারাজ ব্রিটেন

শ্রাবণী বসু • লন্ডন

২৭ জুন: উচ্চ পদমর্যাদা সত্ত্বেও তাঁদের নিজেদের মধ্যে বন্ধুত্ব অটুট। ঘনিষ্ঠ বৈঠকে তারা একে অপরকে নাম ধরে ডাকেন। ব্রিটেনের বিদেশমন্ত্রী জ্যাক স্ট্র বিয়ের পরে মধুচন্দ্রিয়ায় এসেছিলেন ভারতে। আর ভারতীয় বিদেশমন্ত্রী নটবর সিংহের ইংরেজি সাহিত্য ও সংস্কৃতির উপর দুর্বলতা তো সর্বজনবিদিত।

তা এ হেন দুই 'বন্ধু' যখন দু'দেশের বিদেশনীতি নিয়ে বৈঠকে বসেন তখন স্বাভাবিক ভাবেই প্রত্যাশা ছিল অনেকটা। বৈঠকে জ্যাক স্ট্র 'বন্ধু' নটবরকে জানিয়েও দেন রাষ্ট্রপুঞ্জের নিরাপত্তা পরিষদে স্থায়ী সদস্যপদে ভারতের অন্তর্ভুক্তিতে ব্রিটেনের পূর্ণ সমর্থন রয়েছে। কিন্তু ভারতের 'ভেটো' দেওয়ার ক্ষমতা থাকবে না। যদিও ভারত-সহ জি-৪ গোষ্ঠীর দেশগুলি

ইতিমধ্যেই ভেটোর দাবি থেকে সরে এসেছে। তাদের প্রস্তাবে নীতিগত ভাবে ভেটোর দাবি থাকলেও ১৫ বছর এ দাবি জানানো হবে না।

স্ট্র নটবরকে আজ সাফ জানিয়ে দেন, ঐতিহাসিক প্রয়োজনেই এক সময় স্থায়ী সদস্যদের ভেটো ক্ষমতা দেওয়া হয়েছিল। কিন্তু বর্তমান পরিস্থিতিতে নতুন সদস্যদের ভেটো ক্ষমতা দেওয়া কঠিন। ১৯৮৯-এর পর ব্রিটেন যে আর ভেটো প্রয়োগ করেনি সে কথাও নটবরকে জানিয়ে দেন স্ট্র।

স্ট্র জানান, ভারত-ইউরোপীয় ইউনিয়নের সম্মেলনে যোগ দিতে ব্রিটিশ প্রধানমন্ত্রী টনি ব্লয়ার ভারতে আসবেন। আগামী মাসে স্কটল্যান্ডের গ্লেনগলসে জি-৮ শীর্ষ সম্মেলনে ভারতের প্রধানমন্ত্রী মনমোহন সিংহকে স্বাগত জানাতেও প্রস্তুত ব্রিটেন।

চ্যাটহাম হাউসে 'আগামী দশকের ভারত' শীর্ষক এক আলোচনা সভায়

অংশ নেন স্ট্র ও নটবর। সেখানে স্ট্র সাফ জানিয়ে দেন আগামী দিনের 'সুপারপাওয়ার' হিসেবে চিনের থেকে ভারতকে এগিয়ে রাখা হবে। তিনি বলেন, "গত কুড়ি বছরে চিন বেশ কিছু অসাধারণ কাজ করেছে। কিন্তু মানবাধিকার ও গণতন্ত্রের শক্তিতে এগিয়ে থাকবে ভারত।" তিনি বলেন আগামী দিনে বিশ্বের অন্যতম প্রধান অর্থনৈতিক শক্তি হিসেবে নিজেকে প্রমাণ করার জন্য যে গণতান্ত্রিক কাঠামোর প্রয়োজন তা ভারতের আছে, চিনের নেই।

ওই সম্মেলনে নটবর অবশ্য নিরাপত্তা পরিষদের কলেবর বৃদ্ধির পক্ষে জোর সওয়াল করেন। তিনি বলেন, বর্তমান স্থায়ী সদস্যরা ১৯৪৫ সাল থেকে বিশ্বের প্রতিনিধিত্ব করছে। কিন্তু উন্নয়নশীল দেশগুলির কঠোর আন্তর্জাতিক মঞ্চে আরও বেশি করে আসা দরকার।

28 JUN 2005

ANADABAZAR, PAKISTAN

UK backs India's UNSC bid

LONDON/DELHI, June 27. — Ahead of Dr Manmohan Singh's visit next week, Britain today came out in support of India's claim for a permanent seat in the UN Security Council, sans the veto, even as Delhi made it clear that it opposed selective or piecemeal reforms of the world body.

