

US pulls out all the stops for PM's visit

S. Rajagopalan
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VISITS OF world leaders to the planet's power capital are a dime a dozen. Even so, seldom does one see foreign flags flutter in the stiff Washington breeze.

It was different on Sunday as the Tricolour and the Stars and Stripes danced together in the wind atop government buildings and sidewalks.

Washington has very few 'state' visits as opposed to the numerous 'official' visits round the year. PM Manmohan Singh's has all the trappings of a state visit, complete with a state banquet. President George W. Bush, one is told, has hosted only six such dinners in the past five years of his presidency.

"All of this is meant to do one thing: convey a sense of respect for India... and a signal that this relationship now stands as one of the most important that the US has with any country," a top US official said, explaining why Washington has pulled out all the stops.

The Prime Minister, who arrives here later on Sunday, has a packed schedule over the next three days, beginning with a ceremonial reception on the South Lawn and the summit meeting with Bush. 'Strategic partnership' is the buzzword here as the two sides get set for the parleys.

Apart from civilian nuclear energy and space cooperation, where a clear push has been hinted, the talks will focus on a new momentum for bilateral trade, investment and technology collaboration.

A joint statement will set out the shape of things to come in the major areas of engagement. In addition, the White House will come out with "fact sheets" on 16 subjects: energy, space, science and technology, HIV/AIDS control, IT, business promotion, environment and, one, even on protecting the Bengal Tiger.



PTI

Prime Minister Manmohan Singh addresses the media on board a special flight on his way to the US.

18 JUL 2006 THE HINDUSTAN TIMES

India seeks US nuke tech

New Delhi, July 17

PRIME MINISTER Manmohan Singh said on Sunday that persuading the United States to share more of its nuclear technology would be a priority in his meeting next week with President Bush, and said he hoped the two countries would move from being "estranged" to "engaged" on issues of mutual interest.

"It's much too presumptuous on my part to say that I can predict the outcome, but I am looking forward, with hope, that out of this visit we will have a stronger, more durable, more productive relationship with the United States", he said. "People have described in the past our two countries' relations as two estranged democracies", he said, adding, "I would like to work to-

wards a new era where our two democracies are engaged."

After India's independence from Britain in 1947, the politics of the cold war era infused India-United States relations with mutual distrust. Change came slowly, with the opening up of India's economy in 1991 — Singh, an Oxford-educated economist and the finance minister at the time, was its chief architect — and relations fell to a new low in 1998, when India conducted nuclear tests.

India, which is not a party to the Nuclear Non-proliferation Treaty, has been clamouring for fuel and technology. United States law bars export of technology that could aid a nuclear program to any country that has not signed the treaty.

Singh said he was encouraged by previous meetings with Bush on nu-

clear technology. "The president himself has mentioned to me a country like India needs to be helped to reach its full potential in the area of nuclear energy," he said.

Relations between the countries warmed considerably after Sept. 11, 2001, with joint warfare exercises and Washington's offer of fighter planes for the Indian Air Force. The US is India's largest trading partner, and Washington has welcomed India's new patent law restricting production of low-cost Indian-made generic drugs and an "open skies" agreement intended to draw American airline companies to a booming Indian market.

In a telling snapshot of Indian perceptions, a survey commissioned by the Pew Global Attitudes Project found that Indians were singular in

the world for having a positive view of US policy.

Indian officials have been eager in recent weeks to emphasise what they refer to as a "convergence of interests" between New Delhi and Washington: a common stance against terrorism, a shared interest in the opportunities of a booming Indian economy, the need to stabilise global oil prices and, increasingly, what one senior official called "the affinities we have as democracies".

Offering an implicit contrast to China, the Prime Minister described India as a unique social experiment based on "an open society and an open economy," and dismissed the idea that India could be used as a bulwark against its ever-mightier neighbour.

The New York Times



The PM at Frankfurt airport on his way to the US.

PTI

To the next level For Better Indo-US Relations

PRIME Minister Manmohan Singh has a unique opportunity to redefine Indo-US relations. Distrust between Washington and New Delhi is now well into the past. Anti-Americanism in India is confined to the Left and American leaders of the 1970s vintage are embarrassed and apologetic about what they thought and said then. Relations have even moved beyond early post-cold-war daydreams of the US largesse towards the largest democracy. If Dr Singh needed a reminder that such unequivocal support was never on the cards, it was provided in the UN last week when the US called for a vote against the G-4 proposal that would have given India a permanent seat in the Security Council. And yet there are a number of critical areas, from fighting terrorism to developing energy strategies, where India and the US can, and need to, work together. For that, both countries will not only have to discard past baggage but also recognise that close cooperation in one area does not preclude disagreement in others. Closer Indo-US relations will then be just one of several alliances that each nation will pursue. Prime Minister Manmohan Singh will have an opportunity to demonstrate in the US that India has the maturity to handle the multiple relationships of a multi-polar world with the responsibility of a country that represents a sixth of humanity.

Dr Singh's message that New Delhi intends to rapidly increase its cooperation with Washington without in any way compromising its sovereignty will have an audience not only in the US but also in India. And it is the audience at home that could prove more difficult. As Dr Singh learnt from the reaction to his speech in Oxford, there are sections in India looking for a loss of national pride in every sentence of a speech. And it will not help that a substantial number of those critics belong to the anti-American Left, on whose support Dr Singh's government depends. The PM will have to show the world that he has not only the vision needed to take Indo-US relations to a higher and mutually beneficial level, but also the political spine to make that vision a reality.

18 JUL 2005

The Economic Times

Bush out to woo 'global power'

Sir
Indo-Asian News Service

WASHINGTON, July 17. — Dr Manmohan Singh flew into the Andrews Air Force Base here today for an official visit to the USA. This is Dr Singh's first visit to Washington after becoming Prime Minister in May 2004.

Mr George W Bush would meet Dr Singh tomorrow in an affirmation of a growing relationship that sees New Delhi as an emerging "global power" and seeks to build a "strategic

partnership" straddling key areas of security, technology, energy and economics.

The Prime Minister carries with him the hopes of a nation that seeks greater political, technological and economic support from Washington and yet fears too tight an embrace that could reduce it to the status of a "client state".

The relationship has been transformed in the last few years — beginning with then President Mr Bill Clinton's visit here in March 2000 — from a time when the two countries

were nothing more than "estranged democracies" with New Delhi nowhere in Washington's diplomatic, strategic or economic calculus. Now, in the words of US ambassador to India Mr David Mulford, "the transformation is taking place so quickly that it is a little bit hard for people to keep up".

Secretary of State Ms Condoleezza Rice gave expression to the presidential vision, saying that "at a time when Mr Bush has made the spread of freedom his highest foreign policy priority, few tasks are more

important than building the closest possible relationship between the USA and India, the world's two largest multicultural democracies".

She said Dr Singh's visit was an "important opportunity" to move this agenda forward. The USA welcomed India's emergence as a global power with which it seeks a "growing strategic partnership", she declared.

However, the Indians, traditionally wary of a "US bear hug", have not been overtly enthusiastic, at least not in pre-visit pronouncements.

“Looking forward to strengthening strategic ties”

Diplomatic Correspondent

NEW DELHI: Prime Minister Manmohan Singh on Saturday said he looked forward to “further developing and strengthening” India’s strategic partnership with the United States during his July 18-20 official visit to Washington.

“India attaches the highest importance to further developing and strengthening the strategic partnership with the United States, both in the bilateral context and to strengthen our partnership to meet global challenges. As the world’s two largest democracies, we have common values and interests,” he said before his departure from here.

Dr. Singh said India hoped to enhance interaction in civilian nuclear energy cooperation while strengthening ties in science and technology. There was no direct reference in his prepared statement to defence cooperation, for which a framework agreement was signed in Washington on June 28.

“In my meeting with [U.S.] President [George W.] Bush, I look forward to a comprehensive review of our bilateral relations. The United States is our largest trading partner. Accelerated

cooperation relating to trade, investment and technology collaboration is a primary objective”.

Some of the initiatives under consideration were enhancing the content of economic and energy dialogue; and global initiatives in democracy and combating HIV-AIDS and in agricultural education and research.

Dr. Singh stressed that his U.S. visit was an “important element” of India’s effort to establish friendly and productive relations abroad so as to optimise the benefits for the country’s development and its security and foreign policy interests.

Will meet Dick Cheney

The Prime Minister would meet Vice-President Dick Cheney and senior members of the Bush Cabinet. “I will be addressing a joint session of the U.S. Congress. Meetings have also been arranged with the Senate leadership as well as the India Caucus in the U.S. Congress.”

In his statement, Dr. Singh said he would speak at a luncheon meeting hosted by the National Press Club with leading U.S. and Indian business leaders and a gathering of the Indian-American community.

17 JUL 2002

Opening up the potential in economic cooperation

The visit does not hang on a single peg but would reaffirm the transformation in India-U.S. ties, says Shyam Saran

N. Ravi

NEW DELHI: Prime Minister Manmohan Singh's four-day visit to the United States is expected to open up the potential in several broad areas of economic, high technology and strategic cooperation rather than see dramatic moves on key issues of public interest in India including membership of the United Nations Security Council and civil nuclear supplies.

It is a visit that, in the words of Foreign Secretary Shyam Saran does not hang on a single peg but would be "reaffirming at the highest level the transformation which is taking place in India-U.S. relations" and would see a "substantial outcome." In a similar vein, the American Under-Secretary of State for Political Affairs, Nicholas Burns, during his visit to New Delhi last month said he expected this to be "one of the most consequential U.S.-India summits in the history of our relationships."

Security Council issue

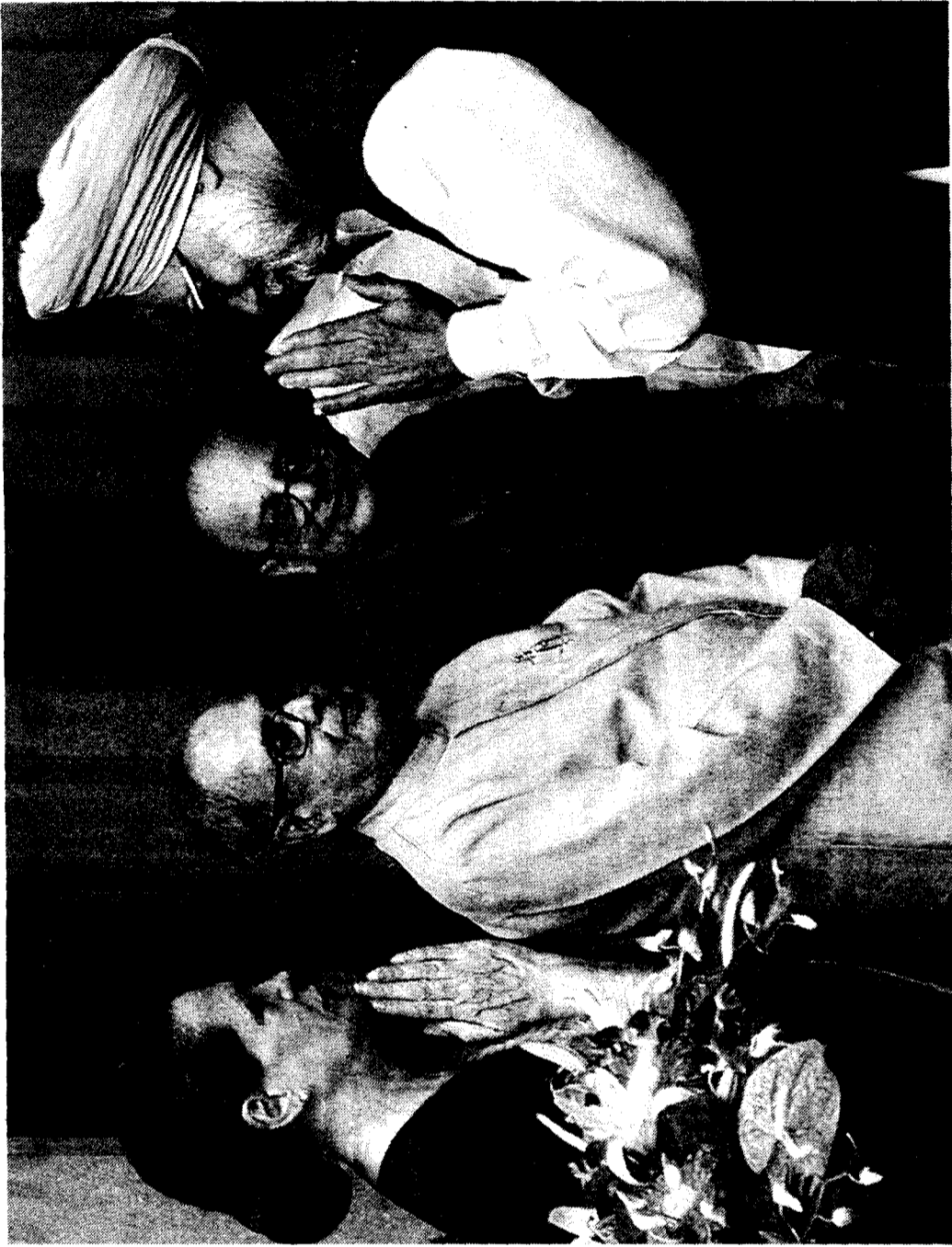
On the issue of question of expansion of the U.N. Security Council and India's quest for permanent membership, the positions of the two sides remain quite divergent and no move forward is expected. India is part of the G4 initiative to expand the Council with the addition of six permanent members and four non-permanent members, taking the strength of the Council from 15 to 25, and would seek the support of the General Assembly for the expansion. The U.S., on the other hand, wants an agreement on a broader reform of the U.N., including more efficient budgeting and management, the establishment of a peace building commission, a new human rights council, a democracy fund and a democracy initiative within the U.N. and a comprehensive convention on terrorism before taking up the question of expansion of the Security Council.

On the expansion of the

- No move forward likely on U.N. Security Council issue
- India seeks cooperation in civilian nuclear energy sector
- Support for terrorism in Pakistan on the agenda
- CEOs Forum to discuss blockages on trade and investments

Council itself, it wants the overall strength to be limited to 19 or 20 so that it does not become unwieldy and lose its effectiveness, with "two or so" new permanent members and two or three non-permanent members with five-year terms. It has spelt out the criteria that it would propose for the permanent members including economic size, population, military capacity, commitment to democracy and human rights, financial contributions to the U.N., contribution to U.N. peace-keeping and record on counter-terrorism and non-proliferation and announced its support for bringing Japan. India's credentials under the American criteria are seen as good but President Bush has not so far made a decision on supporting any country other than Japan.

The focus of the trip would be on the Economic Dialogue, and the newly set up CEOs Forum which would include a select group of 10 CEOs from each country will be holding its first meeting in Washington during the Prime Minister's visit. On the Indian side, the Forum includes Ratan Tata, Mukesh Ambani, Nandan Nilekani, Deepak Parekh and P. C. Reddy while from the United States the group of 10 CEOs who applied to participate. The Forum after discussions would recommend steps that the two governments could



ON A GOODWILL VISIT: Prime Minister Manmohan Singh greets United Progressive Alliance chairperson and Congress president Sonia Gandhi before his departure to Washington in New Delhi on Saturday. Others in the picture are Defence Minister Pranab Mukherjee and HRD Minister Arjun Singh. - PHOTO: SHANKER CHAKRAVARTY

take to remove the blockages on trade and investments.

The democracy initiative is expected to be taken further during this visit. The U.S. proposed the democracy initiative and the creation of the U.N. Democracy Fund last year and India has expressed support for the fund. While Washington has taken democracy promotion the world over as one of its core aims, India's experience in democracy and managing the world's largest electoral exercise is expected to

be a valuable resource for other nations.

An Energy Dialogue has also been started between the two countries and one of its components would be cooperation in the area of civilian nuclear energy with India seeking nuclear fuel and equipment, including new generation reactors. High technology trade is an area where there has been some progress since the lifting of U.S. sanctions in 2001 but India would be seeking a more liberal regime in this

area. American high technology sales to China run to \$500 million while in the case of India it amounts to just \$100 million.

Cooperation and technology supplies in the areas of environment and wildlife protection as well as in combating HIV/AIDS in the rest of the world, combining the resources of the two countries for disaster relief as in the case of the Asian tsunami and cooperation in agricultural research are other items on the agenda.

Among the contentious issues,

the question of support for terrorism within Pakistan would be high on the list. While the Indian position on this question is well known, the American argument has been that while it has no illusion about support for terrorism from elements within Pakistan, it needs to adopt a carrot and stick approach to persuade the government to check religious extremist groups. The Indian side has been voicing its feeling that there has been too much of the carrot and not enough of the

stick in U.S. dealings with Pakistan.

Gas pipeline project

Another area of difference would be on the question of the proposed gas pipeline from Iran through Pakistan. The U.S. in its efforts to isolate Iran has been trying very hard to persuade India and Pakistan not to go ahead with the pipeline, but the Indian position is that with its long standing relationship, both civilisational and economic, with Iran the pipeline is an obvious choice in the interest of its energy security. The two sides seem to have voiced their strong differences but have agreed not to let the differences spill over into other areas.

The Indo-U.S. defence cooperation framework agreement, which was signed during the visit of Defence Minister Pranab Mukherjee to Washington ago some weeks ago, is expected to figure in passing. The agreement, which has created a controversy in India, particularly with the Left, provides a framework under which the two countries will cooperate to maintain peace and security including in multilateral peacekeeping when it is in their interests to do so. The obvious American interest is in joint exercises with the Indian defence forces, in India joining in multilateral peacekeeping operations and in the Indian navy securing the commercially and strategically important sea lanes. Both Indian and American officials have been at pains to point out that the agreement is just a framework and it does not commit either side to any specific action unless each country determines that it is in its own interest to join forces. India's interest lies in getting American military equipment, particularly communications and electronic systems for weapons systems. Since 2001, the U.S. has issued 700 licences for direct commercial defence sales to India and in 2005 the volume of such sales is expected to touch \$64 million.

What the CPI(M) seeks from Mannohan's U.S. visit

Karat asks Dr. Singh to resist from making any announcements on opening retail trade

Special Correspondent

NEW DELHI: As Prime Minister Manmohan Singh prepares to leave this week on his first official visit to the United States, the Communist Party of India (Marxist) has asked him to resist from making any announcements on opening retail trade.

Among other things, he must tell Washington not to stand in the way of India's quest for energy security.

"The policies of the Bush administration have a direct bearing on India's economy, security and national interest. India, for its part, is one of the leading developing countries whose economic and political potential is

widely recognised. The outcome of the visit, therefore, will be closely watched not only in India but in the international arena and, in particular, the Third World countries," CPI(M) general secretary Prakash Karat said in an article, "What is expected from PM during his U.S. visit," in the latest edition of party mouthpiece *People's Democracy*.

Foreign policy

In recent years, he said, due to the pro-American policies of the [previous] Vajpayee Government, the impression had gained ground that India was moving into the orbit of the U.S. as a strategic ally. The Common

Minimum Programme (CMP) of the United Progressive Alliance had stressed on an independent foreign policy, which raised hopes that India would correct the earlier distortions and plays its due role as a leading representative of developing countries and a founder of the Non-Aligned Movement.

In the run-up to the coming visit, a number of issues have come up that require careful consideration. "A coherent set of policies which put Indo-American relations on a balanced and equitable plane needs to be formulated," Mr. Karat said. The U.S. was interested in exploiting India's large market, in particular open it to the flow of international capital and provide privileged access to giant American multinational corporations.

While the Manmohan Singh

• Need for policies that put India-U.S. relations on a balanced and equitable plane

• Liberalisation: Government must keep in mind the framework of the Common Minimum Programme

• New Delhi's determination to pursue gas pipeline project must be conveyed

Government is eager to utilise the U.S. interest to push forward the liberalisation process, the Left expects the Government to keep in mind the framework of the CMP, he said. The U.S. is keen that India open up its retail trade to foreign investment. U.S. giant Walmart is interested in coming to India. Retail trade employs about eight per cent of the total workforce of our country and contributes around 13 per cent

to the GDP. In the absence of expansion of the manufacturing sector, retail trade is one area that has absorbed surplus labour from the countryside. The UPA Government should resist the temptation to make any announcement on opening up retail trade to FDI during the visit, the article said.

A major concession was made in the financial sector, during Dr. Singh's visit to New York for the U.N. General Assembly ses-

sion last year, by allowing 74 per cent FDI in private banking sector. The U.S. wants further liberalisation in the sector including insurance.

The Left, Mr. Karat said, has maintained that opening up the financial sector can lead to loss of economic sovereignty.

India has to play an independent role by developing its economy and strengthening the united forums of the developing countries to end the international economic order.

While the U.S. claims it encourages free flow of trade and commerce, it has repeatedly taken protectionist steps and prevents free flow of personnel and goods even in bilateral relations. In this context, Dr. Singh should convey New Delhi's determination to pursue the Iran-Pakistan-India gas pipeline project. "The U.S. should be told

that it cannot hamper India's quest for energy security."

As the Government is keen to enlist American support for India's candidature as a permanent member of the U.N. Security Council, Mr. Karat said that India should be careful not to give in to the U.S. on such a vital issue. The country's representation should not be delinked from the wider question of democratisation of the United Nations.

The article also drew attention to how attempts by U.S. President George Bush to privatise social security funds and put them in the stock market backfired in the United States. It said the UPA Government was now trying to privatise pension, which people considered a social security measure.

The UPA can use the opposition to stand up to US pressure

Constructive thinking

The challenge for Prime Minister Manmohan Singh during and after his visit to Washington will be one of form rather than substance, if the opposition by left parties to the "New Framework for the US-India Defence Relationship" is any indication. By this yardstick, the prime minister is already in trouble, even before he has packed his bags for next week's journey: he may not be aware of it, though. At least, not yet.

The trouble that is brewing for the prime minister is over a state dinner which President George W. Bush is planning for Singh at the White House on Monday. Indian officials and those in charge of protocol at the White House have spent considerable time making arrangements for this dinner. It will be nowhere on the scale of a banquet, which Bush's predecessor, Bill Clinton, put together for Singh's predecessor, Atal Bihari Vajpayee. The guest list will be much smaller: the dinner, and the reception which precedes it, will all be held inside the White House, not on the lawns unlike in 2000.

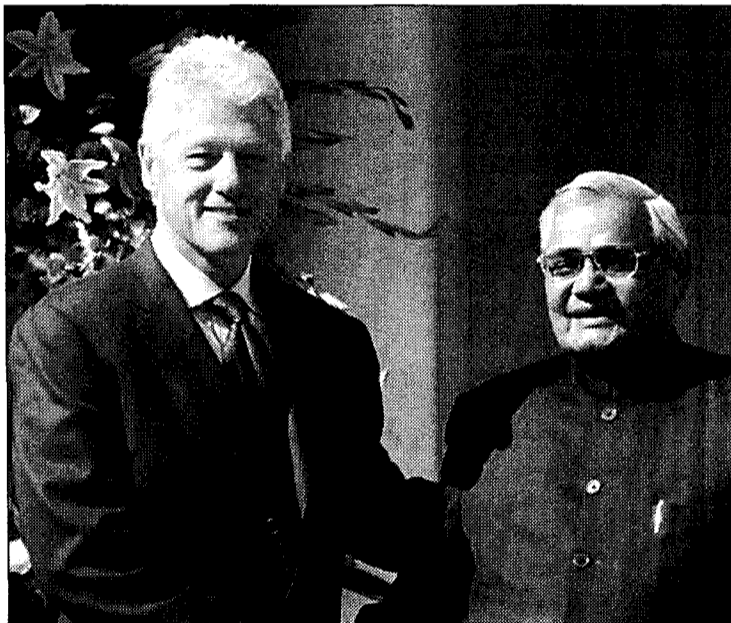
But that should not obscure the significance of Bush's gesture in welcoming Singh to Washington. In his entire first four-year term, Bush hosted just four state dinners. His parents hosted the same number of dinners even before they had time to fully settle down in the White House — during the first six months of the 41st presidency.

The White House wants to invite to next Monday's dinner all 10 American members of the Indo-American CEO's Forum, which has been set up in time to hold its first meeting in Washington during the prime minister's visit. But it does not want to invite to dinner the 10 Indian CEOs who make up the forum. Indian officials in Washington are unhappy with the discrimination, but there is little they can do about it. It is still possible that Bush's protocol officials may change their mind on the guest list, but you really cannot tell your host who all he should call home for dinner, can you? The White House has, instead, suggested that the Indian CEOs should go for a lunch being organized by the secretary of state, Condoleezza Rice, the same afternoon.

It is not as if Indians of the stature of Ratan Tata, Y.C. Deveshwar or Ashok Ganguly are desperate to be feted at the White House. When they agreed to lend their names and prestige to the CEO's Forum, they were participating in the larger goal of adding substance to Indo-US economic relations and helping to fulfil some of the obligations that come from India's new global role as an emerging power. But it still leaves a bad taste in the

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mouth when they are excluded from an event to which their American counterparts are being invited.

The exclusion will not come as a surprise for those who know the strange ways of America. Roughly a third of the 152 adult guests who slept at the White House or the presidential retreat at Camp David last year were fundraisers or donors to Bush's political campaigns. The practice of selling the White House for money was tuned into a fine art by Clinton. John McCain, the widely respected Republican senator from Arizona, said of the practice:



"the president of the US, in seeking to raise money for his re-election, was willing to use the Lincoln Bedroom, probably one of the more sacrosanct places in America, in order to gain those financial funds which he felt were necessary."

Several of the American chief executives, who have been recruited to the CEO's Forum, are close to Bush and are among his contributors. Yet, it is a very big thing for each of them to be invited to the White House. Bush wants to use the opportunity offered by Singh's visit to return their favours.

Unfortunately, most Indians will not see it that way. That will be Singh's problem, just as the left parties see nothing good in the new defence framework and want it to be thrown into the dustbin. Singh's dilemma during and after his visit to Washington will be fundamental. For close to 15 years, Indians and Americans have tired of telling each other that one of them is the world's oldest democracy and the other is the biggest democracy in the history of mankind. For five

years now, Indians and Americans have thought of each other as "natural allies".

But no relationship between nations can be sustained indefinitely on platitudes. In the last one year of his prime ministership, Singh has demonstrated that he can take Indo-US ties forward, building on the foundations for a new relationship which were laid by the National Democratic Alliance government. But that requires a greater understanding in India of the way Americans do things and greater sensitivity to their needs.

‘ No relationship between nations can be sustained indefinitely on platitudes ’

At the same time, it would be unrealistic to expect the Americans to reciprocally show any such sensitivity towards India, except when Washington acutely wants something from New Delhi. When the Bush administration was desperate for India's support for its war effort in Iraq, the defence secretary, Donald Rumsfeld, surprised many by calling on the then deputy prime minister, L.K. Advani, at his hotel room in Washington on a Sunday within hours of Advani's arrival.

As any euphoria generated by Singh's three-day stay at Blair House, the presidential guest house adjacent to the White House, wears off, the United Progressive Alliance government will realize that it will not be easy to get the Americans to

move forward on any issue of critical interest to New Delhi in Washington, notwithstanding the huge propaganda to the contrary by a growing American lobby in India.

The leadership of the Bush administration is in favour of engaging India. But there is entrenched opposition within the American establishment to doing anything with India, be it on nuclear energy, missile defence, cooperation in space, even on HIV and AIDS. Leftist opposition to such issues as the new Indo-US defence framework can actually be useful in resisting American demands in areas critical for India. Such opposition can, at the same time, be used by New Delhi to work out *quid pro quos* with Washington.

When P.V. Narasimha Rao was prime minister, he effectively used such resistance in India to engaging America as a way of standing up against US demands to sign the nuclear non-proliferation treaty, to make concessions in Geneva during negotiations for a comprehensive test ban treaty and for a host of other compromises on issues of national interest.

Because Rao's relations with some opposition leaders were better than his relations with many Congress leaders, he may have even persuaded opposition parties to agitate against the US on certain issues as a way of telling the Americans that he could not accede to their demands because of domestic opposition within India.

Singh's government lacks such Machiavellian thinking, so essential in dealing with a super-power. Instead, there is a scramble in New Delhi to claim credit for what is being done in Washington. The prime minister's visit to Washington was nearly undercut this week by that scramble.

Without telling the Indian embassy in the US, without going through normal protocol, the external affairs minister, K. Natwar Singh, for instance, attempted to organize a lightning visit to Washington on Thursday, ostensibly to tie up loose ends and to give the finishing touches to the prime minister's journey to the White House, according to American sources.

Because national security adviser, M.K. Narayanan, had made an extended visit to Washington last month doing precisely that, the external affairs minister's now aborted July 14 visit was meant to take the spotlight away from Narayanan. Fortunately, the Indian embassy put its foot down and insisted that a ministerial visit at this stage would be disruptive, not productive. What the prime minister needs in his dealings with America is constructive support and constructive opposition, without which his trip next week will be like that of several of his predecessors.

DIPLOMACY

K.P. NAYAR

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America, India and outsourcing imperial overreach

Siddharth Varadarajan

IF THERE is one document everyone should read to understand the direction relations between the United States and India have begun to take in the past few years, it is *The Indo-U.S. Military Relationship: Expectations and Perceptions*, a report commissioned by the Pentagon in October 2002.

Written by Juli A. MacDonald of the Information Assurance Technology Analysis Center (IATAC), a Department of Defence-affiliated outfit, the 131-page report was based on in-depth, off-the-record interviews with 40 senior serving U.S. officials — including military officers — and around the same number of serving and retired Indian officials and officers. The aim: to “reveal the opportunities for and impediments to military-to-military cooperation” between the two countries.

Although the unclassified report was circulated in the upper echelons of government in both countries two years ago, its existence was never publicised by either side — presumably because of the frank manner in which U.S. officials spoke

REALITY CHECK

of the value of India in America’s emerging Asian strategy. Reading the report two years later, it is clear the Pentagon did not commission the study as an academic exercise. In 2002, U.S. officials believed the opportunities were infinite and the impediments relatively easy to overcome.

Anticipating the much-hyped naval cooperation between the U.S. and India in the aftermath of the tsunami, the IATAC report argues that the “U.S. military seeks a competent military partner that can take on more responsibility for *low-end operations in Asia*, such as peace-keeping operations, search and rescue, humanitarian assistance, disaster relief and high-value cargo escort, *which will allow the U.S. military to concentrate its resource on high-end fighting missions*” (emphasis added). The Pentagon’s Global Posture Review 2004 suggests the

In offering to make India a ‘major world power,’ Washington wants a ‘low cost ally’ whose support in ‘low-end tasks’ will help free its own military for the ‘high-end’ military operations central to maintaining its power in Asia.

era of permanent large-scale overseas deployment is over. Military action of the future requires small bases, or “lily pads,” and a network of close allies with compatible “capabilities.” This is where India fits in.

The ‘tethering’ of China

What the Pentagon’s planners want is a military alliance of the kind the U.S. has with South Korea and Japan. The U.S. is looking ahead at the next 50 years. Japan is a declining power and Korea an unpredictable one. Alone in Asia, India offers the prospect of a power whose rise can be harnessed in order to help the U.S. deal with the strategic challenge of China.

So confident is Washington of the inevitability of this new alliance — and of its utility on the China front — that it has begun speaking of India with Japan and Korea. After her speech at Tokyo’s Sophia University on March 19, U.S. Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice was asked about the challenge posed by China to the U.S. “[As] we look to China’s life,” she replied, “I really do believe the U.S.-Japan relationship, the U.S.-South Korean relationship, the U.S.-Indian relationship, all are important in creating an environment in which China is more likely to play a positive role than a negative role. These alliances are not against China; they are alliances ... that put China ... [on] a different path to development than if [it] were simply untethered, simply operating without that strategic context.”

The use of the word ‘untethered’ is not fortuitous. George F. Kennan had just died and his intellectual legacy was weighing heavily on Dr.

Rice’s mind. ‘To tether’ means “to tie a rope or chain to an animal so as to restrict him to a particular spot,” precisely what Kennan hoped to achieve by ‘containment’ of the Soviet Union.

In her report, Ms. MacDonald noted, “the American interviewees are focused on the longer term implications of the Chinese gaining a strategic position to threaten the U.S. position in Asia.” She stresses the reluctance of Indian and U.S. officials to recommend or argue openly that the Indo-U.S. military relationship be directed primarily against China. “A U.S. admiral reasoned that ... [t]he U.S. and India both view China as a strategic threat ... though we do not discuss this publicly.” She quoted one American colonel as warning against portraying India as a counter to China in U.S. strategy: “... Such a rationale for the relationship will make the task of selling the Indo-U.S. relationship to the Indian public exceedingly difficult.” At the same time, China is the key. “This statement is typical,” the IATAC report says: “We want a friend in 2020 that will be capable of assisting the U.S. military to deal with a Chinese threat. We cannot deny that India will create a countervailing force to China,” it adds.

