

Thy neighbours

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29/11/05
Assertion here, tinkering there ^{India-} _{foreign policy}

South Asian area studies are becoming more and more complex. On the eve of the third round of the composite dialogue in the new year, it is just as well that India has put Pakistan on notice over the terrorist camps. Yet the customary assertiveness towards the western neighbour confirms Mr Atal Behari Vajpayee's lament in Mumbai about the "absence of an integrated foreign policy". Willy-nilly it has also exposed the grotesque imbalance in the corresponding policy towards the eastern front. The MEA's low-key approach has often been exploited by Bangladesh in its anxiety to be more strident in defending its case when an irritant has arisen. The irritants that have been raised with Pakistan are strikingly germane in the context of Bangladesh, notably the need to dismantle terror camps and the urgency of border fencing.

There has been far less of assertion and more of tinkering in relations with Bangladesh. Which explains why no tangible headway has been made on the eastern flank on any of the issues that have so stridently been raised with Pakistan. On the contrary, equations have suffered a setback on account of the MEA's pussyfooting. Border fencing remains a critical area of friction, and Dhaka now reinforces its refusal through occasional bluster and irresponsible semantic quibbling. It makes confusion worse confounded by referring to the fence as "defence activity". Bangladesh has been consistently firm in its opposition to the fence, a move India considers essential to curb the regular influx of migrants and the movement of militants from the north-east. Just as J & K militants are using Pakistan as a base, so too are NE militants crossing over to Bangladesh to use its territory as a "launching pad". Delhi's concern over the terrorists on the west is in stark contrast to the woolly approach towards the east. For all the simulated bonhomie at the Saarc summits and the officers' mess euphoria over *Vijay Divas* on 16 December, it remained for Mr RS Mooshahary, the Director-General of the BSF, to gauge the level to which bilateral equations have slumped — "the eastern flank is going to create more problems for India than the border with Pakistan on the western front". Not to put too fine a point on it, Bangladesh today poses a more insidious danger than Pakistan. And the MEA is perhaps much too embarrassed to endorse the BSF chief's assessment.

25 DEC 2005

THE STATESMAN

নিজের শর্তে বাস্তববাদী বিদেশ নীতির পথে

ডিসেম্বর ২০০৪। নতুন প্রধানমন্ত্রী মনমোহন সিংহের আশ্বাস, এ বার পাল্টে যাবে ভারতের বিদেশনীতি, বাজপেয়ী আমলে যেমন দেশকে বিকিয়ে দেওয়া হচ্ছিল 'নাইন-ইলেভন'-তাড়িত আমেরিকার পায়ে, তেমনটি

বাজপেয়ীর দাবি: তাঁর আমলে বিদেশ নীতিতে একটা স্বাতন্ত্র্য বজায় রাখা হয়েছিল, মনমোহন সিংহ সে সব একেবারে ধূলিসাৎ করে দিলেন। আসল ঘটনাটা কিন্তু ঠিক উল্টো। লিখছেন সমস্তুী ঘোষ

জুলাই ২০০৫। 'ঐতিহাসিক' বোঝাপড়া ঘটে গেল মার্কিন প্রেসিডেন্ট বৃশ আর মনমোহন সিংহের মধ্যে। ওয়াশিংটন ডি.সি.তে রাজকীয় বরণের পর প্রধানমন্ত্রীর হাতে তুলে দেওয়া হল 'বন্ধুত্বের' উপহার, অসামরিক ক্ষেত্রে মার্কিন পারমাণবিক সহায়তার উদার প্রতিশ্রুতি। প্রায় অপ্রত্যাশিত, আশঙ্কাজনকও। বহু দিন ধরে পরমাণু প্রশ্নে ভারতের প্রতি ক্ষুব্ধ আমেরিকার এই উদার দানের কী প্রতিদান দিতে হবে, কে জানে!

সেপ্টেম্বর ২০০৫। বাম নেতাদের ডাকে সাড়া দিয়ে রাস্তায় নেমে এসেছে দেশের বিভিন্ন শহরের হাজার হাজার কর্মী। কংগ্রেস সরকারের ছিছিকারে কান পাতা যাচ্ছে না: মনমোহন সিংহের ভারত শেষ পর্যন্ত ইরানের বিপক্ষে ভোট দিল বৃশের মন রাখার জন্য? আই এ ই এ (ইন্টারন্যাশনাল অ্যাটমিক এনার্জি অ্যাসোসিয়েশন) বৈঠকে এ ভাবে দালাল বনে গেলেন মনমোহন?

সমালোচনায় গলা মিলিয়েছেন আর এক জন। নাম: অটলবিহারী বাজপেয়ী। বক্তব্য: তাঁর আমলে ভারতের বিদেশ নীতিতে একটা স্বাতন্ত্র্য বজায় রাখা হয়েছিল, মনমোহন সিংহ সে সব একেবারে ধূলিসাৎ করে দিলেন। বাম ও দক্ষিণ, দুই শিবির থেকে আক্রমণের ঠেলায় অর্থনীতিজ্ঞ প্রধানমন্ত্রীর বড় দুঃসময় তখন। বাজপেয়ীর হুকুরে অবশ্য হুসি ছাড়া উপায় থাকে না। তাঁর জমানায় কোথায় 'স্বাতন্ত্র্য' বজায় রাখা ছিলেন তিনি, ইরাক যুদ্ধ থেকে বিশ্ববাজার, কোথায় আমেরিকার সঙ্গে সম্পর্কে ভারতের নিজস্বতা প্রমাণিত হচ্ছিল, এ সব প্রশ্ন উত্তরহীন থেকে যায়। সে জন্য তাঁকে দোষারোপ করতেই হবে, এমন নয় অবশ্য। ভারতকে কেন আমেরিকার মন জুগিয়ে চলতেই হতো তার হাজার রকম যুক্তি শোনা ও জানা কঠিন ছিল না। কিন্তু ২০০৫-এ 'কেন আমেরিকা-মিত্রতা' বলে মনমোহনকে সমালোচনা করাটা বাজপেয়ীর পক্ষে বাড়াবাড়ি রকমের অসততা, সন্দেহ নেই।

তবে শেষ পর্যন্ত তবে দাঁড়াল কী? বাজপেয়ী যে পথে হাঁটছিলেন, মনমোহন সিংহ কি ২০০৫ সালে সেই পথেই হাঁটলেন? সবাই তাই বলছেন। কিন্তু সত্যিই কি ভারত এখন একশো শতাংশ 'অধীনতামূলক মিত্রতা'র মোড়কে?

প্রথমেই একটা কথা: বিদেশনীতির ক্ষেত্রে প্রতিটি দেশেরই একটা 'পাবলিক স্ট্যাম্প' থাকে, সেটাই দস্তুর। কিন্তু তার মানেই যে সেই স্ট্যাম্প বা অবস্থানটাকে পুরো মাত্রায় বিশ্বাস বা গ্রহণ করতে হবে, এমন কোনও কথা নেই। মার্কিন মুখপাত্রের

বাইরে যা-ই বলুন না কেন, ২০০৫ সাল কিন্তু ইতিমধ্যেই তাঁদের কাছে একটা বার্তা যথেষ্ট পরিমাণে পৌঁছে দিয়েছে, তা হল— মনমোহন সিংহের ভারত আমেরিকার প্রতি মিত্রভাবাপন্ন সহযোগী বটেই, তবে কি না সেটা সম্পূর্ণ ভারতের নিজের স্বার্থ বজায় রেখেই, যাকে বলে 'অন ইটস ওন টার্মস'। ঠিক যেমন, ভারত বন্ধু হয়েছে বলেই পাকিস্তানের মিত্রতা থেকে সরে আসেনি আমেরিকা, ঠিক তেমনি ভারতও কিন্তু নিজের স্বার্থের জায়গাগুলি ঠিকঠাক রেখেই ওয়াশিংটনের নিকটবর্তী হতে পারছে, অন্তত এখনও পর্যন্ত।

আমেরিকা: আড়াল দিয়ে লুকিয়ে

ওয়াশিংটনের দিল্লিকে জরুরি দরকার একুশ শতকের ঠাণ্ডা যুদ্ধের প্রতিপক্ষ চিনকে জন্ম (contain) করার জন্য। বিজেপি-শাসন থেকেই দিল্লি নিজেকে বেজিং-এর উপযুক্ত রাজনৈতিক এবং অর্থনৈতিক

প্রতিস্পর্ধী হিসেবে প্রমাণ করতে পেরেছে। বাজারের দিক থেকেও ভারতের বিকল্প নেই। পাকিস্তানকে প্রত্যক্ষ হিসেবে থেকে সরিয়ে

রাখলে সম্ভব-প্রশ্নেও ভারত-আমেরিকার সংখ্যার ভিত্তি দুট। আর, পশ্চিম এশিয়ার কাছাকাছি থেকেও দুনিয়ার অন্যতম সেরা গণতন্ত্র হিসেবে ভারত যে এই মুহূর্তে আমেরিকার কাছে কতটাই অমূল্য, তা-ও কি আর বলবার। সব হিসেবেই ঠিক ছিল, বাদ সাধাছিল কেবল পরমাণু।

শত অগ্নিচক্রে দেখিয়েও কিছুতেই পরমাণু-প্রশ্নে বাগে আনা যায়নি ভারতকে, নন-প্রলিফারেশন ট্রিটিতে সই করানো যায়নি, পারমাণবিক পরীক্ষা থেকে নিরস্ত করা যায়নি। শাস্তি হিসেবে দিল্লিকে ইউরেনিয়াম আবাদানি বন্ধে বাধ্য করেছিল আমেরিকা। কিন্তু ভারতকে পাশে পেতে হলে যে এ সমস্যা মিটিয়ে নিতেই হবে, বুঝতে পারছিল ওয়াশিংটন। সত্যি কথা বলতে কী, ভারত বেগডব্বাই করছে বলে তাকে শাস্তি দেওয়া আমেরিকার 'পাবলিক স্ট্যাম্প' হতেই পারে, কিন্তু চিনের অতি-নিকট প্রতিবেশী

ভারত যে এত নিষেধাজ্ঞা সত্ত্বেও ২০০৫ সাল পর্যন্ত অস্ত্র তৈরি করে ফেলেছে, তাতে কি আমেরিকার খানিক নিভৃত স্বস্তিও লুকিয়ে নেই? সুতরাং ২০০৫ সালের মনমোহন-বৃশ প্রেমালোচনের জন্য দিল্লির থেকেও বেশি এগিয়ে এলেন খোদ বৃশ, এগোলেন নিজেদের ঘোষিত ও পালিত নীতি জলাঞ্জলি দিয়ে, মার্কিন কংগ্রেসে প্রভূত সমালোচনা সহ্য করে। তুলনায় ভারতকে কিন্তু মাথা হেঁট করতে হয়নি, কোনও কঠিনপালনীয় প্রতিশ্রুতিও দিতে হয়নি। জুন মাসের ২৮শে রামসফেস্ প্রতিরক্ষামন্ত্রী প্রণব মুখার্জিকে দিলেন উন্নততর পারমাণবিক ক্ষেপণাস্ত্র প্রযুক্তির প্রতিশ্রুতি, আর জুলাই-এর ১৮য় জর্জ ডবলিউ বৃশ প্রধানমন্ত্রী মনমোহন সিংহকে দিলেন অসামরিক পরমাণু শক্তি উৎপাদনের জন্য ইউরেনিয়াম-সহ যাবতীয় সহযোগিতার আশ্বাস।

দুটো থেকেই মূল কথাটা পরিষ্কার: ভারত নিজস্ব ইউরেনিয়াম অসামরিক থেকে সরিয়ে সামরিক খাতে ব্যবহার করুক, তার প্রত্যক্ষ স্বীকৃতি আমেরিকা দিতে অপারগ, কিন্তু পরোক্ষ তথা গোপন মদতে আপত্তি নেই।

পারমাণু ছাড়া অন্য কিছুও কিন্তু ভারতকে এ জন্য ত্যাগ করতে হয়নি। ত্যাগ করতে হয়নি চিনের সঙ্গে বোঝাপড়া, ত্যাগ করতে হয়নি রাশিয়ার সঙ্গে পরমাণু-চুক্তি। যদিও চিনের সঙ্গে 'স্ট্র্যাটেজিক অ্যান্ড কো-অপারেটিভ পার্টনারশিপ ফর পিস অ্যান্ড প্রস্পারিটি' চুক্তি সই এবং দুই এশীয় 'দৈত্য'র ২০ বিলিয়ন ডলারের পারস্পরিক বাণিজ্য প্রতিশ্রুত হয়েছে গত এপ্রিলে, অর্থাৎ মার্কিন-ভারত বৈঠকের আগেই— লক্ষণীয় যে, এখনও পর্যন্ত আমেরিকার কারণে এতটুকুও মোঘের ছায়া পড়তে দেখেনি ভারত; মনমোহন সিংহের ভাষায়, জুলাই-এর মার্কিন-ভারত চুক্তি 'is not at the cost of China.'

ইরান: যার শেষ ভাল

শেষ পর্যন্ত আই এ ই এ-র নভেম্বর বৈঠকে রাশিয়ার মধ্যস্থতায় ইরান প্রাণ মূলতুবিই রইল,

রাষ্ট্রপুঞ্জের নিরাপত্তা পরিষদে ইরানকে কাঠগড়ায় তোলা হল না। এবং মকারি ভাবে মনমোহন সিংহ জানানেন যে ভারত-এই সংশোধিত সিদ্ধান্তে নিরতিশয় উৎফুল্ল। নেনা, যেমন ভারতের 'পাবলিক স্ট্যাম্পে' ইরানে বিরুদ্ধে ভোট দেওয়া ছাড়া গতি ছিল না, ঠিক তেমনই নিভূতে ভারত আসলে চায় যে, শেষ িন্ত এ প্রশ্নে ইরান এবং পশ্চিমের (এই মুহূর্তে, ইউ-এয়, অর্থাৎ ব্রিটেন,

জার্মানি, ফ্রান্স) মধ্যে একটা সমঝোতা হয়ে যাক। ২০০৫-এ ভারতের এই গাছেরও খাওয়া তলারও কুড়োনো নীতি সম্পূর্ণত সফল। কূটনীতি মানেই তো তাই। কূট উপায়ে দুই কূলই সামলে রাখা!

মাঝখান থেকে ইরানের সঙ্গে সম্পর্ক খারাপ হল? এখনও পর্যন্ত তার কোনও প্রত্যক্ষ প্রমাণ মেলেনি। যদিও সঙ্গে সঙ্গেই ইরানি তরফে ছমকি এসেছিল যে তাদের ২২ বিলিয়ন প্রাকৃতিক গ্যাস, ৫ বিলিয়ন তেল পাইপলাইনে ভারতে পাঠানোর প্রস্তাব খারিজ হবে, এখনও তা কার্যকরী হয়নি। তা ছাড়াও একটা কথা। ইরানের সঙ্গে বাণিজ্যিক সম্পর্ক অত্যন্ত প্রয়োজনীয় সন্দেহ নেই, কিন্তু সে-ও তো নিজের স্বার্থ বজায় রেখে, ইরানের 'টার্মস'-এ নিশ্চয়ই নয়। ভারতকে যদি আন্তর্জাতিক স্তরে বৃহৎ শক্তি হিসেবে নিজেকে তুলে ধরতে হয়, তা হলে কোনও সংকীর্ণ গোষ্ঠী-কোন্দলে জড়িয়েই ভারতের লাভ নেই, যতক্ষণ পর্যন্ত না তার নিজের প্রত্যক্ষ স্বার্থ সরাসরি তাতে উপকৃত হচ্ছে।

এশিয়া: ঘর কৈনু বাহির

পাকিস্তান প্রসঙ্গত জরুরি বটেই। বাজপেয়ী আমলের মতো এ আমলেও কাশ্মীর প্রশ্নে 'নো কমপ্রোমাইজ' নীতি, কিন্তু দুই দেশের নাগরিক সমাজের মধ্যে অনেক বেশি আদানপ্রদান তৈরি হয়েছে গত বছরে। শ্রীনগর-মুজফফরাবাদ বাস সার্ভিস শুরু, রাজস্থান ও সিন্ধুর মধ্যে ট্রেন চলাচল পুনরারম্ভ তার প্রমাণ। আরও জরুরি, পারভেজ মুশারফের প্ররোচনামূলক মন্তব্যে সহজে উত্তেজিত না হয়ে পড়ে ধৈর্য ও আত্মসম্মত বজায় রেখে নিজ পক্ষ সমর্থনের যে দু-তিনটি দৃষ্টান্ত দেখিয়েছেন প্রধানমন্ত্রী, নিঃসন্দেহে তা একটা 'উত্তরণ' হিসেবে গণ্য হতে পারে।

যে কাজটা এখনও অনেকটাই বাকি, তা হল দক্ষিণ এশিয়ার প্রতিবেশী দেশগুলির সঙ্গে সুসম্পর্ক তৈরি। পাকিস্তানের সঙ্গে সম্পর্কে উন্নতি এসেছে ঠিকই, বাংলাদেশ বা নেপাল বা শ্রীলঙ্কার সঙ্গে ভারতের আদানপ্রদান এখনও প্রবল সংকটময়। 'আসিয়ান' বৈঠক ভালয়-ভালয় শেষ হয়েছে বটে, কিন্তু ভবিষ্যতে আঞ্চলিক মহাশক্তি হিসেবে ভারতের স্বীকৃতি মেলায় সম্ভাবনা এখনও বড় সুদূর। দক্ষিণ ও দক্ষিণ-পূর্ব এশিয়ার এই দেশগুলি ভারতের পাশে এসে না দাঁড়ালে কিন্তু মহাশক্তি হয়ে ওঠার আশা অধরাই থেকে যেতে পারে। ২০০৫ দেখিয়েছে এক আত্মসম্মানী ভারতের আশা।

দেখা যাক, কত দূর পৌঁছাই।



মিত্রতাই যথেষ্ট। মনমোহন সিংহ ও জর্জ বৃশ। ওয়াশিংটন ২০০৫

गुरु

BJP sees drift in foreign policy

28/12 9-foreign policy HD-1

UPA Government's foreign policy is subservient to the United States, says Advani

Neena Vyas

MUMBAI: The Bharatiya Janata Party here on Tuesday charged the United Progressive Alliance government with failure in the management of India's foreign policy resulting in a "drift," but differences appeared to have surfaced between Mr. Vajpayee and the party's resolution on foreign policy.

Party president L.K. Advani went a step further saying the UPA's foreign policy was "subservient" to the United States. Mr. Jaswant Singh, who moved the foreign policy resolution at the party's Mumbai conclave, recalled the "midnight decision" of the Manmohan Singh Government on India's vote in Vienna on the issue of Iran's alleged nuclear weapons programme to reinforce the point that India had done what the United States wanted it to without proper consultations and consensus at home.

However, former Prime Minister Atal Bihari Vajpayee, who intervened briefly in the debate on the resolution, virtually excused himself for not saying anything substantial. "Why should I speak on foreign policy? I don't understand it. The subject is complex and the language used is extraordinary," he said, adding mysteriously that "the language [of the resolution] was beautiful," that is, full of fine phrases, signifying little. He also said, much to the discomfiture of the party: "it would have been better if more time had been devoted to discussing the subject [of the resolution]."

Mr. Vajpayee's brief intervention was seen as criticism of the party's resolution that has questioned the UPA government's approach. His advice to the party was that such complex issues needed to be more thoroughly debated before a stand is taken



THE FRONTRUNNER: Senior BJP leader Rajnath Singh, who is widely expected to succeed L.K. Advani as the party president, with Rajasthan Chief Minister Vasundhara Raje at the second day of the organisation's national executive meeting in Mumbai on Tuesday. - PHOTO: PTI

and made public. In a way, he was seen to have disassociated himself from the resolution.

The resolution held the Government responsible for deteriorating security environment as a result of unrest in Nepal on which "the UPA must explicitly state its policy and approach"; and illegal immigration from Bangladesh that continues to "export terrorism" and shelter "Indian terrorists" with no identifiable Government policy on

how to deal with this. On Pakistan, the BJP charged that "in reality India has abandoned the issue of cross border terrorism" and there was "a complete lack of coordination, total confusion, and a drift of policy management." The party made it clear that it was for expanding the constituency of peace, but "not at the cost of India."

It was on Indo-U.S. relations that the BJP was most critical of the Government, charging it

with accepting an "asymmetrical relationship" which spelt "capitulation," "not strategic partnership. In short, the effort was to show that the Vajpayee government had improved relations with the U.S. but had proceeded on a "partnership" basis, but the UPA had a policy of "subservience" to the U.S.

Concept rubbished

Finally, the party rubbished a "concept floated by certain

American think tanks" suggesting the establishment of a "United States of Kashmir" whose sovereignty should be shared by India and Pakistan.

The party reiterated that "the entire State of Jammu and Kashmir is an integral part of India" and the "BJP will never allow any compromise" on this.

More reports on Page 12

THE HINDU

India needs to look East: Manmohan

J- Foreign Review HD-1

12/12

“We need faster growth of our economic exchanges with China”

Amit Baruah

KUALA LUMPUR: India does not need to look West to attract investment, but should focus on South-East Asia and East Asia as the region had the largest savings surplus in the world, Prime Minister Manmohan Singh said on Sunday.

Dr. Singh said East Asia and South-East Asia were of the “greatest importance” to India as it sought more investment. Talking to correspondents en route to Kuala Lumpur, Dr. Singh said India had a “benign” relationship with South-East Asia and had no disputes with any country in this part of the world.

Free trade area pact

Reiterating India’s determination to conclude a free trade area agreement with the Association of South-East Asian Nations (ASEAN), Dr. Singh said New Delhi’s vision at the East Asia Summit (EAS) was to bring about an Asian Economic Community.

Chinese investments welcome

He said an Asian Economic Community would constitute a “new magnet, a new pole” for growth and stability in the world economy. Asked about the resistance in New Delhi to the operation of Chinese companies, Dr. Singh said he welcomed Chinese investments.

“We need faster growth of our economic exchanges with China. Our trade is growing at a healthy rate. I expect that in years to come more Indian companies will invest in China. Several Indian pharmaceutical companies are already in China,” he said.

“Misconception”

Asked if China was trying to limit India’s growth, Dr. Singh said it was a “misconception” that the countries were competitors. “India and China are partners. It is our effort to engage China in greater economic inter-

A fast-growing Indian economy and a growth rate of seven to eight per cent would have a beneficial impact on South-East Asia

action. Our relations with China are moving in a healthy direction.”

India and China had also been able to agree on basic guiding principles to resolve their border dispute. “We are hopeful that we can make progress not only in economic relations with China, but also in resolving our border issue.”

Dr. Singh told presspersons on board his special aircraft that a fast-growing Indian economy with a GDP of \$700 billion and an annual growth rate of seven to eight per cent would have a beneficial impact on the South-East Asian region as a whole.

Terming the Congress party as the author of India’s “Look East” policy, he said India’s trade with East Asia and ASEAN was growing at a “handsome rate.” In the years to come, investment flows would figure prominently in exchanges between Asean and East Asia, he added. In a sense, the level of current contacts reflected the “fulfilment” of India’s Look East policy.

‘Permanent arrangements’

Asked if India would be in the “core committee” of the process that would drive the EAS forward, Dr. Singh said that all this was a matter for discussion at the Summit. Possible “permanent arrangements” that the EAS might put in place would also be discussed.

Dr. Singh said Europe, America and Asia must “adopt convergent policies” to boost world economic growth.

SINGH-PUTIN FOURTH MEETING THIS YEAR ON TUESDAY

Iran policy working: PM

SNS & PTI

ON BOARD PM'S SPECIAL AIRCRAFT/ NEW DELHI, Dec. 4. — Prime Minister Dr Manmohan Singh today said India's strategy to resolve the Iran nuclear issue within the IAEA jurisdiction and not allow it to go to the UN Security Council seems to be working. "Our concern has been to find a solution of the problem and not allow it go to the UN Security Council and resolve it within IAEA. I am glad to say that our strategy as of now seems to be working," he told reporters accompanying him on a three-day visit to Moscow.

He said India had been talking to various players, including European Union, Russia and China, to find a solution to the problem.

Asked whether there was a roadblock in the Indo-US nuclear deal and whether New Delhi was looking at Russia for supply of nuclear reactors, Dr Singh said India and the USA had working groups and "we are hopeful that things will work out in a way we envisage."

The Prime Minister arrived in

Moscow later to a red carpet welcome on his three-day visit, during which he will hold talks with Russian President Mr Vladimir Putin in the Kremlin at the sixth Indo-Russian annual summit on Tuesday.

He was received at the Vnukovo-2 VVIP airport by Russian Deputy Prime Minister Mr Alexander Zhukov, Indian Ambassador to the Russian Federation, Mr Kanwal Sibal and senior Russian officials. A tri-Services guard of honour was lined up to welcome Dr Singh.

After the ceremonial welcome, Dr Singh and his team drove straight to Hotel Baltshug Kempinski, located just opposite the Kremlin, across the Moskva river.

The Prime Minister will start the official part of his visit tomorrow by receiving the degree of Professor *Honoris Causa* of Russia's oldest varsity, Moscow State University.

Russia's energy minister Mr Viktor Khristenko and vice-premier and defence minister Mr Sergei Ivanov will call on him separately tomorrow at the hotel.

Later, Dr Singh is to address an Indo-Russian business meet organ-

ised jointly by the FICCI and the CII who have sent a 14-member delegation to Moscow.

In New Delhi, before his departure, Dr Singh said ties with Russia were key to the creation of a "secure and stable multi-polar world". "My visit to Moscow is I believe a signifier of the importance both our countries attach to our relations with each other," he said in a departure statement.

Harking back half a century in history, Dr Singh said: "I am honoured that my visit is taking place exactly 50 years after India's first Prime Minister Jawaharlal Nehru paid his landmark visit to the then USSR, setting our two nations on the path of an enduring strategic partnership. This partnership is a cornerstone of India's foreign policy and the declared priority for both our countries."

Noting that it would be his fourth meeting with President Putin this year, he said he identified defence partnership as "the most prominent facet of our interaction".

India and Russia, he hoped, would build a long-term partnership in energy security. He added that he would explore ways to enhance trade too.

05 DEC 2005

THE STATESMAN

Left parties seek debate in Parliament on foreign policy

9th Dec
Foreign Policy

HO-12

29/4

Leaders say they will also raise efficacy of joint military exercises with U.S.

Special Correspondent

NEW DELHI: The Left Parties on Wednesday told the United Progressive Alliance Government to have a discussion in Parliament on the country's foreign policy with special focus on West Asia and on the outcome of the recent South Asian Association of Regional Cooperation (SAARC) summit.

Promising that they would play a constructive role in ensuring a smooth conduct of business during the winter session of Parliament that got underway on Wednesday, Left leaders said they would raise the issue of emerging military relationships with different countries, including the efficacy of the joint exercises with the United States and some other countries.

The Left parties and the UPA decided to counter the Opposition move of bringing in an adjournment motion on the Mitrokhin Archives by referring

• **Promise constructive role for smooth conduct of Parliament session**

• **To protest Centre's decision to raise FDI in telecom sector**

to allegations against political leaders named in books: one by Seymour Hersh (on CIA operations in India), another by former Naval Chief Vishnu Bhagwat against then Defence Minister George Fernandes and a third book by a former intelligence officer on foreign funds raised by the Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh.

The Congress has expressed unwillingness to yield to demands by the Opposition for a discussion on the Mitrokhin issue stating that it was about charges levelled in a book.

Aware that the Opposition is keen to rake it up, the UPA and

the Left parties decided to go on the offensive by referring to writings that would embarrass the BJP-led Opposition since some of the allegations pertain to the time when BJP leaders like Atal Bihari Vajpayee and L.K. Advani were Ministers in the Janata Party Government.

At a joint briefing later, the Left leaders said they would facilitate a discussion on the Indian position at the impending Ministerial meeting of the WTO in Hong Kong from December 13 to 19. "We cannot afford to expose the agricultural workers and small and medium organisations to profit-making overseas companies. The Government must discuss it in Parliament so that the country's interest is protected," CPI Lok Sabha leader Gurudas Dasgupta said.

Apart from raising the problems being faced by the Indian labour due to globalisation and economic reforms, the Left parties decided to protest the Gov-

ernment's decision to raise foreign direct investment in the telecom sector to 74 per cent.

The Government, according to Revolutionary Socialist Party M.P. Manoj Bhattacharya, plans to introduce legislation providing for reservation in admission to private professional institutions. The parties also decided to highlight commercialisation and privatisation of higher education, especially professional education and stressed on the need for a regulatory mechanism to ensure that access to higher education was not denied to students from economically backward families.

The UPA-Left Parliamentary parties meeting was attended by the Defence Minister and Lok Sabha leader, Pranab Mukherjee; the Parliamentary Affairs Minister, Priyaranjan Dasgupta; CPI (M) leaders Sitaram Yechury and Nilotpal Basu; and CPI leaders S. Sudhakar Reddy and Gurudas Dasgupta.

24 NOV 2005

THE HINDU

'NO UN REFERENCE FOR IRAN'

Govt toes Left line

22/11
J. Foreign
Position
SIT

Statesman News Service

NEW DELHI, Nov. 21. — With the Left letting all know that it would make things difficult for the government in Parliament should it stick to its anti-Teheran stand, the UPA government and its main block of supporters today reversed their position. They agreed that the Iran nuclear issue should remain within the jurisdiction of the International Atomic Energy Agency and not be referred to the United Nations Security Council.

"The government has apprised the Left parties of the progress made with diplomatic efforts (on the matter). It was noted that the Centre's intention was to ensure that the matter remained within the IAEA's jurisdiction," Finance minister Mr P Chidambaram said after a two-hour meeting of the Left-UPA Coordination Committee, chaired by Dr Manmohan Singh.

CPI-M Politburo member Mr Sitaram Yechury, who was present at the meeting, said: "We have always maintained that any dispute over Iran's nuclear capability should be kept within the confines of the IAEA and not taken to the UNSC. Iran is a signatory to the NPT (Non-Proliferation Treaty) and has its rights and obligations. The Centre

US goes easy

VIENNA, Nov. 21. — The USA and its European allies will not push to have Iran referred to the UNSC later this week, giving Russia time to try to persuade Tehran to compromise with its nuclear activities, diplomats and officials. — AP

is willing to make diplomatic efforts. This is consistent with our (Left's) stand."

Asked what if the Centre had to vote at the 24 November IAEA meet, he said: "The next vote will mean the matter goes to the UNSC. We will oppose that and the Centre is working on it. It's also possible that no voting will be required at all." A Congress source said even if the worst came to the worst, the Left was not going to "destabilise" the government.

UPA chief Mrs Sonia Gandhi, defence minister Mr Pranab Mukherjee, CPI-M general secretary Mr Prakash Karat, CPI secretary Mr D Raja and RSP leader Mr Abani Roy also attended the meeting.

Mr Yechury expressed his satisfaction with the way the probe into the Volcker allegations was going. He also said the Left parties today agreed to consider government proposals to shed a small percentage of stakes in non-Navratna profit-making PSUs on a case-to-case basis.

THE STATESMAN

22 NOV 2005

Iran and *our* foreign policy

THE LATEST International Atomic Energy Agency report on Iran has brought out clearly why it was necessary to threaten Iran with a referral to the UN Security Council on the subject of its nuclear cheating. Because of the September 24 vote, supported by India over the protests of the Left and its fellow travellers, Iran has turned over documents detailing data it had received from the A.Q. Khan network on fabricating nuclear weapons. Iran claims that it did not solicit the data — relating to casting and machining uranium metal into cores for nuclear weapons — nor has it used it. Given the gravity of the situation, and the record of Teheran's past deceptions, we cannot simply take Iran at its word. It must tell us why it chose to keep this critical information secret all this time. Further, the revelation has brought up the patent need for Pakistan and A.Q. Khan to provide a complete accounting of its incredibly irresponsible behaviour on nuclear proliferation.

In these circumstances, Iran's decision to process a new batch of uranium last week, days ahead of the IAEA board meeting that will consider the

new report, seems like an act of calculated brinkmanship. The Iranian defiance, carefully calibrated with some cooperation, only underscores the IAEA belief that more openness is "indispensable and overdue."