British foreign secretary Mr Jack Straw said at a joint press conference with external affairs minister Mr Natwar Singh after their talks here: "We have extended full support to India to become a permanent member of the Security Council without veto power."

Mr Straw noted that most permanent members of the UNSC never used the veto. "We have never used it since 1989."

Also today, Maldives President Mr Abdul Gayoom telephoned Dr Singh to express his country's support for India's bid for a permanent seat in the UNSC. — SNS & PTI

athomed. As for the first reference vis-a-vis the scale of reporters' ignorance, he explained: "Could you have received such freedom of speech if movements did not yield results? What was today's alternative to calling a strike?" He sounded far removed from his earlier statement that government would run buses and trams if employees reported for work. "Why should we run buses? You are only willing to enjoy the fruits and not take the pain. Is it desirable that fuel prices go up?" — SNS

ভারতকে হক বিক্রি, বিতর্ক ব্রিটেনে

শ্রীবণী বসু • লন্ডন

২৪ মে: বেশ নির্বিঘ্নেই চলছিল সব কিছু। একশো কোটি পাউন্ডের চুক্তিও হয়ে গিয়েছিল ভারত ও ব্রিটেনের মধ্যে। বিপত্তি ঘটাল ভারতের এয়ার মার্শাল সুভাষ ভোজওয়ানির একটি আপাতনিরীহ মন্তব্য। প্রশিক্ষণ না যুদ্ধ, ঠিক কী জন্য ভারত ব্রিটেনের থেকে হক প্রশিক্ষণ জেটবিমান কিনছে, তাই নিয়ে শুরু হয়ে গিয়েছে জোর বিতর্ক। ছয় ভারতীয় বিমানচালকের ব্রিটেনে প্রশিক্ষণ নেওয়ার মতো গুরুত্বপূর্ণ ব্যাপারও এই গোলমালে চাপা পড়ে গিয়েছে।

অনেক দিন ধরেই ভারতকে হক বিমান বিক্রি করার চেষ্টা করছে ব্রিটেন। এ নিয়ে দু'দেশের মধ্যে প্রায় কুড়ি বছর ধরে আলাপ-আলোচনা চলেছে। নব্বইয়ের দশকে প্রিন্স চার্লস নিজে ভারত সফরে গিয়ে এ ব্যাপারে কথা বলে গিয়েছিলেন। অবশেষে ২০০৪ সালের মার্চ মাসে ভারতের সঙ্গে

ব্রিটেনের চুক্তি হয়। এই চুক্তি অনুযায়ী, ভারতকে মোট ৬৬টি হক বিমান বিক্রি করবে ব্রিটেন। ২০০৭ সালের সেপ্টেম্বর মাসের মধ্যে ব্রিটেনের একটি সংস্থা ২৪টি বিমান তৈরি করে ভারতে পাঠিয়ে দেবে। বাকি ৪২টি বিমানের যত্ন ভারতে পাঠানো হবে। সেগুলি থেকে সম্পূর্ণ বিমানটি বানিয়ে নেবে বাঙ্গালোরের হিন্দুস্থান এরোনটিক্স লিমিটেড বা হ্যাল। সেই সঙ্গে এ-ও ঠিক করা হয় যে, এই বিমান চালানোর জন্য তিন বছরে মোট ৭৫ জন ভারতীয় বিমানচালককে উপযুক্ত প্রশিক্ষণ দেবে ব্রিটিশ বিমানবাহিনী (আরএএফ), প্রত্যেক বছর ২৫ জন করে।

চুক্তিমাফিক গত এক বছর ধরে ভারতীয় বিমানবাহিনীর ছ'জন অফিসার ব্রিটেনে প্রশিক্ষণ নিয়েছেন। অল্প দিনের মধ্যেই তাঁরা সকলের মন জয় করে নেন। তাঁদের দৌলতেই আরএএফের রান্নাঘরে ঢুকে পড়েছে ভারতীয় খানা, ফুটবল বা রাগবি ফেলে আরএএফের কর্মীরা মন দিয়েছেন