The American officials quoted in the IATAC report also said the U.S. needs to prepare for the day its traditional relationships in Asia weaken. A State Department official notes: “India’s strategic importance increases in the event that U.S. relationships with other traditional allies (e.g. Japan, South Korea, and Saudi Arabia) become more acrimonious or politically uncomfortable for both parties; or if access rights that the U.S.

takes for granted become more restrictive... The U.S. needs to develop alternatives in Asia. India is the optimal choice if we can overcome the obstacles in building the relationship.”

Lack of access to U.S. weapons technology is seen as the biggest obstacle from the Indian side. “An American major general summarised the contrasting aims: ‘The Indians will laud the relationship as a success if they obtain the technology they want from the U.S. We will view the relationship as a success if we are able to build a constructive military cooperation program that enables us to jointly operate with the Indians in the future.’”

But these aims turn out not to be so contrasting after all. The sale of U.S. technology will improve the “inter-operability” of Indian and U.S. soldiers and allow for the kind of joint ‘multinational operations’ the new U.S.-India defence agreement speaks of. “U.S. military officers who want India to be a capable partner convey a uniform message: The U.S. must allow the sale of U.S. technology and equipment to India,” the IATAC report states. According to a U.S. general, “The only way to achieve any level of inter-operability requires the U.S. Government to sell India U.S. equipment. Not only will [this] help the two militaries communicate and operate together, they will also enable the U.S. military to more equally assess India’s military capabilities.”

The aim is not just to assess but to access Indian capabilities. “Access to India would enable the U.S. military ‘to be able to touch the rest of the world’ and to respond rapidly to regional crises,” one U.S. Lt. General told Ms. MacDonald. And another senior officer argued that the U.S. Air Force “would benefit from having access closer to areas of instability (e.g. Central Asia, Southeast Asia and the Persian Gulf). India’s well developed infrastructure could be useful for U.S. power projection into these areas.”

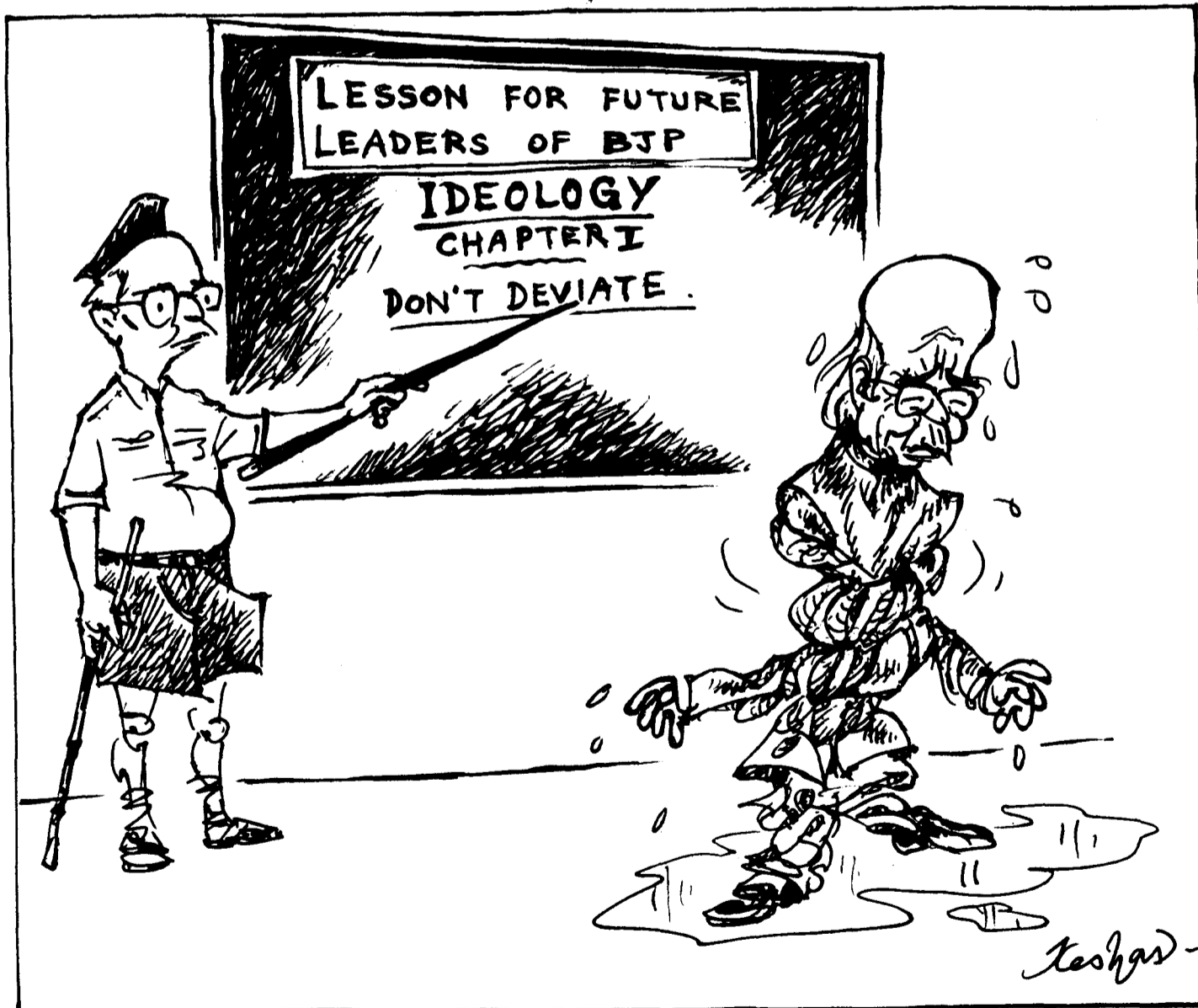
Indians who feel flattered by the growing number of port calls by U.S. warships and joint exercises at sea and in air should realise there is a purpose behind everything. American military officers are “candid in their plans to eventually seek access to Indian bases and military infrastructure,” the IATAC report states. “The U.S. Navy wants a relatively neutral territory on the opposite side of the world that can provide ports and support for operations in the Middle East,” a U.S. officer is quoted as saying. “Over time, port visits must become a natural event... In the same vein, the U.S. Air Force would like the Indians to be able to grant them access to bases and landing rights during operations, such as counter-terrorism and heavy airlift support.” “Our ultimate goal,” another U.S. officer said, “is to be able to work together with the Indians to respond to regional crises, particularly in Africa. We should be seen as partners in restoring order and promoting democracy in the region.”

If U.S. officials are candid about their expectations from India, they are also aware of the need to tie India down early. A U.S. colonel told Ms. MacDonald: “The costs of building a relationship with India today are significantly lower than the costs of facing India as a spoiler in the future.” “Many Americans,” she notes, “advocated that ‘the low cost of building a relationship today will pay large dividends in the future’ by preventing India from acting in ways that could be counter to U.S. interests.”

In the process of helping the U.S. “tether” China, India is likely to find that it has tethered itself as well. This is the essence of the ‘offer’ a senior U.S. State Department official made in March this year to “help India become a major world power.” Such an offer is not only demeaning, it is aimed at ensuring India never plays a constructive role with China and others in developing a new, cooperative Asian security framework — a framework in which there is no room for outside powers to maintain a military presence in the continent under the guise of providing ‘balance’.

If he has not already done so, Prime Minister Manmohan Singh would be well advised to go through the IATAC report before setting off for Washington on March 16. Last week, he told reporters India would never be a supplicant or client state. He is right. India is far too big — and its people far too proud — to allow this to happen. But as his Government rushes into a ‘partnership’ with the U.S. on all fronts — especially military — there must be no illusions about just what it is Washington wants.

CARTOONSCAPE



The Ball Is In America's Court

Onus on Bush to refashion India-US relations

By K SUBRAHMANYAM

In another week, we will know whether Indo-US relations will take a historic turn for the better. On both sides, there are optimistic expectations as well as pessimistic predictions. Given the history of last 60 years, mistrust and suspicion cannot be expected to disappear overnight. It took several years after Henry Kissinger's secret visit to Beijing, which led to a breakthrough in Sino-US relations, for normal diplomatic relations to be established between the two countries.

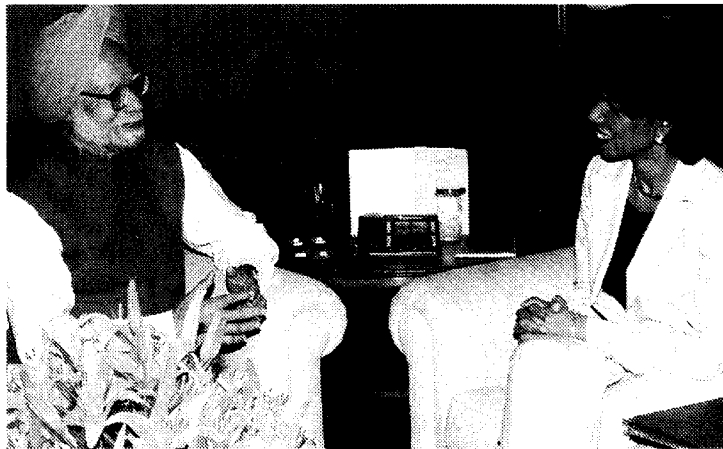
In spite of China deriving enormous benefits from its alliance with US, after it first abandoned the Soviet Union and then communism, there is enormous suspicion between the two countries. The US and European allies, partners under the North Atlantic Treaty Organisation for 50 years, have come to develop rivalries and tensions. As circumstances change, international relations are forced to evolve accordingly. Therefore, India and the US should approach the summit in a spirit of realism and pragmatism.

As in the case of Sino-US relations, the US initiative to help India build itself as a major world power in the 21st century is the result of a "top-down" strategy worked out between the US president and some of his closest advisors. There is bound to be enormous resistance to change within the US bureaucracy — the non-proliferation Ayatollahs and cold warriors who still dream of unbridled US supremacy. Meanwhile, in India, our political class and bureaucracy have yet to overcome their Cold War and non-alignment mindset.

India expects the US to support it openly for a permanent seat in the expanded Security Council, and for revocation of nuclear

sanctions. If India is to be the natural ally of the US, to use natural security advisor Condoleezza Rice's expression, these are perfectly normal expectations. But have Indians thought through US expectations from India?

The proposition that the US wants to use India in military terms against China is absurd. The US has neither the capability nor the intention to deal with China in military terms. The US strategy vis-a-vis China is of engagement and building an Asian balance of power. Neither of these steps will hurt India's interests or autonomy in arriving at decisions.



The US secretary of state has clearly explained the linkage between long-term US economic interests on the one hand and its interaction with India as a rising economic power on the other. The US is focused on India's rapid growth, the latter's role as a factor in Asian balance of power and its contribution to US economic pre-eminence. Manmohan Singh, in his statements, has already declared India to be among liberal democracies, with every intention to tap international resources. There is, therefore, a basic framework for a bargain between the two countries, even as India's bureaucracy has not assessed US's objective.

The only problem — a major one at present — is how far the bureaucracies and cold

warriors on both sides would allow the leaderships to reach a mutually satisfactory agreement. In proceeding on these lines, the prime minister is handicapped by political dependence on the Left, which lives in a Cold War time warp. Though Bush too has to deal with a bureaucracy and sections of politicians who share the Cold War time warp, he has returned to power with the largest electoral margin in history. To that extent, he can set the ball rolling.

A section of the US administration, in fact, feels that the NSSP (Next Step in Strategic Partnership) is not adequate, and that the US must declare its commitment to

help India in its move to become a major power of the 21st century and extend support on nuclear energy. The pronouncements of the US president, secretary of state and state department officials were so upbeat as to justifiably raise Indian expectations. If the president does not assert himself — usually he is accused of asserting too much — and is unable to deliver on reasonable Indian expectations, Indian critics who accuse the US of being unreliable will feel vindicated.

Indo-US relations could revert to the dark ages of the 70s. The US credibility will be damaged

not only in Indian eyes but in the rest of the world. The Left in India and others who have been campaigning against improvement in Indo-US relations will be able to step up pressure on Manmohan Singh government even on economic liberalisation.

The objective international reality is that the world does not have and will not have any more superpowers and will have to reconcile itself to a six-actor balance of power system. In that system, with the rising Chinese economic challenge, the US will need India more than vice-versa. The US and India have the potential to be natural allies. Whether the alliance firms up in the near future or suffers a setback because of Cold War mindsets depends on the US leadership.

THE TIMES OF INDIA

Not accepting U.S. offer on missile shield: Pranab

'Ready to accept critical inputs to bridge deficiency'

Sandeep Dikshit

NEW DELHI: Defence Minister Pranab Mukherjee on Tuesday said "there was no question" of accepting a missile defence shield from "anybody." Speaking in the context of American overtures regarding a missile defence shield, the Minister said there were gaps in the integrated guided missile defence programme but India would only accept critical inputs that bridged the deficiency. "If we don't get them, fine," he added, indicating that India would then explore other options, including indigenous development and approaching other countries chiefly Russia.

Background paper

In his first interaction with the media after signing the 10-year India-U.S. defence framework, the Minister said several meetings between officials of the two countries on the defence missile shield should not be read as accepting the U.S. offer to join

its programme. Though Mr. Mukherjee was categorical in ruling out accepting a complete defence missile shield system, a background paper circulated at his interaction with the media stated that "the U.S. side also offered to advance the proposed briefing on the Patriot PAC-III (missile defence) system which is a part of phase-II of the next steps in strategic partnership (NSSP)".

The Minister said he would shortly meet leaders of the Left

parties to address their concerns on the India-U.S. defence framework. At the same time, "the Left parties have a particular ideological position with respect to the U.S. We have to keep in view that point," he said, adding that "every party is entitled to its point of view".

He denied the framework would lead to India participating in a U.S.-led operation outside ambit of the United Nations. "We have a clear perception that we will participate in multina-

tional operations under the U.N. That position has not changed. It is not necessary that after every mention of multinational, the word U.N. should be added." Mr. Mukherjee said India's position of participating only in U.N. mandate operations figured in the talks with his counterpart Donald Rumsfeld.

No contradiction

The Minister denied any of the framework's clauses contradicted the Common Minimum Programme. "Neither did I sign under duress nor did I apply pressure. It was an expression of intention," he said. The framework was simply a follow-up of the agreed minutes on defence cooperation signed in 1995 which was to expire after 10 years.

Mr. Mukherjee said the high point of his visit was the U.S. acceptance to India's desire of participating in the joint production of equipment and transfer of technology.

"No need to respond"

Special Correspondent

NEW DELHI: India need not respond to the revelation that the former U.S. Secretary of State, Henry Kissinger, had used expletives against Indira Gandhi during the Bangladesh liberation struggle because the "Government of India had

reacted very effectively in 1971," said Defence Minister Pranab Mukherjee. Asked whether he had brought up this episode during his recent visit to the U.S., Mr. Mukherjee said, "It is not necessary to react if somebody says something insane. Anyway, he has apologised."

Decoding the India-U.S. defence tie-up

Was the agreement on defence cooperation suddenly sprung on Pranab Mukherjee when he arrived at the Pentagon? This is a question that needs to be answered.

Sandeep Dikshit

DID DEFENCE Minister Pranab Mukherjee and senior Defence Ministry officials mislead the media and the country about the significance of their American visit, which ended in the signing of the "New framework for the Indo-U.S. defence relationship"? Would it not have been fair for the Government to indicate the impendency of an arrangement that could rework the country's security philosophy?

Before setting out for the United States, Mr. Mukherjee did not want much significance to be read into the visit. Emerging from the meeting of the Cabinet Committee on Security that discussed his brief for talks with his American counterpart, Donald Rumsfeld, and other senior State Department and Pentagon officials, he said the trip was "exploratory" in nature. "I am not going with a shopping list. This is a visit by an Indian Defence Minister to the U.S. after a long time."

If it was only an exploratory visit, how did the two countries end up signing a document obligating India to a defence relationship some of whose provisions go against the tenets of its foreign policy? These clauses include the intention to "collaborate in multinational operations," "expand collaboration relating to missile defence" and "assist in building worldwide capacity to conduct successful peacekeeping operations."

Besides the fact that there were no discussions with the supporting parties on the defence framework, which transcends the term of the present Government, Mr. Mukherjee's briefing to the media after the CCS meeting lost credibility when he concealed the main purpose of his tour.

To be fair to Mr. Mukherjee, most of the questions at the post-CCS meeting explored the prospects of a mega arms purchase agreement. But at another briefing by senior Defence Ministry officials hours before they boarded the aircraft as part of Mr. Mukherjee's entourage, an official said: "We are not going to open something that is closed but to build on the existing relationship." "The in-

itation for the visit had come from the previous Bush regime but the Defence Minister could not go as he had Parliamentary commitments. So it was decided to utilise the gap between two Parliament Sessions to make an exploratory visit," he added.

So, was the agreement suddenly sprung on Mr. Mukherjee when he arrived at the Pentagon? This is a question that needs to be answered.

Those in the know say that an agreement was in the pipeline for "quite sometime." It was initiated when the previous government was in office and some senior Cabinet Ministers from the Congress party had their way by deciding to continue with its formulation. They did not want the work on the defence framework to be made public for "obvious reasons," meaning the fear of opposition from within the ruling establishment and its supporting parties to continuing with the previous government's urge to build a more abiding defence relationship with the U.S.

In the pipeline for long?

"It was in the works and is well prepared. Such a thing cannot be conjured out of nothing. It seems to have been processed carefully," says the former Foreign Secretary, Shankar Bajpai. He believes the reason for the secrecy was the need to fine-tune the clauses and points out that no Government will reveal such an agreement in advance. As for discussing the broad contours with the allies and supporting parties, he points out there is no past precedence of negotiating an element of broader strategic partnership with another government through the public.

The supporting parties and a large section of the strategic community feel otherwise. They had banked on the United Progressive Alliance Government adopting an operating style different from that of the previous government, of encouraging debate and discussions on broad aspects of the country's approach to regional security. Instead of opening to the public the hitherto closed process of evolving a new defence paradigm, the new Government has sustained the old approach.



TOO CLOSE FOR COMFORT?: Defence Minister Pranab Mukherjee with U.S. Defence Secretary Donald Rumsfeld at the Pentagon during his visit to the United States in June.

- PHOTO: SNAPSINDIA

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HINDU

Kissinger regrets Nixon language against Indira

Agencies
New Delhi, July 1

FORMER US secretary of state Henry Kissinger said on Friday that he regretted his use of strong language against Indira Gandhi in 1971. After his remarks were made public, causing a storm in India, Kissinger told NDTV that he had "high regard" for Indira and the strong remarks were a "one-time event".

Kissinger had made his comments in a conversation with then-President Richard Nixon in the White House in November 1971, the transcripts of which were declassified earlier this week. Nixon had described Indira as an old witch, while Kissinger had used an expletive to describe Indians in general.

On Friday, Kissinger (82) said the "old witch" reference was "Nixon language". "This was not a formal conversation. This was somebody letting off steam at the end of a meeting... There was disappointment at the results of the meeting. The language was Nixon language," he said.

"In any event I regret these words were used. I have extremely high regards for Mrs Gandhi as

a statesman... she was a great leader who did great things for the country," he said.

Though he regretted the language, he appeared to justify the mood. "(This) has to be seen in the context of a Cold War atmosphere... India had made a kind of an alliance with the Soviet Union," he said.



Henry Kissinger

Since then, equations have changed, and Kissinger described himself as a "strong supporter and promoter" of the warming relations. Defence minister Pranab Mukherjee has signed a landmark military accord with US defence secretary Donald Rumsfeld, and Prime Minister Manmohan Singh is scheduled to visit the US this month at the invitation of President George W. Bush.

In Washington on Thursday, Bush made a brief reference to Indira, saying she "spoke of poverty and need as the greatest polluters". Some in India saw this as a way for Bush to quietly distance himself from the Nixon comments on Indira.

But the Congress is still angry. "This kind of language does not behave any head of state," party spokesman Anand Sharma said. He conceded, however, that comments made 34 years ago had little relevance at this juncture.

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Joint action pact with US

Ind. vs

K.P. NAYAR

Washington, June 29: India and the US have broadened their military co-operation to include collaboration "in multinational operations when it is in their common interest".

In principle, for example, this allows India to join the US military invasion of Afghanistan, which could be deemed to be in New Delhi's "interest" because the Taliban regime in Kabul was hosting and training terrorists operating in Jammu and Kashmir.

Also, in principle, India will not be bound to join, for instance, a US-led attack on Iraq because New Delhi has been opposed to it and does not consider such an attack to be in "common interest".

This huge leap in defence co-operation between the Pentagon and India's defence ministry is one of the provisions

in a four-page document called "New framework for the US-India defence relationship", signed yesterday between defence minister Pranab Mukherjee and US secretary for defence Donald Rumsfeld.

The new framework supersedes the "Agreed minutes on defence relations between the US and India" of January 1995, which has so far been the foundation of military co-operation between the two nations.

In return for New Delhi's willingness to participate in "multinational operations" with the US, Mukherjee scored a big hit for India when he got the Pentagon to agree that any "defence transactions" — namely, arms sales — will not solely be "ends in and of themselves", but "means to strengthen our (two) countries' security, reinforce our strategic partnership, achieve greater



We really slobbered over the old witch
RICHARD NIXON
on Indira Gandhi
See Page 6

well known, has been pushing very hard in New Delhi to get India to buy American arms.

Rumsfeld and secretary of state Condoleezza Rice have spent a big part of their recent visits to Delhi single-mindedly pursuing this aim.

Within the Manmohan Singh cabinet, Mukherjee has been arguing that India should buy US arms only if the Americans agree to transfer weapons technology and sign agreements for co-production.

By taking this stand and not rushing into the arms of America's weapons salesmen, he has won a commitment from the Pentagon to enhance India's long-term defence security through transfer of technology and co-production clauses in weapons deals with Washington.

Mukherjee said very little was discussed about arms sales during his visit.

interaction between our armed forces, and build greater understanding between our defence establishments".

The agreed framework emphasised that "our defence establishments shall... in the context of defence trade and a framework of technology security safeguards, increase opportunities for technology transfer, collaboration, co-production, and research and development".

The Bush administration, whose strong ties with the military industrial complex are

30 JUN 2005

প্রতিরক্ষায় মার্কিন প্রযুক্তির সহায়তা পেতে চলেছে ভারত

সীমা সিরোহি ● ওয়াশিংটন

২৯ জুন: প্রতিরক্ষা ক্ষেত্রে বিস্তারিত সহযোগিতার জন্য দশ বছরের চুক্তি সই করল ভারত ও আমেরিকা। যৌথ অভিযানে মার্কিন আগ্রহ ও উচ্চ প্রযুক্তির জন্য ভারতের আকাঙ্ক্ষা— চুক্তির সময় দু'পক্ষের এই দুই স্বার্থের কথা খেয়াল রাখা হয়েছে। যৌথ সম্মতিতে বহুপাক্ষিক অভিযান, প্রতিরক্ষা বাণিজ্য, প্রযুক্তি হস্তান্তর, ক্ষেপণাস্ত্র প্রতিরক্ষায় সহযোগিতা এবং সন্ত্রাসবাদ ও গণবিধ্বংসী অস্ত্রের প্রসার রুখতে যৌথ প্রয়াসের কথা বলা হয়েছে চুক্তিতে।

এশিয়ায় উচ্চ সামরিক ক্ষমতাসম্পন্ন চিনকে চাপে রাখতে ভারতের সঙ্গে প্রতিরক্ষা সহযোগিতা বাড়াতে অনেক দিন ধরেই আগ্রহ প্রকাশ করে আসছে আমেরিকা। ভারত

বরং মার্কিন উদ্দেশ্য নিয়ে সংশয়ে ছিল। প্রতিরক্ষা কাঠামো সংক্রান্ত এই চুক্তি শেষ পর্যন্ত স্বাক্ষরিত হওয়ায় প্রমাণিত হল, ভারত আমেরিকাকে সুযোগ দিয়ে দেখতে চায়। আর সেই সঙ্গে এই বিষয়ে উচ্চ প্রযুক্তি হাতে পাওয়ার ফায়দা নিতে চায়।

সফররত ভারতীয় প্রতিরক্ষামন্ত্রী প্রণব মুখোপাধ্যায়ের সঙ্গে মার্কিন প্রতিরক্ষাসচিব ডোনাল্ড রামসফেল্ডের আনুষ্ঠানিক বৈঠকের আগে এই চুক্তি স্বাক্ষরিত হয়েছে। চুক্তির ঘোষণায় বলা হয়েছে, “ভারত ও আমেরিকা এক নতুন যুগে প্রবেশ করেছে।” চুক্তিতে যে দু'তরফে প্রতিরক্ষা বাণিজ্য বাড়ানোর কথা বলা হয়েছে, তাতে শুধু অস্ত্র বিক্রিই পড়ছে না। প্রযুক্তি হস্তান্তর, যৌথ গবেষণা এবং ক্ষেপণাস্ত্র প্রতিরক্ষায় সহযোগিতা বাড়ানোর উপরেও বিশেষ জোর দেওয়া হয়েছে।

চুক্তির প্রসঙ্গ টেনেই প্রতিরক্ষামন্ত্রী তাঁর সফর ‘সফল’ বলে মন্তব্য করেছেন।

তাৎপর্যপূর্ণ ঘটনা হল, যৌথ সামরিক অভিযানের ক্ষেত্রে রাষ্ট্রপুঞ্জের তদারকির দাবি থেকে সরে এসেছে ভারত। এ বার থেকে নিজেদের ‘সাধারণ স্বার্থে’র সঙ্গে মিললে বহুপাক্ষিক অভিযানে সামিল হবে দু'দেশের বাহিনী। এবং সেটা শুধু সুনামের মতো ত্রাণ বা উদ্ধার অভিযানেই নয়, ছোটখাটো শান্তিরক্ষা বাহিনীতেও আমেরিকার সঙ্গে যোগ দেবে ভারত। অবশ্যই দিল্লি ‘জাতীয় স্বার্থে’ তেমন সিদ্ধান্ত নিতে চাইলে।

গোয়েন্দা-তথ্য আদানপ্রদানের যে দাবি ভারত দীর্ঘদিন ধরে করে আসছিল, সেটাও মেনে নেওয়া হয়েছে নতুন চুক্তিতে। ভারতের আর একটি দাবি ছিল উচ্চ প্রযুক্তিগত সরঞ্জাম এর পর সাতের পাতায়

India-us

মার্কিন প্রযুক্তির

প্রথম পাতার পর
বিক্রির ক্ষেত্রে নিষেধাজ্ঞা তুলে নেওয়া। এ বার আমেরিকায় এসেও প্রণব এই প্রসঙ্গে সরব হয়েছেন। এখন চুক্তির ফলে কি সেই নিষেধাজ্ঞা উঠে গেল? পোড়খাওয়া রাজনীতিকের মতো প্রণব শুধু বলেছেন, “পরিবর্তনের সম্ভাবনা আছে। কিন্তু তা হবে কি না, বলতে পারছি না।”

প্রতিরক্ষামন্ত্রীর বিশ্লেষণ, প্রযুক্তি হস্তান্তরের ব্যাপারে আমেরিকা আগে তেমন আগ্রহ দেখাত না। ‘বাস্কালাোর এয়ার শো’-র পরে ছবিটা পাল্টে যায়। ১২৬টি বহু ব্যবহারযোগ্য যুদ্ধবিমান ভারত কিনতে চায়, এই তথ্য জানার পরে আমেরিকাও উৎসাহ দেখাতে শুরু করে। রামসফেল্ড ডিডিডি দিল্লি গিয়ে কথাবার্তা চূড়ান্ত করে আসেন।

মার্কিন অভিসন্ধি যা-ই থাকুক, ভারত যে কোনও দেশকে চাপে ফেলার কথা ভেবে আমেরিকার সঙ্গে হাত মেলাচ্ছে না, সেটা পরিষ্কার করে দিয়েছেন প্রণব।

সামরিক ও অর্থনৈতিক শক্তির জীবিত্তির দৌলতে চিনকে নিয়ে আমেরিকার উদ্বেগ বোঝেন প্রতিরক্ষামন্ত্রী। কিন্তু ভারতের মনোভাব বোঝাতে গিয়ে তাঁর মন্তব্য, “আমরা প্রত্যেক প্রতিবেশী দেশের সঙ্গে শান্তিপূর্ণ সম্পর্ক চাই। কেউ তো প্রতিবেশী বদলাতে পারে না।”

পাকিস্তানও ভারতের প্রতিবেশী এবং সেই দু'দেশের প্রসঙ্গের সঙ্গে আমেরিকার নামও বারবার চলে আসে। এই বিষয়টাকেও প্রণবের সাফ কথা, “পাকিস্তান নিয়ে ভারত আর আমেরিকার ধারণা আলাদা হতেই পারে। কিন্তু তার মানে তো এই নয় যে, আমরা বন্ধু হতে পারি না।”

30 JUN 2005

Dirty names yesterday, deal today

AFP



File photograph of Indira Gandhi and Richard Nixon during their meeting 34 years ago.

1971: Nixon blasted Indira

Washington, June 29

FORMER US President Richard Nixon called then-Indian Prime Minister Indira Gandhi an "old witch" and Indians a "slippery treacherous people", according to recently released transcripts of Oval Office tapes.

The comments were made during a private conversation between Nixon and his national security adviser, Henry Kissinger, on November 5, 1971, and Kissinger supported his views. "We really slobbered over the old witch," Nixon told Kissinger of his meeting with Indira Gandhi the previous day.

"While she was a b****, we got what we wanted too," Kissinger said. "She will not be able to go home and say that the United

States didn't give her a warm reception and therefore in despair she's got to go to war."

Indira had come to Washington to discuss the growing possibility of war with Pakistan. At the time, the US was allied with Pakistan and saw India as too closely allied with the Soviet Union.

Indians are "a slippery, treacherous people," Nixon said. "The Indians are b****s anyway," Kissinger replied. "They are the most aggressive goddamn people around."

The transcripts and other newly declassified documents were released on Tuesday as part of a state department collection of significant documents on US foreign policy. They cover the build up to the 1971 India-Pakistan war, which led to the cre-

ation of Bangladesh.

Other papers reveal US concerns that India was developing nuclear technology and chart US contacts with China. Nixon asked China to use military force on its border with India to intimidate Delhi, but the Chinese declined.

While Cold War experts say the documents are interesting, they maintain they generally cover old ground. "They see everything through a Cold War prism. It's a distorted view," said Bill Burr, senior analyst at the national security archive.

Writing in *Asia Times Online*, Debashish Roy Chowdhury said the documents showed "personal equations taking precedence over ground realities in White House decision-making".

The **Guardian**



Pranab Mukherjee and Donald Rumsfeld shake over the agreement at the Pentagon on Tuesday.

2005: Donald toasts Pranab

S. Rajagopalan
Washington, June 29

MUCH WATER has flown down the Potomac and the Jamuna since the Bangladesh War of 1971 when Nixon called Indira Gandhi an old witch, wished Indians a mass famine and Kissinger averred they (Indians) were "b****s anyway..."

Completing a paradigm shift, Washington and New Delhi on Tuesday signed a framework agreement to give a big push to their defence ties in both quantitative and qualitative terms over the next 10 years.

The pact, signed by defence minister Pranab Mukherjee and his US counterpart Donald Rumsfeld, pledges to expand defence trade and widen the oppor-

tunities for technology transfer, collaboration, co-production, and research & development.

A new panel, named the Defence Procurement and Production Group, has been set up to oversee defence trade. There will also be a Joint Working Group to carry out a mid-year review of work overseen by the US-India Defence Policy Group.

Coming three weeks ahead of the Prime Minister's visit, the framework says: "The US and India have entered a new era. We are transforming our relationship to reflect our common principles and shared national interests."

It talks of defence cooperation to maintain security and stability, defeat terrorism, prevent the spread of weapons of mass destruction and protect the free flow

of commerce via land, air and sea lanes. The agreement stresses that the two countries will work to conclude defence transactions, not merely as ends in themselves, but also to strengthen their security and reinforce the strategic partnership.

After his talks — capped by the agreement — Mukherjee called his visit a successful one. However, he told reporters that he hadn't had detailed discussions on procurement of platforms and weapons. These would be subjects for subsequent negotiations, he said.

Official sources said the US side had offered to advance the proposed briefing on the Patriot PAC-II system, which is part of the second phase of the Next Steps in Strategic Partnership.