India's move to vote with the majority in the IAEA calling for Teheran to comply with the letter and spirit of the Non-Proliferation Treaty had persuaded the CPI(M) that to urge Iran to observe rules it had accepted voluntarily was somehow undermining India's foreign policy. Actually, by making such a furore, it is the Left which has dangerously damaged India's independent foreign policy and virtually sought to give Teheran a veto on our policy-making processes. Iran's whole attitude in this, including its rejection of very reasonable compromise suggestions that uranium enrichment be done in a joint project in Russia, appears to be a part of the general hardline being taken by its new President Mahmoud Ahmadinejad. But this shift has occurred in Iran, not India or the IAEA or the EU. Yet, the Left seems determined to thoughtlessly make New Delhi look feeble and helpless by insisting that it back Iran.

Iran issue: BJP defers decision

To wait for Government to clarify stand

Special Correspondent

NEW DELHI: The Bharatiya Janata Party has decided to adopt a wait-and-watch policy on the Iran nuclear issue.

A meeting to discuss the party's stand on foreign policy issues was held at the former Prime Minister, Atal Bihari Vajpayee's residence on Saturday. Although party leaders had indicated that the BJP would discuss and then firm up its views on the Iran issue, the subject was apparently deferred.

"We discussed the situation in Nepal and other foreign policy issues, but on Iran we decided to wait for the Government to first clarify its stand," BJP deputy leader in the Lok Sabha V.K. Malhotra said.

There is a view in the party that since there are differences

between the Congress and the Left parties on India's vote on the Iran issue in Vienna on September 24, the BJP should wait and watch how the differences developed rather than jump in by clarifying its own stand.

The meeting was attended by BJP president L.K. Advani, the former External Affairs Ministers, Jaswant Singh and Yashwant Sinha, the former principal secretary to Mr. Vajpayee, Brajesh Mishra and Mr. Malhotra.

Rather than a discussion on Iran, a subject that is on the Left's priority list for the coming winter session of Parliament, the BJP wants to focus on the Volcker Committee Report on the oil-for-food scandal related to Iraq. On the Volcker issue, the BJP has already demanded a discussion under Rule 184 that entails a vote.

ইরান-নীতি নিয়ে ফের ভূমুকি বামেদের

নিজস্ব সংবাদদাতা, নয়াদিল্লি, ও কলকাতা, ১৫ নভেম্বর: শেষ লগ্নে সরকারের কাছে ইরান নিয়ে রীতিমতো কড়া বার্তা পৌঁছে দিতে শুরু করলেন বামেরা। দিল্লি যদি আন্তর্জাতিক পরমাণু শক্তি সংস্থার (আইএইএ) আসন্ন বৈঠকে আবার ইরানের বিরুদ্ধে ভোট দেয়, তা হলে তাদের 'পস্তাতে হবে' বলে জানিয়ে দিয়েছেন তাঁরা। তবে সরকার এই সতর্কবার্তা কী ভাবে নিচ্ছে, তা এখনও স্পষ্ট নয়।

প্রধানমন্ত্রী মনমোহন সিংহ সম্প্রতি বলেছিলেন, এ বিষয়ে এখনও চূড়ান্ত সিদ্ধান্ত হয়নি। আর সংসদবিষয়কমন্ত্রী প্রিয়রঞ্জন দাশমুন্সি এ দিন বলেন, সহমতের ভিত্তিতেই বিষয়টি নিষ্পত্তি করা হবে। ইউপিএ-র শরিক বা অন্য কোনও দলের অসন্তুষ্টির কারণ থাকবে না। আইএইএ-র বৈঠকের আগে সরকার বামেদের সঙ্গে আলোচনা করবে বলেও জানিয়েছেন প্রিয়বাবু।

ইরান প্রশ্নে যে তাঁরা ঝড় তুলতে তৈরি হচ্ছেন, তা এখন প্রায় প্রতিদিনই বৃষ্টিয়ে দিচ্ছেন বামেরা। আজ আবার আলাদা আলাদা সময়ে তিরুবনন্তপুরমে বিষয়টি নিয়ে মুখ খোলেন সিপিএমের সাধারণ সম্পাদক প্রকাশ কারাট এবং

সিপিআইয়ের এ বি বর্ধন। কলকাতায় সিপিএম পলিটব্যুরোর সদস্য তথা বাম-ইউপিএ কো-অর্ডিনেশন কমিটির সদস্য সীতারাম ইয়েচুরিও বলেছেন, “আমাদের আশা, সরকার এ বার ইরানের বিপক্ষে ভোট দেওয়ার ভুল আর করবে না। যদি করে, তা হলে তা ন্যূনতম সাধারণ কর্মসূচি অমান্য করা হবে। এবং আমাদের কড়া ব্যবস্থা নিতে হবে। কী ব্যবস্থা নেওয়া হবে, তা চার বাম দল বসেই সিদ্ধান্ত নেবে।”

ভেলের বিলম্বীকরণের প্রস্তাব সামনে আসার পরে ঠিক এ ভাবেই প্রকাশ্যে সরকারকে সতর্ক করেছিলেন কারাটেরা। এ বারও ঠিক একই ভাবে সতর্কবার্তা জারি করা হচ্ছে। ইয়েচুরি বলেওছেন, “ভেলের বিলম্বীকরণের প্রসঙ্গে আমরা সরকারকে পিছু হঠতে বাধ্য করেছি। আমরা চাই, ইরানের পরমাণু প্রসঙ্গটি নিরাপত্তা পরিষদের হাতে যাতে কোনও ভাবেই না যায়। তা হলে ইরানের মতোই ইরান আক্রমণের রাস্তা পরিষ্কার হয়ে যাবে।” ইয়েচুরির ধারণা, বামেদের চাপে সরকার ভোট দেওয়া থেকে বিরত থাকতে পারে।

সরকার বামেদের কথা না মানলে প্রথম পদক্ষেপ হবে বিষয়টি সংসদে

তুলবেন। কারাট-বর্ধন বলেন, কী ভাবে তোলা হবে, তা তাঁরা পরে ঠিক করবেন। তবে সরকারের সমর্থক সাংসদেরা বিষয়টি নিয়ে লোকসভায় বিরোধিতায় নামলে মনমোহন যে প্রচণ্ড অস্বস্তিতে পড়বেন, তাতে সংশয় নেই। ঘটনাচক্রে আজই সনিয়া গান্ধী বলেছেন, বামেদের সঙ্গে কিছু কিছু বিষয়ে মতপার্থক্য থাকলেও বড় ধরনের সমস্যা নেই। সরকার-বাম বিরোধকে প্রচারমাধ্যম বড় করে তুলে ধরে বলে মন্তব্য করে তিনি বলেন, সমস্যা থাকলে আলোচনার মাধ্যমেই তার নিষ্পত্তি সম্ভব।

কিন্তু কারাটের বক্তব্য, প্রধানমন্ত্রী চাইলে কথা বলতেই পারেন। কিন্তু সরকার অবস্থান না-বদলালে সমস্যা মিটেবে না। তাঁর মতে, গত সেপ্টেম্বরের বৈঠকে মার্কিন চাপের কাছে নতিস্বীকার ছাড়া ভারতের ইরানের বিরুদ্ধে ভোট দেওয়ার কোনও কারণ ছিল না। আর বর্ধন বলেন, সরকার এর পরেও আমেরিকার সঙ্গে মিলে ভোট দিলে তাঁদের 'পস্তাতে' হবে।

বাম নেতারা এ কথাও স্পষ্ট করে দিচ্ছেন যে, দিল্লি যদি সত্যিই এ ভাবে 'মার্কিনঘেঁষা নীতি নিয়ে এসোতে থাকে,

তা হলে ভবিষ্যতে সরকারের বড় ধরনের সঙ্কট দেখা দিতে পারে। কারণ সরকারকে সংসদে হেনস্থা করা তাঁদের কাছে প্রথম পদক্ষেপ মাত্র। এক শীর্ষ নেতার কথায়, “তার পর যখন যেমন পরিস্থিতি দেখা দেবে, তখন তেমন ব্যবস্থা নেওয়া হবে।”

তবে এখনই যে সমর্থন পুরোপুরি প্রত্যাহারের সম্ভাবনা নেই, সেটা মোটামুটি নিশ্চিত। কারণ পুরোপুরি সরকারের বিরুদ্ধে চলে যাওয়ার আগে বামেরা বিষয়ভিত্তিক সমর্থনের পথে সরে যাবেন। তা ছাড়া, কংগ্রেস নেতৃত্বাধীন সরকারকে সমর্থনের 'এক্সপেরিমেন্ট' ব্যর্থ হয়েছে বলে কারাট এখনও মনে করেন না। রাজগার বিলকে তাঁদের সাফল্য হিসাবে আজই তিনি তুলে ধরেছেন।

বামেরা কো-অর্ডিনেশন কমিটিতে ফেরার পরেই সরকার বামেদের কথা উপেক্ষা করে পেনসন বিল নিয়ে সিদ্ধান্ত নেয়। ইয়েচুরির দাবি, “পেনসনের টাকা শেয়ারে বাজারে লগ্নির ব্যাপারে চূড়ান্ত সিদ্ধান্ত হয়নি। এ নিয়ে দু'পক্ষে আলোচনা চলছে। সুতরাং কখনওই বলা যায় না যে, সরকার বামেদের উপেক্ষা করছে।”

Left red eye to Centre on Tehran policy

Don't give in to pressure from Washington or else face consequences, warn CPM & CPI

Justice for the 80 million
15.11.07

HT Correspondents
Kolkata/Thiruvananthapuram, Nov 15

THE LEFT parties, propping up the Congress-led UPA government at the Centre, has queered its pitch on the Iran issue by warning that either the Centre should pay heed to them or it should be prepared for any consequences after the crucial International Atomic Energy Agency meet in Vienna on November 24.

Issuing a strong warning to the government, CPI(M) politburo member Sitaram Yechuri said in Kolkata on Tuesday that if India melts under pressure from Washington and votes against Iran during the International Atomic En-

ergy Associations meeting on November 24, "it will create great danger for the government".

Insisting, however, that the Left wanted the Congress-led government at the Centre to continue for its full five-year term, Yechuri indicated that the Left would not hesitate to mount pressure on the government in case it voted against Tehran.

"We hope the government will not bow under US pressure as it did the last time. But, if it violates the common minimum programme, responsibilities for its consequence will lie squarely with them", Yechuri said.

Asked whether the Left might once again boycott the UPA-Left

coordination committee meeting in case the government went against Iran, the CPI(M) politburo member said, "We'll have to discuss it in details".

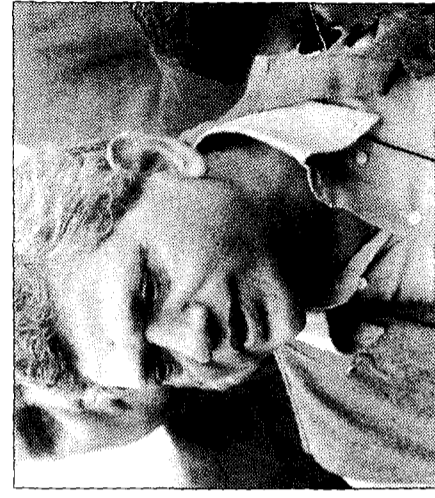
CPI echoes warning

In Thiruvananthapuram, CPI general secretary A.B. Bardhan said, "Hear us, or else repent".

"It's better to be wise before the event than repent later", warned Bardhan at a Press conference here on Tuesday. For a change for the Congress, the strident posture has come from the junior partner of the Left. While Bardhan was talking tough, CPM said the Left combine would team up with like-

minded parties, such as Mulayam Singh Yadav's Samajwadi Party, to raise the Iran issue in both Houses of Parliament.

There are enough reasons for Bardhan to take a tough stand because the CPI's Panniyar Ravindran is a candidate for the Thiruvananthapuram by-election on November 18. The vacancy was caused by the death of CPI parliamentary party leader P.K. Vasudevan Nair. "We won't remain mere onlookers this time. We already conveyed the Prime Minister about this during our last meeting with him. It is for him to decide or face consequences", the veteran CPI leader warned the UPA government at the Centre.



'Justice not done to Natwar'

TALKING TO reporters after attending a function organised by the DYFI, Yechuri expressed unhappiness over the manner Natwar Singh was stripped of his post. "Steps should've been taken after inquiry. Significantly, the Volcker committee has only named people, who are against US aggression on Iraq," he said. He said that the Left would vote against the Pension Bill in both the Houses of Parliament if it was brought in its present form. He said that his party would soon take a final decision on the issue of IT sector.

HTC, Kolkata

Of poets, planes and foreign policy

Statesman News Service

KRISHNAGAR, Nov. 6 — Within a week, two prominent CPI-M politburo members have voiced different opinions regarding the Congress-led UPA government's foreign policy, causing confusion among comrades.

On 30 October veteran CPI-M leader and former chief minister Mr Jyoti Basu said: "On the question of foreign policy and a few other important issues the UPA government has come closer to the views of the Left Front".

On the other hand, chief minister Mr Buddhadeb Bhattacharjee has said the government's decision to conduct joint air exercises with the USA at the Kalaikunda air-base threatens the country's foreign policy. The exercises, due to start tomorrow, are highly controversial.

Mr Bhattacharjee, who completes five years in office today, said: "Deepening military collaboration with the USA does not augur well for India's strategic interests and independent foreign policy. The party is dead against this joint air exercise with the USA and will gather thousands of workers in front of the air base.

"In this regard, when Prime Minister Dr Manmohan Singh asked me over tele-

phone, I told him I have no support for this policy. Dr Singh then asked me to resolve the matter. "The party, however, will hold a peaceful agitation across the state in protest".

Considering these differing opinions, many party workers are left wondering what line they should take regarding the UPA government's foreign policy.

Confusion reigns among comrades over their leader's pro-American views when it comes to direct foreign investment (FDI).

While in Krishnagar today to attend a party rally and lay a foundation stone for a Rs 1.35 crore *manch* to Bengali poet Dwijendralal Ray, Mr Bhattacharjee expanded on this theme.

Speaking at a rally at the Krishnaga Government College, Mr Bhattacharjee said he was determined to carry out reforms to attract foreign investment in both industry and agriculture.

Mr Bhattacharjee also said he had no hesitation in welcoming FDI from the USA, Europe and South East Asia to develop the infrastructure of agricultural petrochemical and automobile sectors.

"Look at China and Vietnam", he said "They too are desperate to attract US investment. There is no point in sticking to dogmas."

কলাইকুণ্ডায় ৬ এফ-১৬, মার্কিন বায়ুসেনা

৩০ লক্ষ বাম কর্মী

১৯৭২ ১-Forcible Power ১৩০০০০০-২

দেখাবেন বিক্ষোভ

আজকালের প্রতিবেদন: দিল্লি ও কলকাতা, ৪ নভেম্বর— বাম বিরোধিতা অগ্রাহ্য করে মেদিনীপুরের কলাইকুণ্ডায় ৭ নভেম্বর থেকে ভারত-মার্কিন যৌথ বিমান মহড়ার সিদ্ধান্ত নিল মনমোহন সরকার। গত রাতে কেন্দ্রীয় মন্ত্রিসভার নিরাপত্তা বিষয়ক কমিটির বৈঠকের পর আজ সকালে প্রধানমন্ত্রী মনমোহন সিং এবং কেন্দ্রীয় প্রতিরক্ষামন্ত্রী প্রণব মুখার্জির বৈঠকে এই সিদ্ধান্ত নেওয়া হয়েছে। গত রাতে রাজ্যের মুখ্যমন্ত্রী বুদ্ধদেব ভট্টাচার্য এবং বাম নেতৃত্বের সঙ্গে কেন্দ্রের গুরুত্বপূর্ণ আলোচনা হয়। চার বাম দলের তরফে তার পর এক বিবৃতিতে বলা হয়, এফ-১৬ ও অন্যান্য যুদ্ধাস্ত্র নিয়ে বিমান মহড়া ভারতের নিরাপত্তার পক্ষে দারুণ বিপজ্জনক এবং দেশের স্বাধীন বিদেশনীতির পরিপন্থী। তবে প্রধানমন্ত্রীর সঙ্গে বৈঠকের পর প্রণববাবু আজ সাংবাদিকদের বলেন, 'সব মিটে গেছে। মুখ্যমন্ত্রী এবং বাম নেতাদের সঙ্গে আমরা কথা বলেছি। এটা যে রুটিন মহড়া এবং গত চার-পাঁচ বছর ধরে হয়ে আসছে, সেটাও বলেছি। প্রয়োজনীয় নিরাপত্তার ব্যবস্থাও করতে বলেছি রাজ্য সরকারকে। তবে বিক্ষোভ দেখানোর অধিকার যে কোনও রাজনৈতিক দলের আছে। অতএব, বাম কর্মী ও সমর্থকরা বিক্ষোভ দেখাতেই পারেন। এই বিক্ষোভ অবশ্যই শান্তিপূর্ণ হতে হবে।' কিন্তু সি পি এম রাজ্য সম্পাদক অনিল বিশ্বাস গুরুবার রাজ্য দপ্তরে বসে এই মিটমাট হওয়ার বিষয়টি অস্বীকার করেছেন। তিনি বলেছেন, আমাদের দাবি ভারতের মাটিতে যৌথ সামরিক মহড়া চলবে না। ভারতে মার্কিন সামরিক বাহিনীর ঘাঁটি স্থাপন চলবে না। ৭ তারিখ এই যৌথ মহড়ার বিরুদ্ধে সি পি এমের বিভিন্ন নেতা বিক্ষোভ করবেন। অনিল বিশ্বাস নিজে থাকবেন মার্কিন প্রচার দপ্তরের সামনে। সি পি এম

পলিটবুরো নেতা বিমান বসু থাকবেন বিমানবন্দরে। তবে বিক্ষোভ হবে শান্তিপূর্ণ। কলাইকুণ্ডায় বিশাল জমায়েত হবে। প্রণব মুখার্জি সব মিটমাট হয়ে গেছে বলায় অনিল বিশ্বাস কিছুটা বিরক্ত। তিনি বলেন, এটা কংগ্রেসের অন্তর্নিহিত সমস্যা। তারা ঠিক কথা বলছে না। তারা যা করছে তাতে জনগণ তাদের উচিত

সমর্থক বিক্ষোভ দেখাবেন বলে ঈশিয়ারি দেওয়া হয়েছে। গতকাল ও আজ কলাইকুণ্ডায় ৬টি মার্কিন এফ-১৬ যুদ্ধবিমান নেমেছে বায়ুসেনা ঘাঁটিতে। বৃহস্পতিবার রাতেই ৪টি পৌঁছে গিয়েছিল। আজ দুপুরে আরও ২টি নামে। কলাইকুণ্ডা যাওয়ার পথে ২টি সামরিক বিমান দমদমে নামার সময় সেখানে বিক্ষোভ দেখান সি পি



মহড়া হবেই: কেন্দ্র

দমদমে মার্কিন ফৌজি বিমান। ছবি: পি টি আই

শিক্ষা দেবে। এদিকে, কেন্দ্রীয় মন্ত্রিসভার জরুরি বৈঠক থেকে বোঝা যাচ্ছে, বাম দলগুলির প্রতিবাদকেও কেন্দ্রীয় সরকার যথেষ্ট গুরুত্ব দিচ্ছে। সি পি এম, সি পি আই, আর এস পি, ফরওয়ার্ড ব্লক— চার বাম দলই যৌথ মহড়ার তীব্র প্রতিবাদ জানিয়েছে। বিমান মহড়ার বিরুদ্ধে সারা রাজ্যে ৩০ লক্ষ বাম কর্মী ও

এম এবং সিটি কর্মীরা। নেতৃত্ব দেন সাংসদ অমিতাভ নন্দী। মার্কিন বিমান দুটির থেকে এক এক করে নামে আসেন মার্কিন বায়ুসেনার। ওঠেন বাসে। মার্কিন বায়ুসেনা দলের মুখপাত্র কর্নেল জে পক জানিয়েছেন, বিমানের সঙ্গে তাঁরা এনেছেন মহড়ার সরঞ্জাম। শনিবার আসছে এরপর ৫ পাতায়

Joint air exercise stays

Soma Mookherjee
in Kalaikunda

Nov. 2 — Outlining the military benefits of the planned Indo-US joint air exercise the CPI-M believes would compromise India's defence and foreign policies, Indian Air Force officers today said that the programme stands and that they were looking forward to it.

The CPI-M state secretary, Mr Anil Biswas, had yesterday announced his party would organise mass protests around the Kalaikunda air base during the exercises from 7 to 19 November. Declining comment on the planned protests, the officers said on condition of anonymity

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that they were continuing preparations for the exercises and had received no intimation from the Defence Ministry about any change of plan. Mr Biswas, meanwhile, said his party would go ahead with the planned protests even if the Air Force changes its plan.

Earlier, during a visit by The Statesman to the Kalaikunda air base, Squadron Leader S Mukul, an MiG 27 pilot had said: "Such joint air exercises are of great benefit to us. By this we gain experience in radar work and radio transmission. Such co-operative exercises also help us to gain better knowledge of each other's air force."

Squadron Leader Mukul had visited US air bases at Misawa and Kadena in Japan as part of the exchange programme to train in the USAF's ways of working.

"I'm eagerly waiting for the day. During the exercises, our day will begin around 5 a.m. Our US counterparts will be briefed by meteorology officers to familiarise them with the climate. They will also have to be told about signals and aerodrome facilities for take off and landing," the Squadron Leader said. "It is not that our boys and US Air Force men will participate separately. Men from both air forces will form offensive and

9. Foreign Minister
defensive formations to attack and defend a set mission. Only simulated devices would be used and no aircraft would carry weapons," said Group Captain TK Chatterjee, chief operations officer. He said: "Our mission is to train together for co-operative security." He said there would be no night flights. Air Force officers at the air base also said such exercises "help us to learn a lot about each other's Air Forces and if the occasion so arises we can function as a joint force". They hope that after the success of Cope Thunder 2004 in Gwalior, Cope Thunder 2005 at the Kalaikunda airbase would be a roaring success.

THE STATESMAN

01 NOV 2005

MEA may revive history & research division

Devirupa Mitra in New Delhi

Nov. 1. — The ministry of external affairs is planning to revive its historical and research division to be manned exclusively by a separate research cadre, which had been wound up in the early nineties.

This division is supposed to research documents and reports of the ministry and write detailed background papers on assigned foreign policy topics.

"In the ministry, officials are posted for two or three years and then they move on. So, to give a sense of continuity, these papers could help officers to get a long-term perspective on complicated foreign policy issues, for example, the Sino-Indian border issue," said a senior MEA official.

The ministry had already sketched out a plan for forming the division afresh and had got financial approval for it. "The file has now been sent to the UPSC to draw up the recruitment rules," said the official. The historical and research division will have to be manned by a separate research cadre, directly recruited by the UPSC.

The MEA used to have this division since Independence, till it gradually folded up after the retirement of the last official of the research cadre in 1993.

Mr AS Bhasin, who was the last remaining research cadre to retire, is not very enthusiastic about the MEA's plan to revive the division, if it is a mirror of its earlier image.

"It was a neglected part of the ministry, where the officers did not feel integrated with the mainstream," said Mr Bhasin. He



Graphic: Biswendu

The committee strongly felt that the historical and research division should be re-established soon where historical documents and records could be kept not only for the benefit of the ministry but also for the use of academicians, researchers, students and others interested in the subject'

ty. "There was never any feedback on the papers that we used to draft. It was extremely frustrating," he said.

MEA researchers used to have access only to bland monthly political reports, from Indian missions abroad, instead of day-to-day despatches.

"These political reports used to be just compilations of clippings and a round-up of events in the month. There was no inclusion of more analytical or in-depth information," said Mr Bhasin.

In the seventies, the ministry made a decision to close down the division, gradually stopping all recruitment to the research cadre. In the last couple of years, efforts had been made to again revive the division and the cadre, but the parliamentary standing committee on external affairs in the 13th Lok Sabha expressed concern that the "revival had not been handled with the seriousness it deserved".

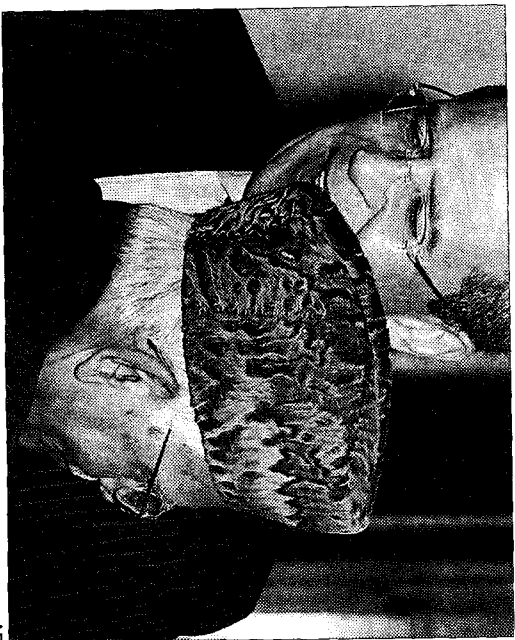
"The committee strongly felt that historical and research division should be re-established soon where historical documents and records could be kept not only for the benefit of the ministry but also for the use of academicians, researchers, students and others interested in the subject," said the second report of the standing committee in 2000.

The ministry had then set up a committee, which had recommended ten posts for research cadres and ten supporting staff. But there has not been much progress on that front, until recently. "The question of promotional avenues for the new cadre officers is being considered, with a few solutions being considered," said a senior MEA official.

in five years," he said.

Mr Bhasin remembers that the quality of work got compromised over the years, as they felt that their detailed analysis and research papers were an "exercise in futi-

Now IAEA meet 'acid test' for India: Left



External affairs minister K. Natwar Singh with Russian counterpart Sergei Lavrov in Moscow. India and Russia are working closely to find a solution to the Iran nuclear imbroglio. AP

HT Correspondent

New Delhi, October 28

FORMER DIPLOMATS and international relations experts said in a Left-sponsored seminar on Friday that the UPA government had succumbed to US pressure in voting against Iran at the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) meet held in Vienna last month.

CPI general secretary A.B. Bardhan deplored as the "lowest point in India's foreign policy", foreign secretary's recent statement that India's vote against Tehran was intended to buy more time for diplomatic efforts.

By voting against Iran, and then giving "ridiculous" excuses for doing so, India has weakened its position in international diplomacy and exposed itself to the world that it's susceptible to the US pressure, the experts said. They were speak-

Dasgupta in favour of strike by IT workers

CPI LEADER and AITUC general secretary Gurudas Dasgupta on Friday said the IT industry was like any other industry and there was no reason why its workers could not go on strike as a last resort. The industry, he said, should not come to the centre stage of political controversies. "Political controversies will only embolden the masters of

the industry to avoid implementing labour laws", he said.

The AITUC leader, who took up violation of labour laws with the government, said IT workers should have a right to form unions and collective bargain. There was need that a trade union movement was built up and strengthened in the industry "as it was a den of exploitation".

Since the industry lived on outsourced jobs, the IT workers had every right to go on strike, as the countries they served also witnessed strikes by workers. The production centres of the IT industry were like any other manufacturing industry, he said, adding that all labour laws were thus applicable to the IT industry. **HTC, New Delhi**

ing at the seminar titled 'India's Independent Foreign Policy' organised by the Committee on India's Independent Foreign Policy.

Later, while speaking to the media, Bardhan said, "They've given

ridiculous explanations for their earlier action. The next meeting will be the UPAs acid test.

"The foreign secretary's statement that India had voted against Iran to buy more time to resolve the

issue was the lowest point in India's foreign policy", he added.

Former diplomat M.K. Bhadrakumar — who has served in Moscow, Islamabad, Kabul and Tashkent — termed the decision "totally

incomprehensible" and said it was a political decision and not a technical or legal one. "Iran has a larger-than-life presence in West Asia", he observed.

Former diplomat Satish Chandra said India's vote against Iran would have long-term implications for India and that it had lost a lot of room for manoeuvrability in international diplomacy. "There's no proof that Iran has been weaponising its nuclear programme. No proper assessment of the programme has been done either. The argument has been, unfairly weighted against Iran", Chandra added.

Former Indian ambassador to Iran Akbar Khaleeli said Iran and India shared a deep relationship that went back thousands of years. "We should let the US and Iran sort out theirs. India shouldn't be a party to it", Khaleeli said.

Iran cloud on N-deal

PRANAY SHARMA

New Delhi, Oct. 27: Delhi has risked jeopardising its civilian nuclear deal with Washington by saying it doesn't want Iran's nuclear programme to be referred to the UN Security Council: it would rather see the issue resolved at the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA).

Delhi has also expressed its desire for "long-term" energy cooperation with Iran.

These remarks by foreign minister Natwar Singh could anger members of the US Congress, who have begun a hearing in Washington to decide if American domestic laws should be changed to allow India access to US civilian nuclear energy.

Singh's earlier visit to Iran

had led several US Congressmen to ask, at the last hearing of the foreign relations committee in September, whether Delhi could be a reliable US ally when it was going out of its way to build ties with Tehran.

Many Congress members are not too keen to pass the civilian nuclear technology to India.

Delhi's vote at the IAEA meeting next month would be keenly watched by many, including the US. Though Washington officially refuses to link India's vote with the civilian nuclear deal, foreign policy observers believe that the pact will not go through if Delhi fails to condemn Iran's alleged



Natwar: Not for UN

"clandestine nuclear programme".

The Indian foreign minister met Iranian Vice-President Pervez Dawoodi on the sidelines of the Shanghai Cooperation Organisation meeting in Moscow yesterday.

On the nuclear issue, Singh made it

clear that "India would wish to avoid any reference to the UN Security Council and that the matter should be amicably resolved within the purview of the IAEA".

India, however, has refused to be drawn into a controversy over Iranian President Mahmoud Ahmadinejad's reported remark that Israel should be wiped off the face of the earth.

Uses of domestic dissent in foreign policy

Harish Khare

AMERICAN UNDER-SECRETARY of State Nicholas Burns' visit last week revived all the doubts, reservations, and opposition to the July 18, 2005 India-United States civilian nuclear energy cooperation agreement. Doubts and questions have never been fully answered. These doubts got deepened when India chose to vote with the United States and against Iran on September 24 at the International Atomic Energy Agency in Vienna.

Doubts have been voiced from three sources. First, from within the strategic community. Some remain genuinely concerned about the Indian establishment's ability to think through issues involved in separating civilian from mil-

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itary nuclear facilities. Some simply feel cut up that they have not been consulted, before and after the deal. Others are intrinsically hostile because of their hidden liaison with the BJP crowd. And, some of the sceptics are "Indian bomb" fundamentalists who are not prepared to countenance any current or future restraint on *Bharat Mata's* freedom to go in for a higher stage of nuclear weaponisation.

Secondly, sections of the vocal Muslim community have spoken up, particularly after New Delhi's Iran vote. Most of them find themselves in the unfamiliar waters of strategic affairs. They are not faulting the Government for voting against Iran *per se*. Rather their complaint is articulated as a protest against a deviation from the independent course of our foreign policy and

There is no reason why non-official voices cannot be raised to send a message to the Bush White House that public opinion in India will not permit an unequal deal.

principles of non-alignment. Still, there is nothing amiss with sections of the Muslim community expressing themselves on this issue; no less a person than the Prime Minister himself told the media in New York last month that one of the factors that must weigh in any decision on Iran would be the presence of the world's second largest Shia population in India.

The third source of opposition is the most serious. The Left and the Right have converged in their opposition against the centre. A section of the BJP has opposed the July agreement, for no other reason than the deal was done by a regime other than the one headed by Atal Bihari Vajpayee. Like sections of the Muslim community, the BJP faults the July agreement as compromising the national autonomy that Pokhran II was supposed to have cemented. The Samajwadis and other third front candidates have also dissented, some for the sake of the Muslim vote and others from deeply ingrained habits of anti-Congressism.

Then there is the Left, led by the Communist Party of India (Marxist). The Left has voiced its opposition in the most systematic and reasoned manner; there has been no shouting at the top of the voice, only articulation of the party's long-held positions and a nuanced anti-Americanism. The Left promises to carry on its reasoned opposition; sensibly it has come to anchor its opposi-

tion in a professed anti-Americanism. The Left has promised to keep at it, mobilising public opinion against what it perceives as misplaced priorities of the Manmohan Singh Government.