ক্রিকেটে। ভারতীয় বিমানচালকরাও আরএএফের প্রশংসায় উচ্ছ্বসিত। দেশে ফেরার আগে কাল তাঁদের সম্মানে এক বিশেষ অনুষ্ঠানের আয়োজন করা হয়েছিল। সেখানে প্রিন্স চার্লসও উপস্থিত ছিলেন। ভারতীয় ও ব্রিটিশ বিমানবাহিনীর ঘনিষ্ঠ সম্পর্কের ইঙ্গিতবাহী একটি ছবি চার্লস নিজে ভারতের এয়ার মার্শাল সুভাষ ভোজওয়ানির হাতে তুলে দেন। সব ঠিকঠাকই চলছিল। মাঝখান থেকে ভোজওয়ানি দুম করে ব্রিটিশ সংবাদমাধ্যমের কাছে বলে দিলেন, শুধু প্রশিক্ষণ নয়, যুদ্ধের কাজেও হক বিমানগুলি ব্যবহার করবে ভারত। বাস, মাথায় হাত ব্রিটিশ প্রতিরক্ষামন্ত্রকের কর্তাদের।

তবে যে গোড়া থেকেই ব্রিটিশ প্রতিরক্ষামন্ত্রক ও হক প্রস্তুতকারী সংস্থাটি দাবি করে আসছে, শুধু প্রশিক্ষণের কাজেই ওই বিমান ব্যবহার করা হবে, এই শর্তসাপেক্ষেই হক বিমানগুলি ভারতকে বিক্রি করা

হয়েছে? ভোজওয়ানির বক্তব্য, “আমি আসল চুক্তিটি দেখিনি। তবে যত দূর জানি, এ রকম কোনও শর্ত সেখানে রাখা হয়নি।” অবশ্য ভোজওয়ানির মতে, হাড্ডাহাড্ডি লড়াই চলার সময় হক ব্যবহারের প্রলম্বই উঠছে না। শত্রুপক্ষের বিমানশক্তি একেবারে ধ্বংস হয়ে গেলে তবেই এটি ব্যবহার করা যাবে। তবে হক কেনার ফলে প্রশিক্ষণের ব্যাপারে ভারতীয় বিমানবাহিনীর যে বিশেষ সুবিধা হবে, তাতে কোনও সন্দেহ নেই তাঁর।

ব্রিটিশ কর্তৃপক্ষের দাবি, যুদ্ধের কাজে হক ব্যবহার করতে হলে ভারতকে আগে তাদের অনুমতি নিতে হবে। ব্রিটিশ প্রতিরক্ষামন্ত্রকের মুখপাত্র অ্যাডাম টমাস জোর দিয়ে বলেছেন, প্রশিক্ষণ দেওয়ার জন্যই ভারতকে হক বিমান বিক্রি করা হয়েছে। অন্য উদ্দেশ্যে তা ব্যবহার করা যাবে না। কিন্তু শুধু কথা দিয়ে সমালোচকদের টিড়ে ভেজানো সম্ভব হচ্ছে না ব্রিটিশ প্রতিরক্ষামন্ত্রকের পক্ষে।

UK backing for UNSC seat

Statesman News Service

NEW DELHI, Feb. 18. — Britain supports India's candidature for a permanent seat in the United Nations Security Council, but does not think veto power would be given to the new permanent members. Mr Straw said veto power may be extended eventually, but not in the first spell of reforms.

At an interaction with captains of industry, organised by the Ficci, Mr Straw said Britain supported the enlargement of the UN Security Council "to include as permanent members Germany, Japan, Brazil and India".



Mr Jack Straw

Mr Straw said Britain favoured the expansion under which more nations would be inducted in the permanent and non-permanent seats, but with no veto power. In the second plan, the number of securi-

ty council seat would be increased by nine, with one permanent with no veto power and eight rotating seats for four years.

Indo-British pacts

Union home minister Mr Shivraj Patil and Mr Straw today signed an agreement on transfer of sentenced prisoners and renewed a MoU regarding verification and return of illegal Indian migrants in the UK. Meanwhile Mr Straw, who visited the historic Jallianwala Bagh here yesterday, said he was ashamed for the 13 April 1919 incident when hundreds of innocents were slaughtered by the British Police.

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