Us and them ⁹³⁻⁸

Indo-US defence cooperation — finally some substance ^{760/6}

A MIDST the tall talk of an “unfolding transformation” in Indo-US relations, on the one hand, and widespread scepticism about the real possibilities, on the other, Defence minister Pranab Mukherjee and US Secretary of Defence Donald Rumsfeld have put something substantial on the table. Proving cynics wrong, the two leaders signed the path-breaking ‘New Framework for US-India Defence Relations’. The agreement is sweeping in terms of the strategic objectives that the two nations will pursue in the coming decade and specific in terms of new methods to facilitate actual cooperation. Mukherjee and Rumsfeld have underlined a convergence of interests on “combating terrorism and violent religious extremism, preventing the spread of weapons of mass destruction, protecting the free flow of commerce, and promoting security and stability in Asia”. India and the US have also unveiled mechanisms to promote long-term bilateral defence industrial ties and the possible outsourcing of research and production by US defence contractors to India.

Throughout the Cold War, India and the US have had little defence cooperation, barring the brief interlude after the Sino-Indian border conflict in 1962. The attempts to structure defence ties towards the

end of the Cold War by Rajiv Gandhi produced some useful defence technological cooperation, for example in the development of the Light Combat Aircraft. After the Cold War, military-to-military exchanges intensified. But in the end the political framework guiding this engagement was too fragile and did not survive bilateral nuclear tensions.

The new framework agreement opens up opportunities for the Indian defence industry to position itself better in a world where defence industries of the advanced countries are globalising. It should also expand India’s ability to bargain for technology transfers and co-production from the three main sources of armaments in the world—the US, Europe and Russia. Traditionalists will see new Indo-US defence cooperation as being targeted against either Pakistan or China. It does nothing of the sort. Indo-Pak relations and Sino-Indian relations have never been as good as they are today. And Washington’s ties with both Islamabad and Beijing are substantive. What the agreement marks, though, is the recognition of the need in Washington and New Delhi to add more depth to the Indo-US engagement. Even more important is the message that a stable balance of power in Asia requires stronger Indo-US defence cooperation.

INDIAN

Pranab asks US to end dual-use curbs

S. Rajagopalan
Washington, June 28

INDIA HAS proposed a new era of defence partnership with the US, urging Washington to lift the "anachronistic" restrictions on dual-use technology and focus on the supply of platforms and weapons system on the basis of "a long-term commitment".

Beginning a weeklong American sojourn, defence minister Pranab Mukherjee hit the nail on the head, pointing out that the "restrictive and discriminatory technology regimes" have limited India's ability to become a stabilising force in Asia.

"If India is to play its part as an engine of growth and factor of stability in Asia, it should be in the interest of the US and others that such regimes are liberalised as quickly as possible," he said in an address to the Carnegie Endowment for International Peace.

In a day of hectic engagements, the minister met with vice-president Dick Cheney, sec-

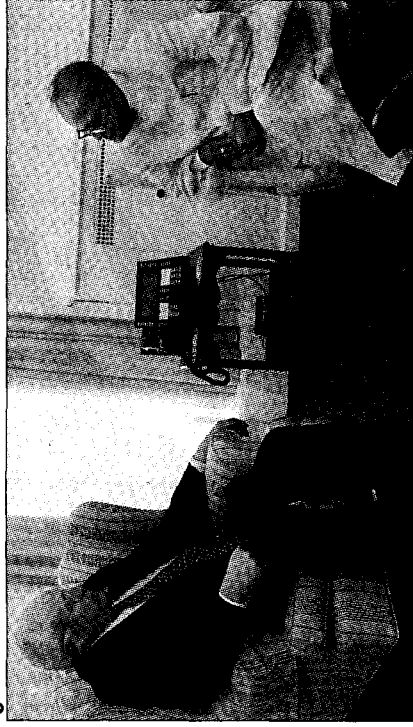
retary of state Condoleezza Rice and National Security Adviser Stephen Hadley.

The main course — talks with defence secretary Donald Rumsfeld — is slated for Tuesday.

Ahead of the Pentagon meeting, Mukherjee sought to quell speculation of an imminent deal with the US on F-16/F-18 fighter jets. During a chat with the Indian media and later during a Q&A at Carnegie, he maintained that consideration of the American offer was still at an early stage.

Significantly, he also made the point that any defence tie-up with the US will not necessarily be at the expense of India's longstanding relationship with Russia on this score. "I will like to underline one point very clearly. Friendship with one doesn't mean non-friendship with the other," he told a questioner.

While deciding on future fighter jets for the India Air Force, proposals received from different manufacturing nations will be duly considered from the overall



Pranab Mukherjee with Dick Cheney in Washington on Monday.

standpoint of competitiveness, costs and quality, he stressed.

At an interaction with captains of the American defence industry at the US India Business Council, Mukherjee held out hopes of "great opportunities for business in India's defence sector".

For a start, he mooted supply of American equipment and

self-defence and deterrence," he said proposing a panel under the Defence Policy Group to address equipment related issues.

Favouring greater engagement between the players on both sides, Mukherjee said the US industry could immensely benefit by tying up with Indian companies and leveraging the low cost manufacturing and R&D capabilities existing in India to bring down developmental costs and thereby become globally competitive.

A 10-member delegation, brought by the Federation of Indian Chambers of Commerce and Industry (FICCI), also participated in the deliberations.

Speaking on behalf of FICCI, its secretary general, Amit Mitra, beckoned the American industry to engage with their Indian counterparts, keeping in mind that India's defence expenditure from 1980-81 to 2002-03 increased 15 times, reaching \$18 billion.

Mitra observed that massive opportunities were available for

joint ventures, technology transfer, co-production, technology development and R&D.

The roundtable was followed by a two-hour interactive session with US majors like Boeing, Raytheon, General Dynamics and Honeywell, where the Indian delegates made presentations and discussed the areas of possible cooperation.

Making it clear that India is looking for a "long-term commitment" on defence supplies, Pranab submitted that the quantum of commercial opportunities will depend on the extent of transfer of technology, co-development, co-production, mutual outsourcing and joint marketing.

Apart from defence matters, Mukherjee also held discussions with the US secretary of state "in general terms" on the UN Security Council reforms.

However, nothing concrete was forthcoming yet on the American position of support to Japan and "one developing country" in contrast to the G-4's plea for six more UNSC berths.

শুধু মার্কিন আশ্বাস নয়, কাজ চান প্রণব

সীমা সিরোহি • ওয়াশিংটন

২৮ জুন: যত সাদর অভ্যর্থনাই হোক, প্রাপ্য বুঝে নিতে ছাড়বে না ভারত। মার্কিন সফরে 'বিশেষ সম্মানিত অতিথি'র মর্যাদা পেলেও নিজেদের মনোভাব স্পষ্ট করে দিতে দ্বিধা করছেন না প্রণব মুখোপাধ্যায়। বুধ প্রশাসনের কর্তাদের ভারতীয় প্রতিরক্ষামন্ত্রী বলে দিচ্ছেন, দ্বৈত ব্যবহারযোগ্য প্রযুক্তি এবং পরমাণু ক্ষেত্রে সহযোগিতা তাঁদের চাই-ই।

সফরের শুরুতে এক দিনে মার্কিন ভাইস প্রেসিডেন্ট ডিক চেনির সঙ্গে দু'বার সাক্ষাৎ করেছেন প্রণব। কথা বলেছেন বিদেশসচিব কন্ডোলিজা রাইস ও প্রতিরক্ষাসচিব ডোনাল্ড রামসফেল্ডের সঙ্গে। আমেরিকার ১৫টি বড় প্রতিরক্ষা উৎপাদন সংস্থার সি ই ও-দের সঙ্গেও তাঁর কথা হয়েছে। সর্বত্রই তিনি জানিয়েছেন, আমেরিকা-সহ আন্তর্জাতিক মহল যদি ভারতকে এশিয়ায় উন্নয়নের বাহক ও স্থিতিশীলতার ধারক হিসাবে দেখতে চায়, তা হলে প্রযুক্তিগত ব্যবধান দূর করতে হবে আমেরিকাকেই।

নিজেদের চাহিদা ও প্রাপ্যের বেলায় তিনি যে দর কষাকষির জন্য তৈরি, সেটা প্রণবের কথায় স্পষ্ট। এবং প্রধানমন্ত্রীর আসন্ন সফরের কথা মাথায় রেখেই তাঁর কড়া সুর। যেমন, প্রণব বলেছেন, "আমরা কোনও গোষ্ঠীর অংশ হতে যাচ্ছি না। তবে আন্তর্জাতিক আইন মেনে অন্যান্য দেশের সঙ্গে ভারত মহাসাগর বরাবর নজরদারি চালানোর দায়িত্ব ঠিকই পালন করব।"

হোয়াইট হাউসের কাছে হোটেল ওয়াশিংটনের অভিজাত রেস্টোরাঁয় কাল প্রণবের জন্য নৈশভোজ দিয়েছিলেন রামসফেল্ড। চেনি এবং আমেরিকার জাতীয় নিরাপত্তা উপদেষ্টা স্টিফেন হ্যাডলি ছাড়াও মার্কিন কংগ্রেসের 'ভারত-বন্ধু' প্রতিনিধিরা আসরে উপস্থিত ছিলেন। হোটেলের সুইটে বসে প্রণব বলছিলেন, "বন্ধুত্বপূর্ণ মেজাজেই ওঁরা বলেছেন যে, সম্পর্ক আরও দৃঢ় করতে চান।

কৌশলগত সমঝোতার ব্যাপারেও ওঁরা খোলাখুলি বক্তব্য জানিয়েছেন।"

প্রণবও মার্কিন কর্তাদের বুঝিয়ে দিয়েছেন, ভারত আমেরিকার কাছ থেকে কী আশা করে। তারাপুর-সহ পরমাণু চুল্লিগুলির জন্য জ্বালানি চায় ভারত, সঙ্গে উচ্চপ্রযুক্তি।

"নিজেদের প্রয়োজনে প্রতিরক্ষা ক্ষেত্রে যা কেনার, কিনব। কাউকে খুশি করার জন্য নয়", বলেছেন প্রণব। এফ-১৬-সহ আরও কিছু ভারতকে বেচতে আগ্রহী আমেরিকা, প্রতিরক্ষা সংক্রান্ত যৌথ বিবৃতিও চায় তারা। কিন্তু ভারতও নিজের প্রাপ্য বুঝে নিতে চায়। মার্কিন লব্ধ ব্যবহার করেই প্রণব বলেছেন, "কেউ 'ফ্রি ল্যান্স' পাবে না।"

অন্য দিকে, 'কার্নেগি এনডাওমেন্ট ফর ইন্টারন্যাশনাল পিস'-এর অনুষ্ঠানে প্রণব বলেন, সীমান্তের ও'পার থেকে ছায়াযুদ্ধের মোকাবিলা করতে হচ্ছে ভারতকে। তবে পাকিস্তানে জঙ্গি পরিকাঠামো ভাঙতে আমেরিকা প্রভাব খাটাবে— এমন আশাও তাঁর নেই। একান্ত সাক্ষাৎকারে তিনি বলেন, "দ্বিপাক্ষিক স্তরেই সমস্যা মেটাতে হবে ভারতকে।"

'কার্নেগি এনডাওমেন্ট'-এর অনুষ্ঠানে ভারতের 'কৌশলগত দৃষ্টিভঙ্গি' ব্যাখ্যা করতে গিয়ে প্রণব জোর দিয়েছেন 'বহুমেরু বিশ্বে'র উপরে। যে বিশ্বে শুধু আমেরিকা নয়, চিন, রাশিয়া ও ইউরোপীয় ইউনিয়নের বড় ভূমিকা থাকবে। ওয়াশিংটনের গোটা প্রভাবশালী মহলটাই উপস্থিত ছিল সেখানে এবং সেই অবসরে ধারালো বক্তব্য পেশ করেন প্রতিরক্ষামন্ত্রী। তাঁর কথায়, "এটা আমাদের দর্শন, আমাদের দৃষ্টিভঙ্গি। তাই এটা ওয়াশিংটন, লন্ডন বা মস্কো-কেন্দ্রিক না-হয়ে ভারত-কেন্দ্রিক।"

আমেরিকার সামনে সুর নরম করা যে তাঁর সফরসূচিতে নেই, সেটা টের পাওয়া যাচ্ছে আরও একটি মন্তব্যে। মার্কিন সংস্থা যতই চাক, প্রতিরক্ষা ক্ষেত্রে প্রত্যক্ষ বিদেশি বিনিয়োগ ২৬ থেকে বাড়িয়ে ৫১ শতাংশ করবে না ভারত— জানিয়ে দিয়েছেন প্রণব।

Thanks to Mukherjee, America is now willing to listen to India

1-18
29/6

Clearing the air

DIPLOMACY *gnd. us*

K.P. NAYAR

If defence minister Pranab Mukherjee's two days of talks in Washington this week are indicative of what to expect during Manmohan Singh's visit to the White House on July 18, the prime minister will be no pushover for the Americans.

It was refreshing to see Mukherjee tell the Americans unequivocally — and without being offensive — where India stands on issues that affect not merely Indo-US relations, but India's external affairs as a whole. Not since Atal Bihari Vajpayee's national security adviser, Brajesh Mishra, put across to the Americans a set of ideas some four years ago, which concretized into the Next Steps in Strategic Partnership, has anyone in the Indian government clearly answered the question: what does India want from the United States of America? A huge cloud of uncertainty over India's objectives and expectations in its relations with the US has been lifted by what Mukherjee said in Washington in the last two days, both in public and, more forcefully, in his private meetings — including one with the man whom most people consider to be the real president of the US, the vice-president, Dick Cheney.

Mukherjee's presence in Washington, in fact, achieved much more than that. He pulled up by the bootstraps those groups in American society which traditionally contribute a great deal to any Indian state visit to Washington. These groups — Indian-Americans with a network that spans the partisan political network, the large number of India's friends on Capitol Hill, Indophiles in the American decision-making network not just in Washington but also in the states — have all been depressed and largely out of the loop in the efforts so far to make Manmohan Singh's visit to Washington fruitful.

They have been depressed — indeed bewildered — by the advice they have been receiving from "official" India not to make an issue of the single-most potentially divisive issue in Indo-US relations since the United Progressive Alliance government came to power just over a year ago: the Bush administration's decision to rearm Pakistan. For decades, these groups have been primed to instinctively oppose, on India's behalf, any effort in Washington to supply offensive weapons to Islamabad. Even before the decision to send F-16s to General Pervez Musharraf was announced in Washington, some of these groups were preparing to go to battle over that line within the Bush administration. But the advice they received from India in Washington was to soft-pedal the issue. In fact, for at least six months before the decision on F-16s became public, Indian delegations arriving in the US capital have been getting controver-

sial — and highly debatable — advice from Indian officials in Washington that they must not put Indo-US friendship at risk by raising the subject of arming Pakistan!

Doubts among Indian-Americans and American friends of India about the wisdom of not having forcefully questioned the Bush administration's decision to sell F-16s to Pakistan will not go away because of Mukherjee's words and actions in Washington this week. These groups continue to believe that India lost heavily, both in leverage and bargaining power, by New Delhi's mealy-mouthed response to the Bush administration's military policies towards the Musharraf *junta* and its advice to these groups to follow a similar line.

What Mukherjee has done, though, is to take preparations for the prime minister's upcoming visit way beyond this confusing scenario, which threatened to deprive Manmohan Singh's talks with President George W. Bush and others in his administration, on Capitol Hill, among the Indian-American community and America's corporate leadership, of strategic clarity. Singh will arrive in Washington in an environment which has greeted no Indian prime minister before him. India is now the favourite flavour in the US. When India talks, there is, at present, a willingness in America to listen, which was not there at any time since independence. Partly, it is because stalwarts in the National Democratic Alliance government, like Jaswant Singh and Brajesh Mishra, changed the tone of the discourse between New Delhi and Washington. They stopped lecturing the Americans.

During his two visits to Washington and in interactions with a stream of American officials and public figures, who have been descending on New Delhi since the Bush administration settled down to its second four-year term, the external affairs minister, K. Natwar

Singh, did try to take the discourse back to the days when India was viewed by the Americans as little more than an irritant on the international scene. But other high profile visitors from the UPA government to America, such as the finance minister, P. Chidambaram, the science and technology minister, Kapil Sibal, and the petroleum minister, Mani Shankar Aiyar, made the Americans realize that the external affairs minister was an odd man out in the Manmohan Singh government, which did, indeed, want to positively engage the US. Manmohan Singh's talks with

like a ripe apple. That perception found its clearest articulation in the now infamous remark of the then assistant secretary of state for south Asia, Robin Raphel, questioning the legality of the instrument of Kashmir's accession to India.

Mukherjee has told every American he met during his current visit how things have changed in 10 years. But he has not been hesitant to add a rider: perceptions may have changed, but India's interests remain the same. He has left the Americans in no doubt that notwithstanding the Bush administration's ham-handed handling of the global terrorist threat and despite what it intends to do with Pakistan, India's interests in Afghanistan and beyond, in central Asia or south-east Asia, cannot be wished away. He has made it clear that the expansion of India's navy, Mani Shankar Aiyar's petroleum diplomacy, New Delhi's engagement of Teheran are all part of a strategic vision and that demands in Washington for political correctness will not make India compromise on its vital regional or global interests.

Mukherjee's great advantage in dealing with the Americans is that unlike some of his colleagues in Manmohan Singh's cabinet — and, for that matter, in Vajpayee's cabinet — he is a man of few words. Sometimes this makes the Americans he deals with uncomfortable.

During the last visit of the US defence secretary, Donald Rumsfeld, to New Delhi, the American minister was holding forth about how much the Bush administration wanted to cooperate with India militarily, all the while surreptitiously preparing the ground for the sale of F-16s to Pakistan. Among all those who dealt with Rumsfeld in New Delhi, Mukherjee was the only one to call the defence secretary's bluff, which he did in one sentence. "You are not a reliable partner", Mukherjee bluntly told Rumsfeld. Shortly thereafter, Bush's secretary of state, Condoleezza Rice, arrived in New Delhi and her mantra throughout her talks was that the US wanted to be India's "reliable partner" in defence matters, thanks to that blunt remark.

Mukherjee's talks in Washington have come just a few days after India decided to stick with the group of four at the United Nations in their pursuit of security council reform and reject US attempts to split the group. Hopefully, the clarity with which the defence minister outlined India's world view and its principled stand on UN reform will convince the Americans that New Delhi's ill-advised decision to soft-pedal the F-16 issue should not be seen during Manmohan Singh's visit to the White House as a sign of weakness.



Reliable man

Since there is an unprecedented willingness in Washington to accommodate India, the question made sense. But except for Manmohan Singh and Chidambaram, who have partly answered this question in their public pronouncements, the Indians seemed unable to answer this persistent American query with any clarity. And under those circumstances, the Americans have been setting the agenda for Indo-US engagement.

In two days of intense interaction with the Bush administration, Mukherjee has corrected this record. To start with, he has been disarming in his admission that the last time he was in Washington was exactly a decade ago. Everything in Indo-US relations was different and Mukherjee, as external affairs minister in the P.V. Narasimha Rao government, was at the receiving end of the perception in the Clinton administration at that time that Kashmir may well fall into Pakistan's lap

Pranab raises Pak heat

K.P. NAYAR

Washington, June 28: Defence minister Pranab Mukherjee has told the Americans that proof of Pakistan's commitment to end cross-border terrorism would be to launch joint operations along its border with India to hunt for terrorists.

At meetings with Vice-President Dick Cheney, secretary of state Condoleezza Rice and national security adviser Stephen Hadley, Mukherjee said General Pervez Musharraf is yet to dismantle the infrastructure of terrorism.

Mukherjee's initiative to put incremental pressure on Musharraf on cross-border terrorism comes only days after national security adviser M.K. Narayanan detailed at

his meetings here proof of Pakistan's continuing efforts to destabilise Jammu and Kashmir and spread terror to other parts of India.

According to sources present at Mukherjee's meetings, the Americans were taken by surprise by the comparison between the joint efforts by the US and Pakistan to hunt for al Qaida and the Taliban in areas near the Pakistan-Afghanistan border and the complete absence of any such attempt on Pakistan's eastern border.

His remarks represented a throwback to New Delhi's long-standing complaint that Washington had double standards on terrorism and that there were bad terrorists who threatened America and others it couldn't care less about.

Sources said Rice responded to Mukherjee's remarks by saying that Musharraf had done a lot to lower the temperature in Jammu and Kashmir and that the Americans viewed him as committed to the global fight against terrorism.

Mukherjee conceded that infiltration along the Line of Control had come down, but he attributed the decline to "vigilance and surveillance" by Indian security forces.

He said the snow had not melted yet this year on the routes used by infiltrators and "we will have to see" after the routes are open in a few weeks.

Mukherjee's proposal puts the onus on the Americans to do more to get Musharraf to tighten the screws further on anti-India terrorists within Pakistan.

US trip exploratory: Pranab

Visit aims at 'widening' bilateral relations

AGENCIES

New Delhi, June 24

ASSERTING THAT he was not going to the US with a shopping list of military hardware, defence minister Pranab Mukherjee said on Friday his visit was mainly "exploratory" in nature to expand Indo-US relations.

Mukherjee's four-day visit to the US from Saturday came up for detailed discussion here at a two-and-a-half hour meeting of the Cabinet Committee on Security (CCS) presided over by Prime Minister Manmohan Singh.

"I am not going with a shopping list. This is a visit by an Indian defence minister to the US after a long time," Mukherjee told reporters on being asked whether India will enter into negotiations on purchase of F-16 warplanes offered by the US.

During his stay in Washington, Mukherjee will have meetings with US Vice President Dick Cheney, his counterpart Donald Rumsfeld and national security adviser Stephen Hadley.

The visit is taking place in the context of US agreeing to cooperate with India in matters relating to defence hardware.

Mukherjee said: "No decision (on purchase of defence hardware) is expected during my visit. The visit will be mainly exploratory in nature to expand and widen relations between India and the US."

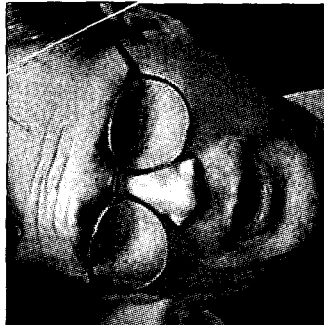
"It will be wrong to say that I am going there to buy equipment," he said maintaining that



Dick Cheney



Donald Rumsfeld



Stephen Hadley

the trip was in the backdrop of the opening up of US policy towards India with regard to the defence sector.

Mukherjee's trip comes ahead of the visit by Prime Minister Manmohan Singh to the US next month.

In the run up to the Prime Minister's visit, national security adviser M K Narayanan and foreign secretary Shyam Saran have held intensive parleys with their American interlocutors to firm up the agenda.

Mukherjee said the CCS also discussed the home ministry report on security in Jammu and Kashmir, North and Naxalite affected areas. The security situation was reviewed and assessed but no decision taken, he said.

Asked if India was still considering to buy F-16 planes from the US despite opposition from

Left parties to defence deals with Washington, senior defence ministry officials said no decision has been taken but only technological and commercial aspects of the aircraft were being assessed.

On purchase of P3C Orion surveillance aircraft for the Navy from the US, they said it was a "good" plane and various aspects relating to it were being examined.

To a question whether any memorandum of understanding was expected to be reached with Washington during Mukherjee's visit to the US, the officials said such an agreement could be considered to cover research, development, testing and evaluation of defence hardware.

Some kind of an assurance with regard to uninterrupted supply of defence material and safeguards to this effect could also come up for discussion during the visit, the officials said.

Asked whether having permanent Indian representatives in US central and pacific commands to maintain communication channels was under consideration, the officials said the issue has been discussed but no decision has been taken yet.

I am not going with a shopping list. This is a visit by an Indian defence minister to the US after a long time

Pranab Mukherjee
Defence Minister

Unless the US translates its intent into action, no strategic partnership can emerge

On a first date forever

HFB
23/6

BY BRAHMA CHELLANEY

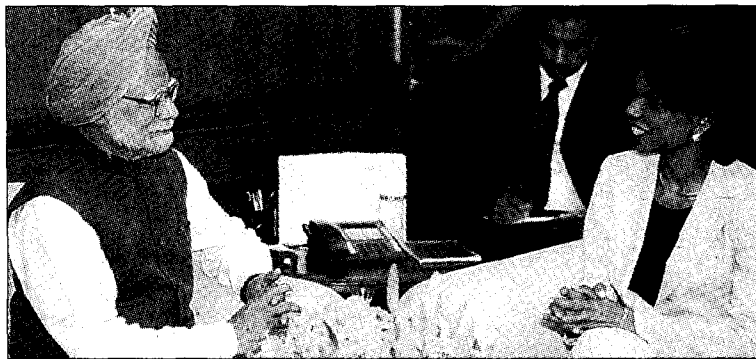
HOW LONG will it be before the courtship between India and the US leads to a strategic partnership? Despite a congruence of vital national interests and a shared political goal to build a long-term strategic relationship, a true partnership has yet to emerge. Inordinate excitement in India over the courtship has obscured the slow movement towards a strategic partnership.

To be sure, there have been important shifts in US thinking, largely on account of India's rising geopolitical importance, its abundant market opportunities and its role in ensuring power equilibrium in Asia. The US is now discussing with India cooperation on missile defence, nuclear energy, civilian space and high technology. To facilitate such collaboration, the Indian Parliament recently passed the Weapons of Mass Destruction Bill in the same week it was introduced. The act goes well beyond what the US had sought from India.

The US pronouncements on India, although welcome, have yet to progress from statements of good intent to tangible policy changes. In his second term, the US president usually has only a year or so to shape his agenda before he becomes a lame duck. The next few months will determine whether the US thinking on India translates into policy. This can occur only top down. It is not clear, however, whether Bush wants India as part of his legacy-shaping agenda.

The incremental approach, represented by the so-called Next Steps in Strategic Partnership (NSSP) and the three separate bilateral dialogues it has spawned, involves bureaucratic haggle and is unsuited to moulding a dramatic new turn in Indo-US ties. The current process is a slow, drawn-out affair. A year-and-a-half after the NSSP's start, India's access to US technologies remains far more restricted than China's.

If the US were to apply the same standard it does in relation to Israel, it would throw open for export to India many hi-tech items currently barred. It makes sense for the US to ease technology controls as an incentive to win Indian support to shore up the troubled non-proliferation regime. The US is now negotiating the conditions India needs to meet to



LOOK INTO MY EYES: Manmohan Singh and Condoleezza Rice

gain access to selected technologies. If all goes well and it makes itself sufficiently useful to US policy, India could in the years ahead qualify for the standard applicable to Israel.

The best way India can negotiate is to accelerate the growth of its economic and military power. It can hardly be viewed as a dialogue between potential strategic partners if it largely involves one side making demands and the other side reporting compliance.

India ought to hold the US to its public pronouncements. There is no need to take the pronouncements at face value or to assume that the US is shrewdly manipulating Indian public opinion by playing to India's sense of pride. Heeding Reagan's dictum, 'trust but verify', India can develop 'tests' for US performance to measure progress in the relationship and quietly press the US to discharge its obligations, in return for Indian cooperation in other matters.

If the US really wants to "help India become a major world power in the 21st century", as a US background briefing stated the very day Bush made public his controversial decision to sell F-16s to Islamabad, it should be willing to demonstrate that this is not just rhetoric or a way to mollify India over its rearming of Pakistan. While readily cooperating with the US to make this vision a reality, India should set benchmarks for the US to meet in order to show it is serious about its commitment to assist the growth of Indian power.

At the global level, the US can easily translate its commitment into action by bringing India into the G-8

(along with China) and by supporting both the early enlargement of the UN Security Council and India's inclusion as a permanent member. If the US insists on pushing the council enlargement to the back of the larger, infinite UN reform process, any support it extends to India's candidacy would be of academic value.

A strategic partnership faces two major impediments: stringent technology controls against India and Bush's coddling of the one-man junta in Pakistan. Not only are US actions bolstering the military-mullah complex that runs Pakistan, the supply of major combat systems and multibillion-dollar aid also encourages Pervez Musharraf not to dismantle the State-run terror complex against India. The F-16 deal comes on top of the decision to arm Islamabad with the P-3C Orion maritime reconnaissance aircraft, TOW anti-tank missiles and Phalanx defence systems — all systems that will be aimed against India. To add insult to injury, Condoleezza Rice stated that the F-16 sale was designed to maintain 'military balance' in the subcontinent — an objective, oddly, that China shares.

No partnership can be built without both sides being sensitive to each other's legitimate security and economic concerns. How does the US justify restricting India's access to a host of advanced civilian technologies that can only aid rapid economic modernisation? Can a durable partnership be built with the US enforcing penal measures against India?

A number of influential Americans have suggested important poli-

cy changes relating to India, including an end to technology controls, broad, long-term space collaboration, the sale of commercial nuclear-power reactors and India's assimilation into the non-proliferation regime as a friendly nuclear-weapons nation. Washington, however, is pursuing more modest objectives in the dialogues with India. So far, it has been reluctant to find a way to accommodate India within the non-proliferation regime. In fact, it believes it's safer not to tinker with the regime it helped fashion and thus is looking only at the possibility of relaxing certain technology controls it maintains beyond the regime's requirements. It is in this narrow band between what the regime mandates and what the US maintains in excess that Washington is open to change through negotiation.

In contrast, as symbolised by the new WMD Act, India has been willing to go the extra mile, allowing Washington to even influence its Pakistan policy. Washington could not have made the Pakistani dictator internationally respectable without help from India. This assistance India has rendered in continuity since it invited him out of the blue to Agra, a summit whose dates were disclosed first by the White House. The losers have been Pakistani civil society and regional stability.

The more the US claims it is not pairing India with Pakistan, the more it strengthens Pakistani offensive capabilities against India. Measured in terms of delivered goods as opposed to grand intent, the Major Non-Nato Ally (MNNA) status to Pakistan has proven more substantial than the NSSP. The US, in fact, has placed no limits on the number of F-16s it is willing to sell to Pakistan or on their configuration, making the US offer to sell 'better' fighter jets to India a PR exercise. In the first go, Pakistan is likely to buy up to 40 F-16s armed with the new-generation AIM-120 advanced medium-range air-to-air missiles (AMRAAM).

Yet, the Indo-US courtship continues in full swing. The US seems under no pressure to fulfil its commitment as undying hope has long been the lubricant of Indian foreign policy. In Manmohan Singh's words, "The best is yet to come."

23 JUN 2005

THE HINDUSTAN TIMES

India, Bangladesh discuss all issues in cordial atmosphere

Shyam Saran makes presentation on the needs for United Nations reforms

Amit Baruah

NEW DELHI: Putting aside the acrimony that has often marked relations between India and Bangladesh, the two sides discussed all issues between them in "very cordial" manner on Tuesday. A joint statement on the talks between Foreign Secretaries Shyam Saran and Hemayetuddin was expected after discussions between the two delegations went on through the day.

"A good gesture"

In a bid to create the right environment for the discussions, Mr. Saran personally received his Bangladeshi counterpart at the airport on Monday. "It was a good gesture," a Bangladeshi diplomat told this correspondent.

All issues — from India seeking the return of United Liberation Front of Asom leader Anup Chetia to India lobbying Bangladesh for support for United Nations' reforms — came up during the talks. Apart from the daylong delegation-level talks at Hyderabad House, Mr. Saran and Mr. Hemayetuddin also had a one-on-one conversation, which lasted a little over 30 minutes.

Security, trade, water issues, trade and culture were some of the other items on the menu. While India-Bangladesh relations have remained difficult for some time now, a Parliamentary panel in Dhaka recently called for improving ties with India.

It may be recalled that ties had deteriorated further earlier this year after India refused to attend the South Asian Association for Regional Cooperation (SAARC) summit in Dhaka, citing security reasons. India has, now, relented and agreed to attend the twice-postponed SAARC meeting in November.

An Indian source said after the discussions that the Bangladeshi side reiterated that Anup Chetia, who has already served out a jail sentence in Bangladesh, was involved in a legal proceeding and the matter was *sub judice*.



FOR RESOLVING ISSUES: Foreign Secretary Shyam Saran (right) with his Bangladeshi counterpart, Mohammad Hemayetuddin, prior to a meeting in New Delhi, on Tuesday. — PHOTO: S. SUBRAMANIAM

According to the source, Mr. Saran made a detailed presentation to his counterpart about the need for U.N. reforms and the need for Dhaka to back the G-4 resolution on expansion before the General Assembly.

The Foreign Secretary took the view that "consensus" could

not lead to the expansion of the Security Council. In his reply, Mr. Hemayetuddin spoke in general terms of the need for U.N. reforms.

An Indian understanding of the Bangladeshi position on Council reforms suggests that Bangladesh is unlikely to vote

for the G-4 resolution on expansion that is likely to be tabled some time next month in New York. However, whatever be the differences of opinion on issues that have divided the two nations, both sides concurred that Tuesday's discussions were held in a positive spirit.