Except a statement by the Prime Minister and a perfunctory discussion in Parliament in the last session, there has been no detailed or passionate defence of the September vote and the July agreement. Only the Foreign Secretary keeps on, valiantly arguing the case. The Congress party has been strangely silent on the issue, partly because it is becoming increasingly a stranger to the world of ideas and policies. Within the AICC establishment, most of those familiar with the intricate world of foreign policy and diplomacy have migrated to the Government. Above all, there is an institutional indifference to dissent, disagreement, and discussion. Nor is there any appreciation of the need to mobilise domestic public opinion in favour of this policy or that initiative.

The July agreement rests on a structure of reciprocity. But the deepest unstated fear is that the Manmohan Singh Government will allow itself to be railroaded by the Bush administration into keeping its part of the bargain while the United States will pretend that a difficult American Congress has refused to play ball. The White House is not averse to using the American constitutional arrangement to extract concessions

from foreign interlocutors, friendly or unfriendly. For instance, when after Congressman Tom Lantos exhibited bad taste and called India's External Affairs Minister all kinds of names, the Government voted against Iran at Geneva; this gave rise to the inevitable inference that New Delhi had given in to an orchestrated *jugalbandi*.

The broader issue is why the Indian Government cannot creatively use domestic dissent to optimise its foreign policy agenda. True, the Indian Constitution gives the executive complete autonomy of initiative in matters of defence and foreign policy; nor is the executive obliged to submit any agreement or treaty for parliamentary approval. However, this stipulation in no way exempts any government from the larger obligation of democratic accountability.

Dissent and disagreement ought to be welcomed by the Government and the ruling party of the day. Of course, the assumption is that such dissent will not be leveraged in internal political battles. Every responsible political party in India is duty-bound to express itself on matters of foreign and defence policy. This responsibility has become even more onerous because of the creeping infirmities in our public discourse. The popular media are incapable of educating the citizenry on issues such as the nuances of the July agreement or the Iran vote. Media that seem to be so breathtakingly fixated on "scandalous tapes" or some astrologer predicting his own death cannot possibly become an instrument of public enlightenment. This is not a happy development for a democratic system.

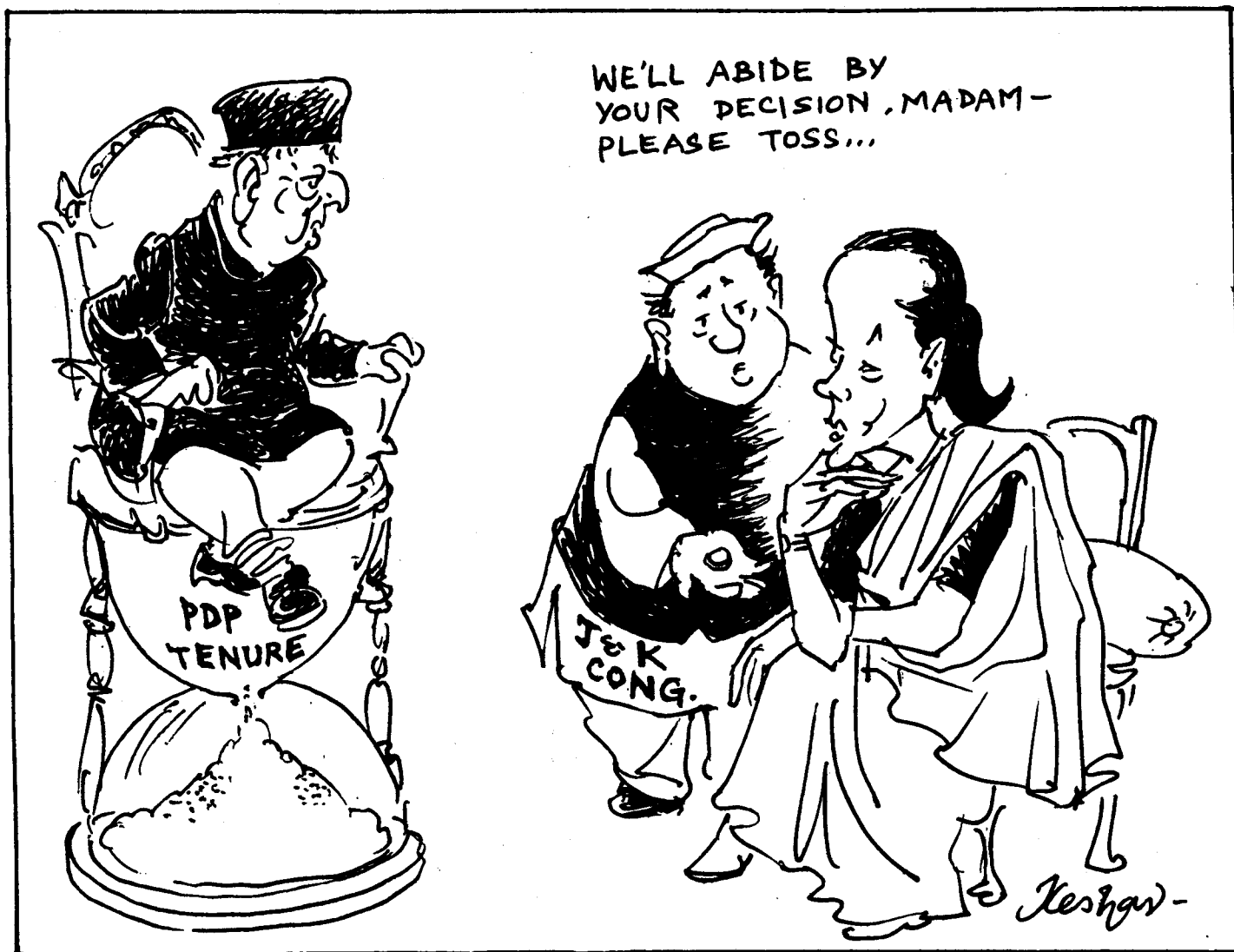
As it is, over the years we have blunted and submerged any exercise in democratic accountability in the vastly consequential areas of national security. The general argument that any discussion of defence matters would demoralise jawans has been flung in the face of all those who have had questions about defence budgets or priorities. In the early days, when India faced far graver threats to its existence, Jawaharlal Nehru was not averse to talking complicated foreign policy matters before massive crowds.

On the other hand, a leader and a government ought to have freedom of initiative in policy matters in determining national interests. A heavy responsibility goes with that initiative. Within months of India becoming a free nation, Pandit Nehru delineated the leaders' responsibility thus: "Whatever policy you may lay down, the art of conducting the foreign affairs of a country lies in finding out what is most advantageous to the country. We may talk about international goodwill and mean what we say, but in the ultimate analysis, a government functions for the good of the country it governs and no government dares do anything, which in the short or long run is manifestly to the disadvantage of that country. Therefore whether a country is imperialist, socialist or communist, its foreign minister thinks primarily of the interests of that country."

Our current problem is that ever since we gave in to the logic and forces of globalisation, there has remained considerable doubt about our leaders' capacity to think and take decisions in the national interest. It is a question of national self-assurance and competence in dealing with an exacting world. Doubts about leaders' ability persist because the pursuit of power of our political parties has become totally divorced from a faith in democratic principles and this disdain exhibits itself most in the realm of foreign policy.

We need an ideal mix of dissent and initiative. The Manmohan Singh government would do well to use domestic opposition to maximise its bargaining position in international forums. The winter session of Parliament should be used to let national sentiments and fears be expressed on both sides of the divide. Admittedly, there are limits to what the government can say in Parliament. But there is no reason why non-official voices cannot be raised to send a message to the Bush White House that public opinion in India will not permit an unequal deal.

CARTOONSCAPE



Ties with 'major powers' in nation's interests: PM

TIMES NEWS NETWORK

New Delhi: Despite trenchant criticism from the Left and other quarters, the UPA government will determinedly forge ahead in developing closer strategic ties with the US, be it in the civilian nuclear energy or the military technology arena.

PM Manmohan Singh gave indications of this while addressing the armed forces' brass on Thursday. It's in India's interest to develop strategic linkages with as many "major powers" as possible, in the global game of power politics, to tackle the "diverse, complex and evolving" security challenges faced by the country, he said.

And the US figures high on India's radar as "the dominant economic, military, technological and cultural power" today, though the European

Union, Russia, China and Japan will also consolidate their individual positions to play a global role in the future.

While dwelling on the critical role of energy security in stepping up India's economic growth, the PM said expansion of the country's civilian nuclear energy programme was of "vital national interest". In this context, he said the July Indo-US civilian nuclear energy pact would, "when operationalised", "help us enormously in this regard". Holding that India must evolve "a new paradigm of security cooperation relevant to an emerging multi-polar world", Singh said his government was precisely seeking to do just this.

To meet the emerging challenges, India has to strengthen itself economically and technologically, acquire adequate defence capability to

counter threats and seek partnerships. "With this in perspective, India too is reciprocating positively to overtures of other major players in the global balance of power. No doubt this involves sophisticated bargaining with each of them. It's unrealistic to expect nations to act for altruistic reasons," said Singh. This, interestingly, comes a day before US under-secretary of state Nicholas Burns arrives in India to discuss the implementation of the N-energy pact, which was of course followed by India voting against Iran in the IAEA.

While the global community has made "some progress" in evolving a "rule-based order" for managing the economic and commercial dimensions of globalisation, it has failed to do so for contemporary security threats like terrorism, the PM said.

Foreign Powers

11-9 27/10

'India always mindful of historical ties with Iran'

Indian foreign policy is decided in New Delhi, says E. Ahamed

Staff Reporter

15/10 20-7
Indian Foreign Policy
KANNUR: Minister for State for External Affairs E. Ahamed said on Friday that India would always be mindful of the historical, cultural and trade links with Iran, reiterating that the country had averted the issue of Iran's nuclear programme being referred to the U.N. Security Council.

Talking to reporters here, Mr. Ahamed said India's stand in the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) was beneficial to Iran as it gave more time for discussion on the issue within the agency to find a solution. India had been actively involved in the negotiation with France, En-

gland and Germany to get the original text of the resolution changed, thereby averting referral of the Iran issue to the Security Council, he said. The country would be mindful of its traditional links with Iran while taking any decision on the issue in future.

Dismissing the criticism that India had 'reversed' its independent foreign policy on the Iran issue under the U.S. pressure, the Minister said Indian foreign policy had always been decided in New Delhi. He said the country's stand was that Iran had the right to generate nuclear energy for peaceful purposes. India also upheld the stand that if there were any reservations

about Iran's fulfilment of its obligations under the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty, it should be solved through discussion in the IAEA.

To repeated questions on the issue, he said foreign policy matters of the country were not under his administrative duties.

Asked about the Left parties' strong stand against the Manmohan Singh Government's stand on Iran, Mr. Ahamed said all political parties had the right to formulate their views on issues. As for his party's stand, he said the Indian Union Muslim League always supported the Central Government's decisions taken in the interests of the country's security and welfare.

বিদেশনীতি আমেরিকাকেন্দ্রিক হবে, না ভারতকেন্দ্রিক

জলে আমেরিকা ডাঙায় ইরান। কাউকে না কাউকে তো চটাতে হবেই, ফলে সাত-পাঁচ ভেবে-চিন্তে প্রধানমন্ত্রী মনমোহন সিংহ কুমিরের পাশে গিয়ে দাঁড়াতেই মনস্থ করলেন, বাঘকে দিলেন ছেড়ে। বহু দিন পর ভারতীয় বিদেশনীতি এত বড় একটা সাঁড়াশি সংকটের মধ্যে পড়ল। দীর্ঘকালের বাসনা পূর্ণ করে এই সবে আমেরিকার প্রেসিডেন্টের কাছ থেকে মিলছে পরমাণু সহায়তার প্রতিশ্রুতি, তার মধ্যেই এই সংকট।

সংকটটা তৈরি হল যখন, ইরান— যে দেশের সঙ্গে ভারত যথেষ্ট বন্ধুত্বাপন্ন, যে দেশ নিয়মিত ভাবে ভারতকে শক্তি সরবরাহ করে, সেই ইরানের বিপক্ষে পরমাণু-প্রশ্নে ফতোয়া জারি করতে আমেরিকা একেবারে এককাটা হয়ে পড়ল। আমেরিকার সঙ্গে ইরানের শত্রুতা আজকের কথা নয়। তেহরানের চোখে বহু দিনই ওয়াশিংটন বিশ্বের বৃহত্তম শয়তান, আর ওয়াশিংটনের চোখে তেহরান বিশ্বের তিন শ্রেষ্ঠ দূশমনের (অ্যাঙ্কিস অব ইভল) অন্যতম। তবে ব্যাপারটা বিশেষ রকম গোলমালে হয়ে উঠল যখন গত নির্বাচনে ইরানে ক্ষমতায় এলেন রক্ষণশীল নেতা মাহমুদ আহমদিনেজাদ। তিনি এসেই ঘোষণা করলেন পশ্চিম এশিয়ার সব দুর্দশার মূল হোতা ইজরায়েল ও আমেরিকাকে মোক্ষম শিক্ষা দেওয়াই তাঁর দেশের প্রধানতম লক্ষ্য। নানাবিধ পরমাণু কার্যক্রম ইরান অনেক দিন ধরেই চালিয়ে আসছে, যে কার্যক্রমকে সহজেই পরমাণু সমরাস্ত্র প্রস্তুতির প্রয়োজনে ব্যবহার করা যায় বলে বিশেষজ্ঞদের বিশ্বাস, তার ওপরে গত জুলাই-এ আহমদিনেজাদের আবির্ভাব, তার ওপরে হঠাৎ বেশ কতগুলি দুর্ঘটনার শক্তিশালী মিসাইল কিনে ফেলা: সব মিলিয়ে ইরান এখন মার্কিন চোখে 'হাইলি সাসপিশাস'দের মধ্যেও পয়লা নম্বর জায়গায়।

সুতরাং বিশ্বের পরমাণু সংক্রান্ত প্রহরা সংস্থা ইন্টারন্যাশনাল অ্যাটমিক এনার্জি এজেন্সির (IAEA) বৈঠকে প্রস্তাব আনা হল ইরানের বিপক্ষে। চিন, রাশিয়া, দক্ষিণ আফ্রিকাসহ ১২টি দেশ ভোটদানে বিরত থাকায় ২২-১ ভোটে গৃহীত এই প্রস্তাব বলল যে, নন-প্রলিফারেশন ট্রিটি-র ধারা অমান্য করে ইরান গোপন পরমাণু কার্যক্রম চালানোর অপরাধে অপরাধী, এবং এতদ্বারা বিষয়টি রাষ্ট্রপঞ্জের নিরাপত্তা পরিষদের কাছে প্রেরিত হল যাতে ইরানের বিরুদ্ধে আরও কড়া পদক্ষেপ নেওয়া যায়।

জোট-নিরপেক্ষ অতীতের মায়া কাটিয়ে ভারত শেষ পর্যন্ত ভোট দিল ইরানের বিপক্ষে। বিরোধীদের অভিযোগ, এ হল ওয়াশিংটনের কাছে নতিস্বীকার। সরকারের বক্তব্য, এর নাম বাস্তববাদী বিদেশনীতি। বাস্তববাদ মানে কিন্তু আপস নয়। লিখছেন সেমন্তী ঘোষ

সবচেয়ে উল্লেখযোগ্য এই বৈঠকে ভারতের অবস্থান। নানাবিধ দ্বিধা সংশয় কাটিয়ে, সর্বোচ্চ বৈদেশিক মহলে বাঘ ও কুমিরের তুলনামূলক আলোচনা দ্রুত সেরে ফেলে, নিজের জোট-নিরপেক্ষ অতীতের কফিনে শেষ পেরেকটি পুঁতে ভারত শেষ পর্যন্ত ভোট দিল ইরানের বিপক্ষে। মার্কিন সাধুবাদ বারে পড়ল শ্রাবণের ধারার মতো।

প্রধানমন্ত্রী মনমোহন সিংহ কিংবা বিদেশমন্ত্রী নটবর সিংহ দেশকে বিক্রি করে

কিন্তু জোট-নিরপেক্ষতার দিন ফুরিয়েছে বলেই যে বিশ্বজোড়া জোটের তালে তাল মিলিয়ে নাচতেই হবে, তা-ই বা কেন? বামবাদী গোঁয়ারত্বমি বা বাস্তববিমুখ আদর্শবাদিতায় না চুকেও ভারতের এই পদক্ষেপ বিষয়ে তাই একরাশ প্রশ্ন থেকেই যায়।

১) প্রসাদদৃষ্টি পাওয়ার জন্য আমেরিকার সব কথায় 'হাঁ হজুর' হয়েই বা থাকতে হবে কেন? কেন নিজের স্বার্থ ক্ষুণ্ণ না করে এবং অথবা অন্যের পেছনে না লেগে সংযত

এনার্জি-সংকট দূর হবে না, আঞ্চলিক শক্তি-সমঝোতাও অনেকখানি নিশ্চিত হবে, — সেই পরিকল্পনাও এর ফলে অনিশ্চয়তায় তলিয়ে যেতে পারে। সুতরাং এই ঘটনার খেসারত দিতে হবেই। অথচ এমন কি হতে পারত না যে, আমেরিকার বিরোধিতা না করেও ইরান-বন্ধুত্বটা রক্ষা করা গেল? নানা দিক রক্ষা করে চলাটাই তো কূটনীতি? ইরানের সমর্থনে ভেনেজুয়েলা যেমন ভোট দিল, ভারতের পক্ষে তা হয়তো অসম্ভবছিল। কিন্তু অন্তত রাশিয়া-চিনের মতো ভোটে বিরত থাকতে কি পারতাম না আমরা?

২) সত্যিই কি ভারত মনে করে ইরান যা করছে, তা অক্ষমণীয় অপরাধ, যে অপরাধের জন্য তাকে নিরাপত্তা পরিষদের কাঠগড়ায় দাঁড় করাতে হবে? নন-প্রলিফারেশন চুক্তির অন্যতম স্বাক্ষরকারী দেশ হিসেবে ইরান এন পি টি-র ধারাগুলি যে সত্যিই 'অমান্য' করেছে, বিশেষজ্ঞরাও কিন্তু তা বলছেন না। বরং খুব সতর্কতার সঙ্গে ধারাগুলিকে এড়িয়ে গিয়েই ইরান তার নিজস্ব কার্যক্রম চালাচ্ছে। ঠিকই, বিশেষজ্ঞরা এ-ও বলছেন, শক্তি-উৎপাদনের নামে ইরান যে ইউরেনিয়াম তৈরি করছে, তার থেকে বোমাপ্রস্তুতির উপযুক্ত ইউরেনিয়াম তৈরি এমন কিছু কঠিন ব্যাপার নয়। কিন্তু মোদা ব্যাপার হল, এখনও পর্যন্ত ইরানের বিরুদ্ধে তেমন কোনও দাখিলযোগ্য প্রমাণ যেহেতু কারও কাছেই নেই, আবারও কি ইরাকের WMD বা গণবিধ্বংসী অস্ত্রের মতো আর এক মরীচিকার পিছনে ছুটবে বুশের নেতৃত্বে গোটা একমেরু গোলক?

৩) এই যে প্রস্তাবটি গৃহীত হল, সেটা কি অনাবশ্যক রকম আক্রমণাত্মক নয়? এটা নিশ্চয়ই বোঝাপড়ার মাধ্যমে সমাধানের নমুনা নয়? ইতিমধ্যে তো বেশ কিছু ব্যাপারে আই এ ই এ এবং ইরান নিজেদের মধ্যে সমস্যা মিটিয়ে নিয়েছে, এমনকী সেক্টরগেও সংস্থার ডিরেক্টর জেনারেল জানিয়েছিলেন যে "good progress has been made in Iran's correction of the breaches and in the Agency's ability to confirm certain aspects of Iran's declarations." তবে? এই অবস্থায় শান্তি-প্রস্তাবকে

হাত খুলে সমর্থন করতে পারল ভারত?

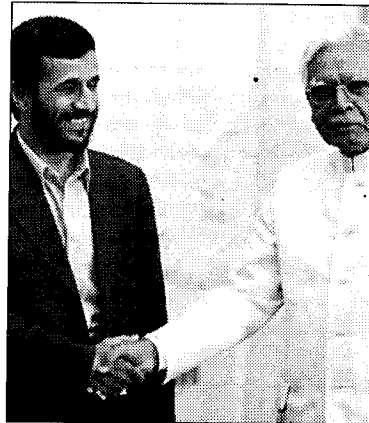
৪) আরও একটি গুরুতর প্রশ্ন। বাহ্যিক শ্রেণিক্তি ছাড়াও কোনও দেশের বিদেশনীতির ভেতরকার একটি নিজস্ব সঙ্গতি থাকে, যাকে বলে 'কনসিস্টেন্সি'। যে ভারত এন পি টি-তে সই করতে রাজি হয়নি, ছয়-ছয়টি পারমাণবিক বিস্ফোরণ ঘটিয়ে নিজের শক্তি যাচিয়ে নিয়েছে, নিজেকে পরমাণু-শক্তিধর রাষ্ট্র হিসেবে ঘোষণাও করেছে, সেই ভারতের পক্ষে কি অন্য একটি বন্ধুত্বাপন্ন দেশ বিষয়ে পরমাণু-অপরাধের অভিযোগ আনা সঙ্গত কাজ? ইরানেরও যে নিজের ভূ-রাজনৈতিক অবস্থানের কারণে পরমাণু-নিষ্পৃহতার অবকাশ নেই, আমেরিকার স্বেহাশ্রুত ইজরায়েলের পাশে দিন গুজরান করতে হলে তারও যে নিজেকে কিছুটা সুরক্ষিত রাখতে হবে, পাকিস্তান-প্রতিবেশী ভারত নিশ্চয়ই তা বোঝে। সুতরাং পরমাণু-কার্যক্রমই ভারতের উদ্বেগের জায়গা নয়, আসল উদ্বেগ আমেরিকার বন্ধুত্ব নিশ্চিত করা নিয়ে।

৫) এইখানেই শেষ ও মোক্ষম প্রশ্ন। এ পথে কি সত্যিই তরলী ভিড়বে তীরে? যে বন্ধুত্বের জন্য এত বাঁপিয়ে-পড়া আকুলতা, এই মন-জুগিয়ে চলার পথে কি তা মিলবে আদৌ? অবশ্যই ওয়াশিংটন নিভুতে শাসিয়ে রেখেছিল যে ইরান বিষয়ে ভারত কী করে, তার ওপরেই নির্ভর করছে সদ্য-সমাণু মনমোহন-বুশ পরমাণু চুক্তির বোঝাপড়ার ভবিষ্যৎ। নাহলে যতই অসামরিক পরমাণু-সহায়তার প্রতিশ্রুতি থাকুক, কথা ফিরিয়ে নিতে দেরি হবে না একটুও।

কিন্তু ভারত ইরানের বিপক্ষে গেলেও যে কথা ফিরিয়ে নেওয়া হবে না, এমন আশ্বাসও কি ভারতের কাছে আছে? আমেরিকার পক্ষ থেকে চাপ দেওয়ার এই তো সবে শুরু! এখন থেকে হয়তো প্রতিটি ক্ষেত্রেই ভারতকে মার্কিন অবস্থানে 'জো হজুর' করিয়ে নেওয়ার চেষ্টা হবে, আর না হলেই চলবে কথা ফিরিয়ে নেওয়ার ছমকি। এবং হয়তো নানা অজুহাতে কথা ফিরিয়ে নেওয়া হবেও, অন্তত যতখানি প্রতিশ্রুত হয়েছে, তার সবটা বাস্তবায়িত হবে না। হাজার হোক, বুশ যে উদ্দীপনার সঙ্গে মনমোহন সিংহকে প্রতিশ্রুতি বিলিয়েছেন, মার্কিন কংগ্রেস কিন্তু তাতে যথেষ্ট বিরক্ত ও বিরত। এবং শেষ পর্যন্ত কংগ্রেসের সমর্থন ছাড়া এক পা-ও এগোতে পারবেন না বুশ, যতই তিনি একমেরু বিশ্বের অধীশ্বর হোন না কেন! তবে কি এই মার্কিন গাজরের পেছনে ছুটে চলাই এখন থেকে ভারতীয় বিদেশনীতির নিয়তি?



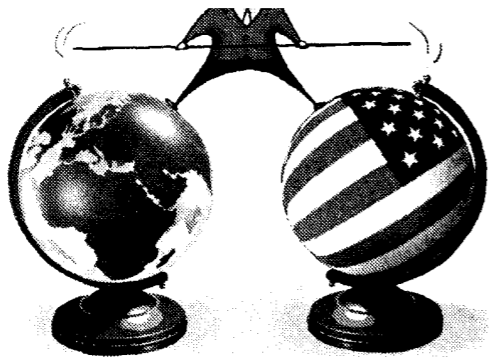
শ্যাম এবং অথবা কুল। মার্কিন প্রেসিডেন্ট বুশের সঙ্গে প্রধানমন্ত্রী মনমোহন সিংহ (বা দিকে), ইরানি প্রধানমন্ত্রী আহমদিনেজাদের সঙ্গে বিদেশমন্ত্রী নটবর সিংহ



দিতে বসেছেন, এই মর্মে সুতরাং আপাতত অনেক কটুক্তি। সুবিধেবাদী, মার্কিন তাঁবেদারি ইত্যাদি গালি যতই লোডনীয় হোক, পরিস্থিতি এ বার সত্যিই কঠিন ছিল। আমেরিকা যে প্রতিশ্রুতির শেকলে ভারতকে বেঁধেছে, তাকে দুচ্ছাই করে উড়িয়ে দেওয়ার জায়গায় ভারত কি সত্যিই আছে? বাস্তববাদী বিদেশনীতি বলে, জোট-নিরপেক্ষ কূটনীতির দিনও ফুরিয়েছে বটেই। একমেরু দুনিয়ায় সমস্ত এবং বিশ্বায়নের যুগপৎ-তাড়িত মঞ্চে আমেরিকার প্রসাদদৃষ্টি ছাড়া যে চলবে না, মনমোহন সিংহের সরকারের সে হিসেবটাতেও কোনও ভুল নেই।

নিরপেক্ষতায় একটা সম্মানজনক অবস্থান রাখা সম্ভব হবে না? ভারতের বিদেশনীতি আমেরিকা-কেন্দ্রিক না হয়ে ভারতকেন্দ্রিক হলেই তো ভাল, নয় কি? চিন তো চিন-কেন্দ্রিক বিদেশ-নীতি ও স্বদেশ-নীতি নিয়েই আমেরিকার কাছে বিশেষে শ্রদ্ধাভাজন হয়ে উঠতে পেরেছে। আই এ ই এ-তে এই যে পদক্ষেপটি নেওয়ার পর আশঙ্কামতোই ইরান এখন ভারতের বিরুদ্ধে কড়া প্রতিশোধের কথা বলতে শুরু করেছে। ইরান থেকে ৪০০ কোটি ডলারের-গ্যাস পাকিস্তানের ওপর দিয়ে ভারতে নিয়ে আসার যে পরিকল্পনা, যাতে নাকি কেবল এই অঞ্চলের

- How should India redefine its foreign policy coordinates in the unipolar world?
- How relevant is non-alignment in the current era?
- Does India's vote on Iran at the International Atomic Energy Agency board indicate a fundamental shift in policy?



Is our foreign policy favouring the US?

Does India's vote on Iran at the International Atomic Energy Agency board indicate a fundamental shift in the country's foreign policy? Three experts evaluate the relevance of non-alignment in the current era.

M RASGOTRA
FORMER FOREIGN SECRETARY
GOVERNMENT OF INDIA

SINCE the end of the Cold War the world has been in a dynamic transition to a new equilibrium of peace. With the disintegration of the Warsaw Pact and the erstwhile Soviet Union in 1990, the US emerged as the single, unrivalled power with global reach. Then there is also its epiphanic transformation as an Asian power with its tangible military presence in Central Asia, the Gulf region, the Afghan-Pak area, the Indian ocean, South-East Asia, the China sea and North-east Asia. All these regions, with the exception of the last-named two, form part of Indian's security arc.

The rise of China as the pre-eminent Asian military and economic power and India's own transformation as a regional military and economic power are equally notable developments of recent years. The US, China and India along with Japan and Russia constitute the pentagonal power complex of the 21st century: four of them are acknowledged nuclear weapon powers. As a result, the centre of gravity of world power and international focus has shifted to Asia from Europe, which is at peace and preoccupied with the problems of its political unification and economic integration. In the next half-century at least, the issues of peace and security will be decided here in Asia by the working equations among these Asian powers.

It is a very different world from the world of a decade and half ago. Necessarily, therefore, the foreign policies of these five powers, and indeed of other countries, are undergoing change in varying measure. The tectonic shift in Washington's India policy is the most significant example of recognition of the realities of a radically changed world. India too must shed its old mindset and reshape its foreign and security policies to safeguard its security and other interests. The US has recognised India as a responsible nuclear weapon power and offered to assist in enhancing its global role and status. India, in turn, must suitably reciprocate Washington's offer. There are no free gifts in international relations.

National interest is the single most important coordinate for foreign policy making. In-

dia needs nuclear energy in abundant measure, a thorough modernisation of its military, advanced technologies for its industry and agriculture, greatly enhanced trade and investments and vastly expanded infrastructure. On the ideological plane, democracy should provide the mooring and moral basis for its future international working partnerships.

Above all, we must be rid of the NPT constraints and become an equal member of the nuclear suppliers group. For the achievement of these goals, India needs active cooperation and support of the US. In return, and in our national interest, the least we ought to do is to actively oppose nuclear proliferation, especially in the regions of India's security perimeter. There is no question of India surrendering to America. Dr Manmohan Singh has firmly rejected pro-Pakistan American pressures on Kashmir. India's IAEA vote on Iran's uranium processing problems is not a vote for the US or against Iran. It is a vote for India's own national security interests. India and another close friend of Iran — France — had warned Iran beforehand of the consequences of non-compliance with its treaty obligations. Iran now has some time to set matters right and avoid referral to the UNSC.

Governments' critics in this matter are prisoners of sentiment and living in the past: the Iranians themselves have shown better understanding of India's action. Does India need to be guided in its decision-making in such matters by Venezuela or NAM members to prove that it has not surrendered its independence to America? Is this their idea of India's role and place in the world? As for NAM, its agenda of the mid-twentieth century, e.g., decolonisation, elimination of apartheid, nuclear disarmament, etc., had been exhausted or bypassed by events by the early '80s. It is a very large and diverse group with a plethora of divergent, often conflicting political and strategic interests.

The movement can acquire relevance if it can put together, even at this late stage, an agreed agenda of economic and development cooperation. Indira Gandhi had tried to guide the movement in that direction in 1983 but was opposed by Cuba, Yugoslavia, Iran and others. Perhaps, the PM should nudge NAM once again on to a constructive course: there is no one around better equipped for the task.

C UDAY BHASKAR
DEPUTY DIRECTOR
IDSA, NEW DELHI

INDIA'S vote at the IAEA is not so much a case of Indian policies being aligned with that of the US, but a reflection of the reality that in the prevailing international strategic systemic, there is a certain correspondence in the interests of India and the US. This is not to be interpreted as total congruence — but a broad convergence in certain areas. And adhering to the sanctity of international treaties in the nuclear domain is one of them. India as a board member of the IAEA has specific obligations to discharge in consonance with the principles that it has adopted, which in turn bolster Delhi's credentials as a 'responsible' nuclear weapon power.

The corollary that follows is that India's foreign policy contours in the current strategic systemic ought to protect and advance India's core interests, even while remaining consistent with the values that it has inherited over the decades. India's current security priority in the nuclear domain is the prevention of further proliferation by either state actors or non-state actors and both are central in the Iranian imbroglio. If Teheran has no intention of acquiring nuclear weapons as it claims, then being more transparent and assuaging the IAEA's concerns would add to regional stability. And investigating Iran's purported covert dealings with the AQ Khan network is of urgent concern to the entire global community.