গ্যাস পাইপলাইন নিয়ে সুর নরম করল আমেরিকা

ওয়শিংটন, ১৭ জুন: ইরান-পাকিস্তান-ভারত গ্যাস পাইপ লাইন নিয়ে মার্কিন হুমকির তীব্র প্রতিক্রিয়া হতে পারে আঁচ করেই বুশ প্রশাসন এ বারে কিছুটা সুর নরম করল। বুশ প্রশাসন তাদের উদ্বেগ থেকে সরে আসেনি, কিন্তু জানিয়েছে যে, ভারত ও পাকিস্তানের সঙ্গে এই বিষয়টি তারা 'গঠনমূলক দৃষ্টিভঙ্গি নিয়েই বিচার করতে চায়। নেতিবাচক উপায়ে নয়।'

গ্যাস পাইপ লাইন চুক্তি সই করার পরে ইসলামাবাদকে আমেরিকা কয়েক দিন আগেই হুমকি দিয়ে বলেছিল, ওই প্রকল্পে সায় দিলে পাকিস্তানের উপরে নিষেধাজ্ঞা জারি করা হবে। এর পরে কিছুটা অনিশ্চিত হয়ে পড়ে প্রকল্পটিই। মার্কিন হুমকির তীব্র প্রতিক্রিয়া হয়

ভারতেও। সিপিএম কড়া সমালোচনা করে। শেষ পর্যন্ত এ ব্যাপারে অনেকটাই সুর নরম করল আমেরিকা।

২৬০০ কিলোমিটার দীর্ঘ এই গ্যাস পাইপ লাইন চুক্তিতে সই করায় আমেরিকা কত দূর পর্যন্ত বিরোধিতা করতে পারে তা নিয়ে প্রশ্ন করা হলে মার্কিন বিদেশসচিব কন্ডোলিজা রাইস কাল বলেন, "আমরা এ ব্যাপারে আমাদের উদ্বেগের বিষয়টি ভারত ও পাকিস্তানকে জানিয়ে দিয়েছি। কিন্তু আমাদের মধ্যে খুবই ইতিবাচক সম্পর্ক রয়েছে।" সে ক্ষেত্রে নিষেধাজ্ঞার হুমকি থেকে আমেরিকা সরে আসছে কি না তা অবশ্য স্পষ্ট বলেননি রাইস। তিনি জানান, নেতিবাচক পদক্ষেপে আগ্রহী নন তাঁরা। — পি টি আই

US set to back India's UNSC bid

By Indrani Bagchi/TNN

New Delhi: The US may finally tilt in India's favour in the UN Security Council sweepstakes. In the coming weeks, Washington is expected to announce the criteria under which it will back candidates for the UN Security Council. India will fit the bill.

The criteria are believed to include democracy, developing country status and involvement in the UN.

US media reported on Thursday that the Bush administration would signal a shift in its stand on UN Security Council reforms. Besides supporting Japan, it would now support a "developing country" in addition to Japan. This rules out Germany, which had anyway been told by the US that it

would not support its bid. According to sources, the administration's stand on the different changes had been sent out to all US embassies.

A recent task force on UN reforms by the US Congress, called the Gingrich-Mitchell plan, said new members "should be ideally composed from democracies". According to reports, the Bush administration might accept the recommendations of this high-powered panel. Among the G-4 countries, both Brazil and India qualify as democracies, but the US' discomfort with Left-leaning Brazil is well known as is the objection of every other Spanish-speaking Latin American country to Portuguese-speaking Brazil.

The MEA has expended valuable diplomatic capital to bring the US

around from its initial position. But a part of the change is attributed to the new vision of the Bush administration vis-a-vis India. When Condoleezza Rice was here she had said, "There are countries like India that have emerged in recent years as major factors in the international economy, in international politics... international institutions are going to have to start to accommodate them in some way." That formed the basis of the new US position. It quickly became clear to India that the G-4 resolution in its present form was not going to be acceptable to the US. On the other hand, the US was much more receptive to India's claims to the UNSC seat, and acutely aware that its support to India would go a long way in assuaging India's habitual prickliness about the US.

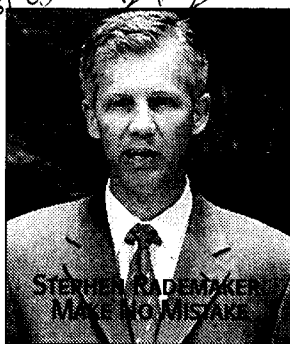
17 JUN 2001 THE TIMES OF INDIA

India-Iran oil nexus draws US flak

Our Political Bureau
NEW DELHI 16 JUNE

IN its strongest comment on the proposed Indo-Iran gas pipeline till date, visiting US assistant secretary of state Stephen Rademaker, who looks after arms control in the administration, said on Thursday that going ahead with the project would be a mistake.

"We think it would be a mistake. It would provide oil revenue to Iran that could be the basis of funding for weapons of mass destruction," Mr Rademaker told reporters. Senior US embassy officials in Delhi were quick to qualify his remarks by adding that there was no formal position on the issue, as the proposal for



the pipeline was not yet officially on the table.

Mr Rademaker's contention, however, gave a clear indication of the alarmist view that the Bush administration is taking on the proposed oil nexus between India and Iran. US stand on the sub-

ject was conveyed by secretary of state Condoleeza Rice when she was in the capital earlier this year.

Mr Rademaker, who held day long talks on arms control issues with Indian officials, pointed out that the US for long made active efforts to discourage oil development in Iran and even had legislation in place threatening sanctions against countries helping Iran in this regard.

Petroleum minister Mani Shankar Aiyar, who just returned back from a trip to Pakistan and Iran pursuing the pipeline deal, however, insisted that India will not change its mind, notwithstanding the opposition from the US. He got added support from the Left parties, who strongly objected to the US

view on the issue. During Mr Aiyar's Tehran visit, an agreement was signed to purchase five million tonnes of LNG over a 25 year old period, beginning 2009.

The US though, to recompense for a possible change of mind on India's part, already initiated moves to put on the fast track its engagement with New Delhi on the energy front. A series of high level meetings have already been held to prepare the foundation of a broad energy cooperation between the two countries with the objective of fulfilling India's energy needs. National security advisor MK Narayanan left for Washington on Thursday to hold discussions with senior Bush administration officials including his counterpart.

ক্ষেপণাস্ত্র-বিধবংসী ব্যবস্থা ভারতকে বেচবে আমেরিকা

সীমা সিরোহি ● ওয়াশিংটন

১৫ জুন: ভারতকে অত্যাধুনিক পেট্রিয়ট ক্ষেপণাস্ত্র ধ্বংসকারী ব্যবস্থা বিক্রির ছাড়পত্র দিল বৃশ প্রশাসন। ভারতের প্রতিরক্ষা মন্ত্রককে এই সিদ্ধান্তের কথা জানানো হয়েছে। পাশাপাশি, এই ক্ষেপণাস্ত্র ধ্বংসকারী ব্যবস্থার প্রস্তুতকারক সংস্থা লকহিডকে বলা হয়েছে, তারা ভারতকে এই ব্যবস্থার মহড়া দেখাতে পারে। ভারতের প্রতিরক্ষামন্ত্রী প্রণব মুখোপাধ্যায়ের সফরের ঠিক আগে এই ছাড়পত্র রাজনৈতিক দিক থেকে যথেষ্ট তাৎপর্যপূর্ণ বলেই মনে করছে রাজনৈতিক মহল।

বস্তুত, প্রণববাবুকে স্বাগত জানাতে ব্যাপক তোড়জোড় শুরু করে দিয়েছে পেন্টাগন। ভারতের সঙ্গে সুসম্পর্ক বজায় রাখতে বৃশ প্রশাসন যে কতটা উদগ্রীব, এই ইতিবাচক মনোভাবই তার প্রমাণ। সম্প্রতি প্রণববাবু নিজেই কলকাতায় বলেন, “এত দিন মার্কিন সরকার ভারতকে অস্ত্র বিক্রির ব্যাপারে আগ্রহী ছিল না। এ বার মার্কিন প্রতিরক্ষা সচিব ডোনাল্ড রামসফেল্ড আমাকে আমন্ত্রণ জানিয়েছেন। এটার একটা তাৎপর্য আছে।” নিজে উদ্যোগী হয়ে প্রণববাবুর জন্য নৈশভোজের আয়োজন করেছেন রামসফেল্ড। এ মাসের ২৭ তারিখ সরকারি ভাবে প্রণববাবুর মার্কিন সফর শুরু হওয়ার কথা। তার আগের দিনই ওই ভোজের আয়োজন করেছেন রামসফেল্ড।

সহকর্মীরা রামসফেল্ডকে কাঠখোঁটা মানুষ হিসেবেই জানেন, এ ধরনের নৈশভোজে যাওয়াও তিনি পছন্দ করেন না। কিন্তু প্রণববাবুর জন্য এই বিশেষ খাতিরের ব্যবস্থার জন্য চেপ্টার ক্রটি রাখেননি তিনি।

পেন্টাগনে প্রণববাবুর জন্য গার্ড অফ অনারেরও ব্যবস্থা করা হয়েছে। এই সফরে রামসফেল্ড ছাড়াও প্রণববাবু কথা বলবেন মার্কিন ভাইস প্রেসিডেন্ট ডিক চেনির সঙ্গেও। মার্কিন বিদেশনীতির ক্ষেত্রে ডিক

চেনির মতামত অত্যন্ত গুরুত্বপূর্ণ।

আগামী দিনে প্রতিরক্ষা-সহ নানা ক্ষেত্রে ভারতকে পাশে পেতে আমেরিকা সচেষ্ট। সূতরাং এই সফরে মার্কিন অস্ত্র কেনাবেচা নিয়েও কথা হতে পারে। তা ছাড়া রামসফেল্ডের আরও একটি উদ্দেশ্য রয়েছে। এশিয়ার প্রধান সামরিক শক্তি হিসেবে চিনকে মানতে চায় না আমেরিকা। রামসফেল্ড নিজে কখনও চিনে যাননি। কিছু দিন আগেই চিনের ক্রমবর্ধমান প্রতিরক্ষা বাজেটের কড়া সমালোচনা করেছেন তিনি। পাশাপাশি গণতান্ত্রিক শক্তি হিসেবে ভারতের প্রশংসাও করছেন তিনি মুক্তকণ্ঠে। রামসফেল্ড ছাড়াও মার্কিন বিদেশসচিব কন্ডোলিজা রাইসও চিনের ব্যাপারে সন্দেহান।

তাই দিল্লির সঙ্গে প্রতিরক্ষা চুক্তি অনেকটা শিথিল করেছে ওয়াশিংটন। ভারতকে উচ্চপ্রযুক্তি সম্পন্ন এফ-১৬ ও এফ-১৮ বিমান কেনার প্রস্তাব দেওয়া ছাড়াও ভারতীয় বিমানবাহিনীর ১২৬টি যুদ্ধবিমান কেনার টেন্ডারের দর হাঁকার জন্য মার্কিন ঠিকাদারদের অনুমতিও দিয়েছে আমেরিকা।

এফ-১৬ বিমানের নির্মাতা সংস্থা লকহিড মার্কিনের সঙ্গে যোগাযোগ করে এই কেনাবেচার প্রসঙ্গে আলোচনা করেছেন রামসফেল্ড। প্রণববাবুর সঙ্গেও সংস্থার শীর্ষ কর্তারা দেখা করবেন। তাঁদের বক্তব্য, দিল্লি যদি ওই যুদ্ধবিমান কিনতে রাজি হয় তবে তা হবে, দুই দেশের সুসম্পর্কের প্রতীক।

শুধু সম্পর্কের উষ্ণতা নয়, এত ঘনিষ্ঠতার পিছনে বাণিজ্যিক স্বার্থটাও অগ্রাহ্য করা চলে না। ভারত যদি এফ-১৬ কিনতে রাজি হয়, তা হবে দিল্লির সবচেয়ে বড় প্রতিরক্ষা চুক্তি। কারণ চার কোটি ডলারের এক একটি এফ-১৬-এর ঘাড়ের উপরেই নিঃশ্বাস ফেলছে ফ্রান্সের মিরাজ-২০০৫, রাশিয়ার সুখোই-৩০ ও সুইডিশ যুদ্ধবিমানগুলি। সে ক্ষেত্রে ভারতকে এফ-১৬ বেচতে পারলে আর্থিক ভাবেও লাভবান হবে আমেরিকা।

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Avoid "divisive debate" on U.N. Council: China

Understands India's stance; "reforms are bigger"

Nirupama Subramanian

BEIJING: China does not want the debate on United Nations reform to be hijacked by the single and "divisive" issue of the expansion of the Security Council, a senior Chinese official said on Wednesday.

Shen Guofang, Assistant Foreign Minister, told a group of South Asian journalists visiting here on an invitation from the Chinese Government that "we should avoid concentrating on Security Council reforms as it had become a point of tension and divisions in the world."

"We understand India's desire to play a bigger role in the United Nations, but reform of the Security Council is only one aspect of the U.N. reform, which has several other aspects. We

hope equal seriousness will be given to all these aspects," Mr. Shen said during an interaction with the journalists at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs here.

India has canvassed Beijing's support for its candidature in an expanded Security Council. China has so far avoided taking an unequivocal official position on the issue apart from saying that as one of the fastest developing nations India should have a bigger voice in the international arena.

During his visit to India in April, Premier Wen Jiabao reiterated this position; India has read in this the nuance that China supports its candidature but cannot say so openly.

In his interaction with the journalists from India, Pakistan, Sri Lanka, Nepal and Bangla-

desh, Mr. Shen emphasised that China was in favour of enlarging the Security Council in order to give representation and voice to developing countries and to medium and small countries. But this had to be done only through consultation and consensus among all countries.

The Minister, who is in the second tier of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs hierarchy, said China set great store on furthering its strategic and economic cooperation with India.

"It is our great hope that we can further strengthen our bilateral ties so we can play a greater role together in international affairs," Mr. Shen said. He described the strategic partnership put in place by both countries during Mr. Wen's visit to India as an "important achievement."

স্থায়ী সদস্যপদ নিয়ে কথা দিলেন না রাইসও

সীমা সিরোহি ● ওয়াশিংটন

১৪ এপ্রিল: অস্পষ্টতা থেকেই গেল। রাষ্ট্রপুঞ্জ ভারতের গুরুত্বপূর্ণ ভূমিকা নিয়ে জোরদার সওয়াল করেও আমেরিকাকে নরম করতে পারলেন না বিদেশমন্ত্রী নটবর সিংহ। আন্তর্জাতিক ক্ষেত্রে ভারতের ক্রমবর্ধমান গুরুত্বের কথা স্বীকার করে নিলেও নিরাপত্তা পরিষদের সম্প্রসারণের বিষয়টি বৃহত্তর প্রেক্ষিতে দেখা উচিত বলেই বৈঠকের পরে জানিয়ে দিলেন মার্কিন বিদেশসচিব কন্ডোলিজা রাইস। তবে দ্বিপাক্ষিক সম্পর্ক তেজী করতে 'শক্তি' বিষয়ক আলোচনা, মহাকাশ গবেষণার ক্ষেত্রে যৌথ কর্মগোষ্ঠী প্রভৃতি ঘোষণা করেছে দুই দেশ। মস্কো সিংহের

নেতৃত্বে ভারতের প্রতিনিধিরা অর্থনৈতিক ও 'শক্তি' বিষয়ক আলোচনা চালাবেন বলে ঠিক হয়েছে। জুলাইয়ে মনমোহনের ওয়াশিংটন সফরে আরও উল্লেখযোগ্য অগ্রগতির আশা করছেন রাইস। নটবর জানান, ভারত-মার্কিন প্রতিরক্ষা সম্পর্কের উন্নতির লক্ষ্যে প্রতিরক্ষামন্ত্রী প্রণব মুখোপাধ্যায়ও শীঘ্র ওয়াশিংটন যাবেন। ওভাল অফিসে এ দিন নটবর সিংহের সঙ্গে প্রেসিডেন্ট বুশের আধ ঘণ্টার আলাপচারিতাকে প্রাথমিক ভাবে প্রথাভাঙা সৌজন্য বলে মনে হলো এ র পিছনে রাজনৈতিক সমীকরণটি কিছু পরিষ্কার। তা হল, চিনের রাজনৈতিক প্রতিদ্বন্দ্বী হিসেবে এশিয়ায় ভারতের জায়গা পাকা করা।

বৈঠকের পরে ভারতের বিদেশসচিব শ্যাম সারন জানান, অত্যন্ত বন্ধুত্বপূর্ণ ও উষ্ণ অভ্যর্থনাই তাঁরা পেয়েছেন মার্কিন প্রেসিডেন্টের কাছে। অর্থাৎ ভারতকে ঠিক কতটা গুরুত্ব দিতে চান, বুশ সেই সঙ্কেত ঠিক ভাবেই ঠিক জায়গায় পৌঁছে দিতে পেরেছেন। জানিয়ে দিয়েছেন, দ্বিতীয় দফার শাসনকালে তাঁর প্রশাসনের লক্ষ্যই হবে, ভারত-মার্কিন সম্পর্ককে একটি নতুন স্তরে উন্নীত করা। বুশ প্রশাসনের দ্বিতীয় দফার শীর্ষ পদাধিকারীরা অনেকেই আজ হাজির ছিলেন বৈঠকে। ছিলেন মার্কিন বিদেশসচিব কন্ডোলিজা রাইস, নিরাপত্তা উপদেষ্টা স্টিফেন হ্যাডলি ও চিফ অফ স্টাফ অ্যান্ড্রু কার্ড প্রমুখ।

দীর্ঘদিন প্রস্তুত হয়ে গিয়েছিলেন নটবরও। সঙ্গে ছিলেন যোজনা কমিশনের ডেপুটি চেয়ারম্যান মস্কোক সিংহ অহলুওয়ালিয়া, আমেরিকায় ভারতের রাষ্ট্রদূত রশেন সেন ও বিদেশসচিব শ্যাম সারন। ভারত-মার্কিন সম্পর্কের ক্ষেত্রে অর্থনৈতিক সহযোগিতা যে বিশেষ গুরুত্ব পেতে চলেছে, মস্কোক সিংহের উপস্থিতিতেই তা পরিষ্কার। বাণিজ্যে প্রভূত উন্নতি চায় দু'পক্ষই। উদ্ভাস ধরা পড়েছে নটবরের গলাতেও। তাঁর মতে, আজ নয়, "প্রেসিডেন্ট হিসেবে প্রথম দফার প্রথম দিন থেকেই ভারতের সঙ্গে সম্পর্কের উন্নতিতে সচেষ্ট হন বুশ।" তাতে ফলও হয়েছে বলে তিনি মনে করেন।

16 APR 2005

ANADABAZ PARIKA

Fuel for energy talks

K.P. NAYAR

Chicago, April 15: President George W. Bush's signal in receiving an Indian delegation in the Oval Office yesterday yielded an American commitment to pursue cabinet-level dialogue with New Delhi on nuclear power and a joint working group on space.

India has opted to strike while the iron is hot: the deputy chairman of the Planning Commission, Montek Singh Ahluwalia, is staying back in Washington to pursue discussions on economic matters, nuclear energy and Indo-US scientific cooperation.

It was announced at a joint news conference by foreign minister K. Natwar Singh and US secretary of state Condoleezza Rice in Washington that defence minister Pranab Mukherjee would shortly visit America to discuss US proposals to sell arms to India and upgrade bilateral defence cooperation.

The energy talks, which India has been seeking, will be held between Ahluwalia and the Bush administration's energy secretary Samuel Bodman.

The foreign minister said at the news conference: "I am particularly happy to compliment our American friends for the fresh approach they have brought to bear on a subject that is of such vital importance for us."

Rice, however, indicated that the dialogue will be a slow and difficult process in view of US non-proliferation laws and cautioned against raising expectations.

She said in an interview to the *Wall Street Journal* that the US was not yet ready to sell nuclear reactor technology to India.

"We are not there, that is not the case. We have agreed with the Indians that we can talk about a variety of energy sources but obviously there are NPT (nuclear non-proliferation treaty) implications that are quite serious about civilian nuclear power in India."



Natwar Singh with Bush during their meeting on Thursday. (PTI)

She made it clear at the news conference that India's attempts to step up energy cooperation with Iran would be a factor in the Indo-US dialogue.

"We have made clear our concerns (to India) about the Iranian development. We have made clear that at a time when Iran has clearly not yet made a strategic choice to demonstrate to the world that it is prepared to live up to its international obligations, that we would not hope that this would be taken into account. But these are the kinds of discussions that we continue to have."

The foreign minister, how-

ever, said the dialogue "recognises the importance of addressing (India's) growing energy demands while taking into account their environmental implications". He said the three main components of the talks would be civil nuclear energy, hydrocarbons and cleaner technologies.

Singh said "our cooperation in space highlights the technology bond that is a special characteristic of our ties. Our goal is to promote synergies in all aspects of space collaboration, including satellite fabrication and launch".

He said the Next Steps in

Strategic Partnership process will be accelerated. "It has been a useful and productive engagement but we are now looking at even wider horizons."

Rice said her recently appointed official in charge of UN reform, Shirin Tahir-Kheli, is to travel to Delhi shortly to discuss issues related to India's quest for a permanent seat in the UN Security Council.

She said India's case has to be approached "in the broader context of UN reform. Yes, we have supported Japan for some very particular reasons... Japan really is the second largest contributor to the UN".

Really opening up the skies

THE INDIA-U.S. Civil Aviation Agreement marks another bold step in the open skies policy being pursued by the Government of India. That it replaces a 50-year-old agreement between the two countries is a commentary on the low level of interest in the past and the fairly recent emergence of India as a key economic and tourist destination. Although a couple of American airlines have already announced plans to connect with Indian cities in their summer or winter schedules, the new aviation pact clearly moves the relationship to another level and enables the airlines of both countries to look at new destinations and also to operate to third countries. What Civil Aviation Minister Praful Patel and Transportation Secretary Norman Y. Mineta settled on Thursday opens the skies to existing airlines and will let India's private carriers fly out to the U.S. at least by 2006. The agreement removes the caps on the number of flights and enables connections to new cities.

American airlines operate only to New Delhi and Mumbai currently while Air India alone operates from India. There could be a vast change in the months to come. Delta has planned to launch a New York-Chennai flight, and Northwest will link Minneapolis and Bangalore. Air India will step up its services to the U.S. from 28 to 37 a week even as some European airlines will take advantage of India's open skies policy to tap the market potential. Given the business, tourism, and education links India enjoys with the U.S., the opening up of the skies should provide a strong impetus to bilateral relations in all these areas. India's private airlines such as Jet Airways and Sahara are waiting in the wings to operate services to the U.S. Consider the fact that between October 1, 2003 and September 30, 2004, the U.S. issued 3.04 lakh non-immigrant visas in India, 1.26 lakh of them from its Chennai consulate.

What will this mean for passengers and the market? It is clear fares will drop in a matter of months, more so after the private air operators begin their services. The European and Southeast Asian airlines, which seem to be enjoying the largest slice of the market in the India-U.S. sectors, will face stiff competition from both American and Indian players. The southern States, which seem to be riding the crest of development and investment flows, will be getting the bulk of the new services. Under the code sharing arrangements, European airlines could also be strengthening their presence in the Indian aviation scene, to provide multiple connections to the U.S. from their countries. Already, Lufthansa, Air France, and British Airways, which have done exceedingly well in the Indian market, have firmed up plans for the future. It is imperative for Air India to equip itself for such a competitive environment. The business and tourist traffic aside, the U.S. attracts a huge flow of students from India every year and the open skies policy will gladden their hearts.

16 APR 2005

THE HINDU

বুশ-নটবর বৈঠকে ফল সত্যিই কতটা, সন্দিগ্ধ বিশেষজ্ঞেরা

সীমা সিরোহি ● ওয়াশিংটন

১৫ এপ্রিল: ভারত সফরে এসে বিভিন্ন ক্ষেত্রে কৌশলগত সহযোগিতা বাড়ানোর ঘোষণা করেছিলেন কভেলিজা রাইস। তার দু' সপ্তাহের মধ্যে সেই রাইসের সঙ্গে বৈঠকের পরে বলার মতো কী পেলেন নটবর সিংহ? আমেরিকায় ভারতীয় কূটনীতিকেরা এই সফরে বুশ বা রাইসের মনোভাব সম্পর্কে উচ্ছ্বসিত হলেও বিশেষজ্ঞদের অনেকেই এই প্রশ্ন তুলেছেন। বিশেষত নটবরের সওয়াল সঙ্কেও নিরাপত্তা পরিষদে ভারতের দাবিকে কার্যত এড়িয়ে গিয়েছে মার্কিন প্রশাসন। যৌথ সাংবাদিক সম্মেলনে রাইস আন্তর্জাতিক ক্ষেত্রে ভারতের গুরুত্বের কথা বলেছেন ঠিকই, কিন্তু 'তা তাঁকে বলতে হয়েছে' নটবর সিংহ নিজের দেশের গুরুত্বের কথা তুলে ধরার পরে। রাইসকে জিজ্ঞাসা করা হয়েছিল, আমেরিকা নিরাপত্তা পরিষদে স্থায়ী সদস্যপদে জাপানের দাবি কেন সমর্থন করছে? উত্তরে রাইস জাপানের ভূমিকা সম্পর্কে উচ্ছ্বসিত হয়ে বলতে থাকেন। তার পরেই রাষ্ট্রপুঞ্জের বিভিন্ন কাজের ক্ষেত্রে ভারতের ভূমিকার কথা তুলে ধরেন নটবর। বলেন, "১৯৪৫ সালে যে

পরিস্থিতিতে রাষ্ট্রপুঞ্জ গঠিত হয়েছিল, ২০০৫ সালের পরিস্থিতি তার থেকে সম্পূর্ণ আলাদা।" এরপরেই রাইসের উক্তি, "শুধু নিরাপত্তা পরিষদই নয়, রাষ্ট্রপুঞ্জের অন্য সংস্থার কাঠামো বদলের দিকেও নজর দেওয়া দরকার।"

ভারতীয় কূটনীতিকদের ব্যাখ্যা, ভারতের দাবি রাইস কিন্তু সরাসরি উড়িয়ে দেননি। বরং বলেছেন, আন্তর্জাতিক সংস্থায় ভারতের গুরুত্বকে মর্যাদা দিতেই হবে। পরিষদের সংস্কারের বিষয়ে রাইসের উপদেষ্টা ভারত-সহ নানা দেশেই আলোচনার জন্য যাবেনও। রাষ্ট্রপুঞ্জের শতাধিক প্রস্তাবিত সংস্কারের মধ্যে নিরাপত্তা পরিষদের বিষয়টি আমেরিকার কাছে ততটা গুরুত্বপূর্ণ নয়, যতটা ভারতের কাছে। তাই রাইসের বক্তব্য ইতিবাচক বলে তাঁদের ব্যাখ্যা। এই মহলের কথায়, বিশেষত আমেরিকার সঙ্গে সম্পর্ক এক লহমায় বদলে যেতে পারে না। আর কূটনীতিতে চটজলদি লাভ মাথা যায় না। দ্বিপাক্ষিক সম্পর্ক ধীরে ধীরেই এগোবে আর ইতিবাচক দিকেই যে সে বদল হচ্ছে তা স্পষ্ট। অসামরিক ক্ষেত্রে পরমাণু শক্তির বিষয়ে যে সহযোগিতা নিয়ে দু'দেশের প্রতিনিধিরা আলোচনা করছেন, তার

উদাহরণ টেনে তাঁরা বলেছেন, ভারত পরমাণু অস্ত্র প্রসার রোধ চুক্তি সই করেননি। তাই ভারতের সঙ্গে পরমাণু শক্তি নিয়ে আলোচনা মার্কিন নীতি অনুযায়ী নিষিদ্ধ বলেই চলে। তার পরেও খোদ প্রেসিডেন্ট এ বিষয়ে যাবতীয় বাধা কাটানোর পন্থা খুঁজছেন।

আমেরিকার নেতাদের হাবেভাবে 'আগ্রহ, উচ্ছ্বাস'র কথাও তুলে ধরছেন ভারতীয় কূটনীতিকেরা। ওভাল অফিসে বৈঠকের সময়ে উপস্থিত এক উচ্চপদস্থ কূটনীতিক বলেন, "প্রেসিডেন্টের যেন আর তর সইছিল না। সম্পর্ক এগিয়ে নিয়ে যাওয়ার আগ্রহ ছিল চোখে পড়ার মতো।" বৈঠকে প্রধানমন্ত্রী মনমোহন সিংহের একটি চিঠি বুশকে দেন নটবর। সাংবাদিক সম্মেলনেও রাইস ও নটবর পরস্পরকে নাম ধরেই উল্লেখ করেছেন। বুশের সঙ্গে 'প্রথাভাঙা' সাক্ষাত ও উচ্ছ্বাসের পিছনে সম্ভাব্য কারণ হিসেবে বলা হচ্ছে, এশিয়ায় চিনের রাজনৈতিক প্রতিদ্বন্দ্বী হিসাবে ভারতকে তুলে ধরার একটা চেষ্টা করছে আমেরিকা। যদিও নটবর সিংহ পরে বলেছেন, চিনের বিরুদ্ধে ভারত কারও সঙ্গে জোট বাধবে না। তবে সব দেখে শুনে বিশেষজ্ঞদের অনেকেই বলেছেন, যত উচ্ছ্বাস, তত বর্ষাবে কি?

16 APR 2005

ANADABAZAR PATEIKA

India, U.S. sign 'open skies' agreement

"Boost to our economies, our businesses and our citizens"

Special Correspondent

NEW DELHI: India and the United States today signed a landmark agreement, permitting any number of airlines to operate any number of flights to any point in each other's territory.

The historic agreement was signed by the Minister of State for Civil Aviation, Praful Patel, and the visiting U.S. Transportation Secretary, Norman Y. Mineta, here. "If prior experience is any indicator, this bilateral 'Open Skies' agreement between India and the U.S. will stimulate new passenger and cargo services, new partnerships, innovation, and lower prices to the benefit of our economies, our businesses and our citizens," Mr. Mineta said.

New services

Several U.S. carriers have already announced new services. Delta plans a daily service be-

• Replaces 50-year-old treaty

• Removes cap on number of flights

• Delta, Northwest plan services to Chennai, Bangalore

• Special provision on safety

• Air India to add flights to three U.S. routes

tween New York and Chennai while Northwest Airlines plans a service connecting Minneapolis and Bangalore. Recently, Continental Airlines announced new non-stop service between Newark and New Delhi from November 1.

The Union Cabinet on Wednesday gave its approval for replacing the 1956 Air Services Agreement with the new one according to which Air India and other carriers will have ports of call other than the existing ones such as Chicago, Los Angeles,

New York and Newark (New Jersey). Similarly, American carriers will also be able to have direct operations to additional cities in India. Currently, Indian carriers operate 28 flights a week to the U.S. which has 14 flights.

Mr. Patel said the agreement would help Air India to realise its plans to operate flights to Washington, San Francisco and Houston. The private carrier Jet Airways has been allowed to operate flights to New York via Brussels.

The new accord also seeks to

remove the earlier restriction of code-share rights to any five points in the respective territories of both countries. It proposes to eliminate all existing restrictions on Fifth Freedom traffic through intermediate points and provides for greater operational flexibility. A special provision relating to safety has been added in the new agreement.

Minimising glitches

PTI adds:

Later at a luncheon meeting hosted by FICCI and American Chamber of Commerce, Mr. Mineta said efforts were on to minimise the "glitches" in issuing visas. Mr. Patel, replying to a question on whether Left parties were consulted before firming up this accord, said this was especially meant to give more air connectivity and point-to-point easier travel for the people of the two countries.



SKY'S THE LIMIT: Minister for Civil Aviation Praful Patel and U.S. Transportation Secretary Norman Y. Mineta exchange documents after signing an agreement on air traffic transport between the two countries, in New Delhi on Thursday. - PHOTO: V. SUDERSHAN

Open skies pact with UK, US

Foreign carriers will be allowed to operate unrestricted flights to India

HT Correspondent
New Delhi, April 13

INDIA IS truly opening up its skies. After a liberal air services agreement with China, the Centre on Wednesday eased restrictions on flights from the UK and cleared the most open agreement yet with the US. Called the Aviation Cooperation Programme, there will be unrestricted ports of call for any carrier from either side once the treaty comes into effect.

As per the Indo-UK bilateral finalised on Wednesday evening, the total num-

ber of flights will increase from 40 per week now to 130 by winter next year. More than one million people travelled between the two countries in 2004. Designated Indian carriers can operate 56 flights from Delhi and Mumbai to London-Heathrow, and unlimited flights from India to UK on all other routes from the winter of 2005.

For UK, there is a staggered increase of flights from London-Heathrow to Delhi and Mumbai - 42 in winter 2005, 49 in summer 2006 and 56 in the winter of 2006. In addition, there can

Air-India operates 12 flights to UK in a week in addition to Virgin Atlantic, which operates 10 in the same period. British Airways will increase its flights to Chennai from two to six per week and will commence operations to Bangalore with three flights per week from October 2005. Andy Stern, general manager BA South Asia said Wednesday's decision "provides us with the opportunity to operate at least double daily services from the UK to Mumbai and Delhi".