It also merits repetition that there is no particular solidarity among the non-aligned nations over the nuclear issue. On many occasions the majority among them have adopted positions that are at sharp variance with the Indian position in the matter. Consequently the conclusion and visible anguish among some constituencies that the Vienna vote is a betrayal of the commitment to 'non-alignment' is both counter-factual and invalid.

Non-alignment as a politico-military choice had a tangible validity during the Cold War decades and India was reasonably effective in spearheading the movement. In many ways NAM was the equivalent of a trade union movement during the relentless superpower anarchy of the Cold War and sought to resist

the impress of bi-polarity. The non-aligned movement was a necessary creature of its times but this did not prevent India from leaning towards the former USSR as part of the realpolitik compulsions of those decades.

But given the altered strategic landscape and the arrival of a transient unipolar phase, India must still seek to remain non-aligned as far as major power relations are concerned. The fundamental shift that has taken place in recent years — definitively since May 1998 and the concomitant robustness of the Indian GDP growth rate — is the increasing relevance of India in the global comity. Hence Indian policies

both internally and externally must reflect this new strategic salience to maximise and advance what may be perceived as abiding national interests. And at the end of the day, the pursuit of these policies must not only preserve Indian politico-diplomatic autonomy but also improve the socio-economic conditions of a billion plus citizens in an equitable and harmoniously sustainable manner.

The Vienna vote is being reduced to an 'anti-Iran/pro-US' linear distillate which is misleading. India has in recent months arrived at a satisfactory template for pursuing its bilateral relations with the US and the fine print of this consensus is contained in the July 18 agreement signed between Dr Manmohan Singh and Mr George Bush. There are many areas that will advance Indian interests but the one that has received greater notice is the possibility of greater civilian nuclear cooperation. There is considerable symbolism in this strand for it will radically alter India's profile in the global nuclear matrix. Many of the constraints that were imposed on India at the US behest will be gradually removed and in turn India has accepted certain obligations. The quality of India's strategic relevance in the next two decades will be determined by the outcome of this agreement.

What is at stake is India's nascent credibility in matters nuclear and whether it will be admitted into the global nuclear commerce and management fold in a *de-facto* manner. Indian diplomatic dexterity was evident in the manner in which a breakdown was averted in Vienna. The greater challenge will be in ensuring that New Delhi's bilateral ties with Washington and Teheran are not reduced to an 'either-or' binary choice.



The challenge will be to ensure that India's bilateral ties with the US and Iran are not reduced to an 'either-or' choice

AMITABH MATTOO
VICE CHANCELLOR
UNIVERSITY OF JAMMU

THE defining moment in India's international relations did not occur when New Delhi voted with the US and its allies on Iran on the IAEA board. The real watershed in India's foreign policy occurred in May 1998, when — defying traditional assumptions, analytical predictions and international opinion — India conducted a series of nuclear tests. This was the beginning of a new phase of realism in India's international relations. The direction of India's foreign policy, including the current position on Iran, is rooted in that historic decision.

What are the basic goals of India's foreign policy? Simply put, it is the search for security, space and strength. India's primary quest seems to be to acquire the strength and strategic autonomy that will allow it to stabilise an "unfriendly neighbourhood", give it the capability to make independent, even unpopular, choices in the international system, and be able to influence the future course of international relations. These objectives have defined India's foreign policy since Independence and were the basis for non-alignment. (NAM, however, was a child of cold war politics and has not been able to re-define itself adequately to justify its existence in the post-cold war era.) It is the aggressive pursuit of these goals — clinically, amorally and non-ideologically — which is remarkable and unprecedented.

The present debate on Iran is really a debate about the US and the manner in which India's strategic elite has a paradoxical view of that country. On the one hand, the elite (not just the Left) continues to be suspicious of American policies towards South Asia. Some of this tension, of course, is a legacy of the cold war, but this sentiment is kept alive by the US relationship with Pakistan and by Washington's perceived behaviour in international politics. Resentment at the manner in which Pakistan seems to continue to be rewarded by the US despite its support for terrorism within India is palpable, as is the widespread perception that the US has double standards in dealing with terrorism. Washington's decision to declare Pakistan a major non-NATO ally in March

2004, within weeks of the confirmation of reports that Pakistan's scientists had leaked nuclear technology to Iran, Libya and North Korea, brought home to Indians the more cynical aspects of US short-term interests.

Similarly, there is a widespread feeling that Washington is not sufficiently sensitive to Indian security concerns or its aspirations of being a great power. The Indian elite is clearly uncomfortable with the US's hyper-power, a term popularised by the French and which has gained intellectual currency within India. Similarly, the sparring between Indian and US negotiators, in various multilateral trade-related

forums, over the pace of liberalisation in agriculture and services, continues to demonstrate the current limits of the relationship with Washington, and the fact that American self-interest will in no way be compromised in the process of building a relationship with the world's largest democracy.

On the other hand, despite such apprehensions about the US, there are few that want a confrontation with the US. Instead, there is strong support for engaging the only superpower in a meaningful relationship and for building a strong, pragmatic partnership with it. The terms "natural allies" and "strategic partners", often used for India and the US, have a deep resonance with India's strategic elite. The belief that there is long-term strategic convergence between the two countries is widespread. Economic and technological ties, educational and societal links,

shared concern over China's future, and the common battle against terrorism are key factors that bind the US and India. A shared commitment to pluralism, democracy and the free-market, as well as the successful Indian diaspora in the US, provide strong foundations for the growth of the relationship.

A *modus vivendi* with the US is not just desirable, but a necessity if India has to translate its aspirations into reality. In contrast, India may have important stakes in Iran, but there are no vital national interests that could be effected. Moreover, does any Indian want another nuclear weapon power in its extended neighbourhood? Foreign policy, alas, cannot be run on the basis of moral or ideological crusades: the only commitment should be to the national interest and national security. The earlier the Left realises this, the better it will be for the country.



Foreign policy can't be run on the basis of morality or ideology: the only commitment should be to the national interest

PM gets it Left & Right on Iran

Handwritten notes: "Aur in Gopin" and "Rising 2/10" are written above the title. "SP" is written to the right of the title.

Statesman News Service

KOLKATA/BHOPAL, Oct. 1 — Left parties will organise public opinion and put pressure on the UPA government to change its "pro-US" stand and support Iran at the International Atomic Energy Agency when the final voting takes place in November, CPI-M general secretary Mr Prakash Karat said at a meeting organised by the Left Front on Rani Rashmoni Avenue this evening.

"India has always supported anti-imperialist struggles in other countries and took a leading role in the Non Alliance Movement. Its a pity that today the UPA government is supporting the USA which wants to stop Iran from developing nuclear energy for its development", Mr Karat said.

The meeting was attended by senior Left Front leaders including Mr Biman Bose and Mr Anil Biswas. A signature campaign was also launched.

"The government promised in the common minimum programme that it will have an independent foreign policy and work towards building a multi-
Handwritten note: "India has shared a healthy relation-



Dr Singh: Facing flak

ship for many years. After tearing apart Iraq, the USA is now planning to attack Iran to get control over its oil and gas reserves," the CPI-M general secretary said.

Mr Karat also stressed on the need to set up the gas pipeline between Iran and India. "India needs the gas for its development. But the US is now threatening that it will impose sanctions against India, Iran and Pakistan if the pipeline is set up. When India voted against Iran in Vienna our government said it was done in the interest of the nation. Which nation are we talking about?"

It was however apparent that by boycotting the coordination committee meetings the Left parties have lost the opportunity to interact with the government. Asked whether the meet-

ings will resume soon, Mr Karat told reporters that a message had been sent to the Congress and he was waiting for a reply.

In Bhopal, the CPI today accused the Centre of "diluting" India's foreign policy of non-alignment and "almost adopting the BJP's path of anti-working class policies". The party warned that "friendship with the USA will endanger the country".

CPI leader Mr Gurudas Dasgupta said: "We oppose and protest against the dilution of our non-aligned foreign policy. The vote against Iran at IAEA has tarnished India's image." He added: "The USA was never a friend of India. Friendship with it will bring danger."

As for the BJP, senior party leader Mr MM Joshi today criticised the Prime Minister saying there was no government worth its name in the absence of coordination between Dr Manmohan Singh and his ministers. As a result, diverse statements were made by Dr Singh other ministers on nuclear issues, friendship with Pakistan and the Iran gas pipeline. "They are moving in different directions."

Manmohan quotes Gita in defence

Handwritten mark: "X" is written to the right of the title.

Statesman News Service

NEW DELHI, Oct. 1. — The Prime Minister today sought to defend India's vote supporting the IAEA (International Atomic Energy Agency) resolution against Iran's nuclear programme while playing down the scathing reaction from his government's Left allies.

"What we have done is not against Iran. Give diplomacy time to find a via-media, which is mutually acceptable," Dr Manmohan Singh told reporters at Rashtrapati Bhavan after the President, Dr APJ Abdul Kalam, gave away the Lal Bahadur Shastri National Award for excellence in Public Administration, Academics and Management for 2004 to former civil servant C Srivastava.

In response to a direct attack by the CPI-M leader, Mr Prakash Karat, in an article to be published in the next issue of the party's organ, *People's Democracy*, Dr Singh stoically said it did not surprise him and quoted the Gita instead. "Nothing surprises me," he said when asked whether Mr Karat's article had caught him unawares. "Gita says one must do one's duty unmindful of the consequences."

Mr Karat has, in his article, termed India's decision as a "final act of surrender" to the US position and held the Prime Minister directly responsible for the vote. He asserted that the Left could not countenance this "new direction" of the foreign policy. Slamming the Indian position as hypocritical, the CPI-M leader said while India asserted its right to conduct nuclear tests, it did not want another nuclear power in the region.

ইরান-আমেরিকাকে তুষ্ট রাখতে মধ্যপন্থা দিল্লির

স্টাফ রিপোর্টার, নয়াদিল্লি, ২৮ সেপ্টেম্বর: তেহরান নিয়ে অস্বস্তি বাড়ছে নয়াদিল্লির। গত কয়েক সপ্তাহ ধরে টানা পোড়নের মাঝে পড়ে মনমোহন সরকার যে মধ্যপন্থার ফুটনীতি নিয়ে চলার চেষ্টা করছিলেন, তা দৃশ্যতই একপেশে হয়ে গিয়ে ঘরে বাইরে সমালোচনার ঝড় তুলেছে।

পরমাণু একশ্রেণী ইরান-বিরোধী ভোট দেওয়ায় এক দিকে যেমন দ্বিপাক্ষিক সম্পর্ক প্রভাবিত হচ্ছে, অন্য দিকে দেশের ভিতরেও সরকারের বিরুদ্ধে মার্কিন তোষণের অভিযোগ উঠছে। আর এই অভিযোগের তর্জনী উঠিয়েছে সব থেকে বেশি বন্ধু বামেরাই। চুপ করে নেই প্রধান বিরোধী দল বিজেপিও।

তাই বিদেশসচিব শ্যাম সারন থেকে শুরু করে সরকারের তরফে বারবারই বিভিন্ন ভাবে বোঝানোর চেষ্টা চলছে, ইরানের স্বার্থেই খসড়া প্রস্তাবের পক্ষে ভোট দিয়েছে ভারত। চিন ও রাশিয়া-সহ ১২টি দেশের মতো তারা ভোট দেওয়া থেকে বিরত থাকেনি। নয়াদিল্লির

বক্তব্য, সে ক্ষেত্রে ভুল সংকেত যেত।

নভেম্বরে আন্তর্জাতিক সংস্থার সোচ্চার ভোটগুটি সেখানে ভারত

সিদ্ধান্তেরই প্রতিফলন ঘটায় কি না তা নিয়ে কূটনৈতিক শিবিরে জল্পনা শুরু হয়েছে। এ ক্ষেত্রে বামেরদের কাছ থেকেও যে চরম চাপ আসবে সেই ব্যাপারটিকেও মাথায় রাখা হচ্ছে।

অথচ যদি চলতি সিদ্ধান্তের (ইরানের পরমাণু প্রকল্প নিয়ে খসড়া প্রস্তাবের পক্ষে ভোট দেওয়া) থেকে ভারত হটে আসে তা হলে কূটনৈতিক জটিলতা বাড়বে বই কমবে না। সর্বোপরি মার্কিন চাপের প্রসঙ্গটি তো থেকে যাবেই।



মার্কিন-বিরোধী ক্রোড ইরানে! — এএফপি

রাখবার ভারতের ভোটের পর গত কাল ইরান থেকে প্রধানমন্ত্রীর দফতরে বার্তা আসে, গ্যাস পাইপলাইনের চুক্তি বাতিল করে দেওয়া হচ্ছে। এর পরই সক্রিয় হয়ে ওঠে নয়াদিল্লি। আজ সকালে বিদেশ মন্ত্রকের তরফ থেকে জানানো হয়,

তারাই পরিবর্তন ঘটেছে বলে তাঁরা জানেন না। মূলত দিল্লির চাপেই টোক গিলেছে তেহরান। আজ বিকেলেই ইরানের জাতীয় গ্যাস নিগমের মুখপাত্র মহম্মদ রেজ্জাক নেমাংযাদে জানিয়েছেন, গ্যাস চুক্তি সম্পর্কে নতুন ব্যাবস্থা নেওয়া হয়নি।

তবে কূটনৈতিক পদক্ষেপ যাই হোক না কেন

বাস্তব পরিস্থিতি হল, পাইপলাইনের মাধ্যমে ইরানের কাছ থেকে আকৃতিক গ্যাস এবং পরমাণু শক্তি উৎপাদনের জন্য মার্কিন প্রযুক্তি, দুটোই ভারতের কাছে সমান জরুরি। কূটনৈতিক সূত্রের খবর, নয়াদিল্লি তার বাধ্যবাধকতা তেহরানের কাছে পৌঁছে দিতে চাইছে। জোর গলায় মার্কিন কংগ্রেসকেও বোঝাতে চাইছে, পরমাণু প্রযুক্তি পেতে ভারত দায়িত্বশীল দাবিদার। এই মধ্যপন্থাই অবলম্বন করে এগোতে চাইছে মনমোহন সরকার, বোঝাতে চাইছে তার ঘরের 'বন্ধু' বামেরদেরও।

বামেরা অবশ্য এই প্রসঙ্গে গোড়া থেকেই কষ্টের মনোভাব নিয়েছেন। জোট নিরপেক্ষ আন্দোলনে সঙ্গী ইরানের সঙ্গে 'বিশ্বাসঘাতকতার' অভিযোগেই তাঁরা এখন সরব। দেশ জুড়ে প্রচারের ডাক দেওয়া হয়েছে। তবে সরকারের শীর্ষ নেতৃত্বের মধ্যে এই নিয়ে বিধা নেই। আগামী নভেম্বরের বৈঠকে আলোচনার গতিপ্রকৃতি স্থির করতে মনমোহনের পাশে দাঁড়িয়েছেন

প্রতিরক্ষামন্ত্রী প্রণব মুশোপাধ্যায়।

US tilt clear, says Left

5/2/19
Steelman News Service

NEW DELHI, Sept. 28. — The Left parties today strongly criticised New Delhi's stand against Teheran at the recent International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) meeting in Vienna. They said it showed a clear tilt towards the USA and was in violation of the government's Common Minimum Programme on following an independent foreign policy.

Leaders of four Left parties expressed anguish over India's voting against Iran on nuclear matters. They let their feelings be known at a meeting called by the Prime Minister, Dr Manmohan Singh, at his residence this morning. Representatives of the CPI-M, CPI, RSP and the Forward

Bloc were present. The CPI-M Politburo member, Mr Sitaram Yechuri, said after the hour-long meeting that the voting had clearly shown that India tied its foreign policy to US interests.

The Left leaders, expected to meet shortly to formulate their strategy on the matter, held that the development would dent India's image. It would "definitely have a negative impact on its stature as leader of the developing nations". They said India instead should have taken a "neutral" position keeping in mind its time-tested relations with Iran. The CPI national secretary, Mr D Raja, said a meeting of the Left Coordination Committee would be held to evolve a common strategy on the issue.

Earlier, the foreign secretary, Mr Shyam Sharan, along with the

Prime Minister and the defence minister, Mr Pranab Mukherjee, tried to explain to the Left leaders the circumstances under which India had to vote against Iran. This, however, did not bring any change in the Left's views.

Mr Mukherjee later admitted that there were differences with the Left on the issue. "Different parties have different perceptions. They presented their view points at the meeting," he said.

The former Prime Minister and Janata Dal (Secular) leader, Mr HD Deve Gowda, too has criticised the UPA government's move to back the European Union vote against Iran. At the party's national executive here today, Mr Gowda charged the UPA with "straying" from India's policy of non-alignment. A party resolu-

tion on the subject said the decision had come as a great set-back for the developing countries which counted upon India to lead the non-aligned movement.

Pipeline worries

With the Iranian government formally assuring India of the \$22 billion LNG (liquefied natural gas) supply deal being operational in 2009, top brass in the petroleum ministry and in the ministry of external affairs are more concerned about the 2.5 MMTPA agreement for which initial negotiations have begun, and about the Indo-Pak-Iranian gas pipeline, talks about which are already in progress.

India has spoken to Iran about avoiding any further bitterness after India's "yes" vote at the IAEA.

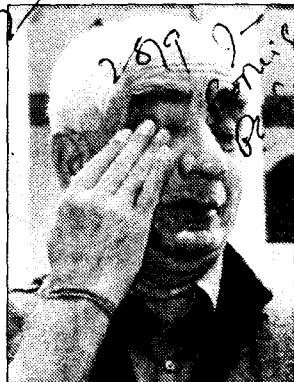
Jaswant's US stand incenses BJP

Singhled Out: Fails To Question UPA Decision On IAEA Resolution

Our Political Bureau
NEW DELHI 27 SEPTEMBER

SENIOR BJP leader and former Union minister Jaswant Singh's "pro-US line", seen on successive foreign policy issues, including the Manmohan Singh government's latest move to vote along with the US and other western countries on the IAEA resolution on Iran, has left his party colleagues livid.

Jaswant Singh, who as the external affairs minister in the Vajpayee government, was credited with masterminding India's foreign policy tilt towards the US, finds himself in the firing line for letting go an excellent opportunity to question the UPA government's decision which, many in his party believe, had been dictat-



ed by Washington, and also highlight the contradictions between the Congress and the Left parties on the issue.

Rather than going into the fine-print, Jaswant Singh, speaking to newsmen on Monday,

found himself conveying the impression that the BJP was angry with the government for keeping it out of the consultation loop.

The former Union minister refrained from attacking the government directly for "succumbing to American pressure", confining himself to observing that "there is a strong belief, including among the UPA alliance partners, that this has been done under international pressure, particularly of the US".

This is not the first time Jaswant Singh has ended up lending credence to the perception that he is soft on the US. It is learnt that during the BJP's national executive meeting held in Chennai earlier this month, he had used his clout within the party to ensure the deletion, from

the political resolution, of two paragraphs devoted to the foreign policy changes being effected by the UPA government, simply because he felt they were very critical of the US.

The party had, in these two paragraphs, had hit out at the Manmohan Singh government for its failure to address the points raised by former Prime Minister Atal Bihari Vajpayee on the Indo-US Civilian Nuclear Co-operation pact, and for compromising India's independent nuclear status. Given his proclivity towards the US, many leaders in the BJP feel that the party had erred in fielding Jaswant Singh to highlight the party's objections on the issue. He, in the end, only heightened the confusion over the party's approach to the subject.

The Economic Times

Explain foreign policy shift: Jaswant Singh

"Government's stand on Iran and other nuclear issues confusing"

Special Correspondent

NEW DELHI: Bharatiya Janata Party leader Jaswant Singh on Monday described the Government's approach to the Iran nuclear issue as "perplexing" and its stand on a host of nuclear-related issues as "confusing." He demanded that the Prime Minister or the External Affairs Minister "explain" to the country the concerns, which made India vote with the European Union on the Iran nuclear issue, leading to a "major shift" in foreign policy.

With the hammering out of an agreement in July between India and the United States during a visit there by Prime Minister

• Centre not consulting Opposition on foreign policy issues

• It must explain rationale behind vote at IAEA

Manmohan Singh, India "fell away from non-alignment," Mr. Singh said. He charged the Government with "surreptitiously" changing the foreign policy without consulting with the Opposition. The issue had not been discussed with either National Democratic Alliance chairman Atal Bihari Vajpayee, Leader of Opposition L.K. Advani or with

him.

Mr. Singh objected to the manner in which the Government went about the business. And "what it finally delivered was totally unacceptable."

A two-page written statement he distributed gave no inkling of the BJP's stand on what was unacceptable, except that lack of transparency and consultation with the Opposition was not in order.

Mr. Singh contrasted the NDA's record after Pokhran-II in 1998 when the Vajpayee Government brought about a "major transformation of the entire nuclear policy."

But that change was brought about "openly" with the rationale offered "upfront" to the country and to the international community.

After the vote at the Vienna meeting of the International Atomic Energy Agency, the political leadership was silent and only some bureaucrats were trying to "explain" the country's stand, Mr. Singh said.

Initially he was reluctant to give the BJP's direct response to a question whether it was critical or supportive of India's stance against Iran. "All the facts were not before us ... the Government ought to have consulted the Opposition ... that is not the manner in which India ought to have approached the issue."

Mr. Singh was also critical of the Left, especially the Communist Party of India (Marxist) for "running with the hare and hunting with the hounds."

"Understanding Vajpayee difficult"

Special Correspondent

NEW DELHI: Deciphering the former Prime Minister, Atal Bihari Vajpayee, was as difficult as trying to get at the meaning of Tulsidas' *Ram Charit Manas*. "It takes time to understand Atalji's views. It is like reading Tulsidas' *Ram Charit Manas*, you can read a new meaning into it on each reading."

That was Bharatiya Janata Party leader Jaswant Singh's response when he was asked by reporters on Monday on the meaning of Mr. Vajpayee's veiled criticism of the Rashtriya Swayamsevak

Sangh on Sunday when he had said that there was "no final principle of any ideology" and "there should be no restriction on ideas and thoughts." He had remarked, "Our friends have made an attempt to limit the thought process. It is not necessary that all of us accept it [ideology] in the same form." The reference to was seen to be a reference to the RSS leaders. Mr. Singh said that just as religion, ideology should not be reduced to a set of rituals. "There should be openness of thinking, but with discipline, if there is no openness then rot sets in.

JD (S), CPI (M-L) criticise vote

India's stand based on independent assessment: Congress

Special Correspondent

NEW DELHI: The Congress on Monday defended India's vote against Iran in the International Atomic Energy Agency stating it took a stand based on independent assessment and national interest.

The party's defence came as more parties, the Janata Dal (Secular), the Communist Party of India (Marxist-Leninist) and CPI (M-L) New Democracy joined the protests and condemned the move.

Congress spokesperson Anand Sharma said India had taken a constructive and positive position at the IAEA and that there was no departure from the country's fundamental and stated position.

He said Prime Minister Manmohan Singh had made it clear that India was principally opposed to referring Iran to the United Nations Security Council and insisted on more time for negotiations within the purview of IAEA.

"We are satisfied that India has engaged proactively with the

• No departure from country's fundamental and stated position: Congress

• JD(S) calls it a shameful act of the Government

• A deep-rooted conspiracy, says CPI (ML)

EU 3 (France, United Kingdom and Germany) and made them aware of our concerns. Indian's concerns were brought on board and the resolution was amended..." Mr. Sharma said.

He said linking the voting to relations with the United States was not correct. "We reject in totality this perception that India's role was influenced by extraneous reasons", he said.

As for the BJP's charge against the Government, Mr. Sharma said the Congress did not need prescriptions from anyone on national interest.

JD (S) spokesman Danish Ali said the party condemned the "shameful act" of the Manmo-

han Singh Government.

He said the party's national executive that meets here on Wednesday would adopt a resolution against it.

CPI (M-L) New Democracy general secretary Yatendra Kumar said that by voting against Iran, the Government supported by the Left, had made India a party to the U.S. "aggressive designs against Third World countries particularly Middle East countries..."

CPI (ML) general secretary Kanu Sanyal said the Government's act was "not only shameful but also a deep rooted conspiracy and crime against our people and the country."

CPI (ML) Liberation general secretary, Dipankar Bhattacharya said the move was not sudden and the incident made it clear that the UPA Government had "tied itself completely to the strategic interests of the American foreign policy and had sacrificed independent foreign policy making as a sovereign state."

The party has called for a protest on Thursday.

Delhi defends Iran move

279
SIA
Indian News Service

NEW DELHI, Sept. 26. — The intense attacks and the media speculation over India going along with the EU and the USA on the IAEA resolution against Iran had forced the external affairs ministry to go into an explanation overdrive today.

India had voted along with EU members — Britain, France and Germany — and the USA, to approve a resolution with 22 votes which termed Iran as "non-compliant" with regard to the IAEA's safeguard provisions.

Foreign secretary Mr Shyam Saran, who arrived last night from the USA, gave an unusual morning briefing to the media to reiterate that the main reason for backing the resolution was that the

EU-3 had accommodated India's concern of giving more time for negotiations with Iran, rather than go in for a direct confrontation.

The damage-control exercise had begun immediately after the vote in Vienna. The external publicity division of the MEA had sent out an explanatory note as well as another long paper on specific points, including the much-speculated link with the US-India nuclear deal. But intense attacks by Left parties and a BJP leader termed India as a "client state" meant that a more direct method was required.

The underlying theme of the foreign secretary's message was that effectively India was battling for Iran. Mr Saran said India had "been all along very supportive of the EU-3" as India saw their initiative as "a way out for a possible

compromise, a reasonable compromise on what is a sensitive issue".

He said India had also supported the agreement between Iran and EU-3 to suspend conversion activity at the nuclear facility in Isfahan. Similarly, India had been part of the consensus which approved a resolution at IAEA in August requesting Iran to suspend its conversion activity, something that it had resumed.

The Prime Minister, the external affairs minister and diplomats had been involved in a series of high-level meetings across world capitals, where they determined the fate of Iran before the UN nuclear agency. Mr Saran said India and other non-aligned nations had a problem with the undue haste being shown by the EU to immediately refer Iran to the United Nations Security Council to face

possible sanctions, especially as there was a new regime in Teheran.

The foreign secretary said that after making a major effort to make the EU-3 dilute the resolution, abstention by India, as done by most non-aligned countries, would not have been in the right spirit. "I think, in terms of diplomacy, having got them to agree to what we wanted, then to say that we will only abstain on the resolution, would not have been a correct position for us to take," Mr Saran said.

Despite the vote, he asserted, India had "no reservations" about Iran's right to peaceful uses of nuclear energy. "There is certainly no implication that India has any reservation about Iran's pursuit of a peaceful nuclear energy programme consistent with global non-proliferation norms," he said.

Iran Finds Support From Left & Right

BJP blasts govt's policy shift

Left says 'shameful'

Our Political Bureau
NEW DELHI 25 SEPTEMBER

SENSING some downstream benefits in the domestic space, the BJP on Sunday attacked the latest foreign policy shift signalled in the UPA government's support to the resolution asking Iran to make concessions to Washington.

BJP leader and former foreign minister Yashwant Singh, criticising Manmohan Singh government for 'abandoning' Iran, said the UPA had succumbed to the US pressure. "The veil is off. India is now firmly in the US camp. A government which came to power vowing to follow an independent foreign policy has surrendered its independ-

ence to the US. The UPA government has made India a client state of the US," Mr Sinha said. The BJP's attack coincided with strong protests from the Left.

Mr Sinha said India has abandoned Iran to save the UPA government's questionable nuclear deal with the USA.

"It is a pity that the government has decided to vote for the EU resolution against Iran in the IAEA. India's consistent position has been that issues in Iran's nuclear programme should be resolved through discussions and consensus and not through confrontation. By voting for a resolution to refer the matter to the United Nations Security Council, this

avenue has been closed," he said.

Mr Sinha said New Delhi did not even choose to abstain from the voting on the EU resolution like Russia and China did.

"Clearly, the UPA government has buckled under pressure from the US," he said.

India was facing pressure from Washington to back a Security Council referral of Iran's nuclear transgressions. The Bush administration had made it clear any shirking on the issue will inhibit it from fulfilling its part of US-India nuclear deal. The attack on the government from the Right as well as the Left is sure to make the forward movement on the policy front quite tough.

Our Political Bureau
NEW DELHI 25 SEPTEMBER

INDIA'S vote against Iran in the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) has thrown up another confrontation between the Manmohan Singh government and the Left. Dubbing the move as "shameful", the Left Parties accused the UPA

on Sunday of giving in to US pressure and demanded a reversal of this stand in the November meeting of the IAEA.

The CPM and CPI issued statements criticising the vote with the US and EU taking Iran to the Security Council for its nuclear programme. Both alleged that

India let down the non-aligned and developing countries and asked the government to stand by its stated position that Iran has the right to develop nuclear tech-

nology under international safeguards as a signatory of the nuclear non-proliferation treaty. Left parties will seek a discussion with the government on the issue.

"Can the Manmohan Singh government justify the demand in the IAEA resolution that Iran cannot proceed with the enrichment of uranium or the demand to stop the construction of a heavy water reactor? This goes against India's declared stand," the CPM

politburo said.





MONDAY, SEPTEMBER 26, 2005

India's shameful vote against Iran

The decision to vote adversarially against Iran at Saturday's crucial meeting of the Board of Governors of the International Atomic Energy Agency is evidence of the Manmohan Singh Government's shameful willingness to abandon the independence of Indian foreign policy for the sake of strengthening its "strategic partnership" with the United States. Made in stealth without any broad-based discussion within the Government or with allies and national political parties, the top-level political decision (which was reported in *The Hindu* of September 17) conflicts with proclaimed Indian policy. It bears emphasis that the resolution adopted by the IAEA Board 22-1 with 12 abstentions has grave international implications. Specifically, it recalls Iran's alleged "failures in a number of instances," as a party to the Nuclear Nonproliferation Treaty, to meet its obligations under its NPT Safeguards Agreement, and its alleged "policy of concealment." Adopting a menacing tone, the resolution finds Iran in "non-compliance in the context of Article XII.C of the Agency's Statute"; among other things, this Article allows the Board "to report the non-compliance to ...the Security Council and the General Assembly of the United Nations." Further, the resolution finds that Iran's nuclear activities and "the resulting absence of confidence" that its nuclear programme is "exclusively for peaceful purposes" have given rise to "questions that are within the competence of the Security Council, as the organ bearing the main responsibility for the maintenance of international peace and security." Finally, it threatens that the Board "will address the timing and content of the report" to be submitted to the U.N. Security Council for possible punitive action.

This Bush-led resolution is unjust as well as provocative — if the idea is to find a solution through intelligent negotiation. Iran and the IAEA have resolved most of the issues in dispute; in fact, the IAEA Director General reported to the Board as recently as September 2 that "good progress has been made in Iran's correction of the breaches and in the Agency's ability to confirm certain aspects of Iran's current declarations." The only major outstanding question is the extent of the Iranian centrifuge research programme. At the very least, the resolution steps up the pressure on Iran in infringement of its sovereign rights. It is possible that it is designed to short-circuit the prospect of a negotiated solution, and to push the world towards another major confrontation. Anticipating public criticism of its *volte face*, the Manmohan Singh Government claims it voted the way it did because the "door for dialogue" was being kept open. It also insists that the decision to abandon its earlier insistence on consensus and break ranks with Russia, China, the non-aligned bloc, and even Pakistan has nothing to do with the July 18 U.S.-India civilian nuclear agreement. These arguments are disingenuous. The craven vote of September 24 underlines the fact that Indian foreign policy suffers from insecurity, a poor understanding of the realities of the international situation, a lack of confidence in the nation's strategic weight, and an absence of belief in, or commitment to, genuine independence and non-alignment. The downward trajectory initiated by the National Democratic Alliance Government in dealings with the United States, signalled by support, of all things, to 'Star Wars,' has hit a new low. It seems that Prime Minister Manmohan Singh's negative remarks on the Iran-India pipeline in July were not happenstance but the opening lines of a script rewritten in Washington.

In the run-up to the crucial vote, New Delhi was told in no uncertain terms that the fate of the civilian nuclear agreement would hinge on changing its line on Teheran. When Congressional hearings on the agreement began in Washington earlier this month, the Bush administration joined individual Congressmen in orchestrating exaggerated concern about India's relationship with Iran. Until then, New Delhi had been correctly insisting that the IAEA was the proper forum to resolve lingering questions about Iran's civilian nuclear programme and that equal weight needed to be given to Iranian obligations (not to produce nuclear weapons) and rights (to the full nuclear fuel cycle) under the NPT. The IAEA Director General's latest report did observe that Iran's full cooperation was overdue and indispensable but also confirmed that nine issues out of ten had been resolved. As a three-part analysis published last week in this newspaper showed, such a situation can hardly be considered "non-compliance" of a magnitude threatening international peace and security.

It's a bit rich that India — which has refused to join the NPT, has turned its back on accepting full-scope IAEA safeguards, has conducted six nuclear explosions (in 1974 and 1998), and is a declared nuclear weapons state — is able to join in a 'proliferation' indictment of Iran. This means embracing the worst kind of double standards. At stake is not the danger of proliferation — nobody has produced any evidence that Iran is pursuing, or has ever pursued, a nuclear weapons programme — but the right of a sovereign country to develop peaceful nuclear power as a source of energy and engage in the nuclear fuel cycle. The NPT allows all parties to the international nuclear bargain to develop uranium enrichment facilities of the kind being built at Natanz, provided they are safeguarded. The U.S. and its allies want to rewrite the rules so that they will be able to control both the nuclear fuel cycle and the commerce around nuclear fuel and reactors. That is why the non-aligned group of countries has tended to stand with Iran on this issue. Teheran has made several positive proposals aimed at reassuring the international community that its civilian facilities will not be misused for military purposes. Washington, however, is not interested in any such proposal. Iran shall not be allowed to enrich uranium, it has decided imperiously. Beyond that, it wants to strangulate Iran's oil and gas sector, and bring about "regime change" in that country. Instead of recognising this truth, and also the fact that American demands on Iran will be unending, the United Progressive Alliance Government has compromised the national interest by helping to prepare the ground for another possible conflict in India's own region. Even at this eleventh hour, the Government must change course. When the subject of Iran comes up for discussion in the Board of Governors meeting in November, it must not support any European or U.S. move to take the matter to the Security Council.

"India voted under U.S. pressure"

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"India" "Foreign Policy"

Left attacks stand against Iran

Neena Vyas

NEW DELHI: Communist parties and some others have charged the Manmohan Singh Government with abandoning non-alignment and acting under pressure from the United States when it voted with the West at the board meeting of the International Atomic Energy Agency in Vienna to refer to the United Nations Security Council issues related to Iran's nuclear programme.

The Left pointed out that not only did India not abstain (Russia and China abstained), it went along with the European Union's resolution "virtually converting India into an ally of the United States" and doing "immense damage to India's standing among the non-aligned and developing countries."

The Communist Party of India (Marxist) in a statement by its Polit Bureau here on Sunday condemned the stand of the Government and gave notice that it would call for a country-

wide campaign against the Government's stand. The Communist Party of India urged that "even now" there was time for India to stand with Iran during the "dialogue" promised in the Vienna resolution.

Separately, the former External Affairs Minister, Yashwant Sinha, said "the United Progressive Alliance Government had succumbed to U.S. pressure." Talking to *The Hindu* over telephone, Mr. Sinha, who made it plain that he was speaking on his own behalf and not for the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP), alleged that the Government had surrendered its independent foreign policy to the U.S.; that it had made India a "client state of America"; and it had gone against its "consistent position" that "issues related to Iran's nuclear programme should be resolved through dialogue and consensus, not confrontation."

THE HINDU

Pro-US shift in foreign policy

Manmohan Asks Iranian Prez To Be Flexible on N-Issue

By Chidanand Rajghatta/TNN

Washington: With those five sentences the UPA regime signalled a fundamental change in the country's foreign policy of over five decades. In a transparent shift in alignment, the UPA government on Friday signed up with the US on a sensitive issue, asking Iran to be flexible and make concessions to avoid a confrontation with Washington on the nuclear issue.

India's blunt message was conveyed by Prime Minister Manmohan Singh to Iranian President Mahmoud Ahmedinijad when the latter called him up on Friday. In fact, the UPA government went to unusual lengths to disclose the gist of the conversation between

PARADIGM SHIFT



Manmohan



Ahmedinijad

the two leaders in a brief press release sent to select media.

The government statement read: "The PM received a call from Iranian President Ahmedinejad... The President raised the issue about Iran's nuclear programme

in the IAEA. Prime Minister advised him that Iran should consider taking a flexible position so as to avoid a confrontation."

Establishment figures argued there was nothing new in the government's position, pointing to the fifth sentence caveat that India "supports the resolution of all issues through discussion and consensus in the IAEA." In fact, when the matter comes up before the IAEA on Saturday, India is again expected to press for a consensus. But the operative portions are sentences three and four in which India advises Iran to be flexible and make concessions. It virtually signals an end to the anti-Americanism that ran through South Block for five decades.

NEW YORK ■ 'India unapologetic about Tehran ties'

Build consensus on Iran: Natwar to Rice

DHARAM SHOURIE

NEW YORK, SEPTEMBER 20

STICKING to its stand on Iran, India today called for intensive diplomatic consultations to build an international consensus on how to deal with Tehran's programme of uranium enrichment despite American and European pressure to abandon it.

The Iran issue figured prominently during a 45-minute meeting here that External Affairs Minister K Natwar Singh had with US Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice, which a senior official said was held in a "cordial and friendly atmosphere".

The Singh-Rice meeting comes within a week of the meeting between Prime Minis-



Natwar Singh, Condoleezza Rice in New York on Tuesday

ter Manmohan Singh and President George W Bush during which it was made clear that India did not want another nuclear weapon state in its neighbourhood. Yesterday, Iranian President Ahmadinejad told the UNGA that uranium enrichment would continue as it

was only for peaceful purposes.

Ahead of his meeting, Natwar Singh, in a TV interview, said India was not apologetic about its relations with Iran and hoped that Tehran's nuclear issue would be sorted out within the IAEA framework. —(PTI)

20 SEP 2005

INDIAN EXPRESS

India for Iran diplomacy card

Natwar, Rice discuss Tehran's uranium enrichment programme

Agencies
New York, September 20

STICKING TO its stand on Iran, India on Tuesday sought intensive diplomatic consultations to evolve international consensus on how to deal with Tehran's decision to continue uranium enrichment programme notwithstanding American and European pressure to abandon it.

The Iran issue figured prominently during a 45-minute meeting here external affairs minister K. Natwar Singh had with US Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice, which a senior official said was held in a "cordial and friendly atmosphere".

The Natwar-Rice meeting comes within a week of the meeting here between Prime Minister Manmohan Singh and President George Bush during which it was made clear that India did not want another nuclear weapons state in its neighbourhood.

It also took place a day after Iranian President Mahmoud Ahmadinejad told the UN General Assembly that it would continue its uranium enrichment programme, asserting it was only for peaceful purposes. Washington fears that Tehran would divert the enriched uranium for making nuclear weapons. During his talks with Bush, the Prime Minister had affirmed that India was not holding a brief or alibi for Iran's nuclear programme and that another nuclear weapons power in the neighbourhood was not good.

India has maintained that Iran, a signatory to the nuclear non-proliferation treaty (NPT), must fulfil its international obligations and, at the same time, diplomacy must be given maximum scope to resolve the issue.

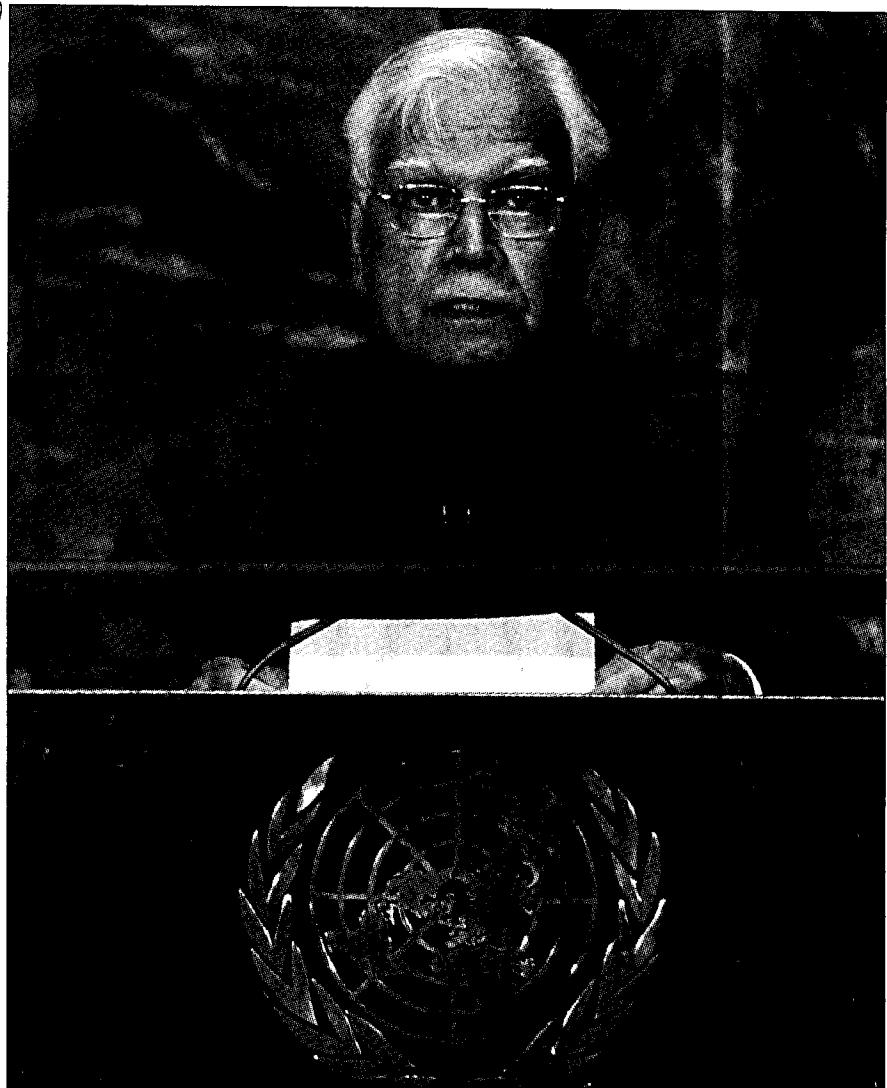
Ahead of his meeting, Natwar Singh had in a television interview said India was not apologetic about its relations with Iran, while hoping that Tehran's nuclear issue would be sorted out within IAEA framework during the Vienna meet. During the meeting with Rice, the external affairs minister reaffirmed the Indian position on the issue besides discussing several regional and bilateral matters.

They reviewed recent developments on several multilateral and regional issues, the official said, adding that Rice briefed on the agreement reached in the six-party talks on the North Korean nuclear issue. The two leaders welcomed the landmark agreement which has led to the abandonment of the nuclear weapon programme by North Korea and its return to the nuclear non-proliferation treaty. The agreement was testimony to the importance of relying on patient, multilateral efforts to resolve a difficult and complex issue, Natwar said.

Meanwhile, Pakistan on Tuesday agreed to host a meeting of Saarc finance ministers in Islamabad ahead of the 13th summit of the seven-nation group in Dhaka in November. This was decided at a luncheon meeting attended by external affairs minister K. Natwar Singh and his counterparts from Bangladesh, Bhutan, Maldives, Nepal, Pakistan and Sri Lanka besides the Secretary General of Saarc, Chenkyab Dorji of Bhutan. The ministers took stock of the progress made since their last meeting here in September, 2004.

Dorji briefed them about the important developments and the status of negotiations on Safta and other economic matters, efforts in regional cooperation in preparedness for and mitigation of natural disasters, strengthening of the Saarc Secretariat and preparations for the upcoming Dhaka Summit.

Emphasising the need for holding such meetings which helped in furthering cooperation, they directed their Permanent Representatives here to institute a consultative mechanism on Saarc affairs.



Foreign minister Natwar Singh addresses the 60th session of the UN General Assembly at the United Nations in New York.

Ties with India improving: Pak

PRESS Trust of India
Islamabad, September 20

THE GRAPH of Indo-Pak relations is improving in a multi-faceted way and both have to make hard diplomatic and political efforts to resolve the Kashmir issue, Pakistan's permanent representative to UN, Munir Akram, said.

Both India and Pakistan have their stated positions on Kashmir and they have to make hard diplomatic and political efforts besides demonstrating boldness to come closer, he said in an interview to a private TV channel here. The process is difficult and both India and Pakistan are aware of this and they have to manage it very carefully, he said while noting that the graph of relations between the two countries is improving in a multi-faceted way. The Indo-Pak ties are "one of the most difficult relations", so the progress that will be made, will seem small in the public perception, Akram said. He said the international communi-

ty is very encouraged the way India and Pakistan have engaged themselves in a dialogue. Responding to a question about Pakistan's stance on UN reforms, he said the proposal put forth by India and other G4 countries was "unequal" and Islamabad along with other members resisted it. "It was a battle that was thrust on us by the G4 in a bid to secure unequal privileges for themselves," he charged while expressing the hope that consultations would continue and lead to an acceptable conclusion.

Meanwhile, foreign minister Natwar Singh and his Pakistani counterpart Khurshid Mahmood Kasuri have discussed the ongoing peace initiatives between the two countries and pledged to take the dialogue process forward. The two leaders met at a lunch for Saarc ministers hosted by Pakistan on Monday and expressed their determination to make all efforts to take the Indo-Pak peace process forward.

ইরান নিয়ে মার্কিন চাপ চলছেই, বিরক্ত ভারত

সীমা সিরোহি • নিউ ইয়র্ক

১৭ সেপ্টেম্বর: প্রতাবনা হয়েই ছিল। মনমোহন সিংহের রাষ্ট্রপুঞ্জ সফরে মার্কিন প্রশাসন বুঝিয়ে দিয়েছে, বন্ধুত্বপূর্ণ আবহেও কতটা একান্তীয় হতে পারে তারা।

প্রসঙ্গ সেই একই, ইরান নিয়ে ভারতের অবস্থান। প্রধানমন্ত্রী রাষ্ট্রপুঞ্জের বৈঠকে যোগ দিতে যাওয়ার আগেই এই নিয়ে কঠোর মনোভাব জানায় আমেরিকা। বৃশ প্রশাসনের এক উচ্চপদস্থ অফিসার বলেন, “ইরান না আমেরিকা, বেছে নিক ভারত।”

আমেরিকার না-পসন্দ সত্ত্বেও ভারত কেন ইরানের সঙ্গে গ্যাস পাইপ লাইন নিয়ে চুক্তিতে যাচ্ছে, এটাই উদ্ভার প্রধান কারণ। এবং সেই জনাই তাদের প্রধান লক্ষ্য, উপমহাদেশের শান্তি প্রক্রিয়ায় পাকিস্তানকে আরও জায়গা করে দিয়ে ভারতকে অস্বস্তিতে ফেলা। এই কৌশলে তারা প্রাথমিক ভাবে সফল। পরিস্থিতি এতটাই খারাপ যে,

মনমোহনের সঙ্গী অফিসারেরা তিষ্ঠ অভিজ্ঞতা নিয়ে দেশে ফিরছেন।

শুধু ইরানের সঙ্গে পাইপ লাইন নিয়ে সম্পর্ক ছিন্ন করাই নয়, আমেরিকা চাইছে আন্তর্জাতিক পরমাণু শক্তি পরিষদ বা আই এ ই এ-তে ভোটাভূটির সময়ে ভারত ও রাশিয়া কঠোর ইরান বিরোধী অবস্থান নিক। ইরানের পরমাণু প্রকল্প নিয়ে যে ষড়; তা শেষ করে দিতে বৃশের পাশে সর্বতো ভাবেই থাকুন হ্লাদিমির পুতিন ও মনমোহন সিংহ।

আই এ ই এ-তে ভোটাভূটিতেই শেষ নয়, পরবর্তী সময়েও এই অবস্থান থেকে সরতে পারবে না ভারত। মার্কিন বিদেশসচিব কন্ডোলিজা রাইস এই মাসের শেষে ভারত সফরে যাবেন। সেখানে তিনি ইরান নিয়ে ভারতীয় নেতৃত্বকে ফের এক হাত নেকেন বলেই মনে করা হচ্ছে। এখানে রাশিয়া ও ভারতের প্রতিনিধিদের এই নিয়ে ‘অনুরোধ’ জানাতে এসে তারই ইঙ্গিত দিয়েছিলেন তিনি।

ভারত মনে করছে, ইচ্ছা করলেই আমেরিকা বিষয়টিকে আপাতত ধামাচাপা দিতে পারত।

বিশেষ করে যেখানে বার বার বলা হয়েছে, তারা এই ক্ষেত্রে আমেরিকার পাশেই। তাই, সাধারণ ভাবে মনমোহনের সঙ্গে মুশারফ ও বৃশের কথা ‘সন্তোষজনক’ হলেও তিষ্ঠতা বেড়ে ফেলাতে পারছে না ভারত। প্রতিবাদে নটবর সিংহের ওয়াশিংটন সফর বাতিল করা হয়েছে। ইরান নিয়ে আমেরিকার উদ্ভার অন্যতম প্রধান কারণ নটবরের তেহরান সফর।

ভারতীয় অফিসারদের বক্তব্য, ইরান নিয়ে দিল্লির অবস্থান ভালই জানা আছে ওয়াশিংটনের। ঘরের কাছে আরও একটু পরমাণু অস্ত্র-সমৃদ্ধ দেশ চায় না ভারত। উল্টে তারা চায় ইরান পরমাণু অস্ত্রপ্রসার রোধ চুক্তির আওতায় আসুক। কিন্তু দিল্লির এই অবস্থান কিছুতেই মার্কিন আমলারা মার্কিন কংগ্রেসের কাছে স্পষ্ট করছেন না। ফলে কয়েক জন কংগ্রেস সদস্য ভারত এবং তার

বিশেষমন্ত্রীর সম্পর্কে রাস্তার ভাষা ব্যবহার করছেন। শেষ পর্যন্ত অবশ্য চিন ও রাশিয়ার সঙ্গে ভারত

ইরানকে পাল্টা চাপ দিয়ে পরিস্থিতি সামলাতে পারে বলে ধারণা আন্তর্জাতিক কূটনৈতিক মহলের। পাকিস্তানের সঙ্গে শান্তি আলোচনাত্তেও তিষ্ঠ অভিজ্ঞতা হয়েছে ভারতীয় প্রশাসনিক অফিসারদের। তাঁরা মনে করছেন, আমেরিকার প্রসারই হঠাৎ শক্ত হয়েছেন মুশারফ। রাষ্ট্রপুঞ্জ বক্তৃতার সময় তিনি পুরনো কট্টরপন্থা নেন।

আমেরিকা সত্যিই উপমহাদেশে শান্তি চায় কি না, তাই নিয়ে অনেক ভারতীয় বিশ্লেষক এখনও দ্বিধায়। একটি তথ্যও হাতের কাছে হাজির: ইরানকে পরমাণু যন্ত্রাংশ জোগান দিয়েছে পাকিস্তান। তবু, সেই তথ্যকে অস্বীকার করে ভারতকেই চাপে রাখার পথ নিয়েছে আমেরিকা। জবাবে ভারতীয় অফিসাররা একটা কথাই বলছেন, “আমাদের কিছুতেই দেয়ালে ঠেলে দিতে পারে না আমেরিকা।”

● ইরান থেকে শেয়ার বাজার, চাপ বাসেদের...পৃঃ ৫

17 SEP 1990 THE HINDU

If forced, India will vote with U.S. on Iran in IAEA

Amit Baruah

NEW DELHI: India will vote with the United States, France, Britain and Germany in the International Atomic Energy Agency's (IAEA) board of governors if forced to make a choice

on referring the question of Iran's nuclear intentions to the United Nations' Security Council.

Highly-placed South Block sources told *The Hindu* that such a decision to vote with the U.S. in a crunch situation was

taken even before Prime Minister Manmohan Singh went into a meeting with U.S. President George W. Bush in New York, where Iran is said to have come up for discussion.

According to reports from New York, it appears that the

U.S. and the European Union "three" are backing off from asking the IAEA's board, which meets in Vienna on September 19, to refer Iran to the Security Council on Monday itself.

In such a scenario, where the

E.U. "three" Foreign Ministers have had diplomatic contacts with the new Iranian leadership in New York, it appears that India will not immediately be called upon to vote one way or another in the IAEA board.

g. Foreign Minister

MANMOHAN, PERVEZ HOLD THEIR OWN AT MARATHON DINNER MEETING

No succumbing to terror: PM

Press Trust of India

UNHQ, Sept. 15. — Talking tough after President Pervez Musharraf's remarks that there was need to "understand and address the motives" behind terrorist attacks, Dr Manmohan Singh today asserted that India would never succumb to or compromise with terrorism in Jammu and Kashmir or elsewhere.

"We must not yield any space to terrorism. We must firmly reject any notion that there is any cause that justifies it," the Prime minister said while addressing the 60th session of the UN General Assembly here. Gen Musharraf in his speech hours earlier had said: "We need to understand and address the motives behind the terrorist acts. These may not justify terrorism; but they explain it."

The Prime Minister also underlined the need for urgent and comprehensive UN reforms, including expansion of the Security Council in both permanent and non-permanent categories, and sought renewed efforts to secure the world against nuclear proliferation and to promote global nuclear disarmament.

Regretting that the UN suffered from a "democracy deficit", he said unless it became more representative for the contemporary world, its ability to deliver on Millennium Development Goals would continue to be limited. Dr Singh spoke about the shortcomings in the UN system as also its inability to evolve itself to contemporary ground realities. "Its structure and decision-making process reflect the



Dr Manmohan Singh with President Pervez Musharraf after their meeting in New York on Wednesday. — PTI

world of 1945, not of 2005."

Dr Singh, who touched on a number of contemporary challenges like HIV/AIDS, environmental depredation and terrorism targeting nations across the world, said there has been growing recognition that these demanded a "global response". At the same time, there was a new sense of hope and optimism, he said adding that the world community welcomed the fact that advances in science and technology had made it possible as never before in human history to mount a frontal attack on

global poverty, ignorance and disease. Highlighting the need for "greater efforts" to mobilise the resources necessary to meet the Millennium Development Goals, he said: "This would be a wise investment for the future. Failure will only make our task in the future much more difficult and much more costly".

Last night, the Prime Minister hosted a dinner for President Musharraf at his New York hotel. After a marathon four-hour meeting that spilled past midnight, the two leaders agreed to pursue

all possible options for a peaceful settlement of the Kashmir issue. They pledged not to allow terrorism to impede the peace process. The General read out a four-paragraph joint statement after the dinner meeting. The statement did not go beyond the well-known positions of the two countries as stated in the joint statements issued on 6 January last year and 18 April this year when Gen Musharraf and Dr Singh met in Delhi.

Briefing reporters, foreign secretary Mr Shyam Saran said the Prime Minister told

the Pakistani President that continued acts of violence and terrorism in Jammu and Kashmir will "cast a shadow" over the peace process.

People (in India) would like to know if there was a peace process then why was terrorism continuing, Dr Singh said.

President Musharraf assured the Prime Minister that he would do everything possible to allay India's apprehensions.

The President said he had invited the Dr Singh to visit Pakistan and he had "kindly accepted" the invitation.

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THE HINDU

“Domestic issue taken to Bush”

Dr. Singh reportedly expressed surprise at Vajpayee's criticism of pact with U.S.

Special Correspondent

NEW DELHI: Prime Minister Manmohan Singh's reported remarks to the U.S. President, George W. Bush, in New York has created a controversy here with senior leaders in the Bharatiya Janata Party, the Congress and the Communist Party of India joining issue.

Dr. Singh is reported to have told Mr. Bush that while Parliament had approved the India-U.S. civilian nuclear cooperation understanding arrived during his July visit, he was surprised that the former Prime Minister, Atal Bihari Vajpayee, had been critical of it.

The former External Affairs Minister, Jaswant Singh, issued a statement saying that Dr. Singh's remarks were “unfortu-

nate” as they suggested that the Prime Minister “was complaining to the President of the USA about our domestic politics.” The country was waiting for “an elaboration of issues discussed, in particular the details of the Iran-India pipeline; United Nations reforms or the domestic opposition to President Bush in the [U.S.] Senate on the issue of nuclear cooperation with India.”

Congress leaders defended the Prime Minister saying that what he had said was “absolutely correct.” Defence Minister Pranab Mukherjee said this on the sidelines of an official function, while party spokesperson Jayanti Natarajan said that what Mr. Vajpayee or the BJP had said was not a secret. Mr. Vajpayee had made his views known in Parliament, she said and

charged the BJP with “blowing out of proportion” a purported remark made in a discussion between two leaders and bringing it into the public realm.

Responding to questions, Ms. Natarajan said that no one knew in what context the remarks might have been made. “The stand of the BJP and Mr. Vajpayee was made in Parliament and is neither a secret nor a mystery for the President of the USA.”

Both Mr. Jaswant Singh and another former External Affairs Minister Yashwant Sinha emphasised that there was an established convention in India that Prime Ministers visiting abroad did not bring in domestic politics. Mr. Sinha said that when Mr. Vajpayee travelled abroad he “always emphasised

that the ruling and opposition parties in India worked together on issues of national importance.” He added: “The Prime Minister had an opportunity to emphasise to Mr. Bush some of the concerns expressed by Mr. Vajpayee instead of presenting them as criticism.”

BJP general secretary Rajnath Singh told *The Hindu* that “the Prime Minister had lost his political gravity [by making these remarks].” He said that in 1995 when Mr. Vajpayee was asked by the then Prime Minister, P.V. Narasimha Rao, to represent India's viewpoint on Kashmir at a conference in Geneva, Mr. Vajpayee had presented India's [official] view although there were differences between the Congress and the BJP on the Kashmir issue.”

বুশের কাছে অটল-নিন্দা মনমোহনের

বিতর্ক পরমাণু চুক্তি ঘিরেই, সমালোচনা ক্ষুব্ধ বিজেপি-র



নিউ ইয়র্কের জেএফকে বিমানবন্দরে সঙ্গীক প্রধানমন্ত্রী মনমোহন সিংহ। — পি টি আই

স্টাফ রিপোর্টার, নয়াদিল্লি ও নিজস্ব প্রতিনিধি, নিউ ইয়র্ক, ১৪ সেপ্টেম্বর: মার্কিন মূলুকে গিয়ে প্রাক্তন প্রধানমন্ত্রী অটলবিহারী বাজপেয়ীর সমালোচনা করে নতুন রাজনৈতিক বিতর্ক শুরু করলেন প্রধানমন্ত্রী মনমোহন সিংহ।

গত বার আমেরিকা সফরে গিয়ে প্রেসিডেন্ট জর্জ বুশের সঙ্গে যে পরমাণু সহযোগিতা চুক্তি করেছিলেন মনমোহন, তার কড়া সমালোচনা করেন বাজপেয়ী। বৃহস্পতি বুশের সঙ্গে আলোচনার সময় মনমোহন বলেন, বাজপেয়ীর এই সমালোচনায় তিনি বিস্মিত। প্রধানমন্ত্রীর এই মন্তব্যের কথা তাঁর মিডিয়া উপদেষ্টা সঞ্জয় বাডু সাংবাদিকদের জানানোর পরেই দিল্লিতে জলখোলা শুরু হয়ে যায়। কূটনৈতিক সফরে গিয়ে প্রধানমন্ত্রীর এই ‘রাজনৈতিক’ মন্তব্যের কড়া সমালোচনা করেছে বিজেপি। চেন্নাইয়ে জাতীয় কর্মসমিতির বৈঠকের ঠিক আগে এমন একটা হাতিয়ার পেয়ে সরাসরি মনমোহনের সমালোচনায় মুখর হয়েছে তারা।

শাসক ইউপিএ-র জোটসঙ্গী সিপিআই-ও বলেছে, প্রধানমন্ত্রী এমন মন্তব্য না করলেই পারতেন। সিপিএম অবশ্য মনমোহনের পাশেই। আর কংগ্রেস মনমোহনের মন্তব্যকে সমর্থন করে বলেছে, তিনি অসত্য কিছু বলেননি এবং প্রথাভঙ্গও করেননি।

এ দিন মনমোহনের সঙ্গে বৈঠকে বুশ বলেন, ভারত-মার্কিন পরমাণু চুক্তি নিয়ে মার্কিন কংগ্রেসে আলোচনা হচ্ছে এবং কংগ্রেসের সমর্থন পাওয়ার ব্যাপারে তিনি আশাবাদী। এর জবাবে মনমোহন বলেন, সংসদেও এ নিয়ে বিতর্ক হয়েছে। পরমাণু চুক্তির পক্ষে জনপ্রতিনিধিদের সাইও মিলেছে। কিন্তু প্রাক্তন প্রধানমন্ত্রী বাজপেয়ী যে ভাবে এই চুক্তির বিরোধিতা করেছেন, তাতে তিনি অসত্য।

গত মাসে সংসদে পরমাণু চুক্তি নিয়ে আলোচনার সময় বাজপেয়ী বলেছিলেন, চুক্তি অনুযায়ী সামরিক ও অসামরিক পরমাণু চুল্লি আলাদা করা সম্ভব নয়। এর জবাবে প্রধানমন্ত্রী বলেন, ‘এই পৃথকীকরণ করা সম্ভব। হয়তো একবারেই তা করা যাবে না। তবে ধাপে ধাপে তা করা সম্ভব এবং এবং আমাদের কৌশলগত প্রকল্পগুলির নিরাপত্তা সম্পূর্ণ বজায় রেখেই তা করা সম্ভব।’

তিনি এ-ও বলেন যে, আমেরিকার সঙ্গে

করা চুক্তির ফলে দেশের সার্বভৌমত্ব কোনও ভাবেই ক্ষুণ্ণ হচ্ছে না।

বুশ-মনমোহন বৈঠকের পরে প্রথমে সাংবাদিক সম্মেলন করেন বিদেশ সচিব শ্যাম সারন। তিনি অবশ্য বাজপেয়ী সম্পর্কে মনমোহনের মন্তব্য সম্পর্কে কিছু বলেননি। এর পর সঞ্জয় বাডু বিষয়টি সাংবাদিকদের জানান। নিউজ চ্যানেলের দৌলতে সেই খবর দেশে পৌঁছতে সময় লাগেনি। সঙ্গে সঙ্গে শুরু হয়ে যায় বিজেপির ক্ষোভ প্রকাশ। তাদের অভিযোগ, অভ্যন্তরীণ রাজনীতিকে বিদেশের মাটিতে নিয়ে গিয়ে মনমোহন ঐতিহ্য ভেঙেছেন। বাজপেয়ী প্রধানমন্ত্রী থাকাকালীন কখনও এমনটা করেননি।

বস্তুত চেন্নাই বৈঠকের দু’দিন আগে হাতে গরম বিতর্ক পেয়ে চাঙ্গা হয়ে উঠেছে লালকৃষ্ণ আডবাণীর দল। দলের এক শীর্ষ নেতার কথায়, ‘গত ছ’মাস ধরে আমরা নিজেদের নিয়েই ব্যস্ত ছিলাম। চেন্নাই বৈঠক থেকে ঘুরে দাঁড়িয়ে সরকারের সমালোচনায় মুখর হওয়ার পরিকল্পনা করা হচ্ছিল।’ মনমোহনের মন্তব্য তাদের সামনে অভ্যন্তরীণ কোন্দলের জের বেড়ে ফেলে রাজনীতির ময়দানে নামার সুযোগ আরও বড় ভাবে এনে দিল। আজই সরাসরি প্রধানমন্ত্রীকে আক্রমণ করে প্রাক্তন বিদেশমন্ত্রী যশোবন্ত সিংহ বলেছেন, ‘বুশের সঙ্গে আলোচনায় মনমোহন সিংহ এমন কথা বলেছেন, যা ঘরোয়া রাজনীতির সঙ্গে যুক্ত। বিদেশে গিয়ে এই ধরনের মন্তব্য দুর্ভাগ্যজনক।’ দলীয় মুখপাত্র মুখতার আকবাস নকভি বলেন, বাজপেয়ী প্রধানমন্ত্রী হিসাবে বিদেশে গিয়ে সর্বদাই সনিয়া গান্ধীর প্রশংসা করতেন। মনমোহন সিংহ নতুন ঐতিহ্য তৈরি করছেন যা দেশের পক্ষে বিপজ্জনক।’