In addition to this, the



Praful Patel

be 14 flights a week from UK to Bangalore and Chennai and 7 flights a week from UK to any other city in India.

At present, British Airways is operating 19 flights to India per week, while

government will sign an agreement with the US transportation secretary Norman Y Mineta on Thursday. The agreement is likely to open any number of carriers assigned designated status, without any restrictions on the number of cities or flights that they can operate.

Sources said the finance ministry had some reservations about the tax exemptions being granted to the US carriers through the agreement. This was ironed out in a meeting between the two ministers earlier this week.

14 APR 2005

THE HINDUSTAN TIMES

India-USA air pact to spread wings

Statesman News Service

NEW DELHI, April 13. — The Centre today cleared an open skies agreement between India and the USA allowing greater links in civil aviation.

Till now, Indian carriers could fly only to Chicago, New York, Newark and New Jersey. Now, all cities will be open to them. Similarly, US carriers will have more access to Indian cities than the four they have at the moment.

Indian carriers fly 28 times a week to the USA and US carriers have 14 flights. Importantly, the USA has many more airlines. Most of them can now schedule flights to and from India.

The new agreement replacing the 1956 Air Services Agreement will be signed here tomorrow by the US secretary of transportation, Mr NY Mineta, and the civil aviation minister, Mr Praful Patel. "We feel that Air-India will be benefited by this," he said after a Cabinet meeting. Asked if the Left had been consulted, Mr Patel said: "It's in the interest of our country to see there are more air services which will help our tourism, trade, and also, generate employment."

The Cabinet also approved the signing of a Memorandum of Cooperation between India and the USA in maritime transport science and technology.

India-UK MoU

India and the UK today signed a MoU under which the number of flights between them would increase from 40 to 130 each week. It was signed by civil aviation secretary Mr Ajay Prasad and director of trade and investment in British High Commission here Mr Stepher Lillie.

Indian carriers can now operate 56 flights from Delhi and Mumbai to Heathrow airport and have an unlimited number of flights from India to UK on all other routes.

The MoU will facilitate 56 flights each week from London to New Delhi and Mumbai, 14 flights a week connecting UK airports with Chennai and Bangalore and seven flights connecting the UK with other Indian airports.

THE STATESMAN

14 APR 2005

Small leap forward

Beijing and Delhi inching closer

Given the booming trade volumes between India and China, and the rhetoric surrounding Prime Minister Wen Jiabao's visit to India — he had earlier told Manmohan Singh that the visit would be the most important event of 2005 — what was actually accomplished in the India-China joint statement does not quite match up. The Chinese have conceded Sikkim to India, which means they still claim Arunachal Pradesh. Both sides have agreed to make adjustments in their positions on the border issue. Beijing and Delhi agreed to respect the LAC and reduce tensions along it 12 years earlier; since then there is still no clarity about where the LAC — which could be the basis of a final settlement — actually is on maps. There is no great leap forward in the current document, except for specifying that both sides have the “political will” to come to a final settlement. Wen has also been oblique in his statement that Beijing would “welcome” India's emergence in the UN Security Council, which ought to be considered in the context of Beijing's position on UN reform spelt out last week — that this can be achieved only by “consensus.” “Welcoming” India in does not say anything about whether Beijing is willing to support or expedite the process. Given the current state of China-Japan relations it is certain that Beijing will be working overtime to prevent Tokyo from getting a foot in, and Delhi is aligned with Tokyo in the Group of 4 — an alliance between India, Brazil, Germany and Japan to break into the club. The Chinese are masters of carefully crafted formulations that sound diplomatic but do not really commit to anything.

On the question of a free trade agreement, it is Delhi that dragged its feet, and justifiably so. China is the manufacturing superpower of the world, and letting in its goods without duty would swamp Indian industry. That is not to say that Delhi shouldn't open its markets gradually to competition from abroad, which can provide the right stimulus as well as cheap inputs to Indian industry. As in medicine, dosage is important — too much of a generally beneficial medicine can kill the patient. Thus a regional trade agreement in place of a free trade agreement sounds right. The best that can be said for the current deals is that relations between Beijing and Delhi are improving, and there is scope to improve further.

14 APR 2005

THE STATESMAN

NEW DEAL

F-16s And The Bigger Picture

By SWAGATO GANGULY

The supply of American F-16s to Pakistan has been a red flag issue in India-US as well as Pakistan-US relations for so long that its symbolism has overshadowed its real significance. When the Americans did not deliver on promised F-16s in 1990, it became for Islamabad a symptom of America's bad faith. For Delhi, resuming supplies of advanced American hardware to Pakistan will encourage its general irredentism and adventurism in Kashmir. But larger developments have been changing the context of the F-16 debate, and need to be taken into account.

Following its economic success, Beijing has registered double digit growth in its arms spending annually over the last decade. That has prompted Delhi to unveil its own modernisation plans, including fighters for the IAF worth Rs 43,000 crore, the largest ever defence deal involving India.

Ongoing arms race

Then came the US initiative which, besides granting Islamabad's wish for F-16s, is offering Delhi the licence to co-produce F-16s and the more advanced F-18 fighters. Along with this came offers of cooperation in other sectors, including space, missile defence and most significantly, civilian nuclear energy. The goal of all these moves, in the words of a state department spokesman, is to "help India become a major world power in the 21st century."

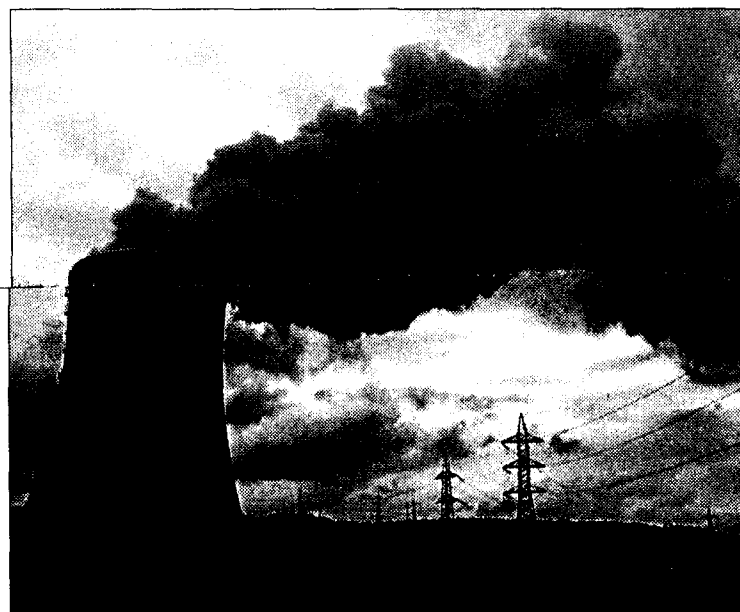
The last statement is unprecedented in the history of Indo-US relations. Historically, the US has looked at India through the grid of its nuclear non-proliferation concerns, and its policy has been to use Pakistan to balance India. The present set of policy initiatives, if they come to fruition, would get rid of the "hyphen" between India and Pakistan. They would also get rid of the assumption of technology denial when it came to India. Taken together, they amount to a paradigm shift in Indo-US relations.

The Left has reacted predictably, stating that the American intention is to start an arms race in the subcontinent. Less predictably, the BJP too has taken up this refrain. From the sequence of events set out above, however, it should be clear that an arms race has been ongoing long before the US stepped in. As a consequence of it, the IAF picked the French Mirage 2000-V, the Russian Mig-29 M2, and the Swedish Gripen as contenders for a massive arms purchase. It had also sent out an enquiry about, guess what, the F-16. In other words, it is not so much the Americans trying to start an arms race as Delhi who invited

the Americans in. And along with them the French, the Russians and Swedish. If there is a lot of arms hustling going on, then the Americans are not the only players.

To put things in perspective, Beijing has just undertaken to manufacture F-22P frigates for the Pakistani navy and JF-17 fighters for the airforce. The frigates are equipped with surface-to-surface and surface-to-air missiles, and helicopters for anti-submarine warfare. The Americans are offering to supply more

is because Delhi has not been able to strategically leverage its resources, whereas Islamabad has. The rules of the game, however, changed with 9/11 and the globalisation of the Indian economy. India has been growing at a faster pace while Pakistan is in an economic rut since the 1990s; the spotlight has shifted to *jehadi* militancy, a principal locus of which is Pakistan; Indian diplomats have been making the right connections; and Delhi demonstrated capabilities of military coercion following the attack on



advanced hardware to India than to Pakistan. The Chinese supply military hardware only to Pakistan. Yet there is no brouhaha about this from the Communists, or even the BJP. Do we take it that because the Chinese supply only to Pakistan, they are exonerated from the charge of having mercenary or commercial motives?

Statements by Indian politicians are often emotive and demonstrative, the downside of which is that they lack clarity. In the context of a burgeoning arms race in the region, is it our position that we are unilaterally bowing out of it? That we will be relying on, say, Track 2 diplomacy when settling our problems with Pakistan? What if there is another attack on Parliament, as in December 2001? Then the same politicians will be baying for war. But they will not have acted, in the interim, to widen our strategic options, or equip our armed forces for that war.

Getting it right

The reality is that if a peace process is underway in Kashmir it is because Delhi is getting ahead, for the first time, in the strategic game with Islamabad. Looked at in a broader context it is astonishing that Islamabad should be able to conduct such a forward-leaning policy on Kashmir and elsewhere for such a long time, against a country with eight times its population and resources. Emotive considerations aside, it

Parliament in December 2001. In other words Delhi has been learning to play realpolitik, instead of underpinning its foreign policy with quixotic idealism and selective pacifism.

What is interesting is that Washington is prepared to go some way towards addressing Delhi's fears that it will not be a reliable supplier of military equipment. It is offering Delhi a technology transfer deal, whereby it could produce 126 fighters, including F-16s and F-18s, to its own specifications and on its own soil. Delhi prefers technology transfer deals, and Washington rarely makes this kind of offer, which suggests that it is serious in wanting to improve ties with Delhi. Washington has also removed hurdles in supplying to Delhi the Phalcon, an advanced early warning system that would act as a force multiplier in combat. The Phalcon is not available to China or Pakistan, as isn't the Patriot anti-missile system that Washington has offered Delhi.

Of greatest significance, however, is the decision to make civilian nuclear technology available to India. A Goldman Sachs projection has found that due to structural and long-term reasons oil prices could double from currently high levels, and go up to as much as \$105 a barrel. This could cripple India's growth aspirations, unless alternative sources of energy are found quickly. Nuclear power could fill

the gap, but since nuclear technology can be dual-use India's civilian nuclear sector has been under sanctions since the Pokhran blasts in 1974. It operates under severe handicap as India's nuclear power plants are old, expensive, inefficient and potentially unsafe. With access to American technology the nuclear sanctions are effectively over. Nuclear energy can play a significant role in India's power grids, while Delhi gains de facto acceptance as a responsible nuclear power. If, indeed, Washington is serious about offering Delhi advanced military, nuclear and space technology, that would redefine the Indo-US relationship, exorcising the Cold War legacy and bringing it definitively into the 21st century.

US, India, China

What does Washington gain from all this? Indo-US cooperation in IT and BPO is helping American businesses stay competitive, a growing India would be a bigger market for its goods, it would also help stabilise South Asia which is currently a nexus of *jehadi* militancy.

Indian institutions are Western oriented, whereas Washington is threatened by the growth of Chinese power. This was evident in the fury in the US Congress when Europe proposed lifting its ban on arms sales to China. That this opposition has had some echoes in Europe and Japan as well, shows that the West is still basically uncomfortable with China. Delhi should work on resolving the boundary dispute with Beijing, and on improving trade and other ties. But it should be aware of the fact that there are inherent brakes on the relationship, stemming from the fact that China is a dictatorship.

Beijing's opening up to the world will make its people increasingly resent this fact, and the last thing its leaders would like to see is a successful democracy next door. This is the factor that makes China uncomfortable in dealing with Japan, ASEAN or Taiwan, and make an "all-weather" friend out of an autocratic Pakistan. This will also make it uncomfortable in dealing with India.

It would be folly, of course, to enter into a strategic alliance with the US against China. But the US is the biggest player in the world, and any offer it makes should be evaluated on its merits, rather than processed according to pre-conceived notions. From the March 25 announcement, it would seem that Washington is willing to make a break from obsolete Cold War notions on South Asia.

Delhi should have the courage to do the same. It messed up its strategic options before, and bled heavily for it, most notably in Kashmir. It should not do so once again.

Why should the US want to make India a major power in the 21st century?

American Indian century

BY PRAMIT PAL CHAUDHURI

THE UNITED States talked the biggest walk when Philip Zelikow, global guru of US Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice, declared the goal of US policy "is to help India become a major world power in the 21st century". The first question that needs to be answered: why should the sole superpower want to do such a thing for India?

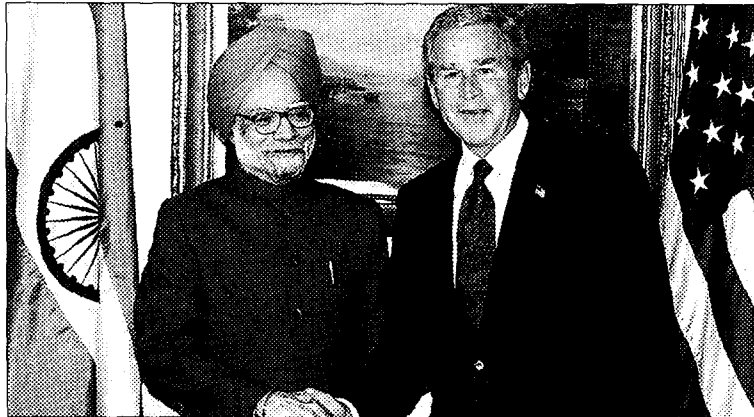
Wind the clock back to the Bill Clinton era. Clintonites saw the post-Cold War period as a chance to implement a liberal internationalist agenda of humanitarian intervention, democratic promotion and global nuclear arms control. But the last bit of this sugar and spice menu would have required India to bury its nuclear option. The end result was six years of Indo-US eye-scratching and abuse — and Pokhran II.

Clinton did leave behind an intellectual legacy: an institutional belief in Washington that democracies are law-abiding, don't fight each other and are generally in US security interests. India was no threat to Washington. But the CTBT fight showed that given a choice between preserving the existing nuclear order and giving India some strategic space, the Clintonites preferred to put the squeeze on the latter.

George Bush came to office largely unconcerned with India's nuclear sins. After all, he intended to deep-six chunks of the same nuclear order that Clinton upheld and India disliked. There was also some long-term interest in India. People like Condoleezza Rice believed the US had to engage with all potential great powers: China, India and Russia. Some Bushites saw India as a counter to China. Bush was personally mesmerised with India's polity. "A democracy of one billion people," he would tell advisors. "That's incredible."

The world, including many in Washington, was surprised when India endorsed Bush's missile defence proposals in 2000. It represented a small but cozy fit between a White House that wanted to rework the international nuclear order and an India that wanted the order overhauled. An expansive Richard Armitage told an Indian audience that missile shields were for everyone, India included. "Don't call it national missile defence any more, call it ballistic missile defence."

But the US strategic vision of In-



DON'T LOOSEN THE GRIP: Manmohan Singh with George Bush

dia was still narrow. It was easy prey for the layers of Indo-scepticism that existed in the Beltway — the non-proliferation lobby, hyphenators who couldn't separate Pakistan from India, and career Atlanticists. The Bush administration wasn't going to lift the heaviest weight for India — restructure the nuclear non-proliferation regime to give India equal footing with the other big powers.

Dissect the Bush administration's worldview. One school, moderate internationalists like Colin Powell, didn't see any need to buck the global order for India. Neo-conservatives, though attracted to Indian democracy, saw little role for India in their immediate goal of modernising the Arab Muslim world. The third school, that of realpolitik conservatives, saw India as a great power and as a card against China — but all in the future.

Together they represented a sentiment that India deserved attention but would matter only at some hazy point to be found in a crystal ball. Helping India along by lifting sanctions and accessing technology through the Next Steps for Strategic Partnership (NSSP) was the foreign policy equivalent of putting aside money for one's pension. It wasn't the stuff of genuine strategic partnership.

Then along came Osama bin Laden and September 11. The immediate impact of 9/11 was to plunge the US into a series of military actions like overthrowing the Taliban and Saddam Hussein and implementing a risky strategy of rebuilding certain key Muslim nations.

The immediate post-9/11 Bush administration was good for Indo-US relations in terms of its big picture: the Taliban were gone, terrorism went to the top of the class and democracy was now part of hard-nosed national security. But the small print was bad for India. The US began pouring resources into Pakistan — one of the Islamic countries earmarked for modernisation — and, probably worst of all, the India file had to make way for important concerns like Iraq.

Going by Indian and US diplomatic sources, the evidence is that with the second Bush administration, the big picture is back in focus. In part this because West Asia is in a relatively less hysterical state of affairs.

The India file is again moving around at the highest levels in Washington. As Zelikow said in his March briefing, "This year the administration made a judgment that the NSSP, though very important, wasn't broad enough to really encompass the kind of things we needed to do to take this relationship where it needed to go."

The prime moving in all this is that the Bush administration, looking back at its experiences post-9/11, has decided the present world order is still not conducive to US security interests. The Atlantic alliance is dying. A questionable China is rising. The Arabs are kicking and screaming as they are dragged along a painful but not hopeless path to democracy.

The US view is that it is prepared to rejig the global order as much as it did in the past few years and put together what Rice calls a "balance of power in favour of freedom" —

democracies that fight. Which is where India comes in.

India is a big country that wants a high seat at the global table. Crudely speaking, the more receptive Washington has been to this ambition, the warmer its relations have been with New Delhi. Today, with neo-con and realpolitik advocacy having fused into a radical but internationalist conservative worldview in the White House, support in the Bush administration for modifying the global order has never been so high. Nor has the belief India should be part of any new global architecture.

India has helped its cause by occasionally showing it has the potential for a great power mindset. It used diplomacy to escape the post-Pokhran II sanctions, showed amazing restraint during Kargil and played the game of coercive diplomacy like a pro in the mobilisation crisis of 2002. More recently, it impressed many in Washington during the tsunami by being, as Foreign Secretary Shyam Saran recently said, the only member who could tell the core group what relief work it had already done as opposed to what it would do.

There is now a two- or three-year window of opportunity for India and the US to tackle the stubbornly knotty core that weighs down their bilateral relationship. India is asking the US to prove its love. Big ticket items include space and civilian nuclear technology and support for a Security Council seat. Small steps include nuclear fuel for Tarapur. The US has a similar set of tick boxes, including signing up for the proliferation security initiative.

This will take time. Said one diplomat, "India shouldn't expect the US to rework the Nuclear Non-proliferation Treaty by this summer any more than the US should expect Indian troops in Iraq this year." However, the omens are good. The second Bush cabinet is staffed with people who most closely reflect the policy sentiments of the US president himself. When it comes to India, this includes not only Rice but also Stephen Hadley in the White House and even Donald Rumsfeld. But India needs to keep in mind that its own lobbying in Congress and with other great powers will also be crucial. The international system helps best those who help themselves.

New US overtures

Orchestrated response needed

All three wings of South Block — the PMO, MEA and AMOD — must don their thinking caps to come up with a comprehensive response to the latest American overtures promising significant upgrade of the bilateral security relationship, including the nuclear element. For this response will have implications far beyond a carefully-worded statement from the Official Spokesman, directly impact the Indian Air Force's modernisation plans, re-work links in the nuclear field and perhaps see India playing a larger role in international affairs. Hence the need for supreme caution, and dexterity. That the initial reaction of New Delhi's "strategic thinkers" is mixed indicates the complexities of the unfolding situation.

The first point upon which the government needs to re-assure itself is the underlying American motive, for in some ways Uncle Sam is reversing a 30-year-old policy, recognising India's nuclear status in a manner tantamount to allowing backdoor entry to the "club". Surely this new-found acknowledgement of India's virtues is not the result of Condoleezza Rice's whistle-stop tour. Nor could it be Washington's way of assuaging hurt Indian feelings over its decision to resume supplying Pakistan with F-16s. Genuine recompense would be a review of that decision, though it must be stressed that the objections came from India's political leadership — military professionals took things in their stride. If the US has eventually realised that India could be a useful ally, hence putting some goodies on the table, why cannot it go the distance and promote India's case for a prominent place in a revamped UN Security Council?

Now it is true that an offer of F-18s and F-16s customised to the IAF's requirements, with joint-production to boot, cannot be viewed only in the context of Pakistan also getting fighters for which it has long been yearning. India's rejecting the offer could mean closing a door that has only just opened — the access to frontline military technology cannot be scoffed at. Yet it must not be forgotten that since the US military is pinning its hopes on the F-35 or Joint Strike Fighter, finding buyers for the F-18 and F-16 is economically critical. It is against this background that some experts have described the many-angled US offer as "aggressive marketing", and India must not allow itself to be pressured. The selection of the 125 fighters now under consideration must be based on what the IAF wants (the Mirage 2000-V?), and not what makes for diplomatic gain. Let's test American motives by initially limiting military purchases to the P3C-Orion and variants of the C-130 Hercules. As its name suggests, the Next Steps for Strategic Partnership does not involve playing leapfrog.

THE STATESMAN

30 MAR 2005

U.S. starting arms race in South Asia: Jaswant Singh

By Our Special Correspondent

NEW DELHI, MARCH 29. The former External Affairs Minister, Jaswant Singh, today charged the U.S. Government with promoting the "commercial interests of its industrial-military complex" and starting "an arms race in South Asia" by deciding to sell F-16 fighter jets to Pakistan and offering F-16s and F-18s to India.

At a press conference, Mr. Singh said the U.S.-Pakistan F-16 agreement was of 1980s vintage and it was held in abeyance by successive American governments principally on grounds of "WMD (weapons of mass destruction) proliferation" and "terrorism promotion" by Pakistan.

The U.S. State department, therefore, needs to let the world know what has changed its earlier assessment of Pakistan "notwithstanding the A.Q. Khan, Iran, North Korea and such other matters" that are now public knowledge.

Modi issue

Mr. Singh denied that the change in the Bharatiya Janata Party's approach to the United States — as evident today from

his harsh criticism — had anything to do with the denial of a visa by Washington to the Gujarat Chief Minister, Narendra Modi. "I do believe that India and the U.S. have a relationship that is multifaceted and which needs to be promoted and nurtured ... there is no change in that approach ... but on the visa issue, it was not a question of one individual, but of India's internal affairs. We do not need international referees and we need to learn no lessons in human rights from any other country. We will settle our internal problems ourselves."

"Discordant voices"

Mr. Singh expressed his dissatisfaction with the handling of the F-16s issue by the Government of India. His charge was that conflicting statements and "discordant voices" had come from the Prime Minister's Office, the External Affairs Ministry and the Defence Ministry.

At the same time, he put on record the BJP's "disappointment" that the status of a "major non-NATO ally" was conferred on Pakistan by the U.S. on another occasion immediately after the then Secretary of State, Colin

Powell, visited the sub-continent when the BJP was the major partner in the ruling National Democratic Alliance Government.

He suggested that it may not be just a coincidence that both then and now, immediately after visits by Secretaries of State, announcements were made conferring non-NATO ally status on Pakistan on the first occasion and promising to complete the F-16 deal with Pakistan on this recent visit.

While acknowledging that it was the "sovereign right" of countries to buy or sell whatever military hardware they choose, India had to assess the attendant consequences for itself. He also wondered, in this context, why then the U.S. "feels troubled" when the European Union countries sell arms to China. "What is sauce for the goose is surely sauce for the gander," he commented.

While buying fighter aircraft, the decision could not be on the basis of numbers of jets to be bought. "No country in the world can afford the kind of technically diversified squadrons we have — MiGs, Sukhois, Jaguars, Mirages, AJs, LCAs and now F-16s or F-18s?"

THE HINDU 30 MAR 2005

মার্কিন রিপোর্টে গুজরাটের নিন্দা, প্রশংসা ইউ পি এ-র

ওয়াশিংটন, ২৯ মার্চ (পি টি আই)— আন্তর্জাতিক চোখে মোদির গুজরাট এক কলঙ্কচিহ্ন। আমেরিকার বিদেশ দপ্তরের সাম্প্রতিকতম মানবাধিকার রিপোর্টে তা আবারও প্রতিধ্বনিত হল। কেন্দ্রের ইউ পি এ সরকারের উদ্যোগের প্রশংসা করেও এই রিপোর্টে ভারতের মানবাধিকার পরিস্থিতির সমালোচনা করা হয়েছে। রিপোর্টে বলা হয়েছে, গত বছর মে মাসে ইউ পি এ ক্ষমতায় আসার পর মানবাধিকার সংক্রান্ত কিছু উদ্বেগজনক বিষয়ের দিকে সরকার নজর দিচ্ছে। যেমন, নতুন করে লেখা হচ্ছে স্কুলের পাঠ্যবই, যেখানে সংখ্যালঘুদের অবদানকেও মর্যাদা দেওয়া হচ্ছে। কিন্তু গুজরাট সরকার পুরনো পাঠ্যবই পরিবর্তনের কথা বলছে না। গুজরাট দাঙ্গার বিষয়টিতেও কেন্দ্রীয় সরকার নজর দিয়েছে। সুপ্রিম কোর্টও নির্দেশ দিয়েছে ২ হাজারের ওপর মামলা নতুন করে শুরু করতে হবে। কিন্তু গত বছরের শেষ দিক পর্যন্ত কোন কোন মামলা আবার শুরু হচ্ছে, তার রিপোর্ট সুপ্রিম কোর্টে জমা পড়েনি। মাত্র তিনটি দাঙ্গা সংক্রান্ত মামলার বিচার শেষ হয়েছে নিম্ন আদালতে। বেস্ট বেকারি বা বিশেষ কোনও মামলার উল্লেখ না করেও বলা হয়েছে, সাক্ষীদের হুমকি দিচ্ছেন স্থানীয় নেতারা। এ নিয়ে স্থানীয় মানবাধিকার সংগঠনগুলি উদ্ভিগ্ন। পোটা প্রত্যাহারের জন্য ইউ পি এ সরকারের প্রশংসা করা হলেও উদ্বেগ প্রকাশ করা হয়েছে সেনাবাহিনীর বিশেষ ক্ষমতা সংক্রান্ত আইন নিয়ে। সামগ্রিকভাবে ভারতের 'প্রাণবন্ত' গণতন্ত্র এবং সাংবিধানিক পরিকাঠামোর অবশ্য প্রশংসাই করা হয়েছে ২০০৪-০৫ সালের এই রিপোর্টে। পাশাপাশি পাকিস্তান প্রসঙ্গে রিপোর্টে বলা হয়েছে, এ দেশের মানবাধিকার পরিস্থিতি বড়ই করুণ। গণতন্ত্রীকরণের প্রক্রিয়াকেও আরও অনেক দূর এগিয়ে নিয়ে যেতে হবে। বিচারব্যবস্থা দুর্নীতিপ্রবণ, অদক্ষ রাজনৈতিক চাপ প্রতিহত করার ক্ষমতা নেই। রাজনৈতিক উদ্দেশ্যে বিরোধীদের মামলায় জড়ানোর প্রবণতা এখনও অব্যাহত।

AAJKAL

30 MAR 2005

F-16 sale won't hit Indo-Pak ties: US

Agencies
New Delhi, March 29

THE UNITED States on Tuesday sought to allay India's apprehensions that sale of F-16 aircraft to Pakistan would have an adverse impact on the Indo-Pak peace process and said the fighter planes offered to India would be at competitive prices and have a superior technology.

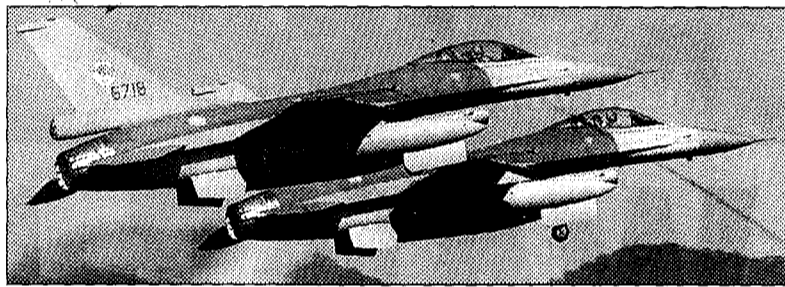
"India already has a defence relationship. This (F-16s) will be a transparent process. We are for maintaining standards. We will find out what kind of plane India wants and how we do technology transfer and also be reliable," US Ambassador to India David C. Mulford told journalists.

The US manufacturers would put before India's defence establishment competitive prices and super technology that they cannot turn down, the ambassador said.

On defence minister Pranab Mukherjee's statement that the sale of F-16s to Pakistan would have an adverse impact on the composite dialogue process between the two countries, Mulford said, "I don't see why it should.

The balance of power is not disturbed (by the US proposal). India is having fighter aeroplanes in quite a number." He also sought to underplay the timing of the decision, saying it was linked to a complex legislative process in the US Congress.

"I don't think anybody had any illusions about it. For quite a long time F-16s for Pakistan is something that was going to happen. It was known



F-16s: Flying into controversy

OPPOSITION FLAK



"Yesterday, Prime Minister Manmohan Singh said he didn't know what is being offered to India. This amounts to saying 'I don't know what is happening'

Jaswant Singh

"The F-16 issue is not a recent one. When the United States did not implement the agreement in the last 15 years, why has the current situation arisen?"

L.K. Advani



and I don't think it should come as a surprise." He also said the sale of F-16s to Pakistan, a crucial ally in the fight against terrorism, was part of Washington's commitment to advancing Pakistan's stability and democratisation process, an interest common to both US and India. "It was an important symbolic gesture."

Mulford also felt that opposition from left parties would not hamper

the US firms' bid. He dismissed a view that the F-16s sold to India and Pakistan might be used against each other, saying aeroplanes of all types can be used against each other.

"It (this view) is not material. This is not going to be a governing point in the military relations", he added. He said Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice's recent visit to India was a "landmark" in bilateral ties.

Historical policy shift to endow India with power

Pramit Pal Chaudhuri
New Delhi, March 27

WASHINGTON WENT public with a historical shift in its policy towards India on Friday. Unfortunately, this is largely being missed in India because the US announcement was coupled with the declaration of US intent to go ahead with a long-pending plan to sell F-16 fighter aircraft to Pakistan. The potent Cold War symbolism of the F-16s has obscured the post-9/11 policy shift.

The key US statement is that "its goal is to help India become a major world power in the 21st century." This new underlying rationale for US policy to India has been kicking around Washington for the past few years.

However, say diplomatic sources, its public declaration indicates the last few India-sceptical lobbies in Washington have been silenced or brought on board.

Friday's decision included a collection of policies reflecting this basic US shift:

- The prime concession is the promise to give India access to civilian nuclear technology — something Washington has denied New Delhi for some three decades.

The subtext is that the US will be looking a nuclear knowhow that goes well beyond what was being considered under the Next Steps in Strategic Partnership.

- A defence cooperation agreement that includes joint production. This is a degree of closeness only provided to close allies of the United States, like Turkey and South Korea. This is more or less unprecedented in Indo-US bilateral ties.

It will put Pakistan's "major non-NATO ally" in the shade. The immediate manifestation is the offer that India could, if it wishes, buy the F-18 fighter.

- The institutional means to convert aspects of the NSSP — including economic cooperation and the provision of space technology — into tangible projects and items. Diplomatic source point to Washington's reference "for the first time" of "satellite-launching vehicles."

- Finally, the United States in-

BJP miffed over aircraft to Pak

THE BJP on Sunday termed America's decision to sell F-16 fighter planes to Pakistan as "unfortunate".

The party categorically stated that this would pose a danger to India's security. The decision of the Bush administration would not only fuel an arms race in South Asia, but it would also have an adverse impact on the security environment of the country, the BJP national secretary and former Union minister, Bandaru Dattatreya said in Hyderabad.

Earlier, the NDA government, led by A.B. Vajpayee, had successfully pressured America to keep its decision in abeyance for three years, he added.

PTI, Hyderabad

ited Prime Minister Manmohan Singh to Washington in July and spoke of a reciprocal visit by US President George W. Bush later this year.

- And, stated in earlier US briefings, is America's decision to let India lead the way for the international community in handling countries like Nepal and Bangladesh.

But more significant was the explanation for all this largesse: That the United States wants India to become a great power and sees no threat whatsoever in India taking on such a role.

The Saturday briefing by three Bush administration officials also provides a contrasting US vision on Pakistan. Yes, a necessary ally in the war on terror, but also a problem proliferator and a nation-state that must be transformed into something more benign.