বিদেশ মন্ত্রকের একাংশ এই বিতর্কের জন্য সঞ্জয় বাডুর উপরে দোষ চাপাতে শুরু করে। তাদের বক্তব্য, শ্যাম সারন যে বিষয়ে মুখ খোলেননি, বাডুর তা সাংবাদিকদের বলার দরকার ছিল না। কিন্তু ঘটনা হল, বুশ-মনমোহন বৈঠকের কূটনৈতিক দিকটা সাংবাদিকদের জানিয়েছিলেন সারন। রাজনৈতিক দিকটা নয়। বিদেশসচিব হিসাবে সেটা তাঁর বলার কথাও নয়। সেটা বলেছেন বাডু। এবং প্রধানমন্ত্রীর অনুমতি নিয়েই।

বিজেপি যা-ই বলুক, কেন্দ্রীয় সরকারের মতে মনমোহন অন্যায় কিছু

করেননি। স্বদেশ বা বিদেশ, সর্বত্র নিজের মতামত প্রকাশের স্বাধীনতা তাঁর আছে। ওয়াকিবহাল মহলও এর মধ্যে অস্বাভাবিক কিছু দেখছে না। কারণ অতীতে বহু বারই ঘরোয়া বাধ্যবাধকতা এবং ঐকমত্যের অভাবের কারণ দেখিয়ে বিদেশি রাষ্ট্রের সঙ্গে কূটনৈতিক দরকষাকষি সেরেছে ভারত। সম্প্রতি প্রতিরক্ষামন্ত্রী প্রণব মুখোপাধ্যায়ও আমেরিকায় গিয়ে প্রতিরক্ষা সমঝোতা নিয়ে আলোচনার সময় বামেদের আপত্তির প্রসঙ্গ তুলেছিলেন।

কিন্তু বিষয়টি কেন প্রকাশ্যে নিয়ে আসা হল, সেটাই প্রশ্ন। এবং সেই

প্রসঙ্গে রাজনৈতিক মহল বলেছে, এমনটা মনমোহন আগেও করেছেন। এর আগে আমেরিকা গিয়ে দু’বার মামলায় রেলমন্ত্রী লালুপ্রসাদ যাদবের বা বাবরি মামলায় লালকৃষ্ণ আডবাণীর চার্জশিট পাওয়া নিয়ে বিরূপ মন্তব্য করে ক্ষোভের মুখে পড়েন তিনি। মনমোহনের আজকের উক্তির ব্যাখ্যা দিয়ে প্রণব মুখোপাধ্যায় বলেন, ‘বাজপেয়ী যে পরমাণু চুক্তির সমালোচনা করেছিলেন সেটা তো সত্য। প্রধানমন্ত্রী তার উল্লেখ করেই বলেছেন যে তিনি বিস্মিত। তিনি তো ভুল কিছু বলেননি। মনের ভাব প্রকাশ করেছেন মাত্র। সে অধিকার তাঁর

অবশ্যই রয়েছে।’ প্রণববাবুর পাল্টা বক্তব্য, আজ যে বিজেপি সমালোচনায় মুখর, ১৯৮২ সালে তারাই তৎকালীন প্রধানমন্ত্রী ইন্দিরা গান্ধীর বিদেশে থাকার সুযোগ নিয়ে সংসদে অনাস্থা প্রস্তাব এনেছিল। কিন্তু এই যুক্তি দেখিয়েও বন্ধু দল বামেদের পুরোপুরি পাশে পায়নি কংগ্রেস। সিপিএম পলিটব্যুরোর সদস্য সীতারাম ইয়েচুরি ‘প্রধানমন্ত্রী সত্যি কথা বলে অন্যায় করেননি’ এমন মন্তব্য করলেও সিপিআই নেতা এ বি বর্ধনের বক্তব্য, ‘মনমোহন এটা না বললেই ভাল করতেন। কারণ দেশের ভেতরের ব্যাপারটা দেশেই সামলে নিতে পারি।’

ইরান-প্রশ্নে বুশের উদ্বেগ বোঝে দিল্লি, আশ্বাস প্রধানমন্ত্রীর

সীমা সিরোহি • নিউ ইয়র্ক

১৪ সেপ্টেম্বর: ইরানের পরমাণু কর্মসূচি ঘিরে আমেরিকার উদ্বেগে ভারতও যে শরিক, জর্জ বুশকে সেই প্রসঙ্গে আশ্বস্ত করার চেষ্টা করলেন মনমোহন সিংহ। রাষ্ট্রপুঞ্জের সাধারণ অধিবেশনে যোগ দিতে এসে মার্কিন প্রেসিডেন্টকে ভারতের প্রধানমন্ত্রী বলেছেন, পরমাণু কর্মসূচির ব্যাপারে আন্তর্জাতিক দায়বদ্ধতা মেনে চলা উচিত ইরানের।

প্রতিবেশী দেশগুলিতে পরমাণু কর্মসূচির প্রসার ঘটুক, সেটা ভারত চায় না— মনমোহন সিংহের এই মন্তব্যকে যথেষ্ট তাৎপর্যপূর্ণ বলে মনে করছে কূটনৈতিক মহল। কারণ, প্রতিবেশী দেশ বলতে পাকিস্তানকেও বোঝায় আর ইসলামাবাদ থেকেই পরমাণু জ্বালানির প্রযুক্তি তেহরানে পৌঁছেছিল। ইরান নিয়ে আমেরিকার উদ্বেগে সাই দিতে গিয়ে কৌশলে মনমোহন পাকিস্তানকে ঘিরে ভারতের মনোভাবের কথাও বুশকে জানিয়ে দিয়েছেন, এমনই ধারণা কূটনৈতিক মহলের।

মার্কিন প্রেসিডেন্টের সঙ্গে ৩০ মিনিটের সাক্ষাতে ভারতের প্রধানমন্ত্রী কথা বলেছেন দু’দেশের পরমাণু চুক্তি এগিয়ে নিয়ে যাওয়ার বিষয়ে। ইরানের পরমাণু প্রকল্প প্রসঙ্গে ভারতের বিদেশমন্ত্রীর সাম্প্রতিক মন্তব্যকে কেন্দ্র করে বুশ প্রশাসনে যদি কোনও বিরূপ ধারণা সৃষ্টি হয়ে থাকে, তা-ও কাটানোর চেষ্টা করেছেন প্রধানমন্ত্রী। জ্বলাইয়ে স্বাক্ষরিত হওয়া ভারত ও আমেরিকার পরমাণু চুক্তি প্রসঙ্গে বুশ বলেন, তিনি মার্কিন কংগ্রেসের সমর্থনের দিকে তাকিয়ে আছেন। মনমোহন জানান, তাঁর দেশের সংসদ এই চুক্তির পক্ষে। তবে প্রাক্তন প্রধানমন্ত্রী অটলবিহারী বাজপেয়ী এই চুক্তির সমালোচনায় সরব হওয়ায় তিনি বিস্মিত হয়েছিলেন বলে মনমোহন মন্তব্য করেন।

বাজপেয়ীর সমালোচনার প্রসঙ্গ আমেরিকায় এসে মার্কিন প্রেসিডেন্টের কাছে তোলার পিছনে দেশীয় রাজনীতির সমীকরণই দায়ী বলে মনে করা হচ্ছে। প্রধানমন্ত্রীর এই মন্তব্য ঘিরে দেশের রাজনৈতিক মহলে ঝড়ও উঠেছে। বুশ অবশ্য ভারতের রাজনীতি নিয়ে কোনও প্রতিক্রিয়া দেখাননি। আলোচনার শেষে তিনি বরং মনমোহনকে বলেন, ‘আপনি ভাল মানুষ। আপনার সঙ্গে কাজ করা যায়।’

বুশ-মনমোহন বৈঠকে ইরানের প্রসঙ্গ তুলে ভারত বোঝাতে চেয়েছে, তারা এই সমস্যার কূটনৈতিক সমাধান চায়। ইরানের পরমাণু কর্মসূচির প্রশ্নে পরিষ্কার এবং কঠোর অবস্থান যাতে না-নিতে হয়, সেটাই ভারতের কামা। পরমাণু জ্বালানির বিষয়ে আন্তর্জাতিক দায়বদ্ধতা লঙ্ঘন করায় ইরানের বিরুদ্ধে রাষ্ট্রপুঞ্জে আমেরিকার সঙ্গে ভোট দিতেও তারা রাজি।

ইরান প্রসঙ্গে ভারতের মনোভাব ঘিরে যে বিভ্রান্তি তৈরি হয়েছিল, তা কাটানোর কূটনৈতিক তৎপরতাও চলেছে সমান তালে। যাঁর মন্তব্যকে কেন্দ্র করে বিতর্কের সূত্রপাত, সেই নটবর সিংহ তাঁর প্রস্তাবিত ওয়াশিংটন সফর বাতিল করে দিয়েছেন। ফলে, আপাতত বেশ কিছু অস্বস্তিকর প্রশ্নের মুখোমুখি হওয়া আটকানো যাচ্ছে।

নিউ ইয়র্কে আসার পথে প্যারিসে মনমোহন বৃষ্টিয়েছিলেন, পরমাণু কর্মসূচি ঘিরে আমেরিকা-ইরান দ্বন্দ্ব মেটানোর ইউরোপীয় উদ্যোগকে ভারত সমর্থন করে। এতে যেমন আন্তর্জাতিক মহলে ভারতের মনোভাব স্পষ্ট করা হয়েছে, তেমনই অভ্যন্তরীণ রাজনীতির দিকেও নজর রাখা হয়েছে। বিশেষত, কোনও প্রসঙ্গে আমেরিকাকে সমর্থন করতে গেলে যেখানে বামপন্থীরা বিরোধিতায় মুখর হন, সেখানে ইউরোপের মাধ্যমে কূটনৈতিক প্রয়াস চালানো সুবিধাজনক।

ভারত-মার্কিন সাম্প্রতিক পরমাণু সমঝোতার পরে ইরানের প্রসঙ্গ দ্বিপাক্ষিক সম্পর্কে ছায়া ফেলুক, সেটা ভারতীয় বা মার্কিন কূটনৈতিক মহলের কেউই চান না। মনমোহনের সফরসঙ্গী ভারতীয় প্রতিনিধি দল এই বিষয়টি খোয়াল রাখতে একটু বেশিই সতর্ক। এক প্রবীণ কূটনৈতিক বলেছেন, ভারতকে শেষ পর্যন্ত এই প্রশ্নে কোনও পক্ষ নিতে হবে না বলেই তাঁরা আশা করছেন।

অভ্যন্তরীণ রাজনীতি এবং আমেরিকার সঙ্গে সম্পর্ক অক্ষুণ্ণ রাখার কূটনৈতিক তাগিদ— দুইয়ে মিলে অত্যন্ত সূক্ষ্ম বিচার-বিবেচনার পরিচয় দিতে হচ্ছে মনমোহন সিংহের প্রশাসনকে। ভারতীয় বিদেশমন্ত্রী নটবর সিংহের সঙ্গে মার্কিন বিদেশসচিব কন্ডোলিজা রাইস এবং ভারতীয় বিদেশসচিব শ্যাম সারনের সঙ্গে মার্কিন বিদেশ দফতরের উপ-সচিব নিক বার্নসের আশ্রম বৈঠকে এই সূক্ষ্ম বিচারবোধেরই পরীক্ষা হবে।

অটল পরমাণু চুক্তির বিরোধী বুশকে জানালেন মনমোহন!

বি জে পি ক্ষুব্ধ

নিউ ইয়র্ক ও দিল্লি, ১৪ সেপ্টেম্বর (পি টি আই, এ পি, এ এফ পি)—মার্কিন প্রেসিডেন্ট বুশের সঙ্গে আধ ঘণ্টার বৈঠকে প্রধানমন্ত্রী মনমোহন সিং কথাপ্রসঙ্গে জানিয়েছেন, গত জুলাইয়ে তাঁর ওয়াশিংটন সফরে অসামরিক পরমাণু শক্তির ক্ষেত্রে দু-দেশের চুক্তি ভারতের সংসদে অনুমোদিত হয়েছে। অন্যরা এই চুক্তি মোটামুটি মেনে নিলেও প্রাক্তন প্রধানমন্ত্রী অটলবিহারী বাজপেয়ী লোকসভায় এর তীব্র বিরোধিতা করেন। তবে পরমাণু সহযোগিতা চুক্তি বি জে পি-র বিরোধিতা সত্ত্বেও সংসদের অনুমোদন পাওয়ায় ইউ পি এ সরকার খুশি। প্রধানমন্ত্রী এভাবে বাজপেয়ীর নাম উল্লেখ করায় ভারতের রাজনৈতিক মহলে দারুণ বিতর্কের সৃষ্টি হয়েছে। বি জে পি-র মতে, এটা দুর্ভাগ্যজনক। মতভেদ থাকতেই পারে। কিন্তু বিদেশের মাটিতে দেশের কোনও নেতার সমালোচনা অনুচিত এবং প্রচলিত ধারার বিরোধী। সি পি আইয়েরও বক্তব্য, সংসদে কে কী বলেছেন, মার্কিন প্রেসিডেন্টকে তা জানানোর দরকার কী পড়েছিল? কিন্তু সি পি এম পলিটব্যুরো সদস্য সীতারাম ইয়েচুরির মন্তব্য, প্রধানমন্ত্রী তো মিথ্যে কথা বলেননি। ইয়েচুরি অবশ্য এটাও মনে করিয়ে দেন, বিষয়টি নিয়ে বামপন্থীদের সঙ্গেও মতপার্থক্য ছিল সরকারের।

ওদিকে, প্রেসিডেন্ট বুশকে মনমোহন

জানিয়েছেন, কাশ্মীরের সন্ত্রাসে পাকিস্তান এখনও মদত দিচ্ছে। এই সন্ত্রাস পুরোপুরি বন্ধ হওয়া দরকার। পরভেজ মুশারফও বুশের কাছে পাল্টা দাবি জানিয়েছেন, কাশ্মীরে সেনা প্রত্যাহারে আমেরিকা ভারতকে চাপ দিক। তাঁর বক্তব্য, কাশ্মীরে সেনা প্রত্যাহার এবং সমস্যা সমাধানের প্রচেষ্টা ছাড়া ভারত-পাক সম্পর্ক কখনওই স্বাভাবিক হবে না। কাশ্মীর সমস্যাকে জিইয়ে রেখে দু'দেশের সহযোগিতা বাড়িয়ে বিশেষ লাভ নেই। আজ রাতে মুখোমুখি হচ্ছেন মনমোহন এবং মুশারফ। বুশ মনমোহনকে বলেছেন, তাঁর মতে কাশ্মীরে সন্ত্রাস আরও অনেক কমা উচিত এবং ভারত-পাক সহযোগিতা আরও বিস্তৃত হওয়া উচিত। মনমোহনের উচ্ছ্বসিত প্রশংসা করে বুশ বলেছেন, 'আপনি একজন ভাল মানুষ। আপনার সঙ্গে চুক্তিবদ্ধ আমরা হতেই পারি।' গত রাতে প্যারিস থেকে নিউ ইয়র্কে পৌঁছতেই বুশের আগ্রহে আধ ঘণ্টার এই বৈঠক হয়েছে। মনমোহনের ভূমিকার দারুণ প্রশংসা করেছেন বুশ। ইরানের পরমাণু-প্রকল্প নিয়ে হালে মতান্তর দেখা দিয়েছে ভারত ও আমেরিকার মধ্যে। সেই পরিপ্রেক্ষিতেও বুশ-মনমোহনের বৈঠকটি গুরুত্বপূর্ণ

ছিল। মনমোহন বলেছেন, ভারত পরমাণু-প্রযুক্তি পাচারের বিরোধী তবে কূটনৈতিক পথেই আমেরিকার উচিত সমস্যা মেটানো, সামরিক পথে নয়।

দিল্লিতে বি জে পি নেতা মুখতার আব্বাস নাকভি এবং দুই প্রাক্তন মন্ত্রী যশোবন্ত সিংহ ও যশবন্ত সিং আজ সাংবাদিকদের বলেছেন, প্রধানমন্ত্রী রীতি ভেঙেছেন। বিরোধীদের সঙ্গে মতভেদ থাকবে, এটাই স্বাভাবিক। কিন্তু বিদেশ সফরে গিয়ে প্রধানমন্ত্রী তার প্রসঙ্গ তুলবেন কেন? এতে খারাপ নজির তৈরি হল। কেন্দ্রীয় প্রতিরক্ষামন্ত্রী প্রণব মুখার্জি মনমোহনের সমর্থনে বলেছেন, প্রধানমন্ত্রী কোনও অন্যায় কাজ করেননি। প্রেসিডেন্ট বুশ যখন বলেন, পরমাণু শক্তি সহযোগিতা চুক্তি রূপায়ণে তিনি দৃঢ়প্রতিজ্ঞ এবং মার্কিন কংগ্রেসের সমর্থন মিলবে বলে তাঁর আশা, ভারতের প্রধানমন্ত্রী তার জবাবেই জানান যে প্রাক্তন প্রধানমন্ত্রী বাজপেয়ীর বিরোধিতা সত্ত্বেও এটি সংসদের অনুমোদন পাওয়ায় তিনি খুশি। এতে দোষের কী আছে? সি পি আই নেতা বর্ধনের মতে, কাজটা ভাল হয়নি। সংসদে কে বিরোধিতা করেছে বা কী বলেছে, সেটা বুশকে জানানোর কোনও দরকার ছিল কী? মনমোহন এটা বাড়িবাড়ি করে ফেলেছেন। অথবা রাজনৈতিক বিতর্কে জড়িয়ে ফেলেছেন নিজেকে।

France to help India

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Civilian nuclear needs to be met

Harish Khare

PARIS: France has promised to leave "no stone unturned" to enable India to meet suitably its civilian nuclear needs, an euphemism for a gradual dismantling of the restrictive Nuclear Suppliers Group (NSG).

This French "commitment" came during an "extremely warm" meeting between Prime Minister Manmohan Singh and French President Jacques Chirac at the Elysee Palace on Monday. But before the "commitment" was made, Mr. Chirac put on record that Dr. Singh "is confirming today the decision to buy six Scorpene submarines and 43 Airbus aircraft which is of course a token of confidence, friendship and cooperation we are of course sensible to."

Both sides avoided any suggestion of a *quid pro quo*. In fact, the Indian side stopped short of suggesting that a nuclear "deal" has been clinched. India also hinted that it was ready to buy French nuclear reactors and a feasibility study was already being undertaken.

The operative part of the ~~joint statement~~ issued by the two leaders reads: "France acknowledges the need for full international civilian nuclear cooperation with India and will work towards this objective by working with other countries and the NSG and by deepening bilateral cooperation. France appreciated India's strong commitment to preventing weapons of mass destruction (WMD) proliferation and the ongoing steps it is taking in this regard. In this context, both countries will also work towards conclusion of a bi-

lateral nuclear cooperation agreement."

A "regime change"

According to Foreign Secretary Shyam Saran, this statement ought to be read along with the India-U.S. agreement of July 14, 2005, as also the statement after the British Prime Minister's recent visit.

As Mr. Saran saw it, all these developments pointed towards a "regime change" in nuclear technology trade and transfer. France, according to him, has assured India that it will work with other NSG members to ensure that India's requirements of nuclear fuel and technology are met.

India publicly refused to mention any date as to when the NSG could be breached but the officials privately sounded confident that with Washington on board, India could hope to see an end to this restrictive regime before long.

France has bought into the India's argument that New Delhi needed to develop its civilian nuclear programme because "nuclear energy provides a safe, environmental friendly and sustainable source of energy." Accordingly, India and France have agreed on "the need to further develop international cooperation in promoting the use of nuclear energy for peaceful purposes."

Besides the promised dismantling of the NSG regime, the two countries agreed to work on "a framework agreement on defence cooperation."

Another report on Page 12

Natwar vows closer ties with Iran

Press Trust of India

TEHERAN, Sept. 2. — Pledging to further strengthen and expand mutual cooperation and strategic partnership, external affairs minister Mr Natwar Singh today arrived on a three-day visit to Iran, marking India's first high-level political contact with this country's new government.

Immediately after his arrival, Mr Singh, who was received at the airport by his Iranian counterpart Mr Manouchehr Mottaki, drove straight to the tomb of Iran's

supreme leader Ayatollah Khomeini and laid a wreath there. India and Iran enjoyed "excellent bilateral relations and I hope to have an in-depth exchange of views on all issues of mutual interest," he said earlier at the airport.

The foreign minister said his interaction with the Iranian leadership would further strengthen and expand opportunities of mutual cooperation. Mr Mottaki said the two countries were having "very good" bilateral ties and Mr Singh's visit will mark a new era in bilateral ties. "I am sure, we will witness strength-

ening of relations during this visit," he said.

During his stay here, Mr Singh will call on President Mahmud Ahmedinejad tomorrow and hold talks with Mr Mottaki on the entire range of bilateral relations and regional and international matters of mutual concern, including the nuclear issue.

He is scheduled to hold parleys with Iran's new Chief Nuclear Negotiator Ali Larijani, who was in New Delhi earlier this week and held talks with Mr Singh ahead of the visit. Both these meetings are also slated for tomorrow.

A test for India's foreign policy

India needs to stay the course in building an enhanced energy partnership with Iran and taking an independent position on its civil nuclear energy programme.

Amit Baruah

INDIAN DIPLOMACY has been quick off the blocks. Within days of a new Government headed by President Mahmoud Ahmedinejad taking office in Iran, External Affairs Minister Natwar Singh will be in Teheran for talks with the leadership.

Mr. Singh, who will be in Iran from September 2 to 4, will have talks with his Iranian counterpart Manouchehr Mottaki, and is scheduled to call on President Ahmedinejad as well. Senior officials said planning for Mr. Singh's visit began soon after it became clear that a new and very different Government was going to take charge in Teheran. The visit comes at an opportune moment to clear the confusion caused by comments made by Prime Minister Manmohan Singh when he spoke of the "uncertainties" in Iran casting a shadow on finances for a possible Iran-Pakistan-India gas pipeline during a July 21 interview with *The Washington Post*.

Following the Prime Minister's remarks, questions have been raised about Indian intentions towards the project, especially on account of the open opposition to the pipeline from the United States. Though there has been no reaction from Iran, it is clear Dr. Manmohan Singh's remarks need to be clarified. Teheran also needs to be told whether or not New Delhi is serious about the project.

"We want to stress during the External Affairs Minister's visit that despite our improved relations with the United States, Iran remains very important to us," a top External Affairs Ministry official told this correspondent. Iran was a key energy supplier for India, the official said, adding that a new Government was in place and it was important for New Delhi to make contact with it. Apart from the pipeline project, India has signed an LNG deal with Iran and Indian companies such as the Tatas and Essar are keen on investing in that country.

The official also pointed to the visit to New Delhi by Supreme National Security Council Secretary Ali Larijani, in the context of the nuclear pressures faced by Iran. The new Iranian leadership has left no doubt that it wants to expand the European troika with which it has been negotiating nuclear questions. Though the development of the



RENEWING TIES: Iran's Supreme National Security Council Secretary Ali Larijani and External Affairs Minister Natwar Singh in New Delhi on Wednesday. - PHOTO: AFP

Chabahar port in Iran and the road linkages to Afghanistan are a major example of India-Iran cooperation, New Delhi is aware that it needs to push ahead with the project and ensure its speedy implementation. This issue is also likely to figure in Mr. Natwar Singh's discussions in Iran.

In a sense, Indian policy towards Iran will be a litmus test of the Manmohan Singh Government's sincerity in pursuing an independent foreign policy. Washington will not be happy if India pursues strategic energy cooperation with it.

Indian officials often tom-tom that Islamabad is susceptible to American pressure while New Delhi is not. That proposition can be called into question given the stand taken

by India on the pipeline. The American opposition to the pipeline also drives a bus through Washington's stated objective of promoting cooperation between India and Pakistan. The Iran-Pakistan-India pipeline, which is a win-win project for all three countries, has the potential radically to transform the energy scene in South Asia.

On the nuclear issue, there's little doubt that as a party to the Nuclear Non-proliferation Treaty (NPT), Iran is well within its rights to carry on with a nuclear energy programme. However, it is equally clear that Washington has Iran in its sights and, in the months ahead, the issue of Iranian (remember the tall stories about Iraq) "proliferation" could well make its way to the United

Nations Security Council.

Given the fact that Washington has hardly hidden its intentions towards Iran, the Indian position on the nuclear question will also be closely watched. The Iranian side, on its part, has been saying it wants to involve the Non-Aligned Movement (NAM) in the negotiations with the EU troika. Obviously, India will be important if the Iranian goal is to involve NAM in these delicate negotiations.

A good, first step has been taken by New Delhi in setting up an early visit to Teheran by the External Affairs Minister. It now needs to stay the course in building an enhanced energy partnership with Iran and taking an independent position on Teheran's civil nuclear energy programme.

Natwar calls for Afro-Asian resolve to 'shape a new U.N.'

P.S. Suryanarayana

SINGAPORE: The External Affairs Minister, K. Natwar Singh, on Wednesday proposed that the countries of Asia and Africa "should determine to shape a new United Nations".

Calling for an inter-continental political resolve to refashion the U.N., including the Security Council in particular, Mr. Singh said it was now necessary to reform not only the U.N. but also the Bretton Woods institutions so that they would "reflect the realities of 2005".

He was addressing the Asian-African ministerial meeting in Jakarta ahead of a summit of leaders from these two continents in the Indonesian capital on Friday and Saturday as also the summit in Bandung on Sunday that would commemorate the 50th anniversary of the first-ever show of Afro-Asian political solidarity.

Plan of action

The Foreign Ministers later adopted a "plan of action" for consideration by the leaders in formulating "a new strategic partnership" between Asia and Africa. Emphasising the need for a comprehensive reform of what has come to be known as the Yalta Order of international political institutions and related financial entities such as the World Bank and the International Monetary Fund, Mr. Singh pointed out that the U.N., when founded in 1945, was "based on the power realities of that time".

He said, "it is important to increase the membership of the



The Foreign Minister, Natwar Singh, and his Indonesian counterpart, Hassan Wirajuda, take part in a photo session after the opening of the Asia-Africa Ministerial meeting at the Jakarta Convention Centre. - REUTERS

United Nations Security Council, both in the permanent as well as the non-permanent categories".

Mr. Singh's call acquired importance in view of India's current bid for a permanent seat in the Security Council and, in a more immediate context, the planned consultations, expected to be a "brain-storming session", between the U.N. Secretary General, Kofi Annan, and the Afro-Asian Ministers in Jakarta on Thursday.

In a media comment on the margins of the ministerial meeting, Mr. Singh said the concept of non-alignment remained relevant to this day, while the non-aligned movement (NAM) as such might require diplomatic blood transfusion so as to reorient itself to the challenges of

the 21st century, ranging from terrorism to globalisation.

Globalisation

In his intervention during the ministerial meeting, he said that "while the decline of colonialism and the emergence of power blocs defined the international situation at that time [of NAM formation], it is globalisation, we believe, which defines today's paradigm". Mr. Singh held consultations with several other Foreign Ministers on issues relating to the proposed Asia-Africa strategic partnership. He is scheduled to take part in the consultations with the U.N. Secretary General on the reforms issue and also hold bilateral meetings with the Foreign Minister of Japan, Nobutaka Machimura, and others.

21 APR 2005

THE HINDU

Asia, Africa should end energy dependence: Manmohan

Dr. Manmohan Singh
HP-8 22/4
"Framework within which we produce and consume energy is determined elsewhere"

Siddharth Varadarajan

JAKARTA: India has called for Asia and Africa to end their "anomalous" dependence on Western governments and companies for the buying and selling of oil and gas, saying it was high time the two continents — which include some of the world's largest producers and consumers of energy — evolved a "framework" of their own.

This suggestion — made by the Prime Minister, Manmohan Singh, in his speech to the Asian-African summit here on Saturday — reflects India's growing emphasis on energy diplomacy and is of potentially huge significance for the future of the world's oil and gas industry. "While our continents include both major producers and consumers of energy, the framework within which we produce and consume energy is determined elsewhere," Dr. Singh said, adding, "We must end this anomaly."

Competition for "new oil"

Though buried within the text, the Prime Minister's call

for Asian and African Governments to forge direct links in the energy sector is likely to heighten anxieties among Western oil majors about the growing competition for "new oil" from public sector companies in Asia. On Thursday, for example, the CEO of Shell, Jeroen van der Veer, cautioned the new oil producing countries from doing business with state-owned companies from India and China, saying this would make them vulnerable to "interference" by foreign governments.

Dr. Singh's use of the word "framework" is a reference not just to the mediatory role of Western companies as producers, buyers and sellers but also to efforts by Western governments, particularly Washington, to direct the Central Asian and African energy sector, including pipeline routes, away from its most important future consumer — South, South-East and East Asia.

During Chinese Premier Wen Jiabao's visit to India earlier this month, India and China agreed to cooperate in oil extraction activities in third countries, espe-

cially in Africa. And the proposed Iran-Pakistan-India gas pipeline is being seen in some quarters as the precursor to a more extensive energy grid that could link up Central Asia with India, China and other parts of East Asia.

Dr. Singh's speech to the Jakarta summit also focussed on other areas of South-South cooperation. Describing the Non-Aligned Movement — which grew out of the 1955 Bandung Conference — as "one of the greatest peace movements ever," he said colonialism and apartheid "have been comprehensively defeated" and most peoples in Asia and Africa have achieved freedom or statehood "barring the brave Palestinian people."

Elusive security order

The world today is more integrated than it was in 1955 but "a cooperative and consensual international security order eludes us," Dr. Singh said.

"Its consequence is insecurity, not common security." That is why "democratisation of the United Nations and its special-

ised agencies must be a fundamental plank" of the new strategic partnership between Asia and Africa, he added, without going into any specific calls for Security Council reform.

Saying that a "new cooperative global structure is within reach," the Prime Minister stressed the need for Africa and Asia to create "new structures of mutual support, solidarity and cooperation."

It was regrettable, he said, that "South-South linkages have weakened when they are most required."

Responding to the highly favourable assessment of the recent India-Pakistan summit made by the Pakistan President, Pervez Musharraf, at the Jakarta meeting on Friday, Dr. Singh said he appreciated and fully reciprocated those positive sentiments.

"We have embarked upon a journey towards peace and good neighbourly ties [with Pakistan]. ... We are sincere in our desire to resolve all issues in a mutually acceptable manner. This will surely bring benefit to our peoples and region."

24 APR 2005 THE HINDU

India ready to accept any date for SAARC meet

9- Foreign Policy

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25/4

Entire gamut of ties with Bangladesh discussed

Siddharth Varadarajan

JAKARTA: More than two months after India forced a postponement of the South Asian Association for Regional Cooperation summit in the wake of King Gyanendra's seizure of power in Nepal, the External Affairs Minister, Natwar Singh, has said that New Delhi is prepared to accept any suitable date for the meeting that Bangladesh, as summit host, wishes to propose.

Mr. Singh communicated this to the Foreign Minister of Bangladesh, Morshed Khan, at a bilateral meeting on the sidelines of the just-concluded Asian-African summit here on Saturday. The two Ministers also discussed "the entire gamut of bilateral issues," an External Affairs Ministry press statement stated, making no note of the recent incident on the India-Bangladesh border in which a BSF company commander was killed.

India's decision to signal its willingness to let the SAARC summit be held — the presumption is sooner rather than later — comes in the wake of the recent change in policy towards King Gyanendra. In a meeting with the King in Jakarta on Saturday, the Prime Minister, Manmohan Singh, agreed to lift the suspension of military supplies to the Royal Nepal Army imposed in the wake of the royal coup. In return, the King agreed to think about drawing up a road map for the restoration of de-

mocracy. On February 2, the Foreign Secretary, Shyam Saran, told reporters that India's decision to seek a postponement of the Dhaka summit "has been taken against the background of recent developments in our neighbourhood which have caused us grave concern." Asked specifically whether this was in response to King Gyanendra's coup, Mr. Saran said that "certainly, the developments in Nepal as well as the continuing and deteriorating security situation in Bangladesh are the two key factors."