The real division in American policy is the broader visions Washington has for India and Pakistan: a global cop in training versus a rogue state in rehab.

হতাশ, বুশকে মনমোহন দিল্লিকে 'তুষ্ট করে' এফ-১৬ পাকিস্তানকে

নিজস্ব প্রতিনিধি, ওয়াশিংটন ও স্টাফ রিপোর্টার, নয়াদিল্লি, ২৬ মার্চ:
ভারতের মন রেখে পাকিস্তানকে এফ-১৬ বিক্রির পথ প্রশস্ত করল আমেরিকা।
দীর্ঘ পনেরো বছর পরে ইসলামাবাদকে এফ-১৬ যুদ্ধবিমান বিক্রির পাঁচটা হিসাবে
দিল্লিকেও এফ-১৬ এবং আরও উন্নত এফ-১৮ বিমান বিক্রির প্রস্তাব দিয়েছে বুশ
প্রশাসন। সেই সঙ্গে পরমাণু প্রযুক্তি সরবরাহ করার কথাও বলা হয়েছে। যদিও
কূটনীতিক মহলের একাংশ বলছে, ভারতের ক্ষেত্রে যুদ্ধ সরঞ্জাম বিক্রির প্রস্তাব
কার্যকর হওয়াটা সময়সাপেক্ষ। এর মাঝে অনেক রাজনৈতিক ও কূটনৈতিক
উত্থানপতন ঘটান সম্ভাবনা আছে।

প্রতিরক্ষামন্ত্রী প্রণব মুখোপাধ্যায় এ দিন কলকাতায় বলেন, “এত দিন পর্যন্ত
আমেরিকার সঙ্গে আমাদের সামরিক লেনদেন ছিল না। এখন ওরা সরঞ্জাম ও
প্রযুক্তি দিতে চাইছে। আমরা তা নেব কি না, সে নিয়ে চূড়ান্ত সিদ্ধান্ত হয়নি। দেশের
স্বার্থ এবং সেনাবাহিনীর প্রয়োজনের কথা মাথায় রেখেই সব কিছু করা হবে।”

বুশ প্রশাসনের আশ্বাস, একুশ শতকে ভারতকে বিশ্বের অন্যতম প্রধান শক্তি
হয়ে ওঠার ব্যাপারে সাহায্য করতে তারা তৈরি। তা সত্ত্বেও কাল মার্কিন
প্রেসিডেন্টের ফোন পেয়ে প্রধানমন্ত্রী মনমোহন সিংহ তাঁকে বলেন, “পাকিস্তানকে
এফ-১৬ বিক্রির সিদ্ধান্তে আমরা অত্যন্ত হতাশ।”

ইসলামাবাদকে এফ-১৬ বিক্রি নিয়ে দিল্লি যাতে আর আপত্তি না করে সে জন্য
তাদের অধিক উন্নত এফ-১৮ যুদ্ধবিমান বিক্রির প্রস্তাব দিয়েছে আমেরিকা। বস্তুত,
এই প্রথম তারা কোনও দেশকে এফ-১৮ বিক্রির প্রস্তাব দিল। শুধু তাই নয়, ভারত
নিজের দেশে এই বিমান তৈরিও করতে পারবে। এর সঙ্গে রয়েছে অসামরিক
পরমাণু শক্তি সংক্রান্ত প্রযুক্তি এবং মহাকাশ গবেষণায় সহায়তার আশ্বাস।

এ ব্যাপারে আমেরিকা কয়েক দশকের নীতি থেকে সরে আসায় দিল্লির
কূটনীতিক মহল মোটের উপরে খুশি। সব মিলিয়ে পাকিস্তানের তুলনায় ভারতের
প্রাপ্তির পাঞ্জাটা ভারী বলেই মনে করেছে তারা।

মনমোহন সরকারের মতে, পাকিস্তান এফ-১৬ যুদ্ধবিমান পেলে তাদের
সামরিক শক্তি যে অনেকটা বেড়ে যাবে, এমন নয়। কারণ এর তুলনায় অনেক
আধুনিক যুদ্ধবিমান ও সরঞ্জাম ভারতের হাতে আছে। কিন্তু গোটা বিষয়টিকে বুশ
প্রশাসনের পাকিস্তানপন্থী মনোভাব হিসাবে দেখা হচ্ছে। যদিও দিল্লির মন
ভেজাতে ‘কৌশলগত সম্পর্ক’ বৃদ্ধির কথা ভেবে রেখেছিল বুশ প্রশাসন। স্বয়ং বুশ
এবং মার্কিন বিদেশসচিব কন্ডোলিজা রাইস এই বিষয়টি গুরুত্ব দিয়ে দেখেছেন।

যাঁর সংশোধনীর জেরে এত দিন পাকিস্তানের এফ-১৬ পাওয়া আটকে ছিল
সেই প্রাক্তন সেনেটর ল্যারি প্রেসলার বলেছেন, “এটা খুবই বিপজ্জনক সিদ্ধান্ত।
আমাদের কোনও নীতির সঙ্গেই পাকিস্তান সহমত পোষণ করে না। অথচ তাদের
ভারতের সমকক্ষ করে তোলা হল।”

প্রেসলার সংশোধনী থেকে ১৮০ ডিগ্রি ঘুরে গিয়ে আমেরিকা পাকিস্তানকে
এফ-১৬ বিক্রির সিদ্ধান্ত নিলেও এটি আকস্মিক নয়। ভারতকেও যে এই ব্যাপারে
আগেই ইঙ্গিত দিয়ে রাখা হয়েছিল, তা-ও কাল মার্কিন ঘোষণার পরে বুঝিয়ে
দিয়েছেন ভারতীয় কূটনীতিকরা। মনে করা হচ্ছে, রাইসের সাম্প্রতিক ভারত
সফরের সময়েই এই ইঙ্গিত দেয় বুশ প্রশাসন।

কাল মনমোহনের সঙ্গে বুশের আলোচনার বিষয়টি সাংবাদিকদের জানান
প্রধানমন্ত্রীর দফতরের মুখপাত্র সঞ্জয় বারু। তাঁকে প্রশ্ন করা হয়, এর ফলে
ভারত-মার্কিন মধুচন্দ্রিমা কতটা থাকে থাকবে? বারু বলেন, “মনে হয় না, এর কোনও
ছাপ আমাদের সম্পর্কে পড়বে। এটা কোনও আকস্মিক ঘটনা নয়। অন্তত ১৫-১৬
বছর আগে দু’দেশের মধ্যে এই ব্যাপারে চুক্তি হয়। আমরা সকলেই তা জানতাম।”

পাকিস্তানের সঙ্গে আমেরিকার এফ-১৬ বিক্রির চুক্তিটি হয় আশির দশকে।
১১১টি বিমান কেনার জন্য চুক্তিবদ্ধ হয়ে ১৯৮৩ থেকে ১৯৮৭ সালের মধ্যে
৪০টি এফ-১৬ পায় পাকিস্তান। এর পরেই আসে প্রেসলার সংশোধনী। এফ-১৬
পেয়ে খুশি পাক তথ্যমন্ত্রী শেখ রশিদ বলেছেন, “আমরা যত খুশি বিমান কিনতে
পারি। কিন্তু তার মানে এই নয় যে আমরা যুদ্ধ ঘোষণা করতে যাচ্ছি। বরং এর
ফলে আঞ্চলিক শক্তির ভারসাম্য প্রতিষ্ঠিত হল।”

27 MAR 2005

Prime Minister conveys "disappointment" on F-16s for Pakistan

By Amit Baruah

NEW DELHI, MARCH 25. The Prime Minister, Manmohan Singh, today conveyed India's "great disappointment" at the American decision to transfer F-16 fighter aircraft to Pakistan.

An official statement said the Prime Minister expressed India's sentiments on the issue when he received a

telephone call from the U.S. President, George W. Bush.

"The Prime Minister expressed India's great disappointment at the decision which could have negative consequences for India's security environment," it said about the transfer of F-16s to Pakistan.

Mr. Bush's telephone call came in advance of a formal announcement that the U.S.

administration was to make about the transfer of the F-16s to Pakistan.

During the course of a wide-ranging conversation, Mr. Bush, among other things, spoke of the administration's decision to propose the transfer of F-16s to Pakistan.

Government sources said the telephone conversation was "warm and cordial." Other issues such as the U.S.

"willingness" to help India in high technology fields also came up for discussion.

Mr. Bush said that he looked forward to the Prime Minister's visit to Washington while Dr. Singh said he awaited Mr. Bush's visit to India.

The Prime Minister also said that he looked forward to meeting Mr. Bush during a proposed visit to Moscow in May.

THE HINDU

26 MAR 2005

Washington urges F-16s, F-18s & strategic ties with Delhi ■ F-16 sale to Pak a disappointment: PM

US push for India's ambitions

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

WASHINGTON/NEW DELHI, March 26. — The USA has decided to "upgrade and broaden" strategic partnership with India by offering to sell nuclear-capable F-16 or the more advanced F-18 warplanes and explore possibility of cooperation in early warning and missile defence systems.

The USA dismissed concerns over supply of F-16s to Pakistan and did a balancing act by holding out a slew of sops to India, including civil nuclear energy and nuclear safety cooperation, besides indicating possible co-production of certain defence items.

A US official said President Bush and Secretary of State Ms Condoleezza Rice have developed an outline for a "broader strategic partnership" with India and presented it to Dr Manmohan Singh... its goal is to help India become a major power in the 21st century. This was shortly after Mr Bush spoke to Dr Singh and conveyed the US decision to supply F-16s to Pakistan and the latter expressed "great disappointment" at the development.

Foreign ministry spokesman Mr Navtej Sarna said yesterday that the USA had conveyed to India its approval to participation of US defence firms in bidding for multi-role combat aircraft. US State Department spokesman Mr Adam Ereli indicated the possibility of manufacturing some parts of the fighters in India.

A US official said Washington would respond positively to India's request for information on its bid for people who are willing to sell India its next generation aircraft. "That's not just F-16s, it could be F-18s... The USA is ready to discuss even fundamental issues of defence transforma-

Yes, if needs met: Pranab

KOLKATA, March 26. — Delhi "would consider" buying sophisticated warplanes from US companies if they match India's requirements, defence minister Mr Pranab Mukherjee said today. He added that India was looking for several military aircraft and would prefer the one suiting the country's interest.

IAF options open

Several months ago, the Air Force short-listed the F-16 as one of the four planes it was considering for purchase and began preliminary discussions with the manufacturers, a report adds from Delhi (Details on page 6). The other short-listed aircraft are the Mirage-2000, made by the French Dassault group, the Swedish Gripen and the Russian MiG-29. — PTI & SNS

tion in areas such as command and control, early warning and missile defence."

Dismissing concerns over sale of F-16s to Pakistan, Ms Rice said there was "no contradiction" between encouraging Islamabad to advance towards democracy and seeking a military relationship with it. In Islamabad, Pakistani foreign minister Mr Khurshid Mehmood Kasuri expressed surprise over India's criticism and said the US move to sell F-16s to Pakistan would not alter the balance of power in the region.

- Better deal to sweeten bitter pill, page 6
- F-16 sale saved jobs in Bush state: Post, page 10

Cost: \$14.6 million; \$18.8 million; **Engines:** One
Length: 49 feet, 5 inches (14.8 metres); **Wingspan:** 32 feet, 8 inches (9.8 metres); **Height:** 16 feet (4.8 metres)
Maximum Takeoff: 37,500 pounds (16,875 kg). Can carry up to 22,000 pounds of weapons, electronic counter measures, sensor pods, and external fuel tanks on 11 store stations. With full internal fuel, it carries more than 15,500 pounds of external stores at its maximum takeoff gross weight.
Speed: 1,500 mph (Mach 2)
Ceiling: Above 50,000 feet (15 kilometres)
Range: Over 2,100 nautical miles (2,425 mile; 3,900 km). In an air-to-surface role, the F-16 can fly more than 500 miles (860 kilometres), deliver its weapons with superior accuracy, defend itself against enemy aircraft, and return to its starting point. An all-weather capability allows it to accurately deliver ordnance during non-visual bombing conditions.
Armament: One M-61A1 20 mm multi-barrel cannon with 500 rounds; external stations can carry up to six air-to-air missiles, conventional air-to-air and air-to-surface munitions and electronic counter measure pods.
Achievement: Flew more sorties in Operation Desert Storm than any other aircraft.

Cost: \$57 million; **Engines:** Two
Length: 60.3 feet (18.5 metres)
Wingspan: 44.9 feet (13.68 metres)
Height: 16 feet (4.87 metres)
Speed: Mach 1.8+
Ceiling: 50,000 + feet
Combat Range: 1,275 nautical miles (2,346 km)
Armament: One M61A1/A2 Vulcan 20mm cannon. External payload: AIM 9 Sidewinder, AIM-9X (projected), AIM 7 Sparrow, AIM-120 AMRAAM, Harpoon, Harm, SLAM, SLAM-ER (projected), Maverick missiles. Also, Joint Stand-Off Weapon (JSOW), Joint Direct Attack Munition (JDAM), Data Link Pod, Paveway Laser Guided Bomb and various general purpose bombs, mines and rockets.
Achievement: in use currently by US forces in Iraq, Afghanistan.
Source: Internet

INDIA A GOOD FRIEND: OFFICIAL

Modi visa denial not to hit ties: USA

Press Trust of India

WASHINGTON, March 22.— Playing down the issue of denial of visa to Gujarat chief minister Mr Narendra Modi, the USA today said it had nothing to do with the bilateral relationship, the “close partnership and good friendship” with India and was not a reflection of Washington’s views about the Gujarat government.

“It is a specific case dealing with a specific visit. It has nothing to do with bilateral relations. It has nothing to do with our close partnership and good friendship with India. It is a technical matter related to a visa application,” State Department deputy spokesman Mr Adam Ereli said here yesterday.

“The issue of this visa, frankly, I think, should be separated entirely from the broader issue of US-India relations,” he said.

On the largescale protests by members of the Indian community here, especially from Gujarat, against the decision, Mr Ereli said: “One should not make more of this decision than it is. It’s a decision based on the interpretation of law with respect to a specific request for a visa. It is not

‘Decision not based on facts’

NEW DELHI, March 22. — The NDA today condemned the US government’s decision to deny a visa to Mr Narendra Modi. It also criticised the latter’s turning down the Centre’s request for a rethink. In its meeting, the NDA passed a resolution condemning the decision. The resolution reads: It (the decision) is not based on facts but on misleading information and rumours.

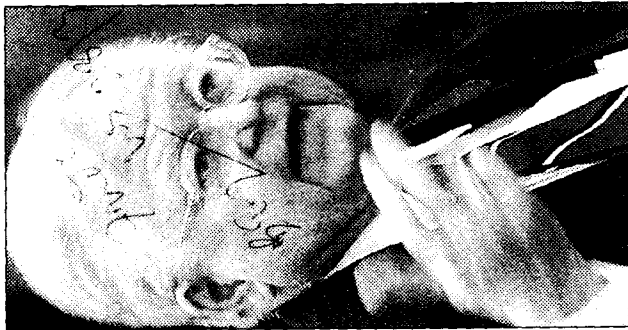
“They (the US) were referring to the NHRC report, but in reality the rights’ body has never accused Mr Modi of inciting riots. This will definitely affect Indo-US relations in future,” BJP spokesman Mr Vijay Kumar Malhotra said. — SNS

a reflection of our views of the government of Gujarat or the people of Gujarat or a reflection of our bilateral relations.”

“And I would also state the great respect the USA has for the many successful Gujaratis who live and work in the USA and the thousands who are issued visas to the country each month,” he said.

Mr Ereli said the USA is “deeply appreciative” of the BJP and the Vajpayee government’s contribution to the improvement of Indo-US ties.

India deserves permanent seat in UN, says Blackwill



Our Bangalore Bureau
22 MARCH

that isolating the nation would not be a viable option given that the jihadi elements would gain the upper hand in that country. "Jehadis have been trying to kill the President (Musharraf). Pakistan has also helped to capture and kill 300 al-Qaida elements besides helping in the hunt for Osama Bin Laden who has been hiding in the mountains bordering Pakistan and Afghanistan," he added.

Commenting on Indo-US relations, he said that there was a perceptible change with a three-man team in the US State Department having a India focus.

"My prescription is that the US adopts India as a friendly nuclear state which is promoting the civilian application of nuclear power. We must also address the issue of space collaboration," he added.

Mr Blackwill said the million-strong Indian armed force was a fighting force and had to have access to the best weaponry. US can look at licensing and co-production for India's defence forces which could do away with the possible uncertainty of supplies during times of crisis.

India, Mr Blackwill noted, had to play a more pro-active role in helping building the civil society in Iraq and preventing Iran from attaining full-nuclear fuel cycle capability.

India needs to change tactics at WTO

INDIA needs to re-orient its thinking while negotiating with the World Trade Organisation (WTO), according to Robert Blackwill, the former US ambassador to India who was addressing members of the Confederation of Indian Industry (CII).

"India is at the cross-roads though you have to change your thinking. Do you want to continue being categorised as a member of the third world or G-20 member or as a nation which is living at the cutting edge of technology? I think you have to choose the second," he said.

In case of issues like outsourcing, the incumbent Bush government was not opposed to the concept though India needed to also show willingness to liberalise and permit more imports from nations like the US. Such a move would also enable to convince the political establishment that more jobs would be created in the US.

While agreeing that developed nations would need to have a re-look on agricultural subsidies, Mr Blackwill said that customers would stand to benefit from lowering of tariffs. He said that India needed to abandon plans for the proposed oil pipeline from Iran.

Mr Blackwill who now heads a lobbying firm in the US, jocularly said, "I had for a long time held the view that the US was the worst country to explain itself to the world. But I find that India comes a close second to it."

He said that India needed to abandon plans for the proposed oil pipeline from Iran. "Iran is a bad actor which has been clandestinely promoting its nuclear programme. It has sheltered a dozen members of the al-Qaida leadership council. It is inappropriate to reward it with receipts of gas exports. It is a question of spending \$5 billion, that too in a dangerous neighbourhood," he added. Mr Blackwill who was the US ambassador to India between 2001-03 said that the US administration under President Bush had changed its outlook towards India.

INDIA has the best claim among 115 nations for a place as the permanent member of the UN Security Council, says former US ambassador to India Robert Blackwill.

Responding to queries from CII members, he said that though India's claim was strong, there was a fundamental worry that expanding the UN Security Council would not help as the council may not work as well and reforming the council also meant changing a 50-year old practice (of having only five permanent members).

On Pakistan, Mr Blackwill said

ভিসা দেওয়া হবে না, পুরনো সিদ্ধান্তেই অনড় আমেরিকা

স্টাফ রিপোর্টার, নয়াদিল্লি,
২১ মার্চ: ভারতের অনুরোধে
'পুনর্বিবেচনা'র পরেও নরেন্দ্র মোদীকে
ভিসা না-দেওয়ার সিদ্ধান্তই বহাল
রাখল আমেরিকা। ভারতে নিযুক্ত
মার্কিন রাষ্ট্রদূত ডেভিড মালফোর্ডের
বক্তব্য, এই সিদ্ধান্ত "২০০২-এর
ফেব্রুয়ারি থেকে মে মাসের মধ্যবর্তী
সময়ে গুজরাতের ঘটনাবলির ভিত্তিতে
নেওয়া হয়েছে। সেই সময় রাজ্যের
সরকারি সংস্থাগুলির ক্রিয়াকলাপের
জন্য সরকারের প্রধান হিসাবে তিনিই
দায়ী।" আমেরিকার সিদ্ধান্তে হতাশা
জানিয়েছে নয়াদিল্লি।

গুজরাত দাঙ্গায় মোদীর 'বিতর্কিত'
ভূমিকার জন্যই যে তাঁকে ভিসা দেওয়া
হচ্ছে না, তা আজ স্পষ্ট করে দিয়েছে
ওয়াশিংটন। রাষ্ট্রদূত মালফোর্ড জানান,
গুজরাতের দাঙ্গা সম্পর্কে মার্কিন
সরকারে দৃষ্টিভঙ্গি তুলে ধরা হয়েছে
তাঁদের মানবাধিকার সম্পর্কিত বার্ষিক
সমীক্ষা রিপোর্ট ও আন্তর্জাতিক ধর্মীয়
স্বাধীনতা রিপোর্টে। তাঁর বক্তব্য, "এই
দু'টি রিপোর্টেই ২০০২-এর ফেব্রুয়ারি
থেকে মে পর্যন্ত গুজরাতের হিংসার
কথা নথিবদ্ধ রয়েছে এবং তাতে
ভারতীয় মানবাধিকার কমিশনের

রিপোর্টেরও উল্লেখ রয়েছে।" ওই
সময় গুজরাতে মানুষের জীবন,
স্বাধীনতা, সাম্য ও মর্যাদার উপরে
আক্রমণ নিয়ন্ত্রণ করতে গুজরাত
সরকার সার্বিক ভাবে ব্যর্থ হয়েছিল
বলে ভারতীয় মানবাধিকার কমিশনের
রিপোর্টে যে মন্তব্য করা হয়েছিল, তা-
ও মালফোর্ড উল্লেখ করেছেন।

মালফোর্ডের বক্তব্য, ভিসা না-
দেওয়ার এই সিদ্ধান্ত "কেবল মাত্র
মোদীর ক্ষেত্রেই প্রযোজ্য, বিজেপি বা
গুজরাতীদের বিরুদ্ধে নয়।" তিনি
জানিয়েছেন, বহু সফল গুজরাতি
আমেরিকায় সম্মানের সঙ্গে বসবাস
করছেন। প্রতি মাসেই অসংখ্য
গুজরাতিকে মার্কিন ভিসা দেওয়া হয়।
তা ছাড়া, মোদীকে ভিসা না-দেওয়ার
সিদ্ধান্তে ভারত-মার্কিন দ্বিপাক্ষিক
সম্পর্কে প্রভাব পড়বে না বলেও
মালফোর্ড মন্তব্য করেছেন।

মার্কিন সিদ্ধান্তে হতাশা জানিয়ে
বিদেশ মন্ত্রকের মুখপাত্র নভতেজ
সারনা বলেছেন, "ভিসা দেওয়া না-
দেওয়ার বিষয়টি সংশ্লিষ্ট দেশের
সার্বভৌম অধিকারের মধ্যে পড়ে
ঠিকই, কিন্তু ভারত ও আমেরিকা
গণতান্ত্রিক দেশ হিসাবে যে সব লক্ষ্য

অর্জনের চেষ্টা করে, তার সঙ্গে মার্কিন
সরকারের এই সিদ্ধান্তের সঙ্গতি নেই।"
সারনার বক্তব্য, "গণতান্ত্রিক পদ্ধতিতে
নির্বাচিত গুজরাতের মুখ্যমন্ত্রীর
সাংবিধানিক মর্যাদা এই সিদ্ধান্তে ক্ষুণ্ণ
হয়েছে।" এই সিদ্ধান্ত 'পক্ষপাতদুষ্ট'
বলেই মনে করছে বিদেশমন্ত্রক।

প্রত্যাশিত ভাবেই মার্কিন সিদ্ধান্তে
ক্ষুব্ধ বিজেপি। দলের মুখপাত্র মুখতার
আকাস নকভি বলেছেন, "এই সিদ্ধান্ত
দুর্ভাগ্যজনক।" তাঁর বক্তব্য, এই
ধরনের একগুঁয়েমি দু'দেশের বন্ধুত্বপূর্ণ
সম্পর্কের পক্ষে ক্ষতিকর। তাঁর দাবি,
বাক স্বাধীনতা ও ধর্মীয় স্বাধীনতা নিয়ে
ভারতের ভূমিকা গোটা পৃথিবী জানে।
কাজেই এ নিয়ে মার্কিন শংসাপত্রের
প্রয়োজন ভারতের নেই। কংগ্রেসের
মুখপাত্র আনন্দ শর্মা জানান, মোদীর
ক্ষেত্রে কেন্দ্র যা বলেছে, সেটা শুধু তাঁর
ভিসা প্রত্যাখ্যাত হওয়ার প্রেক্ষিতেই।
"ওই নির্দিষ্ট বিষয়টি ছাড়া আর কোনও
ক্ষেত্রে মোদী সম্পর্কে আমাদের
মনোভাবে কোথাও কোনও পরিবর্তন
হয়নি," জানিয়েছেন শর্মা। তবে,
প্রধানমন্ত্রী কেন এ ভাবে মোদীর পাশে
দাঁড়িয়েছেন, তা ব্যাখ্যা করতে গিয়ে
তিনি আজ অস্বস্তিতে পড়েছেন।

U.S. group welcomes withdrawal of invite to Modi

By Sridhar Krishnaswami

WASHINGTON, MARCH 20. The Federation of Indian-American Christian Organisations (FIACONA) has welcomed the Asian American Hotel Owners Association's (AAHOA) decision to withdraw the invitation to the Chief Minister of Gujarat, Narendra Modi.

"AAHOA could have avoided the discomfort and unnecessary controversy had it made the same decision four weeks ago when we called on them to express our concern over Modi's invitation," the president of FIACONA, Rev Bernard Malik, said in a statement adding that

his organisation was "snubbed" at the time and told that the invitation was "none of its business."

The FIACONA said it was "sad to hear" the Indian leaders, including the Ministers of the UPA Government calling the episode "an insult" to the nation.

"What happened in Gujarat from 1998 until now is the real insult to the nation and holding the perpetrators of that violence accountable for their action is not what we call an insult to the nation," said John Prabhudoss, chair of the governmental affairs committee of FIACONA.

"Centre must put pressure on U.S."

By Our Special Correspondent

HYDERABAD, MARCH 20. The former BJP president, M. Venkaiah Naidu, has urged the Central Government to put pressure on the United States to reconsider the denial of a diplomatic visa to the Gujarat Chief Minister, Narendra Modi.

At a press conference here today, he wanted the Centre to do "whatever is required to make the U.S. change its stand." The U.S. should be told that the rights of Indian citizens were "the problem of the Indian Government" and that it would not be allowed to "interfere in the country's internal affairs."

It was a question of "mustering political will" to confront the U.S. and the Prime Minister, Manmohan Singh, should view the issue in a non-political manner.

The U.S. action was an "insult

to 100-crore Indians," and it had "ridiculed India's sovereignty, democracy and civilisation."

He criticised the U.S. for remaining silent on the "persecution of minorities in Pakistan and Bangladesh."

Presiding Officers' meet

Referring to the Presiding Officers' conference convened by the Lok Sabha Speaker, Somnath Chatterjee, to discuss the relationship between the judiciary and the legislature, he said that he had chosen the "wrong time" to discuss the issue in the backdrop of the Jharkhand developments.

The decision of the BJP-ruled Chief Ministers not to implement Value-Added Tax was not sudden or politically motivated. Mr. Naidu wanted the Centre to evolve a consensus among all the States.

9-2-05
DENIAL OF VISA TO MODI

Reconsider decision, Manmohan tells U.S.

By Gargi Parsai

NEW DELHI, MARCH 19. Political parties across the spectrum sunk their differences in the Rajya Sabha today to unanimously condemn the United States action of denying a visa to "a constitutionally elected authority" of the country — the Gujarat Chief Minister, Narendra Modi.

Sharing the concern of the members, the Prime Minister, Manmohan Singh, said the Government had taken a principled stand in the matter and had asked Washington to reconsider its decision.

"Not a matter of partisan politics"

The Prime Minister said: "This is not a matter of partisan politics but rather a matter of concern over a point of principle. The American Government has been clearly informed that while we respect their sovereign right to grant or refuse visa to any person, we do not believe that it is appropriate to use allegations or anything less than due process to question a constitutional authority in India."

Replying to the matter raised by the Leader of the Opposition in the Rajya Sabha, Jaswant Singh, the Prime Minister said the U.S. had been told of India's concern. "Our Government has clearly pointed out our very deep concern and regret over the U.S. decision to deny a visa to a constitutionally-elected Chief Minister of a State of our Union. We have observed that this uncalled for decision betrays a lack of sensitivity and due courtesy to an elected authority."

Dr. Singh said that when he learnt of the U.S. decision, he immediately instructed the External Affairs Minister to call the U.S. Ambassador and explain India's concern and regret. The Foreign Secretary [Shyam Saran] on Friday summoned the Deputy Chief of the U.S. Mission in New Delhi [Bob Lake] and gave a "strong demarche" on the U.S. decision. "The Government's prompt and firm response clearly shows our principled stand in this matter," he said to the thumping of desks by the members.

Jaswant praises Government stand

Earlier raising the issue, Mr. Jaswant Singh voiced his con-

cern at the development. He welcomed the United Progressive Alliance Government's stand and acknowledged the fact that the External Affairs Ministry had stood boldly for India's prestige.

He said it should be questioned why a new religious freedom statute in the U.S. had been invoked for the first time in relation to India. He recalled that the U.S. had extended the "major non-NATO ally" status to Pakistan after the then U.S. Secretary of State, Colin Powell, visited New Delhi. Now the denial of visa to Mr. Modi had come soon after the visit of the U.S. Secretary of State, Condoleezza Rice, to India, embarrassing the Government of the day. "Are these coincidences or does the U.S. want to insult us?"

In a note of "caution" to the U.S., Mr. Jaswant Singh said: "We [in India] may have our differences, disputes and contentions. We will resolve them ourselves. We do not require international

interference in this regard. We categorically reject anybody arrogating to themselves the authority to judge others on human rights, especially when America's own record on human rights is not that exemplary."

A lesson for BJP: CPI(M)

Warning against the "ominous signals" from this development, the CPI(M) member, Nilotpal Basu, agreed with Mr. Jaswant Singh that the U.S. was arrogating to itself the role of an "international policeman." He, however, pointed out that the erstwhile NDA regime should have acted when the then Defence Minister, George Fernandes, was strip-searched at a U.S. airport after the 9/11 events. "We may have differences but these are international issues. This should be a lesson for certain leaders that there are international obligations in human rights."

U.S. may not relent: Page 8

Decision was based on NHRC's findings: U.S.

By Sridhar Krishnaswami

WASHINGTON, MARCH 19. The United States says the decision to deny a diplomatic visa to the Gujarat Chief Minister, Narendra Modi, was based not on any determination made by Washington but on the findings of the National Human Rights Commission of India.

The Deputy Spokesman of the U.S. State Department, Adam Ereli, said that it was incorrect to say that the Bush administration had determined that Mr. Modi was behind the Gujarat riots of 2002. "The fact of the matter is that it was the Indians who investigated the riots and it was the Indian Government who determined that State institutions failed to act in a way that would prevent violence and would prevent religious persecution."

"So this is not a matter of the United States saying something happened or something didn't happen. It is a matter of the United States responding to a finding by the Indian National Human Rights Commission pointing to comprehensive failure on the part of the State Government of Gujarat to control persistent vio-

lations of rights," the spokesman said. Mr. Ereli said the U.S. administration officials had made a determination on two things based on the NHRC findings. "Number one, we determined that [on] an application for a diplomatic visa to come to the United States that the terms for issuing that visa under U.S. law had not been met, and so we decided not to issue the visa based on U.S. law and based on findings of fact by the Indian National Commission," Mr. Ereli said.

"And number two, we determined that an existing visa that Mr. Modi had — an existing tourist/business visa — should be revoked under Section 212 (a)(2)(G) of the Immigration and Nationality Act, which says that any foreign government official who is responsible for or directly carried out at any time particular severe violations of religious freedom should not be eligible for a visa," he said.

Asked why was the tourist/business visa that now stood cancelled issued in the first place, Mr. Ereli said: "The visa was given before the events [Gujarat riots] of 2002 is my understanding."

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U.S. denies entry to Modi

● No diplomatic visa; business / tourist visa cancelled

By Amit Baruah

NEW DELHI, MARCH 18. The Gujarat Chief Minister, Narendra Modi, was today denied a diplomatic visa to enter the United States and his business/tourist visa was cancelled by the U.S. Embassy here. The embassy described Mr. Modi as a foreign government official responsible for, or directly carried out, severe violations of religious freedom.

In a swift response to this unprecedented development, the Government of India expressed "deep concern and regret" that the U.S. Embassy had denied a visa to the Gujarat Chief Minister for attending an event organised by the Asian-American Hotel Owners' Association.

Earlier in the day, a U.S. Embassy spokesman said: "We can confirm that Chief Minister of Gujarat State Narendra Modi applied for but was denied the diplomatic visa under Section 214 (b) of the Immigration and Nationality Act because he was not coming for the purpose that qualified for diplomatic visa."

'Severe violation of religious freedom'

"His tourist/business visa was revoked under Section 212(a)(2)(G) of the Act which makes any government official who was responsible for or directly carried out at any time, particularly severe violations of religious freedom, ineligible for visa," the spokesman said.

Centre lodges protest

Expressing displeasure at the development, the Foreign Secretary, Shyam Saran, "called" the Charge d'Affaires of the U.S. Embassy, Bob Blake, to South Block and lodged a "strong protest" against the denial of the visa to Mr. Modi.

Requesting an "urgent reconsideration" of the American decision, an official statement said the action was "uncalled for" and displayed a lack of

courtesy and sensitivity towards a "constitutionally-elected" Chief Minister of a State of India.

The Government is directly concerned with the visa denial since a *note verbale* (official government-to-government request) had been sent by the External Affairs Ministry to the U.S. Embassy seeking a visa for Mr. Modi on February 28. Ministry officials said after the meeting between Mr. Saran and Mr. Blake that the U.S. official had promised to convey the sentiments to his Government.

According to U.S. Embassy sources, Mr. Modi is seen as responsible for the performance of State institutions during the killings and violence of February, 2002.

The Gujarat Government was

responsible for the events that had taken place at the time, they said. The denial of the visa was not aimed at India, but at an individual who was responsible for the performance of State institutions.

The decision not to grant a diplomatic visa to Mr. Modi and to revoke his existing business / tourist visa was taken after consultations between the U.S. State Department and the U.S. Embassy in India.

Apart from the U.S. Commission on International Religious Freedom, an independent entity set up under U.S. law had expressed "serious concern" about the then-impending visit of Mr. Modi. Several America-based activist groups, too, had opposed his visit.

More reports on Page 11

"Insult to India"

By Manas Dasgupta

GANDHINAGAR, MARCH 18. The Gujarat Chief Minister, Narendra Modi, has described the denial of a visa by the United States to him as "an insult to the Constitution of India and its people and [a] threat to [the] sovereignty and democratic traditions of the country."

He urged the Central Government to challenge the decision rising above partisan politics.

Talking to journalists after the U.S. Embassy announced its decision to deny him the visa for his proposed visit to that country from tomorrow, Mr. Modi said the U.S. refusal after the Centre and the Prime Minister's Office cleared his trip, was "against all rules and norms and [the] theory of natural justice." He described as "baseless" the ground of denial of religious freedom in Gujarat and said the U.S. Government had no justification taking such a decision when no court of law

in the country or elsewhere in the world had indicted him for the communal riots so far.

The decision was aimed at "browbeating India into submission to its [U.S.] whimsical way of interpreting democracy," he said. The Leader of the Opposition in the Gujarat Assembly, Arjun Mothvadia, though politically opposed to Mr. Modi, also felt that the denial of visa after due clearance by the Centre was unjustified.

But he disagreed with Mr. Modi linking the denial of visa with the Constitution and its sovereignty and democracy and said that it was improper to drag the "five crore people of Gujarat" for his own "omissions and commissions."

But he felt that the visa controversy would politically help Mr. Modi to tide over the dis-sidence in the BJP Legislature Party. Mr. Modi said he was the Chief Minister of a democratically-elected Government under the Constitution.

THURSDAY 17 MARCH 2005

Shed the Pakistan syndrome For High-Tech US Arms

US SECRETARY of state Condoleezza Rice is not here to discuss US protectionism on business process outsourcing. Yet India's aim of creating a new strategic relationship with the US must include this explicit economic content. For decades, India has shunned US military equipment on the ground that US Congress could cancel deals made with the US administration. That made the US an unreliable supplier during the Cold War, when India sided with the USSR. This logic has lost force in a post-Cold War era. Moscow, India's traditional military supplier, is fast losing its cutting edge in defence technology, and will soon cease to be a top-ranking supplier. Buying arms from the US will have major economic as well as defence implications. India currently runs a huge trade surplus with the US, and this makes it vulnerable to the US protectionist lobbies. The more India buys from the US, the better can India induce the US administration to stand up to protectionism on BPO and software from India. The US no longer produces low- and medium-tech equipment, it manufactures only high-tech equipment. Buying the US military equipment is one of the very few things India can do to reduce its trade surplus with the US. This does not mean kowtowing to the US foreign policy. Parliament passed an all-party resolution deploring the US invasion of Iraq. Having established its right to criticise, India can forge a new strategic relationship with the US without fear of being dominated.

Having long told the US not to club India and Pakistan together in its foreign policy, India itself needs to shed the Pakistan syndrome. From the 1980s, India has opposed the sale of F-16 fighters to Pakistan on the ground that these could drop nuclear bombs on India. The argument has been made obsolete with both countries developing missiles, which in a war will deliver nuclear bombs rather than planes (which are much easier to shoot down). Besides, nuclear deterrence makes a conventional Indo-Pak war very unlikely (Kargil was an inflated border incident, not a conventional war). India needs to present itself to the US as an emerging economic superpower competing with China, not a regional power competing with Pakistan. That should be the basis of a new US-India relationship.

On air

GETTING BETTER

The visit of the American secretary of state, Ms Condoleezza Rice, to India has gone along predicted lines. As expected, Washington expressed reservations about the proposed Iran-Pakistan-India pipeline because of its concerns about the political regime in Tehran. New Delhi is concerned about the potential American sale of F-16 aircraft to Pakistan. Despite these differences, India's relationship with Washington is probably on firmer ground today than it has been in many decades. It is unlikely, therefore, that New Delhi and Washington will allow these differing perceptions about Islamabad or Tehran significantly impact on their relationship. It would have been extraordinary if the United States of America had not reacted to India's growing ties with Iran, especially the proposed pipeline. Washington is convinced that Tehran has nuclear ambitions and is moving towards acquiring nuclear weapons. New Delhi has traditionally had a strong relationship with Iran. Much will depend on events in the next few months and the growing possibility of a confrontation between Tehran and Washington. However, New Delhi can potentially still play the role of a bridge between US and Iran given its strong relationship with both countries.

Differences over Pakistan were predictable. Washington clearly believes that it has an ally in Mr Pervez Musharraf and is seeking to strengthen his regime. India is deeply concerned about this arms transfer. The challenge for New Delhi and Washington is not just to develop a relationship independent of Pakistan, but to work together to ensure that Islamabad becomes a force of stability in the region rather than a cause of violence and extremism. The fact remains that India's relations with the US have grown tremendously in virtually every field in the last few years. Cold War estrangement has changed to engagement of a high order including in the military field, once a taboo. In addition, Washington and Delhi are quietly cooperating on various aspects of national missile defence, sharing information on terrorists and terrorist organizations and slowly developing a common approach to deal with the proliferation of the weapons of mass destruction.

Similarly, the "Next Steps in the Strategic Partnership" between India and the US has generated possibilities about cooperation in three specific areas: civilian nuclear activities, civilian space programmes, and high-technology trade. There is a commitment to "expanded engagement on nuclear regulatory and safety issues", ways to cooperate in peaceful uses of space technology, and efforts to create the environment for "high technology commerce". Despite many irritants, not all trivial, India's relationship with the US seems to be more secure than it has been in the last 50 years. There is greater connectivity at the levels of the political leadership and senior officials, and the bandwidth has also greatly expanded.

গ্যাস প্রকল্প, এফ-১৬ নিয়ে ভারত-মার্কিন মত ভিন্নই

স্টাফ রিপোর্টার, নয়াদিল্লি, ১৬ মার্চ: ইরান থেকে পাইপলাইনে গ্যাস আনার প্রকল্প থেকে সারে আসতে ভারতের উপরে চাপ বাড়ান আমেরিকা। আর পাকিস্তানকে এফ-১৬ যুদ্ধ বিমান বিক্রির ব্যাপারে আমেরিকাকে আপত্তির কথা জানিয়ে দিল ভারত। মার্কিন বিদেশসচিব কন্ডোলিজা রাইসের ভারত সফরে আজকের দিনটা কাটল এই কূটনৈতিক টানাপোড়েনে।

বিদেশমন্ত্রী নটবর সিংহের সঙ্গে বৈঠকের পরে আজ কন্ডোলিজা রাইস বলেছেন, “ইরান নিয়ে আমাদের ধারণা খুব ভাল করেই সবাই জেনে গিয়েছে। ভারত ও ইরানের মধ্যে গ্যাস পাইপ লাইন নিয়ে আমাদের উদ্বেগের ব্যাপারেও ভারত সরকার খুব ভাল ভাবেই জানে।” এই প্রকল্পটি নিয়ে আমেরিকা কতটা উদ্বিগ্ন, তা স্পষ্ট করে দেওয়াও রাইসের সফরের অন্যতম উদ্দেশ্য ছিল। সেটাই এখন পরিষ্কার হয়ে গিয়েছে।

গ্যাস পাইপলাইন ছাড়াও কয়েকটি বিষয়ে রাইসের সঙ্গে প্রধানমন্ত্রী মনমোহন সিংহ, বিদেশমন্ত্রী নটবর সিংহ, ইউপিএ চেয়ারপার্সন সনিয়া গান্ধী এবং বিরোধী নেতা লালকৃষ্ণ

আডবালীর কথা হয়েছে। মনমোহনকে প্রেসিডেন্ট বৃশের তরফ থেকে আমেরিকায় যাওয়ার আমন্ত্রণ জানান রাইস। জুলাইয়ে মার্কিন সফরে যেতে পারেন মনমোহন সিংহ।

ইরান থেকে গ্যাস নেওয়ার ব্যাপারে ওয়াশিংটন আগেই প্রকাশ্যে আপত্তি জানিয়েছে। মার্কিন বক্তব্য, ইরাকের মতো ইরানও বিপজ্জনক পাথে

তাদের সঙ্গে কোনও গুরুত্বপূর্ণ কৌশলগত

কোনও দেশেরই উচিত নয়। আজ রাইস তাঁর বক্তব্য জানানোর পরে নটবর বলেছেন, “ইরানের সঙ্গে আমাদের ঐতিহ্যগত ভাবে ভাল সম্পর্ক। আমরা আশা করি, ইরান সমস্ত দাবি মেটাতে সক্ষম হবে।” আন্তর্জাতিক মহলে ইরানের উপরে চাপ তৈরি করেছে পরমাণু নিরস্ত্রীকরণের জন্য।

অন্য দিকে রাইসের মন্তব্যের প্রেক্ষিতে প্রতিরক্ষামন্ত্রী প্রণব মুখোপাধ্যায় বলেন, “উনি যা বলেছেন, সেটা সম্পূর্ণ ওদের ব্যাপার।” তাৎপর্য পূর্ণ ঘটনা হল, পেন্টাগলিয়ামন্ত্রী

মণিশঙ্কর আইয়ার আজই বলেছেন, “দুই ন্যা-পোষালো আমাদের এই প্রকল্প থেকে সরে আসতে হবে।” দীর্ঘদিন ধরে অগ্রহী থাকার পরে এখন ‘দুই ন্যা-পোষালো’র কথা উঠেছে মার্কিন চাপের জন্যই, এমন কথা অবশ্য ভারতীয় কূটনীতিকরা

করছেন না। ভারতও আজ আমেরিকার উপরে পাকিস্তানকে বিক্রি না-করার দাবি নিয়ে।

রাইসের সঙ্গে বৈঠক করে বেরিয়ে নটবর এফ-১৬ যুদ্ধবিমানের

প্রসঙ্গ উল্লেখ করে বলেন, “প্রতিরক্ষা ক্ষেত্রে কিছু বিষয়ে আমাদের উদ্বেগ জানিয়েছি। এর ফলে কিছু জটিলতা তৈরি হতে পারে।” রাইস জানিয়েছেন, ইসলামাবাদের সঙ্গে এখনই এ রকম কোনও চুক্তি হয়নি। নটবরের কথায়, “পাকিস্তান-সহ দক্ষিণ এশিয়া সফরের সময়ে এই ধরনের কোনও যোগাযোগ হলে মনে হয় না।”

তবে মার্কিন বিদেশসচিব যে তাঁর সব অনুরোধ মেনে নেননি, সে কথাও গোপন রাখেননি

নটবর। বলেছেন, “দুইটি বিষয়ে অবশ্য আমরা একমত হইনি। তবে আমাদের সম্পর্ক এখন এমন জায়গায় পৌঁছেছে, যে সমস্ত বিষয় নিয়েই খোলাখোলা আলোচনা করা সম্ভব। যেমন, এফ-১৬। এই বিষয়ে আমাদের মত সর্বজননৈতিক।”

এই কূটনৈতিক চাপান-উতোরের মধ্যে ভেটো ক্ষমতা-সহ রাষ্ট্রপুঞ্জের নিরাপত্তা পরিষদে স্থায়ী সদস্যদের জন্য দিল্লি আজ দফায় দফায় দরবার করে গিয়েছে। এ ব্যাপারে অবশ্য রাইসের কাছ থেকে কোনও কথাই আদায় করা যায়নি।

রাইস পাকিস্তানে। ইসলামাবাদ থেকে পি টি আইয়ের খবর, ভারতের যতই আপত্তি থাকুক, এফ-১৬ পেতে আজ কন্ডোলিজা রাইসের উপরে যথেষ্টই চাপ সৃষ্টি করেছে পাকিস্তান। রাইস এ দিন সন্ধ্যায় ইসলামাবাদে পৌঁছান। সেখানে তাঁর সঙ্গে কথা হয় মুশারফ এবং পাক প্রধানমন্ত্রী শওকত আজিজের। শওকত রাইসকে স্পষ্টই জানিয়েছেন, ভারতের প্রতিরক্ষার সঙ্গে পাল্লা দিতে এফ-১৬ তাঁদের লাগবেই। পাশাপাশি, কাশ্মীর ইস্যুতেও আবার আমেরিকাকে মধ্যস্থতার অনুরোধ জানিয়েছে পাকিস্তান।

কন্ডোলিজার সফর

ইরান, এফ-১৬: রাইসের সফরে বেসুরো বাজল

দিল্লি, ১৬ মার্চ (পি টি আই)— পাকিস্তানকে এফ-১৬ যুদ্ধবিমান দেওয়ার প্রস্তাবে মার্কিন বিদেশ সচিব কন্ডোলিজা রাইসের কাছে আজ তীব্র অভিযোগ জানাল ভারত। ১৯৯০ সাল থেকে মার্কিন কংগ্রেস যে সিদ্ধান্তকে ঠেকিয়ে রেখেছে, বৃশ প্রশাসন তা কার্যকর করলে ভারতীয় উপমহাদেশে দারুণ অস্থিরতা দেখা দেবে। ভারত-পাক শান্তি উদ্যোগও ব্যাহত হবে। কেন্দ্রীয় বিদেশমন্ত্রী নটবর সিং দ্বর্থাহীন ভাষায় এই কথা জানিয়ে দিয়েছেন। পাশাপাশি বলেছেন, আমেরিকার আপত্তি সত্ত্বেও ইরান থেকে গ্যাস পাইপলাইন আনার সিদ্ধান্ত বাতিলের প্রশ্ন নেই। ইরানের সঙ্গে ভারতের সম্পর্ক খুবই ভাল। তা ছাড়া গ্যাস পাইপলাইন থেকে ভারত দারুণভাবে উপকৃত হবে। অতএব কোনও চাপের কাছে নতিস্বীকারের প্রশ্ন নেই। ৪৫ মিনিট কথাবার্তার পর যৌথ সাংবাদিক বৈঠক করেন রাইস এবং নটবর। রাইস বলেন, মুশারফকে এফ-১৬ দেওয়ার প্রক্ষেপ এখনও চূড়ান্ত সিদ্ধান্ত হয়নি। ভারতের সঙ্গেও প্রতিরক্ষা সহযোগিতা বাড়াতে চায় আমেরিকা। প্রতিরক্ষায় উচ্চ প্রযুক্তির ব্যবহার নিয়ে নটবরের সঙ্গে কথা হয়েছে তাঁর। ভারতের নিরাপত্তা পরিষদের স্থায়ী সদস্য হওয়ার দাবিতে আমেরিকা গোড়া থেকেই বিরোধিতা করছে। রাইস কোনও স্পষ্ট মন্তব্য না করলেও আজ কিছুটা নমনীয় মনোভাব দেখিয়েছেন। তাঁর ইঙ্গিত, নতুন আন্তর্জাতিক পরিস্থিতিতে রাষ্ট্রপুঞ্জের কাঠামো নিয়ে মার্কিন সরকারকে ভাবতে হবে। রাষ্ট্রপুঞ্জের সংস্কার নিয়ে চিন্তাভাবনা ইতিমধ্যেই শুরু হয়েছে। নটবর তার আগে জানান, ১৯৪৫ সালে গড়ে তোলা রাষ্ট্রপুঞ্জ ও নিরাপত্তা পরিষদের কাঠামো ২০০৫ সালে অচল। বিশ্বের যে কোনও গুরুত্বপূর্ণ ইস্যুতে ভারতের মতামত থাকা দরকার। স্থায়ী সদস্যের আসন ছাড়া তা সম্ভব নয়। কলিন পাওয়েলের পর মার্কিন বিদেশ সচিব হয়ে কন্ডোলিজা রাইসের এটাই প্রথম ভারত সফর। এবার ইসলামাবাদে যাবেন তিনি। প্রধানমন্ত্রী মনমোহন, ইউ পি এ জোটের নেত্রী সোনিয়া এবং বিরোধী দলনেতা আদবানির সঙ্গে আজ বৈঠক করেছেন তিনি।

কণিষ্ক মামলা : মুক্ত অনাবাসী ২ ভারতীয়

ভ্যাঙ্কভার (কানাডা), ১৬ মার্চ (এ এফ পি)— ১৯৮৫ সালের ২৩ জুন আকাশে এয়ার ইন্ডিয়ার বিমান 'কণিষ্ক' বিস্ফোরণের ঘটনায় ৩৩১ জন প্রাণ হারান। ঘটনার সঙ্গে জড়িত থাকার অভিযোগে মূল অভিযুক্ত রিপুদমন সিং মালিক (৫৮) এবং আজাইব সিং বাগড়ি (৫৫)-কে ২০০০ সালে গ্রেপ্তার করেছিল কানাডার পুলিশ। এদিন মামলার বিচারের রায়ে তাঁদের বেকসুর খালাস করে দিল কানাডার আদালত। কানাডা থেকে বিমানটি ভারতে আসছিল। আয়ারল্যান্ডের উপকূলে আটলান্টিক মহাসাগরে ভেঙে পড়ে। দীর্ঘদিন চলেছে মামলার প্রমাণ সংগ্রহের কাজ। ইতিমধ্যে এই ঘটনার দুই প্রধান সাক্ষী খুন হন। এই সংগ্রহের মূল মস্তিষ্ক বলে অভিযুক্ত তরবিন্দর সিং পরমা ভারতে পুলিশের সঙ্গে গুলি বিনিময়ে ১৯৯২ সালে মারা যায়। অনাবাসী ভারতীয় ব্যবসায়ী রিপুদমনের বিরুদ্ধে ষড়যন্ত্রের অভিযোগ তুলেছিল সে দেশের গোয়েন্দারা। একই অভিযোগ ছিল আজাইব সিং বাগড়ির বিরুদ্ধেও। এদিন বিচারপতি ইয়ান ক্রুস যোশেফসন স্পষ্ট জানিয়ে দিলেন, তাঁদের বিরুদ্ধে এমন কোনও প্রমাণই নেই যাতে তাঁদের খুনি এবং ষড়যন্ত্রী হিসেবে দোষী দেওয়া যায়।

Rice brings reality check on India-U.S. ties

By Siddharth Varadarajan

NEW DELHI, MARCH 16. In publicly expressing her concerns about the Iran-India gas pipeline during her press conference here on Wednesday, the visiting United States Secretary of State, Condoleezza Rice, made it clear that India's energy security and the Indo-U.S. "strategic partnership" will matter less to Washington than its policy of isolating and undermining the Islamic Republic of Iran.

Dr. Rice also dropped a broad hint that the Indian aspiration for a greater role in international affairs would be better served not through reform of the United Nations — and a permanent seat in the Security Council — but through ad hoc U.S.-led multilateral initiatives such as the controversial and short-lived "core group" set up by Washington in the wake of last year's tsunami.

Two key issues

For the first time since India and the U.S. inaugurated their "strategic partnership," then, it

is evident that on the two key issues animating policymakers here — energy security and a greater role for India in a multipolar world — Washington is keen on defining the rules and setting the limits and that there is little congruence of interest.

While both India and the U.S. agree that today's world is no longer the world of 1945, the change that each country perceives is radically different. New Delhi sees the rise of a number of new powers, itself included, who need to be accommodated in a formal power structure.

Washington, however, sees only the rise of its own strength, untrammelled by the presence of any rival power. India wants the U.N. Security Council to reflect the change that it believes has occurred. But the Bush administration believes the U.N. system has to be reformed to accommodate the reality of U.S. power and that if this does not happen, the U.N. itself will be made irrelevant.

Thus, Dr. Rice noted at her joint press conference with External Affairs Minister Natwar

Singh: "So, we will continue to talk with people about Security Council reform, of the U.N. but clearly we also note that there have been great changes in the world and that international institutions are going to have to start to accommodate them in some way."

Asked point-blank whether

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the U.S. supported the Security Council's expansion and a permanent seat for India, Dr. Rice stonewalled, saying the world was still at the "beginning of the reforms process." She then said:

"I was really quite interested in the fact that when we had the tsunami cooperation which was a kind of ad hoc arrangement for a while to respond to the immediate needs of the tsunami, India was able, I am told, to mobilise its ships and go to sea in about 48 hours. That is extraordinary and that shows that India's potential is very great to help resolve humanitarian and other needs of the world."

The fact is that India mobilised its ships even before being invited by the U.S. to join its "core group." And it was left to Mr. Natwar Singh to explain that India's contribution to humanitarian relief, especially peacekeeping, went back many decades.

If Iran is going to be to the second Bush administration what Iraq was to the first then it is more than likely that Dr. Rice's message on the pipeline will be repeated often, and more forcefully.

India-Iran ties

Until now, Washington has accepted India's friendship with Iran as an irritant which could be ignored. India's recent acceptance of the pipeline proposal has altered the equation dramatically. For the better part of two decades, successive administrations have attempted to isolate the Iranian hydrocarbon sector through the imposition of sanctions on companies which invest in large projects in that country. When the Central Asian oil and gas boom started

in the 1990s, the U.S. effort has been to ensure the energy resources of the region transit westward through Turkey and the Mediterranean rather than southwards through Iran. The Iran-India pipeline would not only give a boost to the Iranian energy sector but also open up new possibilities for the export of oil and gas from the wider Caspian region. Neither outcome is desirable from Washington's point of view.

While it is hard to assess the contours of the proposed "energy dialogue" between India and the U.S. that Dr. Rice mentioned, this is unlikely to go beyond the scope of the discussions already under way on the civilian nuclear sector within the framework of the Next Steps in Strategic Partnership (NSSP). However, with the second phase of the NSSP nearing completion, it is already apparent that the U.S. domestic laws and international commitments (such as its membership of the Nuclear Suppliers Group) impose very real constraints on any significant collaboration in this field.

India, USA in complete agreement on Nepal

Statesman News Service

NEW DELHI, March 16. — India and the USA are in “complete” agreement over the early return of the multi-party democracy to Nepal. Speaking on the “challenge to democracy” in Nepal, the US secretary of state, Ms Condoleezza Rice, said there had been “outstanding cooperation between our ambassadors to try and help that country to get back on a democratic path”.

“That simply must happen and we are in complete agreement that it needs to happen very, very soon,” she asserted.

India had been coordinating position with USA and UK over Nepal, every since King Gyanendra clamped emergency and took over all executive powers on 1 February.

The statements came even as India’s ambassador to Nepal Mr Shiv Shankar Mukherjee came



Ms Condoleezza Rice with Mr Natwar Singh prior to a meeting in New Delhi on Wednesday. — AFP

back to Delhi for “consultations”. This was the second time that he has returned to Delhi since the “royal takeover”.

Mr Mukherjee had reportedly met the finance minister, Mr Madhukar Shumshere JB Rana, yesterday.

MANMOHAN TO VISIT USA IN JULY

India iterates F-16 concern

SNS & PTI

NEW DELHI, March 16. — India and the USA talked shop over supply of F-16s, agreed to disagree over the Iran gas pipeline and played dodge ball over the latter's support for a permanent seat for India with veto powers in the UN Security Council.

There was also a pat on the back for India and Pakistan on the ongoing peace dialogue.

On her maiden visit to India and the first Cabinet member in the second administration of Mr George W Bush to come calling, the US secretary of state, Ms Condoleezza Rice, said no agreement would be announced over the sale of F-16 fighter aircraft.

But she did state that there will be further broadening of defence cooperation between the two countries. At her meeting with Dr Manmohan Singh, she said the USA would like to be a "reliable partner" to India for supply of defence hardware and other areas.

The Prime Minister will undertake a "working visit" to the USA some time in July at the invitation of President Bush. The invitation was extended by Ms Rice when she called on Dr Singh.

The external affairs minister, Mr Natwar Singh, registered India's opposition to the sale of F-16s to Pakistan. At the joint press conference in Hyderabad House, Mr Singh said that on the defence

issue, certain concerns were expressed which could cause complications.

Ms Rice danced around the issue of supporting India's bid for a permanent seat with veto powers in the UN Security Council. She said India was increasingly fulfilling a global role, citing the Indian response to the tsunami crisis as "extraordinary".

Ms Rice said the USA had just initiated discussions on UN reforms, "but clearly, we also note that there have been great changes in the world, and that international institutions are going to have to start to accommodate them in some way".

The Iran gas pipeline also demonstrated a gap in perception, with Ms Rice stating that it has certain "concerns" which have been communicated to India.

However, she acknowledged that India has increasing energy needs for its rapidly growing economy. She offered to have an "energy dialogue" where both the countries could explore "new technologies". Ms Rice also met Mrs Sonia Gandhi and Mr LK Advani and attended a luncheon hosted by the external affairs minister.

Pakistan makes its case

Making out its case for getting F-16s, Pakistan tonight told Ms Rice that it needed Washington's cooperation to attain minimum deterrence with India. Soon after her arrival, she held talks with President Musharraf and Prime Minister Mr Shaukat Aziz.

Photograph, another report on page 4

Game theory

NEW DELHI, March 16. — US secretary of state Ms Condoleezza Rice has promised external affairs minister Mr Natwar Singh that she will "even try to understand cricket". "That would help," she said amidst peals of laughter at a press conference while referring to the challenges and possibilities of Indo-US relations. In exchange, Mr Singh offered to "try and understand baseball". The game lingo was also used earlier, when Mr Singh said that he looked forward to President Musharraf's visit and will ask him to tell the Pakistani cricket team not to beat their Indian counterparts. — SNS



Ms Rice at Humayun's Tomb. — AFP

স্থায়ী সদস্যপদ নিয়ে রাইসকে বলবে দিল্লি

স্টাফ রিপোর্টার, নয়াদিল্লি, ১৫ মার্চ: মার্কিন বিদেশসচিব কন্ডোলিজা রাইসের কাছে রাষ্ট্রপুঞ্জের নিরাপত্তা পরিষদে ভেটো-সহ স্থায়ী সদস্যপদের জন্য দরবার করবে ভারত। রাইস আজ রাতে দিল্লি এসেছেন। আগামিকাল তিনি প্রধানমন্ত্রী মনমোহন সিংহ এবং বিদেশমন্ত্রী নটবর সিংহের সঙ্গে আলোচনায় বসবেন। এই আলোচনায় দ্বিপাক্ষিক সম্পর্কের বিভিন্ন দিক যেমন আসবে, তেমনই দক্ষিণ এশিয়ার বিষয়ও উঠবে। তবে ভারতের কাছে সবচেয়ে গুরুত্বপূর্ণ হল নিরাপত্তা পরিষদের স্থায়ী সদস্যপদের জন্য মার্কিন সমর্থনের বিষয়টি। আমেরিকা এখনও এ বিষয়ে মুখ খোলেনি।

এ দিকে, মার্কিন বিদেশমন্ত্রক সূত্রের খবর, এ বার ইসলামাবাদে গিয়ে পাকিস্তানকে এফ-১৬ দেওয়ার ঘোষণা করতে পারেন রাইস। ভারতকে তার আভাস আগেই দেওয়া হয়েছে। রাইসের পূর্বসূরি কলিন পাওয়েল তাঁর ইসলামাবাদ সফরে হঠাৎ পাকিস্তানকে বিশেষ মিত্রের মর্যাদা দেওয়ার ঘোষণা করায় ক্ষুব্ধ হয়েছিল ভারত। তাই এ বার মার্কিন প্রশাসন সতর্ক ভাবে এগোচ্ছে। ভারত এফ-১৬ কিনতে চাইলে আমেরিকার যে নীতিগত আপত্তি নেই, তা আগেই জানিয়েছে ওয়াশিংটন। দিল্লি থেকেই ইসলামাবাদ যাবেন মার্কিন বিদেশসচিব।

বিদেশ সচিব পদে দায়িত্ব নেওয়ার পরে রাইসের এটাই প্রথম ভারত সফর। বিদেশমন্ত্রকের মুখপাত্র নভতেজ সারনা জানান, দু'দেশের কৌশলগত সম্পর্কের ক্ষেত্রে পরবর্তী পদক্ষেপ কী হবে, তা নিয়ে রাইসের সঙ্গে কথা হবে। পোখরান পরবর্তী পরে আমেরিকা নিষেধাজ্ঞা তুলে নেওয়ার পর ধাপে ধাপে দ্বিপাক্ষিক সম্পর্কের উন্নতি হচ্ছে। যেমন এখন অ্যাডভান্সড জেট নিয়ে দু'দেশ একসঙ্গে মহড়া দিচ্ছে। আর এ বার আলোচনা হবে পরবর্তী পর্যায় নিয়ে, যার কাজ ইতিমধ্যেই শুরু হয়েছে।

সারনা জানান, সুনামি-পরবর্তী সময়ে দু'দেশ যে ভাবে একসঙ্গে কাজ করেছে, তার ফলে দুই সেনাবাহিনীর মধ্যে সম্পর্কের অনেকটা উন্নতি হয়েছে। অর্থনৈতিক ক্ষেত্রে দু'দেশের মধ্যে যোগাযোগ বেড়েছে। টেলিকম, গৃহনির্মাণ, পরিকাঠামো, ব্যাঙ্কিং ও বিমান চলাচলের ক্ষেত্রে মার্কিন লগ্নির পরিমাণও বেড়েছে। যোজনা কমিশনের ডেপুটি চেয়ারপার্সন মস্টেক সিংহ আহলুওয়ালিয়া রাইসের সঙ্গে আরও আলাপ-আলোচনা চালাবেন। দক্ষিণ এশিয়া প্রসঙ্গে যে আলোচনা হবে সে সম্পর্কেও ভারত যথেষ্ট আশাবাদী। ভারতের আশা, পাকিস্তানে গণতান্ত্রিক প্রক্রিয়া ত্বরান্বিত করতে রাইস ইসলামাবাদের উপরে চাপ দেবেন। নয়াদিল্লি হয়েছে তাঁর ইসলামাবাদ যাওয়ার কথা।

চোরা পথে পরমাণু: রাষ্ট্রপুঞ্জের নজরদারি সত্ত্বেও পরমাণু অস্ত্র পরিকল্পনা এগিয়ে নিয়ে যাওয়ার চোরা পথ বার করে ফেলেছে পাকিস্তান। পরমাণু 'চোরা বাজার' নিয়ে আন্তর্জাতিক পরমাণু শক্তি সংস্থা (আই এ ই এ)-র তদন্তে এই তথ্য ধরা পড়েছে বলে পশ্চিমী কূটনীতিকদের একটি সূত্রে জানা গিয়েছে। নিজেদের জন্য পাকিস্তান পরমাণু প্রযুক্তি সংগ্রহের চেষ্টা তো করছেই, সেই সঙ্গে চোরা পথে অন্যান্য দেশ এবং সন্ত্রাসবাদী সংগঠনের হাতেও সেই প্রযুক্তি পৌঁছে যাওয়ার সম্ভাবনা দেখা দেওয়ায় বিশেষজ্ঞেরা উদ্ভিগ।

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Pranab Dhal Samanta. Javed Shah REPORT PAGE 3

US gives India more access to high-end dual use tech

■ NSSP | Of 185 requests between Oct '04 and Jan '05, 176 cleared

PRANAB DHAL SAMANTA
NEW DELHI, MARCH 13

A YEAR after India and US sought to break fresh ground in their bilateral relationship under the framework of the Next Steps in Strategic Partnership (NSSP), a stocktaking of milestones crossed indicates a near turnaround in trade of dual use items.



Rice is in Delhi this Wednesday

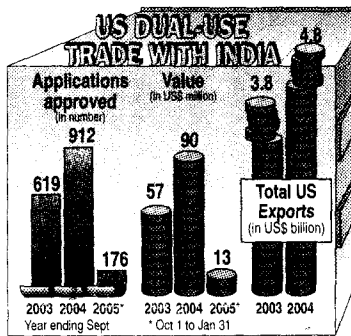
The NSSP, progress of which will be up for review on March 16 when US Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice is here for a day, has in a step-by-step manner eased the restrictions imposed on India following the 1998 nuclear tests.