Senior officials had said at the time that India did not want to legitimise King Gyanendra's takeover by allowing him "photo-ops" with Dr. Singh and other SAARC leaders at Dhaka.

Indeed, New Delhi believes the King timed his February 1 coup with an eye on the SAARC summit, which was scheduled for February 9.

Formally, however, the MEA had refused to link King Gyanendra to India's wish that the SAARC summit be postponed. "I do not think that our decision

should be projected in terms of our willingness or unwillingness to share the platform with this or that leader. We have gone to SAARC summits in the past and shared the platform with various leaders of different political persuasions. I do not think that should be taken as the reason for our decision," Mr. Saran said.

Asked whether India was behaving like a "big brother" in getting the SAARC summit postponed, Mr. Saran had said that "If you have the kind of environment, political environment and security environment, which prevails today, we genuinely believe that the desired outcomes are not possible.

So, we should wait until the time is propitious to have such a very important and significant summit... Obviously, we would be looking for amelioration of the situation or an improvement of the situation which would dispel some of the concerns that we are expressing today".

Manmohan's call: Page 12

Asian-African Partnership signed

BANDUNG (INDONESIA): Asian and African leaders on Sunday signed a new Strategic Partnership to ensure peace, stability and security in the two continents by boosting trade and stepping up cooperation in the war against terrorism and trans-

national organised crimes.

The Indonesian President, Susilo Bambang Yudhoyono, and the South African leader, Thabo Mbeki, inked the four-page declaration on the New Asian-African Partnership in the historic town. — PTI

25 APR 2005

THE HINDU

Do not resume arms supplies to Nepal, say Left parties

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"Desist from any move that will legitimise the King's action"

Special Correspondent

NEW DELHI: The Left parties have asked the Government not to resume arms supplies to Nepal, as it will appear to justify the King of Nepal's suppression of the elementary democratic rights of the people.

"If this report is true, it is a wrong and unjustified step. The Indian Government had correct-

ly decided to stop military supplies after the King of Nepal had suppressed parliamentary democracy and imposed an emergency," said a statement issued on Sunday by the Polit Bureau of the Communist Party of India (Marxist).

The CPI (M) demanded that the United Progressive Alliance (UPA) Government clarify the situation immediately and there

should be "no question" of resuming arms supplies. "The UPA Government must realise that the appreciation and goodwill it earned with its firm stand in defence of democracy and popular government in Nepal will disappear and it will be held responsible for abetting the King's authoritarianism," the statement added.

The party said that all that the King assured in his talks with the Prime Minister, Manmohan Singh, in Jakarta was that democracy would be restored "sooner rather than later." Even

the municipal elections that have been announced are "farical and cannot be a substitute for the full restoration of parliamentary democracy and having an elected government," it observed.

The Communist Party of India (CPI) also wanted the Government to clarify its stand on the issue and felt political parties and Parliament should be taken into confidence. Speaking to *The Hindu* from Thanjavur, the CPI national secretary, D. Raja, found it strange that it was the King who announced what the Indian Government planned to do.

25 APR 2005

THE HINDU

Singh at head: of walk and Asia

PRANAY SHARMA

Jakarta, April 24: Manmohan Singh today represented all the countries of Asia when he spoke at the concluding session of the historic Asian-African Conference, which was held in Bandung today.

"In the context of the present global challenges, the Non-Aligned Movement remains a valid and effective instrument to ensure the creation of a more just and fair and global order," the Prime Minister said.

Singh stressed the need to make the UN and international financial institutions democratised and more repre-

sentative.

Other leaders of the region, including Chinese President Hu Jintao, Pakistan President Pervez Musharraf and Japanese Prime Minister Junichiro Koizumi — who is scheduled to arrive in Delhi next week to strengthen Japan's ties with India — listened in rapt attention as Singh spoke.

That Singh represented Asia is a clear indication of India's rising stock in the world and may be the cumulative effect of steps Delhi has been taking in the past few years to mend fences with neighbours and strengthen relations with traditional fri-

ends in Asia and Africa.

It also indicates that India is seriously trying to take on the mantle of an emerging player in the global field. India is no longer willing to play second fiddle to other countries and wants to regain the position of the leader of the developing world.

"We must also ensure that the global trading system is made more sensitive to the needs and aspirations of poorer countries," the Prime Minister said.

"Just as the NAM played a central role in the struggle for political emancipation in the past, we need to revitalise this moment to make it a vehi-

cle for social and economic emancipation in our times," Singh said, recalling the strong bond between Asian and African countries.

Others who spoke included Nigerian President Olusegun Obasanjo and Indonesian President Susilo Yudhoyono, the host of the summit.

Early today, the Prime Minister, accompanied by foreign minister K. Natwar Singh and other leaders, took a 30-minute special flight to Bandung. Soon after, he took the lead in the 100-metre walk from the Hotel Savoy Homann to Gedung Merdeka — the Victory Hall.

The Prime Minister felt

that developing countries must move in two directions at the same time to meet the new global challenges.

At one level, cooperation among the countries must increase manifold to resolve unilateral differences and strengthen solidarity among themselves in the age of globalisation.

Singh also stressed on inspection and the need for Asian and African countries to remove the weaknesses in their political and social structures.

"We must realise that if development is to be sustainable, it cannot be transplanted from without. It must be in-

trinsic and appropriate to our societies. We should be aware of lacunae in our processes of governance, which prevent us from effectively delivering services to our people," he said.

"Our structures of governance must be modernised and made more suitable to the needs of our times. Our goal must be to ensure the improved delivery of services to all our citizens," asserted the Prime Minister.

"We need to act on the adage that power is a societal trust and we owe it to our people to ensure that it is expended for the common good," Singh said.

INDIA VOICE OF ASIA AT PACT-SIGNING

Trade must help the poor: PM

The Jakarta Post/ANN & PTI

BANDUNG, April 24. — Reflecting its enhanced stature in world affairs, India today got a rare honour when Prime Minister Dr Manmohan Singh spoke for the whole of Asia at the signing ceremony of a historic Asia-Africa strategic partnership agreement and advocated reforms of the United Nations and international financial institutions.

The New Asia Africa Strategic Partnership (NAASP), aimed at boosting economic and political relations and countering threats of globalisation, was signed by 106 countries from the two regions after their two-day summit marking the 50th anniversary of the historic Bandung Conference that led to the birth of the Non-Aligned Movement.

India being given the honour to represent Asia, even though leaders from countries like China and Japan were also present, is seen with considerable importance since New Delhi is a candidate for a permanent seat in the expanded UN Security Council.

Addressing the Golden Jubilee of the Bandung Asia-Africa Conference here after taking a symbolic walk along with other world leaders to commemorate the historic event and the signing ceremony, Dr Singh said the global trading system should be made more sensitive to the needs and aspirations of poorer countries.

He asked the Asian and African countries to "ensure that the architecture of international institutions is democratised and made more representative." "This restructuring should include the United Nations and its specialised agencies and the international financial institutions," Dr Singh said. "In the context of the present global challenges, the Non-Aligned Movement remains a valid and effective instrument to ensure the creation of a

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Foreign Policy

In the context of the present global challenges, the Non-Aligned Movement remains an effective instrument to ensure the creation of a more just and fair global order ~ Manmohan Singh

more just and fair global order," he said.

The NAASP declaration aims to ensure peace, stability and security in the two continents besides boosting trade and stepping up cooperation in the war against terrorism and transnational organised crimes.

Indonesian President Mr Susilo Bambang Yudhoyono and South African leader Mr Thabo Mbeki inked the four-page declaration on the NAASP in this historic town where the countries from the two continents got together for the first time in 1955 and subsequently created NAM.

Through the strategic partnership "we will pool together the vast resources and the tremendous creative energies of Asia and Africa to solve some of the most persistent problems of development," Mr Yudhoyono told the signing ceremony.

In the declaration, the leaders said: "We are determined to prevent conflict and resolve disputes by peaceful means and endeavour to explore innovative mechanisms for confidence-building and dispute resolution as well as for post-conflict peace-building."

Dr Singh also spoke about "lacunae" in governance process in some Asian and African nations and favoured its modernisation to make it suitable to the needs of the current times.

The leaders also committed themselves to the principle of self-determination as set in the Final Communique of the 1955 Bandung Conference and the Charter of the United Nations.

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THE STATESMAN

২৬/৪ বান্দুঙ-২ ও ভারত ইন্দোনেশিয়ার বান্দুঙ শহরে এশিয়া ও আফ্রিকার দেশগুলির

সম্মেলনে ভারত আবার তৃতীয় বিশ্বের মধ্যে অগ্রণী ভূমিকায়। সেখানে এশীয় দেশগুলির নেতৃত্ব করার আহ্বানে সাড়া দিয়া প্রধানমন্ত্রী মনমোহন সিংহ বান্দুঙ-এর আদি সম্মেলনের স্মৃতিকে জাগাইয়া তুলিয়াছেন। তিনি আজিকার পৃথিবীতেও জোটনিরপেক্ষ আন্দোলনের প্রাসঙ্গিকতা তুলিয়া ধরিয়াছেন। দ্বিতীয় পর্যায়ের এই বান্দুঙ সম্মেলন নেহরু-নাসের-টিটোর নির্জেট আন্দোলনের অনুকরণ হইয়া উঠিবে না, ইহা আশা করা যায়। কেননা প্রথম বান্দুঙ যে আন্দোলনের জন্ম দিয়াছিল, তাহা যথার্থ নির্জেট ছিল না। দুই বৃহৎ শক্তির ঠাণ্ডা লড়াইয়ের মধ্যে তাহা প্রকৃত নিরপেক্ষতা বজায় রাখিতে পারে নাই। মার্কিন-বিরোধিতাই এই আন্দোলনের প্রধান উপজীব্য হইয়া ওঠে। স্বভাবতই সোভিয়েত ইউনিয়ন এই আন্দোলনকে স্বানুকূলে ব্যবহার করিয়া লইতে সক্ষম হয়। আর তাহাতে বিদেশ নীতির ক্ষেত্রে ভারত সহ অনেক রাষ্ট্রই বিভিন্ন আন্তর্জাতিক প্রশ্নে নিজ দীর্ঘমেয়াদি স্বার্থের অগ্রাধিকার জলাঞ্জলি দিয়া সোভিয়েতপন্থী অবস্থান লইয়া ফেলে। মনমোহন সিংহ নব পর্যায়ের যে জোটনিরপেক্ষতার কথা বলিতেছেন, সেখানে অবশ্য রাশিয়া আর আন্তর্জাতিক শক্তি-ভারসাম্যের দ্বিতীয় মেরু নয়, মার্কিন যুক্তরাষ্ট্রই এই একমেরু বিশ্বের একমাত্র বৃহৎ শক্তি। তবু নির্জেট আন্দোলনের নূতন পর্যায়টি যাহাতে কোনও সচেতন মার্কিন-বিরোধী অক্ষের অভিমুখে অগ্রসর না হয়, তাহা নিশ্চিত করা দরকার। এ ক্ষেত্রে সুনীতি হইল, কাহারও পক্ষে বা বিপক্ষে অবস্থান লওয়া নয়, আপন রণনৈতিক ও জাতীয় স্বার্থ সিদ্ধ করিতে যখন যে-অবস্থান প্রয়োজন, গ্রহণ করা। নেহরু-ইন্দিরার আমলে এই দিকটিই উপেক্ষিত হয়।

মনমোহন সিংহকে এশিয়ার প্রতিনিধিত্ব তথা নেতৃত্বের মর্যাদা দিয়া সম্মেলনে উপস্থিত রাষ্ট্রপ্রধানরা ভারতের উপর যে দায়িত্ব সঁপিয়াছেন, তাহা এক দিকে ভারতের গণতন্ত্র ও বর্ধমান আর্থিক শক্তির স্বীকৃতি, অন্য দিকে মহাদেশে অন্য বৃহৎ শক্তি চিনের প্রতিদ্বন্দ্বে ভারতের উত্থান ও আত্মপ্রতিষ্ঠার শংসাপত্রও। জাপান সহ দক্ষিণ-পূর্ব এশিয়ার অনেক রাষ্ট্র চিনের আর্থ-রাজনৈতিক আধিপত্যকামিতার শঙ্কায় তটস্থ। ভারতের সহিত চিনের সম্পর্ক যতই উন্নত হোক, এশিয়ার মধ্যে আর্থ-রাজনৈতিক কর্তৃত্বের ভবিষ্যৎ প্রতিযোগিতায় ভারতই যে চিনের প্রতিস্পর্ধী, ইহা এক ঐতিহাসিক নিয়তি। নয়াদিল্লি এ বিষয়ে এখনও তত সচেতন না হইলেও এশিয়ার দেশগুলি ইহা শিরোধার্য করে। মনমোহন সিংহকে এশিয়ার নেতা মনোনীত করিয়া তাহারা ভারতকে সেই প্রতিযোগিতায় রাজনৈতিক ভাবে কিছুটা আগাইয়া দিয়াছে। এ সুযোগের পূর্ণ সদ্ব্যবহার কাম্য। ভারত স্বীয় শক্তিতেই আন্তর্জাতিক মধ্যে গুরুত্বের অবস্থানে উপনীত। নিরাপত্তা পরিষদে তাহার স্থায়ী আসনের দাবিও সেই গুরুত্বেরই প্রতিফলন। আজ গোটা এশিয়া যদি তাহার মুখের দিকে চাহিয়া থাকে, তবে ভারতকে তাহার যোগ্য হইয়া উঠিতে হইবে। নিজের শক্তি বাড়াইয়াই তাহা করা সম্ভব।

এশিয়ায় নিজের বর্ধিত গুরুত্ব উপলব্ধি করিয়াই সম্ভবত প্রতিবেশীদের সহিত সম্পর্ক উন্নত করিতে ভারত তৎপর হইয়াছে। চিন ও পাকিস্তানের সহিত মৈত্রীর পরিবেশ রচিত হইয়াছে। নেপাল ও বাংলাদেশের সহিত সম্পর্ক উন্নত করার ক্ষেত্রে কিছু বাড়তি তৎপরতা দেখা যাইতেছে। নেপালে রাজা জ্ঞানেন্দ্রের ক্ষমতা দখল এবং বাংলাদেশে ভারতবিরোধী জঙ্গি গোষ্ঠীর আশ্রয়লাভের প্রশ্নে নয়াদিল্লি ওই দুই দেশের প্রতিই সম্প্রতি কড়া মনোভাব লইয়াছিল। ঢাকায় দক্ষিণ এশীয় শীর্ষ সম্মেলনের নির্ঘণ্ট পর্যন্ত বাতিল করা হয়। দুইটি সিদ্ধান্তই পররাষ্ট্র দফতরের বিচক্ষণতার অভাব প্রতিফলিত হইয়াছিল। কিন্তু এক বার কঠোর অবস্থান লইয়া সহসা তাহার বিপরীত অবস্থানে ঘুরিয়া গিয়া নেপালরাজ এবং বাংলাদেশের বিদেশমন্ত্রীর সহিত হার্দ্য বৈঠকে সব ভুলিয়া যাওয়ার আবেদনও সমান অপরিণতবুদ্ধির পরিচায়ক নয় কি? ইহার ফলে মনে হইতে পারে, এশিয়ার নেতা হইবার অত্যাৎসাহে নয়াদিল্লি প্রতিবেশীদের অনাবশ্যক তোষণ করিতে ব্যস্ত। জাতীয় স্বার্থকে অগ্রাধিকার দিতে না-পারাই বিদেশ নীতিতে অস্থিরমতিত্বের কারণ। প্রতিবেশীদের সহিত রণোন্নততা জাগাইয়া রাখা যেমন সংকীর্ণ জাতীয়তাবাদ, আগ বাড়াইয়া তাহাদের তোষণ করাও রাজনৈতিক দুর্বলতা বইকী! এশিয়ার নেতা হইতে গেলে দক্ষিণ এশিয়ার আঞ্চলিক নেতৃত্ব হাসিল করিতে হইবে, ঠিকই। কিন্তু তাহা করিতে গিয়া বিপথগামী প্রতিবেশীদের তোয়াজ করা অর্থহীন।

'India will not be used by any power'

In an exclusive interview to *The Hindu* on Friday, External Affairs Minister Natwar Singh spoke with Siddharth Varadarajan and Amit Baruah about recent developments on the diplomatic front. Excerpts:

King Gyanendra came out of his meeting with Prime Minister Manmohan Singh in Jakarta last month saying arms supplies to Nepal would continue. India has not contradicted him. Are we going to resume sending weapons?

Natwar Singh: The supply of arms to Nepal is under constant review. In Jakarta, the Prime Minister spelt out our concerns about the post-February 1, 2005 events, that they were a setback to the democratic process which, he felt, should be resumed before anything could be done. And we had hoped the King would take some action. But then Mr. Sher Bahadur Deuba was arrested. The emergency has been lifted but it is still partial in many ways. Given the nature of our very close relations with Nepal, we have to be extremely cautious and very patient. It's our hope and endeavour to see that normalcy returns.

And military supplies...

The question remains under review.

But has a first shipment of arms now been sent to Nepal, the tranche that was held back in February?

The details I don't know. That only the Defence Minister will know.

On the issue of relations with the United States, your party opposed sending Indian troops to Iraq. On other issues too, you were critical. Now that you are in government, in what way are the UPA's policies towards the U.S. different from those of the NDA?

Relations with the U.S. have improved considerably in the past 12 months — they have never been better. With regard to Iraq, our policy is governed by the unanimous resolution of Parliament in 2003. We have donated \$10 million to the international trust fund for Iraq, and offered to assist them in civil service training, the framing of a constitution.

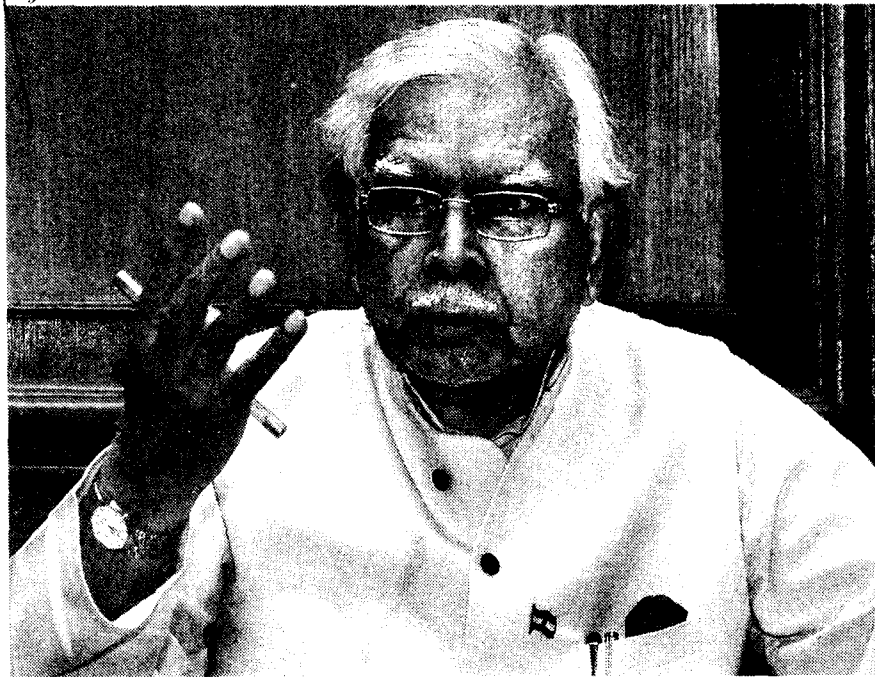
In the Opposition, the Congress had criticised the BJP for committing Indian support to the American missile defence programme. You asked whether the cost-benefit to India had been taken into account. However, the UPA is continuing with the NDA's policy on this. What is the benefit to India that you see now?

I don't think we have taken any decision on it.

But missile defence remains a component of the NSSP process.

Under the NSSP, currently we are only in the phase of being given briefings on the missile defence programme. No decision has been taken that we are going in for, say, the purchase of an anti-missile defence system. The interest part is, of course, quite obvious, because it is a technology which can have important uses for us, it is certainly in our interest to keep abreast of all these technologies. The U.S. is currently giving you briefings on this, including confidential briefings on the system. It is to our advantage.

Many countries say missile defence will fuel a new arms race, that it only encourages the



Natwar Singh ... outlining policy. - PHOTO: SHANKER CHAKRAVARTY

other side to produce more missiles.

We've not taken a position on this.

When President Musharraf was here, he said converting the Line of Control into the border is unacceptable to Pakistan, redrawing the LoC is unacceptable to India and that both countries favour soft borders. Do you think this provides a framework within which the issue of Kashmir can be discussed?

The composite dialogue is going extremely well. For example, in his Jakarta speech, General Musharraf said relations were improving so well they could be an example to the rest of the world. I must say that without his personal involvement, it would not have been possible to have the bus service started. During his visit here, the two leaders got on very well. They also know there are certain things which can't be done overnight. We have also said we are hoping the commitment made on January 6, 2004, will be honoured by the Pakistani side... There is some terrorist activity going on, but the overall Indo-Pak. scene looks more promising than it has done for many decades.

Why is that? Have we changed, or have the Pakistanis changed?

I think the global scenario has changed. And I also think the change in the atmosphere in both countries at the peoples' level also helped a great deal. We know the difficulties, they know the difficulties. But if contacts increase — President Musharraf himself said, "Why only a bus across the LoC, why not trucks with goods?" We have also asked them why our goods can't go through Pakistan instead of through Dubai, which is a loss to both countries.

Some people in the U.S. and India say China is a 'strategic threat' to both countries and that Washington and Delhi need to

coordinate their policies. How do you see this evolving triangular relationship in the next 20 years?

I think our relationship with the U.S. in no way affects our relationship with the Chinese. We have very good relations with the U.S., very good relations with China. These relations are getting better, if you just take the trade figures. We don't subscribe to this theory that any country is using India as a counterbalance for another country... India would not like to be used by any power. We have to look after our own national interests.

The 'guiding principles' on the border settlement with China give rise to the possibility of territorial adjustments in the future. Do you think a change in the map of India is something that would be acceptable to public opinion?

We are looking at a boundary settlement from the overall perspective of bilateral relations. The first stage of the work of the Special Representatives was completed with the signing of the agreement on the guiding principles. In the second stage, the SRs have been asked to hold discussions to reach a consensus on the agreed framework of the boundary settlement. It would be premature now to talk of the outcome of the discussion of the SRs. Whatever the outcome, it will be within the limits defined by the political parameters, the guiding principles laid down by both sides.

How does the Government look at the prospects of resuming the peace process in Sri Lanka?

We are looking at a solution that takes into account the concerns of all the people of Sri Lanka. Our view with regard to Eelam is well known; it has not changed. We are for the sovereignty, territorial integrity of Sri Lanka. We are concerned about the LTTE having

built an airstrip and having two aeroplanes and there's news about more coming.

Will India resist U.S. pressure on the Iran-Pakistan-India gas tie-up and go ahead with the pipeline?

I said so at my press conference with Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice when she made the views of the U.S. known. I said we have very good relations with Iran, we have no problems with Iran. The pipeline is mentioned in the statement issued in September [2004] in New York by the Prime Minister and President Musharraf. Our Petroleum Minister is going to Pakistan very soon. The earlier impression was that India was the stumbling block. We are not. Our energy needs are going to increase exponentially in the next 20 years and there's no other way but to have this kind of an arrangement.

On the reform of the U.N. Security Council, is India proposing an "Option C" as opposed to "Option A" and "Option B" [both without the veto] proposed by the High-Level Panel or is India willing to go along with Option A?

We have, along with Brazil, Japan and Germany, made our position well known. We are hoping to table a resolution and are hoping to have a very large co-sponsorship for the resolution before the General Assembly meets in September. A lot of people think this is a matter for the Security Council to decide. No, this is a matter for the General Assembly to decide with a two-thirds majority. There are 54 nations from Africa, they are very important players in the expansion process. Our position has, so far, been that India should be in the Security Council with a veto. A third view is that the veto should be abolished, which is unlikely. There is another point of view that there could be an informal arrangement that no one country can veto, there should be two or three. Given the world scenario today, with the U.N. having 192 members, it will be very difficult for any of the P-5 to exercise their veto against the popular mood for change. We are also realistic enough to know that the present five will not like the veto to be extended to other members.

[The] Prime Minister has said that we are against any discrimination between the old and the new. The African view is the same. What we have to remember is that these five permanent members have to go back to their respective parliaments ... If the U.S. Senate doesn't ratify, there's a new situation. Now, from what Secretary-General Kofi Annan told us, his expectation is that howsoever strong the reservations of one permanent member against a new one ... in today's climate it would be difficult to exercise the veto. At the most, that power would abstain.

Why doesn't India stick to its earlier stand that the veto, per se, is undemocratic and should be done away with?

It's not excluded. The discussions are going on at various levels, at various forums and they will be further intensified in the next few weeks. You can't even rule out, and I am taking the extreme position — the contradictions are so great, the differences so obvious, that nothing may happen. And, that'll be a great tragedy.

J. Peris, Peris
HD-11

PM forms panel on trade, economic relations

NILOVA Roy Chaudhury
New Delhi, May 2

CRITICAL OF the way economic relations with foreign countries have been handled and the 'inadequate homework' behind preparations for foreign visits, Prime Minister Manmohan Singh has appointed a trade and economic relations committee (TERC).

To be chaired by the Prime Minister, the committee is intended as a "think tank cum implementation agency" to enable "more substance" (read economic content and specific projects) to emerge from summit level meetings, PMO spokesman Sanjaya Baru said on Monday. The committee flows from Singh's conviction that foreign policy in the increasingly globalised world will be powered by economic relations, Baru said.

On the agenda for the committee's

first meeting is the Comprehensive Economic Cooperation Agreement (CECA) with Singapore, set to be signed when Prime Minister Lee visits India later this month. Also, substantive "credible proposals" and initiatives will be presented by Singh when he travels for the G-8 summit and to the US in July.

Implicit in the formation of the TERC is criticism of the way big-ticket projects and collaborations with foreign countries have been announced, mostly by the external affairs ministry, without looking closely into the pros and cons or details of the agreements.

An example cited was the announcement of the free trade agreement between India and Sri Lanka by former prime minister AB Vajpayee and Sri Lankan President Chandrika Kumaratunga.

A more recent example of slow coordination was during the just-concluded visit of Japanese Premier Junichiro Koizumi, when, after the announcement of the \$5-billion dedicated rail freight corridors project from Delhi to Mumbai and Delhi to Kolkata, the feasibility study will now begin.

The TERC will include, besides the Prime Minister, finance minister P Chidambaram, external affairs minister Natwar Singh, commerce and industry minister Kamal Nath and deputy chairman of Planning Commission, Montek Singh Ahluwalia.

For expert inputs it will include chairman of Prime Minister's economic advisory committee, C Rangarajan; chairman, competitive manufacturing council, V Krishnamurthy; national security adviser MK Narayanan and PM's principal secretary TKA Nair, who will be the convener.

03 MAY 2005

THE HINDUSTAN TIMES

Mama MEA, make up your mind

ASHOK MALIK

26-8-2004

ONE of the collateral benefits of living in New Delhi is frequent exposure to India's strategic affairs circuit. Its nodal point is, really, the Ministry of External Affairs. The MEA turns into a frenetic spin doctor each time a new initiative or visit is to be explained, and its wisdom is transmitted through a network of correspondents and commentators.

As spring has given way to summer, the diplomatic calendar has been hyper-busy. In all this, that old rhetorical question, "How many Indians does it take to change a light bulb?", has found a diplomatic variant: how many strategic partnerships will it take to make India a superpower?

Begin with end March and the visit of the American secretary of state. It left India with the offer of a "strategic partnership". Shortly afterwards, the Chinese prime minister came along and offered India another "strategic partnership". Now the Japanese prime minister is here with a third "strategic partnership".

Next month, the Indian prime minister visits Russia to, no doubt, celebrate an old "strategic partnership". In 2005, India and Australia could exchange prime ministerial visits and upgrade their "strategic dialogue" to — what else? — a "strategic partnership".

That aside, a familiar bunch of Cold War nostalgics speaks of a trilateral India-Russia-China "strategic

partnership" — as opposed to bilateral strategic partnerships between these countries. Finally, this week, one analyst came close to advocating a strategic partnership with an "European Union seeking to cut its apron strings to America", a happy occurrence Europhilic Indians have been waiting for since the D-Day landings.

Even if Venezuela and all of Africa have not been strategically partnered yet, that is a whole lot of strategic partnerships to cope with.

The problem of plenty is infectious. Take India's imminent great power status. America promises to

catch-all mantra that is now pasted on every wall in South Block.

Does war with nobody automatically mean strategic partnership with everybody? Just what is going on?

As a consequence of its growing economy and political stability, India is being wooed like never before. Its stock markets are attracting even Japanese and Chinese FII. The US sees India as an outsourcing hub as much a huge market for American banks or insurance companies or airlines, a bulwark against Islamist extremism, in Pakistan or Bangladesh or further afield.

Does war with nobody automatically mean strategic partnership with everybody? Just what is going on?

help India "become a major world power in the 21st century". China has promoted India from "regional power" to "very populous country" that will "play an even bigger role in international affairs". Japan sees India as both "stabilising power" and "new Asian superpower".

With breathtaking aplomb, the MEA and its merry band have diligently explained each happening with adjectives such as "significant" and "crucial". Any suggestion that so many strategic partnerships with so many countries may be contradictory has been pooh-poohed. If you object, you are accused of being unable to "think out of the box", a

There is a degree of competitive, me-too courtship. The Chinese, apart from eyeing Indian commodities for their factories, are worried India will fall to American charms. The Japanese are trying to neutralise the Chinese. It's a complex but nevertheless heady feeling to be suddenly so desirable.

Yet strategic partners and partnerships necessitate a strategic vision, a clear-headed approach to specific foreign policy aims and goals. Does the MEA have a strategic world view (as things stand, even a strategic Nepal view would be fine)? Perhaps it simply has a menu of strategic world views, one

of which is pulled out to suit the visitor of the week.

India ends up doing two things. First, beating about the bush (or Bush). The three-way alliance with Russia and China is humbug. Neither Moscow nor Beijing takes it seriously enough to risk individual equations with Washington. The big choice is between playing battling partner to America — or, if India is feeling particularly masochistic, to China.

Second, India has to guard against complacency. Just because it is being wooed and called a potential power doesn't mean it will *become* a power. The US strategic partnership offer, for instance, has spoken of transferring nuclear plants, virtually recognising India as a nuclear-weapons state.

George W. Bush has two years to deliver, before he becomes a lame duck president. He will need to convince the State Department, India-sceptic Congressmen on Capitol Hill, a host of second-rung powers who may think India is getting undue advantage.

Shouldn't India be taking this with some urgency? Shouldn't the government be painting the big picture for home opinion? Shouldn't MEA lobbyists be mollifying potential spoilers, on the Hill and beyond?

Er no; the MEA's too busy — signing the next strategic partnership with the next visitor who lands at the airport.

30 APR 2005

INDIAN EXPRESS

Nepal aid under review: Natwar

29/4
 45/2
 Indian Foreign Service

Statesman News Service

DELHI/KATHMANDU, April 28. — India today indicated it was in no hurry to resume military aid to Nepal, regretting that King Gyanendra has gone back on his assurances to Indian leadership on steps to unwind emergency measures and release political leaders.

"So far as the military aid is concerned, it is constantly under review and will remain under review in view of what has happened," foreign minister Mr K Natwar Singh told Rajya Sabha.

Deploring the arrest of former Nepal Prime Minister Mr Sher Bahadur Deuba, he said: "It is a matter of very deep regret that when His Majesty, the King, goes back after his talks with the Prime Minister of India, an announcement is made that a person no less than a previous Prime Minister of Nepal is arrested on charges which are yet to be proved".

Mr Singh was responding to CPI-M member Nilotpal Basu who had raised the issue saying while continued engagement with Nepal was

Annan urges constitutional rule

NEW DELHI, April 28.— Expressing his concern over the situation in Nepal, the UN Secretary-General, Mr Kofi Annan, said there should be a return to "constitutional rule" as soon as possible.