There has been a significant jump in the US approval rate on licenses sought by Indian entities to trade in dual use items which involve sensitive technology that can be used for military purposes.

By the time the first phase of the NSSP was completed in September last year, the trade of dual use items was worth \$90 million between both countries. This was a significant increase from \$57 million at the end of 2003 financial year.

But more importantly, Indian entities are now getting faster approvals on importing high-end dual use technology items. In the financial year 2004, Indian entities got as many as 912 approvals for a little over 1,000 applications that were submitted. This was an increase of nearly 300 from the previous year.

The signing of NSSP-I means that a huge chunk of dual use trade largely associated with low-end technology items no longer require licenses. According to reliable sources, nearly 30 per cent of items for Indian entities



IE Graphics/B.K. SHARMA

which earlier needed license have been deregulated since October 1 last year.

In the high-end technology segment, for which the US has strict licensing requirements for almost every country, the progress has been very encouraging from

CONTINUED ON PAGE 2

Power project use in Delhi

legedly induced by its Japanese ally, Marubeni, an MNC that's providing technological input.

Apart from delaying the project—the matter has been referred to an inquiry committee—the simmering controversy has led to a virtual war of letters between the two ministries that monitor the respective PSUs, both headed by Congress ministers: Minister for Heavy Industries Santosh Mohan



Dev in PSU vs PSU

Dev (BHEL) and Power Minister P M Sayeed (NHPC).

While BHEL is waving two letters by Dev and an ex-parte legal

CONTINUED ON PAGE 2

Rice coming on 16 March

Statesman News Service

NEW DELHI, March 4. — The US secretary of state, Ms Condoleezza Rice, will be arriving in India on 16 March. The visit will be part of her first trip to the subcontinent after being appointed America's chief diplomat. She will also visit Pakistan and Afghanistan. Known to be strongly supportive of closer India-US relations, Ms Rice will be meeting the Prime Minister and external affairs minister during her stay.



Ms Rice

External affairs spokesperson Mr Navtej Sarna said that Ms Rice will be

discussing bilateral relations, regional developments and other global issues of mutual interest. The Indo-Pak peace process is obviously slated to be on the talks table, along with the developments in Nepal and Bangladesh.

The West Asian peace process and the situation in Iraq will also be reviewed in meetings between the two sides. Ms Rice is also reported to be meeting UPA chairperson Mrs Sonia Gandhi and the Leader of the Opposition, Mr LK Advani. She will leave India on 17 March.

In another development in Indo-US relations, a two-day bilateral meeting on missile defence between the two countries ended in Hyderabad today. The official spokesperson said that the discussions related to missile defence and the security contribution that the USA could make.

India, U.S. 'on the same side' against terror: Talbott

By Our Special Correspondent

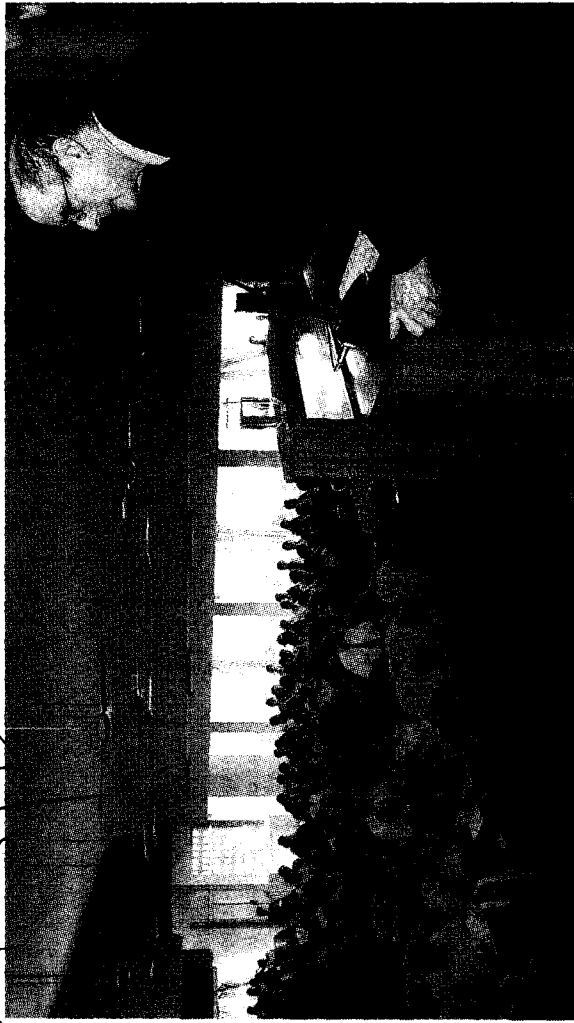
CHENNAI, FEB. 4. The war on terrorism and the campaign on behalf of freedom, liberty and democracy all over the world could "go a long way" to define "what might be a common agenda between the U.S. and India," according to the former U.S. Deputy Secretary of State for South Asia, Strobe Talbott.

"There is no question whatsoever that the U.S. and India are on the same side with regard to both the war on terror and a campaign on behalf of freedom," said Mr. Talbott, now president of a Washington D.C.-based think tank, the Brookings Institution.

He noted that the U.S. and India were on the "same side" now largely because of "a fundamental change in outlook" of both the countries. The change in the nature of the relationship was because of the end of the Cold War and the extra step forward taken by leaders of both countries.

Mr. Talbott was speaking on U.S.-India relations in the age of globalisation, at the Stella Maris College. The talk was organised by the Observer Research Foundation.

Mr. Talbott said that allies



The former U.S. Deputy Secretary of State for South Asia and president of the Brookings Institution, Washington D.C., Strobe Talbott, delivering a talk organised by the Observer Research Foundation in Chennai on Friday. — Photo: R. Raghu

needed a reason to stay together and work together. The new templates that guide United States foreign policy outlined those reasons, he said. "To be an ally there needs to be some agreement between us as to what we are allied for, what we favoured together and what we are allied against," he said. The

stress placed by the U.S. President, George W. Bush, on the struggle for freedom, liberty and democracy all over the world provided the point of agreement for the two countries to work together. But even the joint efforts such as the war on terror or restoring liberty and democracy all

over the world might not satisfactorily answer the question as to what the conceptual framework was for the U.S. foreign policy for the decade ahead.

Common cause

"If we were to make the common cause on terrorism, an automatic bond with every State

that claims to be waging war on terrorism, that would put us in bed with rather strange bed fellows. For example, then it is a problem for US-Russian relations," he said, and added that the US did not appreciate the extreme brutal measures used by Russia on the Chechens.

Also, using the war on terror as an overall umbrella for American foreign policy has also put the United States "much too close" with regimes in Pakistan. Using the campaign for freedom is also a mixed bag.

"It will be too simplistic a policy to say that we are for every country that is a fully developed democracy and against any country that is not so qualified."

The problems thrown up meant that an additional context was needed to guide the war on terror and usher in democratic functioning all over the world.

"I would suggest that the answer lay in the word globalisation itself."

Globalisation should be seen as a fact of life. "It is not something that is good or bad. It simply exists. And the challenge for us is to find some way to manage globalisation... so as to advance values and goals that we all believe in," he said.

US welcomes Indian N-experts

PRANAB DHAL SAMANTA
NEW DELHI, FEBRUARY 13

IN A positive turn to the Indo-US dialogue on civilian nuclear issues, Washington has offered to accept an Indian representative from the Atomic Energy Regulatory Board (AERB) to spend six months with the US Nuclear Regulatory Commission (NRC). There is no strict bar on the number of representatives.

The offer was made by Jeffrey S. Merrifield, a visiting Commissioner of the NRC, who has been in the country for the past week and has held discussions with AERB officials and even toured some of India's nuclear reactor sites.

"We have proposed that a representative of the AERB come to the US for about six months. This will be a valuable tool in learning and exchanging

information on how the reactors work and the care being taken to maintain these reactors," he told *The Indian Express* in an exclusive interaction.

Merrifield said the US had such an arrangement with a few other countries and the measure will help enhance the prospects of the dialogue between the two regulators, which has been underway within the framework of the Next Steps in Strategic Partnership (NSSP). "It can be one or two or more representatives also," he added.

This was the fifth such bilateral interaction at the level of the regulators. While his initial discussions were in Mumbai, Merrifield today met Foreign Secretary Shyam Saran apart from holding discussions with Meera Shankar, Additional Secretary in the MEA.

During his week-long stay, Merrifield also visited the Bhabha Atomic Research



US Nuclear Regulatory Commission official Jeffrey Merrifield in Delhi. *Express*

Centre, the Tarapur Atomic Power Station and the Rajasthan Atomic Power Station. "It was quite impressive... this was a very positive visit."

Merrifield has visited all the 103 reactors in the US and says he has seen nearly half the reactors of the world. In that

But asked whether he would guarantee they are 100 per cent safe, he said: "No, I wouldn't say that about any plant outside the US. What I saw was positive. A lot of care is provided to ensure safety, but I can't give a guarantee. But I also have no reason to believe that they are not running very safely." India, for its part, conveyed its willingness to join the US-led programme to make Generation IV reactors. Merrifield said the regulatory body did not directly deal with this but he will convey this "strong desire" expressed by New Delhi to his counterparts in the US Department of Energy, which runs the programme.

On the possibility of India joining the International Thermonuclear Experimental Reactor project, he said it was unlikely for the membership to expand till a decision is taken on the location of the project.

Outsource reaches US aerospace

B.R. SRIKANTH

Bangalore, Feb. 13: Several US aerospace companies have offered to outsource projects to Indian defence equipment manufacturers, adding a new dimension to the emerging strategic partnership between the two nations.

The honchos of a dozen US aerospace and consulting companies, part of the US-India Business Council's Executive Defence Mission, vowed to build a long-term strategic relationship with India.

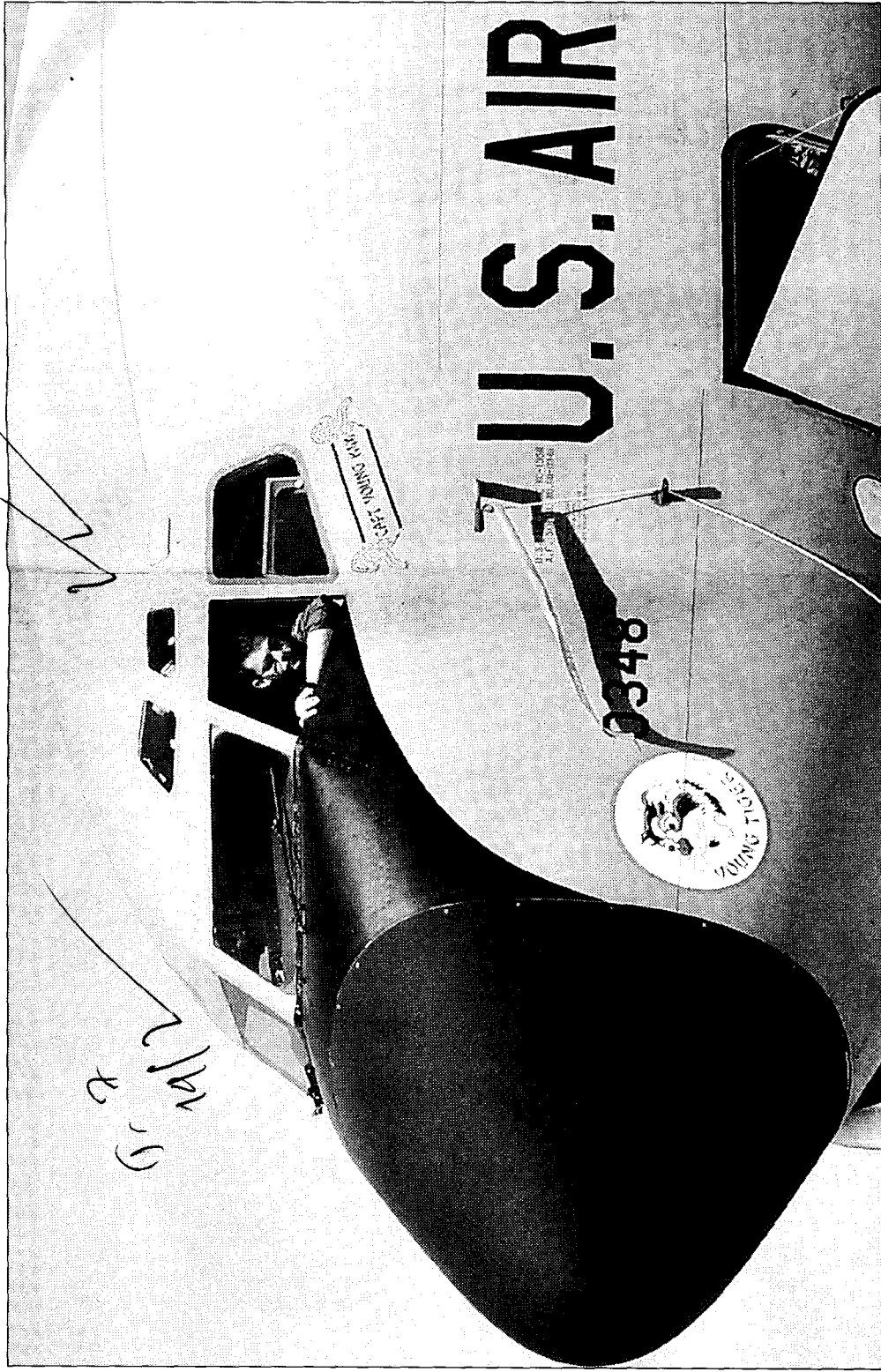
"We view the Indian defence sector not only as a market, but also a potential supplier and partner. And we will be seeking through our discussions to identify additional opportunities in all these areas," General Joseph W. Ralston, a retired joint chief of staff of the US Air Force and vice-chairman of The Cohen Group, told reporters at Aero India 2005, an international airshow here.

The Cohen Group, an international consulting firm headed by former US secretary of defence William S. Cohen, provides advice on business and strategic opportunities in foreign markets.

Former US ambassador Thomas Pickering, the mission co-leader, said: "We are interested in and pursuing major platform tenders as well as sub-systems, component and other small countries."

Listing Boeing's decision to outsource its flight and test software programmes to HCL Limited and a variety of aeronautical projects undertaken by the Indian Institute of Science, Bangalore, the former diplomat said: "If we get permission from the two governments, we can go ahead with similar programmes in the defence sector."

On India's concerns over continuity of supplies, Pickering



A pilot looks out of a US Air Force C-130J transport aircraft during the show on Sunday. (Reuters)

ing said: "Reliability is a serious issue. We are interested in assuring our Indian friends that new developments and new relationships with India will help set the tone and pace of reliability of supply.

"I would like to emphasise: try us and see how we deliver. You will find that we deliver at the right price and support the equipment we supply. Secondly we will closely work with Indian partners to ensure that they share the burden of pro-

viding the support." Pickering said members of the US defence mission met defence minister Pranab Mukherjee on Wednesday to discuss long-term ties.

"This mission is part of the ongoing process by the US industry — in coordination with our own government and with Indian public and private counterparts — to build a robust pattern of commercial defence cooperation," he said.

Back home, the team would follow up with the Bush ad-

ministration all issues raised by the Indian government. Lockheed Martin Corporation, in the race for a share of the Indian Air Force's fleet expansion plans with its F-16 combat jets, said it was in the process of identifying partners to establish manufacturing hubs for products, parts and maintenance.

"Lockheed is in the process of evaluating several Indian organisations for such work. Its technical assistance agreement with HAL (Hindustan

Aeronautics Limited) is one such example. As one of the largest employers in the IT industry, it will look for allies and partners. These will include IT companies and Indian aviation companies in public and private sectors," a company release said.

Denny Plessas, regional vice-president, Lockheed Martin Aeronautics Company, said his company had secured export licence from the US government for marketing the Hercules C-130J transport

plane and the P-3C Orion maritime surveillance aircraft to Indian armed forces.

The defence mission consists of managing directors, presidents and executive directors of Boeing, The Cohen Group, BAE Systems North America, Bell Helicopters, Fremont, General Dynamics, International Turbine Engine Company (Honeywell), Lockheed Martin, Northrop Grumman, Raytheon Corporation and Sikorsky Aircraft Corporation (United Technologies).

US willingness to share information on missile defence indicates its recognition of the realities of the globalising world and India's role in it

■ K SUBRAHMANYAM

AN American team is coming to Delhi to give a briefing to the Indian authorities on the Patriot missile system, which is an element in the basic missile defence, as part of a continuing exchange of information in this area. It may be recalled that this is part of the Next Steps in Strategic Partnership (NSSP) agreement between India and US.

There are controversies in India on missile defence and a number of related issues. There are disarmament fundamentalists who object to missile defence on the basis of obsolete Kissingerian arguments that missile defence will unleash an arms race. There are self-reliance fundamentalists who assert that India can develop its own missile defence technology and therefore does not need any US inputs. Thirdly, there are still veteran cold warriors who cannot forget the Enterprise mission of 1971 and continuing US support to Army-led Pakistani regime.

Ironically, this ancient civilisation, is the inheritor of wisdom of Bhishma and Chanakya, who millennia before Lord Palmerston articulated his foreign policy framework that there are no permanent friends and permanent enemies but only permanent interests, told us that a King (read State) has no friends or enemies as such but only circumstances make them so. If we act on our own ancient wisdom, in this globalising and post-Cold War world, mindful of our own national interest and security, we should exploit every opportunity to augment them.

I for one, can remember the period when the US was unwilling to give India any combat equipment and even non-combat ones like the first generation C-130, Hercules Transport aircraft because of their fear of offending their Pakistani allies. Now, the American armament companies are competing with each other to sell arms to India and establish even co-production arrangements.

This does not mean the Americans

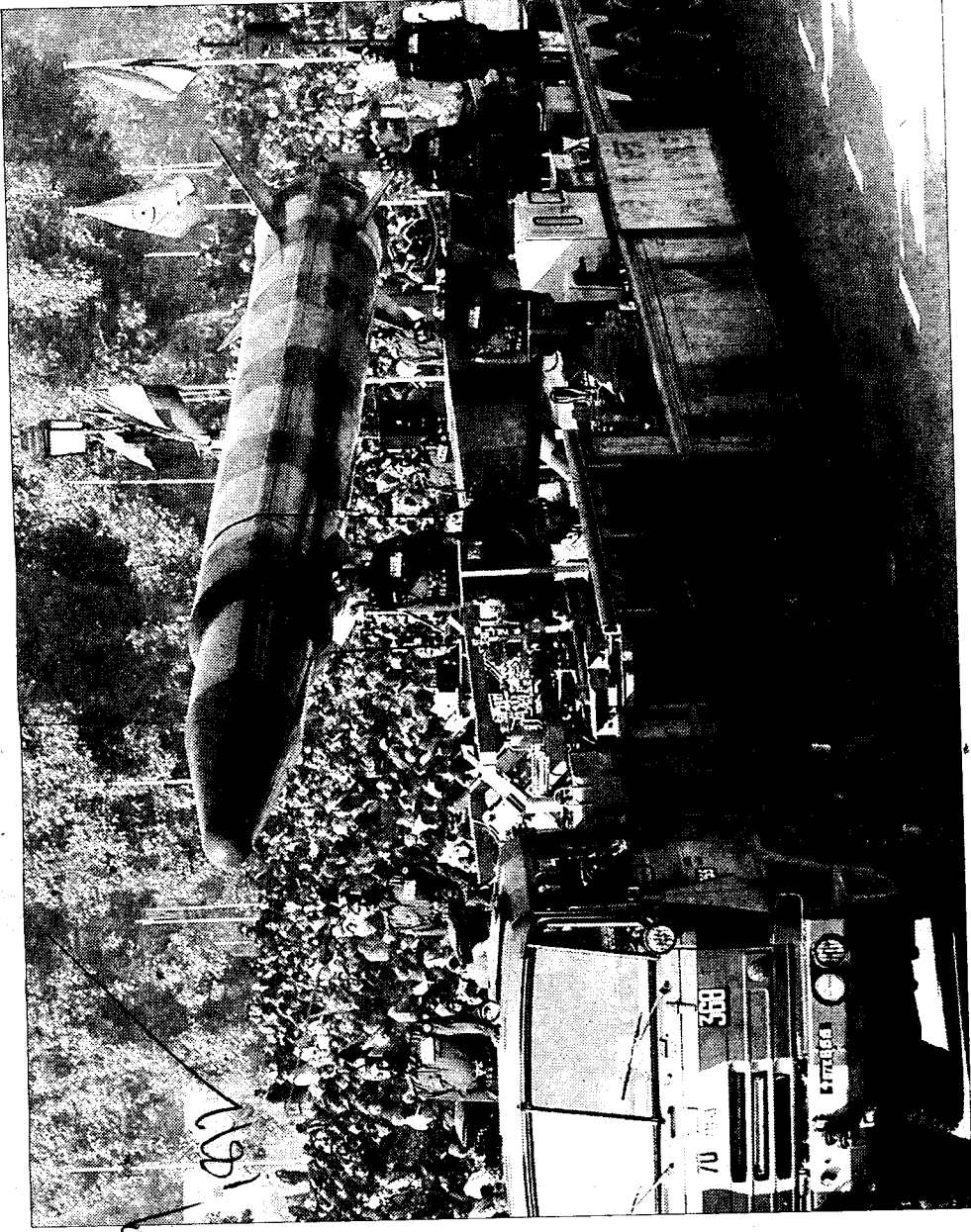
have changed. But the circumstances have changed. Therefore, our assessment need not be on whether Americans will be reliable suppliers but whether the present circumstances will last and what India can do to make them last. Neither the virtues, nor absence of them, of Americans or Indians are relevant to development of stable arms relationship between US and India.

India particularly needs missile defence because we have adopted a "no-first-use" doctrine in respect of nuclear weapons. Therefore, a missile defence for our national decision-making centre and some part of our retaliatory forces would make our "no-first-use" posture more credible. It would enhance the uncertain-

Shoot for INDO-US MISSILE TIES

ties of our potential adversary and act as a disincentive to his ready resort to nuclear weapons.

Irrespective of the degree of effectiveness of missile interception (whether it is 100 per cent or not) the adversary's uncertainty is bound to be enhanced and that should be welcomed. When Kissinger persuaded the Russians to give up missile defence or to limit it (as happened under ABM treaty), the nuclear war he was envisaging was one in which hundreds of warheads and missiles were to be used. No country today is thinking of that kind of nuclear war.



We should have realistic assessment about our current technological capabilities. No doubt we have a pool of scientific and engineering talent which is being tapped by the US and European countries. But as organised activity, our scientific organisations will take a couple of decades more to level up with developed countries. Just look at the time taken to develop Tejas aircraft, Arjun tank, Agni II, Akash and Trishul missiles

We should have realistic assessment about our current technological capabilities. No doubt we have a pool of scientific and engineering talent which is being tapped by US and other European countries. But as organised activity, our scientific organisations will take a couple of decades more to level up with advanced developed countries. Just look at the time taken to develop Tejas aircraft, Arjun tank, Agni II, Akash and Trishul missiles and the nuclear submarine. Individually, our scientists or engineers are as good as any in the world. But the country's capability taken as a whole is lagging behind US and other industrialised countries.

Therefore, there is nothing wrong in our trying to acquire as much technology as possible from other countries. Modern defence equipment has become so costly and its R&D so intricate that except for US, most of the European countries nowadays go in for joint R&D and joint production. Self reliance has acquired new dimensions. India is therefore in no position to reject information-sharing in technology. The time for decision-making on our missile defence is some distance off.

The writer is a defence analyst

so that no whimsical act of US will hamper India. If our Finance Ministry is liberated from expenditure-finance obsession and retrained to accept modern managerial culture, India can afford to purchase arms from US without undue worries about supply interruptions. Our foreign exchange reserve position gives us that capability which we lacked hitherto.

Missile defence falls neither in the jurisdiction of the Ministry of Defence nor of the Ministry of External Affairs. Since it is related to the nuclear strategy, it has to be appropriately handled by the National Security Adviser.

value in having the US on its side. The US stand on the Kargil war and the US reservations on Pakistan's future would show the circumstances have changed beyond recognition compared to the Cold War period. The US is well aware that neither in civilian commerce nor in arms purchases can Pakistan compete with India. The US-Indian technology bridge has no analogue in respect of Pakistan.

There is no doubt that India should be cautious in its arms purchases from US and should ensure that it would have adequate reserves in terms of spares, components and munitions for six weeks of war

Secondly, Pakistan is not in a position to engage in such an arms race without technological inputs from countries like China and North Korea and largescale financial help from Saudi Arabia. In the present international strategic environment, the probability of these developments taking place is not high.

The US willingness to share information on the missile defence under NSSP is an indication of America's recognition of the realities of the globalising world and India's role in it. Even as India pursues its own national interests and national security, India also perceives increasingly the

India, US for better trade ties

Sandeep Bamzai
New Delhi, January 18

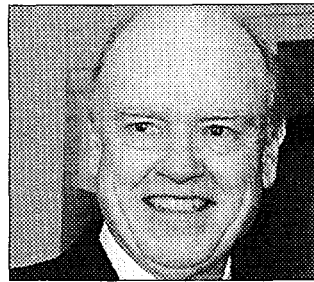
INDIA WANTS to take its economic relationship with the US to the next level of competency. Engaging the US economically is uppermost in the minds of Indian economic policy makers. Finance minister P. Chidambaram has invited US treasury secretary John Snow to Delhi in early April. This will be the first visit of a US treasury secretary since Paul O'Neil visited India in November 2002.

Snow's visit to India coming as it does immediately after civil aviation minister Praful Patel and US transportation secretary Norman Mineta inking a landmark open skies pol-

icy which allows both sides and airlines access to each other's countries. The arrival of high profile Bush top brass underlines the significance that India's economic reforms has taken in the global arena.

Snow and Chidambaram are accepted to take up the issue of free trade agreements and how India's competence in textiles in the post quota regime can be leveraged effectively. Further, with a product patent regime in place, US based MNC pharma giants are likely to establish clinical research facilities. The Indian government is keen that global pharma companies come to India and set up R & D outfits.

With India already discussing the possibility of ne-



John Snow

gotiating a FTA with the US and the Commerce ministry thinking on similar lines, the dialogue between the two ministers can incorporate this.

The presence of top economic decision makers in the political decision making hierarchy and the continuity of

reforms in spite of political changes has emboldened the US to send its treasury secretary. With WTO negotiations all set to enter a new dynamic phase, the US would be keen to tap the Indian leadership's thinking on key issues. The promulgation of an Ordinance on product patents has underlined India's adherence to global commitments.

In fact, Paul O'Neil during his last visit to India while addressing CII and American Chamber of Commerce had dealt with the issue of 'Indi-corps.'

In his speech, O'Neil had articulated that the key is harnessing the innate ability to rebuild India's productivity drive.

Deal opens Indo-US air routes

AIRLINES ARE ALLOWED TO SELECT DESTINATIONS & FREQUENCIES

Reuters
Washington, January 16

THE UNITED States and India have reached an air travel pact that will result in more commercial airline flights, lower fares and stronger economic ties, US officials said on Saturday.

Under the new open skies agreement, airlines from both countries will be allowed to select routes and destinations based on consumer demand, said the department of transportation in a statement.

"The deal provides for open routes, capacity, frequencies, designations, and pricing, as well as opportunities for cooperative marketing arrangements, including bilateral code-sharing with domestic Indian carriers," it said.

It also allows cargo carriers to operate in either country without directly connecting to their homeland.

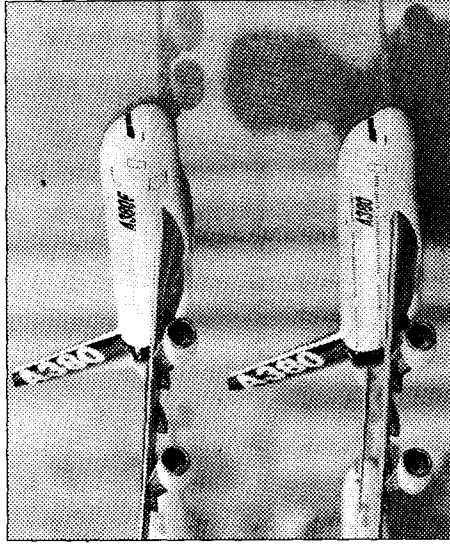
Talks between the nations began on Thursday.

The new pact replaces an agreement signed in 1956 that restricted the number of airlines that could fly between the countries, cities served, frequency of service and pricing, the department said.

Before the new agreement, Air India, Delta Air Lines and Northwest Airlines were offering direct flights. United Airlines and American Airlines were code-sharing on some flights.

Provisions under the new deal on routes and code-sharing will take effect immediately, with the entire agreement coming into force once it is signed, which is expected to be soon, the department said.

"This agreement means that US and India will be closer than ever before," said Transportation Secretary Norman Mineta. "Today's agreement begins a new era where American and Indian consumers, airlines and economies can reap the rewards of cheaper flights, more choices and faster air service."



Double bonanza

INSTANT TIME

17 JAN 2005

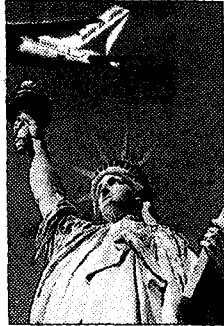
US, India strike open skies deal

Washington, D.C. (AP) —
16 JANUARY

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The Economic Times, 17 JAN 2005

US Congressmen back

India's UNSC bid

SNS & Agencies

NEW DELHI, Jan. 13. — The United States has not officially supported India's candidature for a permanent seat in the United Nations Security Council but a delegation of US legislators today came out in favour of a place for India at the top table of nations.

"India should enjoy all the rights which other permanent members enjoy in an expanded UNSC," members of the delegation told reporters today. The statement is seen as a significant one as this is the first time any US senator or Congressman has publicly spoken for India's candidature. Three of the permanent members — France, Russia and Britain — have supported India but China and the USA have not.

The Congress delegation, which met Dr Manmohan Singh, the external affairs minister, Mr K Natwar Singh, and the finance minister, Mr P Chidambaram, today

included Mr James A Leach (a Representative) and Mr Sam Brownback, a Senator. Others in the delegation included Senator John Corzine, and Representative Frank Pallone.

The delegation, which visited tsunami-affected areas in Indonesia, Sri Lanka and India, praised the Indian government's efforts to deal with the tragedy. They also took note of the "incredible steps" taken by India to provide assistance to Sri Lanka and other tsunami-affected countries.

On Kashmir, they said there were broad discussions with the Prime Minister on this issue. "He (Dr Singh) is very hopeful... he is very positive" that the ongoing dialogue with Pakistan would help normalise relations between the two countries. Asked about the sale of F-16 fighter planes to Pakistan despite India's objections, Mr Brownback said "the whole issue is problematic and it is (sale) highly unlikely to occur."

India, US begin talks on open skies policy

Cuckoo Paul

MUMBAI 12 JANUARY

TALKS have begun between India and the United States on signing a historic open skies agreement, liberalising aviation between the two countries. This will be the first such agreement for India though the US has negotiated over 60 such tie-ups with countries around the world.

Open skies agreements permit unrestricted air service by the airlines of both countries between and beyond the other's territory, eliminating restrictions on how often the carriers can fly, the kind of aircraft they use and the prices they charge. The minister for civil aviation Praful Patel is currently in the US with the Indian team to finalise details of the agreement. Interestingly, the agreement is being backed by the Indian flag carrier Air-India (AI), which is now looking at the US as one of its largest markets.

"Air-India is looking at increasing its footprint in the US by launching flights to San Francisco, Houston and Washington," an airline source said. The US

market is currently served directly by AI and two US carriers Delta and Northwest. The airline has already tripled its frequencies into the US in the last one year. "The biggest advantage is that it will cut red tape and allow airlines to make commercial decisions with minimal government intervention," the source pointed out. Currently, all new flights and schedules have to be cleared by various government authorities.

Sources in the ministry of civil aviation said the model US transportation department open skies agreement consists mainly of the following — open entry on all routes, unrestricted capacity and frequency on all routes.

It also includes the right to operate between any point in the US and any point in the corresponding country without restriction, including service to intermediate and beyond points, and the right to transfer passengers to an unlimited number of smaller aircraft at the international gateway. Another important component is the flexibility to set fares, and the right of carriers to convert earnings into hard currency.

Norms for small routes to continue

Our Delhi Bureau

12 JANUARY

THE civil aviation ministry said on Wednesday the route dispersal guidelines for airlines — meant to provide connectivity to non-trunk routes like the Andamans — will continue to be in force.

Stressing that connectivity to non-trunk routes was paramount, a statement issued by the ministry said the recent decision of the Union Cabinet to allow foreign airlines to fly on long-haul overseas routes only after five years of experience in domestic sector was "formed on the basis that more an airline flies within the country, the greater the reward to operate overseas flights".