Speaking to reporters here, Mr Annan said in his meeting with the King of Nepal on the sidelines of the Asia-Africa summit in Jakarta, he had made it clear that political parties should be allowed to resume their activities. He said the UN was already "very active" on the ground in the Himalayan kingdom to prevent human rights abuses by security forces as well as Maoist rebels. A UN team is in the country to monitor the situation, he added.

On a query of supply of arms to Nepal, Mr Annan said that though the UN was against delivery of arms to conflict areas, individual countries have to make their own policies. — SNS

alright, it should not reflect on actions in the kingdom against democratic forces.

Asserting that India had all the leverages with Nepal but had not used any of them, the foreign minister said New Delhi wanted to resolve the situation in the kingdom in an amicable and friendly manner. "We want to see that democracy is restored, Maoists are contained, political process starts and the people of Nepal do not suffer in any way. That is our policy."

Meanwhile, the USA has continued to put Nepal's Maoists on their list of "foreign terrorist outfits", reinstating punitive measures against the rebels. The Country Reports on

Deuba put in custody

Statesman News Service

KATHMANDU, April 28. — Deposed Nepal Prime Minister Mr Sher Bahadur Deuba was today put under judicial custody till Monday after he refused to testify to the royal government's anti-corruption commission. Also today, a dozen political activists including a former minister were arrested for protesting against the commission.

The Royal Commission for Corruption Control (RCCC) questioned Mr Deuba over alleged irregularities in awarding a multi-million dollar contract of ADB-funded

Melamehi Drinking Water Project as also the misuse of PM's fund.

Since Mr Deuba, the most senior politician to be arrested by the anti-corruption commission, refused to speak, he was put in judicial custody until Monday. He was arrested from his house after a predawn raid yesterday and taken to the Police Training Centre at Maharajgunj for detention.

Today also he was brought to the RCCC's office at Nayabanshwar, but Mr Deuba declined to give any explanation, questioning the legality of the anti-graft body formed by King Gyanendra following his February power grab.

Terrorism 2004 — the Bush administration's annual report on terrorist activities worldwide — was released in Washington today.

The list includes 40 outfits, ranging from the Hizbollah to the LTTE of Sri Lanka to Palestine Liberation Front. The US renewal of measures against the Nepalese rebels came even as they called off a shutdown of private schools from tomorrow.

In continued violence, Maoists killed three villagers and injured 15 others in Sindhupalchowk district's Pipaldanda area, 65 km north of Kathmandu, where at least 10 rebels have been killed by security forces over the past two days.

নেপাল নিয়ে বিপাকে নটবর

স্টাফ রিপোর্টার, নয়াদিল্লি, ২৬
এপ্রিল: নেপালকে সামরিক সাহায্য
দেওয়া নিয়ে বিপাকে পড়লেন
বিদেশমন্ত্রী নটবর সিংহ। জাকার্তা
থেকে ফেরার পথে নটবর
সাংবাদিকদের ঘরোয়া আলাপচারিতায়
বলেছিলেন, দশ দিনের মধ্যেই আবার
নেপালে সেনা পাঠানো হবে।
বৈদ্যুতিন চ্যানেলের মাধ্যমে এই
মন্তব্য কালই ছড়িয়ে পড়ে। সামরিক
সাহায্যের সম্ভাবনা আবার উকিঝুঁকি
দিচ্ছে দেখেই সি পি এমের সাধারণ
সম্পাদক প্রকাশ কারাট প্রকাশ্যে তার
বিরোধিতা করেন। পরে প্রধানমন্ত্রী
জানিয়ে দেন, এমন কোনও সিদ্ধান্ত
হয়নি। বামেদের সঙ্গে গত রাতে
আলোচনায় তিনি বলেন, ১ মে
নেপালে জরুরি অবস্থার তিন মাস
অতিবাহিত হওয়ার আগে রাজা যদি
গণতন্ত্র ফেরানোর ব্যাপারে
'সন্তোষজনক' ঘোষণা করেন তবেই
ভারত সামরিক সাহায্যের ব্যাপারে
ভাববে। প্রধানমন্ত্রীর এই ব্যাখ্যায়
'সম্মুখ' বাম দল। নটবর এখন বলছেন,
তিনি সাংবাদিকদের আনুষ্ঠানিক ভাবে
কোনও কথাই বলেননি। গোটা ঘটনায়
বিদেশমন্ত্রীর উপরে ক্ষুব্ধ মনমোহন।

27 APR 2005

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From ism
Pm
What's the policy?
26/4
pg. 6

INDIA'S TURNAROUND on relations with Bangladesh and Nepal is not easy to explain, though it can be understood. It has been just two months since New Delhi took a tough position against the coup in Nepal and developments in Bangladesh by forcing the postponement of the summit of the South Asian Association of Regional Cooperation (Saarc). What does seem to have happened is that New Delhi has become aware that that policy was not working and that to make it work required a tougher course of action whose consequences could have been counter-productive. Boycotting the monarchy and suspending aid was not sufficient to get King Gyanendra in line. He successfully cracked down on dissent and began playing hardball by making overtures to Beijing and Islamabad.

To compound this, the mainstream political parties on whose behalf India had taken the tough line were unable to put up a credible challenge against the royalist coup. As a result, even as the king in Kathmandu was consolidating his power, Maoists in the countryside were having a free run. New Delhi has

now bitten the bullet and decided that its key goal — the neutralisation of the Maoist insurgency — will be best served by staying the course with the king.

As for Dhaka, which was a target of opportunity, in any case, New Delhi has always had fewer options. This is manifest by the fact that even as India backtracks on Saarc, Bangladesh continues to ratchet up tension along the Tripura border. The Indian decision to postpone the summit is unlikely to have delivered any message to Dhaka on the concern its lackadaisical approach to security is raising around the world. India has for years been concerned about the way in which forces inimical to India, including the Pakistani ISI, are making use of Bangladeshi territory. But it has yet to come up with an efficacious way to handle Bangladesh. The growing anarchy and rise of fundamentalism in Bangladesh is now raising worries in the US, too, which worries that transnational terrorists will use the opportunity to establish themselves there. Changing policies that don't work is a smart thing to do, but the ultimate goal can only be success. What we need are policies that work, and fast.

26 APR 2005

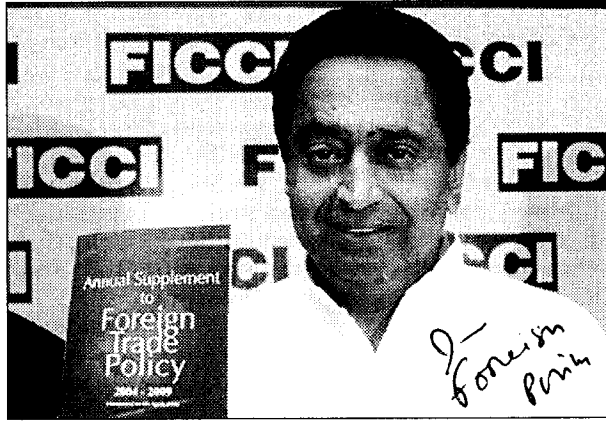
THE HINDUSTAN TIMES

লক্ষ্য ৪ লক্ষ কোটির রফতানি

নয়াদিল্লি, ৮ এপ্রিল: কৃষিপণ্যের উপরে সেস বিলোপ করে এবং খামার ও কৃষিপণ্যের রফতানির পথ প্রশস্ত করে চলতি বছরে ১৫ শতাংশ রফতানি বৃদ্ধির লক্ষ্যে বৈদেশিক বাণিজ্য নীতি পেশ করল কেন্দ্র। আজ দিল্লিতে এই নীতি পেশ করে বাণিজ্যমন্ত্রী কমল নাথ বলেন, বহু ক্ষেত্রে নিয়মকানুন সরল করে রফতানির পথ আরও মসৃণ করে তোলা হবে। পাঁচ বছরের বৈদেশিক বাণিজ্য নীতির পরিপূরক ২০০৫ সালের এই নীতি।

নতুন নীতিতে রফতানি বৃদ্ধির জন্য বিভিন্ন রাজ্য ও কেন্দ্রের মধ্যে যাতে সহযোগিতা গড়ে ওঠে, তার জন্য আন্তঃরাজ্য বাণিজ্য পরিষদ গড়ে তোলার পরিকল্পনা করা হয়েছে। ২০০৪-০৫ সালে ভারতীয় রফতানি ২৪ শতাংশেরও বেশি হারে বেড়ে প্রায় ৮,০০০ কোটি ডলারে পৌঁছেছে। নতুন নীতি পেশ করে কমল নাথ বলেন, চলতি বছরে এই অঙ্ক ৯,২০০ কোটি ডলার বা প্রায় ৪ লক্ষ কোটি টাকা করার লক্ষ্য বেঁধে দেওয়া হয়েছে।

এই নীতিতে বিশ্ববাজারে ভারতীয় চায়ের মান ও সুনাম রক্ষার জন্য বেশ কয়েকটি নতুন ব্যবস্থার কথা ঘোষণা করা হয়েছে। এ দেশের বাগানে উৎপন্ন চা হোক বা আমদানি করে ফের তা রফতানির ক্ষেত্রেই হোক, বিদেশে পাড়ি দেওয়ার আগে কিছু গুণমানের পরীক্ষায় উত্তরোত্তে হবে তাকে। কিছু সংস্থা নিম্ন মানের বিদেশি চা আমদানি করে তা আবার রফতানি করার ফলে বিশ্ববাজারে ভারতীয় চায়ের সুনাম নষ্ট হচ্ছে বলে চা শিল্পমহলের লাগাতার অভিযোগের পরিপ্রেক্ষিতেই এই সিদ্ধান্ত নিয়েছে বাণিজ্য মন্ত্রক। যে সব



শুক্রবার নয়াদিল্লিতে বৈদেশিক বাণিজ্য নীতির খসড়া পেশ করেন কেন্দ্রীয় বাণিজ্যমন্ত্রী কমল নাথ — এ এফ পি

সংস্থা রফতানি করার জন্য চা আমদানি করে থাকে, তাদের রফতানির আগে অন্তত ৫০ শতাংশ মূল্যযুক্ত করতে হবে বলে ঘোষণা করেছেন কমল নাথ। নতুন বাণিজ্য নীতির প্রশংসা করে শিল্পমহল একসুরে জানিয়েছে, এই নীতির ফলে ২০০৯ সালে বিশ্ব বাণিজ্যে ভারতের বৈদেশিক বাণিজ্যের ভাগ দ্বিগুণ হতে পারে। ইন্ডিয়ান চেম্বার অব কমার্সের কর্তাদের মতে, রফতানির পাশাপাশি বাড়বে কর্মসংস্থান। কারণ যে ক্ষেত্রগুলিতে এই নীতিতে জোর দেওয়া হয়েছে, তার মধ্যে অনেকগুলি শ্রমনিবিড়। এগুলি হল কৃষি, হস্তশিল্প, হস্তচালিত তাঁত, অলঙ্কার শিল্প, চর্ম ও পাদুকা শিল্প ইত্যাদি।

শহরের পাশাপাশি গ্রামাঞ্চলেও এর ফলে বিপুল কর্মসংস্থানের সুযোগ হবে বলে ইন্ডিয়ান চেম্বার কর্তাদের

তাঁদের মনপসন্দ হয়েছে।

নতুন নীতির বিভিন্ন দিক ব্যাখ্যা করে মন্ত্রী জানান, জনপ্রিয় পাশবুক প্রকল্প চালু থাকবে। তবে এর বিকল্প ব্যবস্থা তৈরি হচ্ছে। সেই ব্যবস্থা যত দিন না চালু হচ্ছে, তত দিন পাশবুক প্রকল্পই চালু থাকবে।

সংশোধিত এক্সপোর্ট প্রমোশন ক্রেডিট গ্যারান্টি স্কিমের কৃষি ও খামার শিল্প এবং ক্ষুদ্র শিল্পে বাড়তি সুযোগ পাবে। কমল নাথ জানিয়েছেন, মাইনর পোর্ট বা ছোটো বন্দর, কন্টেনার ডিপো বা কন্টেনার ফ্রেট স্টেশন থেকে রফতানি করলেও এই সুবিধা মিলবে।

পণ্যের মান উন্নয়ন ও বাজারে নকল রুখতে হস্তচালিত তাঁত শিল্পে ও উলমার্ক ও সিল্কমার্কারের মতো একটি নতুন মানদণ্ড চালু করার পরিকল্পনা করেছেন বাণিজ্যমন্ত্রী। কৃষিপণ্যের রফতানিতে উৎসাহ দেওয়ার জন্য 'বিশেষ কৃষি উপাঙ্গ যোজনা' প্রকল্পের আওতায় ডেয়ারি ও পোলট্রি পণ্যের উপরে বিশেষ আর্থিক উৎসাহ ঘোষণা করেছেন বাণিজ্যমন্ত্রী।

বিভিন্ন নিয়মের সরলীকরণের মধ্যে আগে বার্ষিক অগ্রিম লাইসেন্সের যে সুযোগ বিশেষ শ্রেণির রফতানিকারকরাই পেতেন, এখন তা আরও ছড়িয়ে দেওয়া হচ্ছে।

কৃষি রফতানি অঞ্চলে এত দিন যে পরিমাণ ব্যাঙ্ক গ্যারান্টি দিতে হত, তাও কমিয়ে দেওয়া হচ্ছে। নীতিতে পরিকাঠামোর উপর জোর দেওয়া হয়েছে, যাতে বিভিন্ন বন্দরে রফতানিকারকেরা ভিড় করার ফলে যে 'পণ্যজট' তৈরি হয়েছে, তা এড়ানো যায়।

এক নজরে

- নতুন বছরে রফতানির লক্ষ্যমাত্রা ৯,২০০ কোটি ডলার
- আন্তঃরাজ্য বাণিজ্য পরিষদ গঠন
- কৃষি ও খামারজাত পণ্যে বিশেষ উৎসাহ
- শ্রম-নির্ভর উৎপাদনমুখী শিল্পে উৎসাহ
- জোর চায়ের গুণমানে

ধারণা। ওরিয়েন্টাল চেম্বার অব কমার্স ও ভারত চেম্বার অব কমার্সের মতো বিভিন্ন বণিকসভার কর্তারা দীর্ঘদিন ধরেই যেহেতু 'ম্যানুফ্যাকচারিং' বা উৎপাদনমুখী শিল্পের উপর জোর দেওয়ার জন্য সরকারের কাছে দরবার করছিলেন, সেহেতু এই নীতি

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ANADABAZAR DAILY

প্রতিবেশীদের প্রতি কি বেশি নরম ভারত, বিতর্ক

জয়ন্ত ঘোষাল • নয়াদিল্লি ২৬
২৫ এপ্রিল: বিদেশনীতি ও কূটনীতির ক্ষেত্রে প্রতিবেশী দেশগুলির সঙ্গে ভারতের সম্পর্ক এখন বহুমুখী। মাত্র এক বছর আগে ক্ষমতায় এসেই মনমোহন সিংহের সরকার বাংলাদেশ-নেপাল-পাকিস্তান সম্পর্কে যে কঠোর 'প্রো-অ্যাকটিভ' কূটনীতির কৌশল নিয়েছিল, তা থেকে তারা এখন অনেকটাই সরে আসছে। উল্টে প্রতিবেশী রাষ্ট্রগুলির সঙ্গে মৈত্রীর সম্পর্ক গড়ে তুলতে গিয়ে ভারত বহু ক্ষেত্রে আপসপন্থী ও নরম মনোভাবের নীতি গ্রহণ করতে শুরু করেছে বলে অভিযোগ উঠেছে কূটনীতির অন্দর মহলে থেকেই। প্রাক্তন বিদেশমন্ত্রী যশবন্ত সিনহার বক্তব্য, "সার্বভৌম জাতীয় স্বার্থকে অবজ্ঞা করা উচিত নয়। এ ব্যাপারে আমরা সরকারকে সতর্ক করছি।"

বাংলাদেশের সঙ্গে ভারতের নীতি নিয়েও নানা মহল থেকে নানা সময়ে প্রশ্ন উঠেছে। প্রয়াত জাতীয় নিরাপত্তা উপদেষ্টা জে এন দীক্ষিত

নিজেও বাংলাদেশের অসঙ্গ যথেষ্ট কষ্টবন্দী ছিলেন। তাঁর বক্তব্য ছিল, বাংলাদেশ সরকার তাদের জমিতে ভারত বিরোধী কার্যকলাপ বন্ধ না করলে বন্ধ হব কী করে? প্রথম দিকে সামগ্রিক ভাবে কেন্দ্রীয় সরকার এ ব্যাপারে ঐকমত্য গড়ে তুলেছিল। এই কারণেই তড়িঘড়ি করে ঢাকার সার্ক সম্মেলনে যোগ না দিতে যাওয়ারই সিদ্ধান্ত নেওয়া হয়। কাল নটবর সিংহ সার্ক যোগ দিতে ভারত রাজি বলে ঘোষণা করলেও বাংলাদেশ কিন্তু আলফা নেতা অনুপ চেটিয়াকে প্রত্যাগণ বা জঙ্গি ঘাটি নির্মূল করার মতো কোনও প্রতিশ্রুতি দেয়নি। ভারত প্রকাশ্যে শাস্তি প্রক্রিয়া শুরুর ইঙ্গিত দিলেও বাংলাদেশ যা বলার বলেছে গোপনে, একান্তে। উল্টে কেন্দ্রীয় স্বরাষ্ট্র প্রতিমন্ত্রী প্রকাশ জয়সওয়াল বলেছেন, "অনুপ চেটিয়ার বিষয়ে আপাতত আমাদের চুপ করে থাকাই ভাল। যত মুখ খুলব, ততই সমস্যা বাড়বে। এখন দু'দেশের মধ্যে বন্ধুত্বের সম্পর্ক স্থাপনটাই আশু কর্তব্য।" সাউথ ব্লকের এক বাঙালি কূটনীতিকের

ভাষায়, "একে বলা যায়, 'সেরেছ কলসির কানা, তাই বলে কি প্রেম দেব না'-র নীতি। ইন্দিরা গান্ধীর পরে আর কোনও প্রধানমন্ত্রীই দ্বিপাক্ষিক সম্পর্ক শক্ত হাতে মোকাবিলা করতে পারেননি।" শুধু বাংলাদেশ নয়, নেপালের ক্ষেত্রেও ভারতের বিদেশনীতি নিয়ে প্রশ্ন উঠেছে। নেপালে জরুরি অবস্থা জারির মাত্র দু'মাসের মধ্যেই পুরনো অবস্থান বদলালেন প্রধানমন্ত্রী মনমোহন সিংহ। নেপালের রাজা জ্ঞানেন্দ্রের আবদার মেনে তিনি জাকাতায় বৈঠকই করলেন না, শীঘ্রই নতুন করে সেনা সাহায্যের প্রতিশ্রুতিও দিয়ে বসলেন। রাজা কিন্তু গণতন্ত্র ফিরিয়ে আনার বিষয়ে ঠিক কী পথ নির্দেশিকা ঘোষণা করতে চলেছেন, তা-ও স্পষ্ট নয়। সেনাপ্রধানের পদ ছেড়ে পাক প্রেসিডেন্ট পারভেজ মুশারফের গণতান্ত্রিক ব্যবস্থায় ফেরার কায়দায় জ্ঞানেন্দ্রও দীর্ঘ পরিকল্পনা ঘোষণা করতে পারেন, যা ভারতের পক্ষে মানা কঠিন। এ অবস্থায় অভ্যন্তরীণ চাপের মুখে নটবরের সঙ্গে রাজার বৈঠকেই বিষয়টির আপাতত নিষ্পত্তি কূটনৈতিক

দিক থেকে উচিত কাজ হত বলে মনে করা হচ্ছে। প্রধানমন্ত্রী তড়িঘড়ি করে এ বৈঠকে রাজি না হলে নেপালের রাজার উপরে বেশি চাপ থাকত বলে মনে করেন কূটনীতিকদের অনেকেই।

সিপিএমের সাধারণ সম্পাদক প্রকাশ কারাটি দলীয় অবস্থান অনুসারে নেপালকে সামরিক সাহায্য ঘোষণার বিরোধিতাই করেছেন। যদিও প্রধানমন্ত্রী আজ সন্ধ্যায় বামেদের আশ্বস্ত করে জানান, নেপালে গণতন্ত্র ফেরানোর শর্তেই ফের সেনা পাঠানো হচ্ছে। একই পরিস্থিতি তৈরি হয়েছে পাকিস্তান নিয়েও। মুশারফের সব অনুরোধই ভারত মেনে নিয়েছে, কিন্তু তাঁর ভারত সফরে দিল্লির চেয়ে ইসলামাবাদেরই লাভ হয়েছে বেশি। ইউ পি এ সরকারের এক মন্ত্রীর বক্তব্য, "আসলে মহাজনের কাছে ধার চাইতে গেলেও হিরের আঁটি পরে যেতে হয়। পরিস্থিতির বাধাবাহকতা যা-ই থাক, বৃহত্তম গণতান্ত্রিক রাষ্ট্র ভারত উদার হতে গিয়ে শেকদগুহীন জেলিফিশে পরিণত হোক, সেটা অবশ্য কারওই কাম্য নয়।"

বিভ্রান্ত বিদেশনীতি

প্রতিবেশীদের সহিত সম্পর্কের ক্ষেত্রে ভারতীয় বিদেশনীতি এখনও সুস্পষ্ট দিশা অর্জন করতে পারে নাই। বিশেষত, নেপাল ও বাংলাদেশের সহিত সম্পর্কে দিশাহীনতার লক্ষণগুলি প্রকট। নেপালের রাজা জ্ঞানেন্দ্র নির্বাচিত সরকারকে বরখাস্ত করিয়া, জরুরি অবস্থা জারি করিয়া, রাজনৈতিক নেতাকর্মীদের বন্দি করিয়া এবং সংবাদপত্রের স্বাধীনতা হরণ করিয়া নিজের হাতে যাবতীয় ক্ষমতা কেন্দ্রীভূত করিলে ভারত সে দেশকে সামরিক সাহায্য দান বন্ধ করিয়া দেয়। লক্ষ্য ছিল, গণতন্ত্র ফিরাইতে রাজার উপর চাপ সৃষ্টি করা। অতঃপর ইন্দোনেশিয়ার বান্দুঙে প্রধানমন্ত্রী মনমোহন সিংহের সহিত একান্ত সাক্ষাৎকারে রাজা জ্ঞানেন্দ্র গণতন্ত্র ফিরাইবার প্রতিশ্রুতি দেন। জরুরি অবস্থা প্রত্যাহত হইলেও সাংবিধানিক রাজতন্ত্র ও বহুদলীয় গণতন্ত্র ফিরিয়া আসে নাই। মুক্তি পান নাই অধিকাংশ রাজনৈতিক নেতা। মুক্ত হয় নাই সংবাদপত্র। তথাপি ভারত নেপালকে স্থগিত সামরিক সাহায্য পুনরায় চালু করার সিদ্ধান্ত লইয়াছে। স্বভাবতই প্রশ্ন উঠিয়াছে, তবে কি গণতন্ত্র অনুশীলন করিবে না রাজতন্ত্র, সেটা নেপালের অভ্যন্তরীণ ব্যাপার, এই যুক্তিতে স্থিত থাকাই কি সমীচীন ছিল? না কি একশো দিন আগের সিদ্ধান্তটিই ছিল ঠিক এবং সামরিক সাহায্য চালু করার সিদ্ধান্তটি ভুল?

ভারতীয় বিদেশ মন্ত্রকের দোদুল্যমানতাই এই প্রশ্ন সৃষ্টি করিয়াছে। রক্তপাতহীন অভ্যুত্থানের মাধ্যমে রাজা জ্ঞানেন্দ্রের ক্ষমতা দখল ভারতবর্ষে এতটাই বিরক্ত ও বিরূপ করে যে বাংলাদেশে অনুষ্ঠেয় সার্ক শীর্ষ সম্মেলনেও মনমোহন সিংহ নেপালরাজের মুখোমুখি হইতে অস্বীকার করেন, সম্মেলন বাতিল করিয়া দিতে হয়। প্রতিবেশী রাষ্ট্রে (যে রাষ্ট্র আবার তাহার অর্থনীতি ও সমরসজ্জার জন্য ভারতের উপর একান্ত নির্ভরশীল) গণতন্ত্রের পুনরভিষেকের জন্য ব্যাকুলতায় ভারত যদি এ ধরনের কঠোর ও অনমনীয় অবস্থান লয়, তাহাতে আপত্তির কিছু নাই (যদিও অন্য প্রতিবেশী পাকিস্তানে ফৌজি জেনারেলের গণতন্ত্র নিধন কাণ্ড ক্রমে নয়াদিল্লির গা-সহা হইয়া গিয়াছে)। কিন্তু সেই অবস্থান পাল্টাইয়া ফেলার মতো কিছুই যখন ঘটে নাই, বিশেষত বান্দুঙের প্রতিশ্রুতি রাজ্যে খেলাপ করিয়াছেন, তখন কেবল তাহার মৌখিক প্রতিশ্রুতির ভিত্তিতে নেপালকে সমরাস্ত্র সরবরাহের সিদ্ধান্তটি বিভ্রান্তিকর।

হয়তো মাওবাদী সন্ত্রাস ও বিদ্রোহের মোকাবিলায় নেপালরাজের হাত শক্ত করিতেই এই অবস্থান বদল। নেপালের মাওবাদী উপপ্লব যে কেবল ওই দেশের ভৌগোলিক সীমাতেই আবদ্ধ নয়, ভারতেও তাহা উপচাইয়া পড়িতেছে, ইহা নয়াদিল্লির কাছে নিঃসন্দেহে একটি উদ্বেগজনক ঘটনা। এই অবস্থায় সামরিক ভাবে দুর্বল নেপালকে মাওবাদী হামলার সম্মুখে নিরস্ত্র ছাড়িয়া দেওয়ার পরিণাম ভবিষ্যতে ভারতকেও ভুগিতে হইতে পারে। কিন্তু এই বাস্তবতাটি তো আগে হইতেই মূর্ত ছিল। তবে নয়াদিল্লি অস্ত্র সরবরাহ বন্ধের সিদ্ধান্ত আদৌ লইয়াছিল কেন? লক্ষণীয়, ভারত যে দিন অস্ত্র সাহায্য চালু করার কথা জানায়, সে দিন মার্কিন বিদেশ সচিব ক্রিস্টিনা রোকা কাঠমান্ডুতে উপস্থিত। গণতন্ত্র ফিরাইতে মার্কিন যুক্তরাষ্ট্রও নেপালরাজের উপর চাপ সৃষ্টি করিয়াছে। শ্রীমতী রোকাও সফরকালে রাজনৈতিক বন্দিদের মুক্তি এবং নাগরিক অধিকার ফিরাইবার দাবিতে মুখর হন। মাওবাদীদের মোকাবিলার ক্ষেত্রেও মানবাধিকার রক্ষায় সতর্ক থাকিতে হইবে এবং সে অধিকার লঙ্ঘনের যে কোনও ঘটনার নিরপেক্ষ তদন্ত করিতে হইবে। অন্যথায় নেপালকে দেওয়া মার্কিন সাহায্যও বন্ধ হইয়া যাইবে। চাপ সৃষ্টির ইহাই ফলিত পদ্ধতি। ভারত কিন্তু কোনও সতর্কবার্তার ধার দিয়া যায় নাই, একতরফা অস্ত্রসাহায্য স্থগিত করিয়াছে। তাহার পর পরিস্থিতির কোনও পরিবর্তন না হওয়া সত্ত্বেও একতরফাই সাহায্য চালু করার সিদ্ধান্ত লইয়াছে। ইহাই অস্থিরমতির লক্ষণ। দক্ষিণ এশিয়া তথা সমগ্র এশিয়ায় আর্থ-রাজনৈতিক শক্তি হইয়া উঠিতে হইলে কিন্তু নিকট প্রতিবেশীদের প্রতি নীতিনির্গমে অস্থিরচিত্ততা পরিহার করা জরুরি।

13 MAY 2005

Delhi relents

How long will Gyanendra prevaricate?

Delhi's decision to resume supplying arms to Nepal, reportedly prompted by the fear that Pakistan might step in, again illustrates an inconsistent foreign policy vis-à-vis our neighbours. Must this be determined by what Islamabad does or intends to do? And why only Pakistan, which has said it has no such intention, and not China, another potential supplier? What seems ridiculous is the Ministry of External Affairs' excuse that the decision was taken most reluctantly. If Delhi was so satisfied that the King fulfilled the "preconditions" by not extending the emergency, it should not have dilly-dallied for ten days. The King is a taskmaster but does not have the reputation of being a man of principle. When he met Manmohan Singh in Jakarta, he reportedly agreed to initiate the restoration of democracy, on which the Prime Minister gave an "assurance" to review arms supplies. But the arrest within hours of Sher Bahadur Deuba by the palace-appointed anti-graft panel on corruption charges was totally at variance with what the King had promised. Several former ministers are already in its dragnet and hundreds of political activists continue to be in jail. Lifting the emergency was a calculated move to appease the countries opposed to the royal takeover. Emergency is gone but bonded emergency remains. Until press censorship is removed and civil liberties restored, the King's claim of having stepped in to save democracy is suspect.

Arms resumption may raise further complications and India must now concern itself with possible consequences. The decision will disappoint the Maoists, particularly the Leftists who are known for their anti-Indian stand and expected Delhi to put further pressure on the King. They fear the arms will be used to suppress democratic forces which India tends to encourage.

14 MAY 2005

THE STATESMAN

11-16
W/S
Rice
Rice

Going Global

India's proactive foreign policy
is good but needs definition

EVER since the crisis in Nepal began, Washington has made one thing clear: It is keen that New Delhi handle the situation since both countries agree on the speedy restoration of democracy in the kingdom. The areas where the world's most powerful and largest democracies are in sync are growing. The sound bytes from Washington signal that it wants to add greater depth to relations between the two countries. The US administration acknowledges India's standing as a regional power and its potential as a global power. Contentious issues remain but the focus has moved to trade and strategic partnerships. In a welcome departure from the past, New Delhi has not gone overboard at this positive turn of events. Instead, it has subtly indicated to Washington that it will pursue other relationships to further its national interests. New Delhi has wisely moved away from the prickly border dispute with Beijing and instead sought to upgrade economic relations with China. The misplaced nostalgia over Indo-Russian ties has given way to a pragmatic one based on mutual defence and trade needs. Despite US secretary of state Condoleezza Rice's apprehensions about New Delhi engaging Tehran, especially on energy issues, the Manmohan Singh government politely stressed that it would not compromise its energy interests. The buzzword these days is economic diplomacy as the newly created trade and economic relations council indicates.

The giant emerging Indian market exerts a gravitational pull for economic interest everywhere. The recent initiatives with Pakistan have enhanced India's standing. While we may not share warm relations with all our neighbours, they realise that the Indian economy is capable of charging South Asia. With its high growth rate and large foreign exchange reserves, India is now proactively seeking markets as far afield as Africa in areas like energy and education. With the advantage of a large English-speaking population, India has emerged as an IT powerhouse and a favoured destination for outsourcing from the West. But to build on such positive trends, we must now have a broad foreign policy framework. New Delhi must document its long-term strategy. Mature democracies, especially those with global worldviews, clearly state and list their policy objectives from time to time after thorough debate and discussion. New Delhi now needs such a stated strategy both for its own benefit and for the world at large to understand its vision.

No change in India's policy on Maoists

HT Correspondent
New Delhi, May 26

THERE IS no change, the MEA said on Thursday, in India's policy towards Maoists in Nepal. MEA spokesman Navtej Sarna said, "We unequivocally condemn their (Maoists') terrorist and violent acts that have caused enormous suffering to the people of Nepal. It's our conviction that there's no purely military solution to the Maoist insurgency", he said.

On a day that senior MEA official Ranjit Rae travelled to Nepal to "oversee certain development projects", and "not for anything political", official sources said, Sarna read out a brief statement to set the record straight that there was "no change" in India's policy towards the Maoist insurgents.

New Delhi has been embarrassed by official Nepalese allegations that it was interacting with certain leaders of the insurgent group. Forced on the backfoot by reports that Indian security agencies had arranged a meeting of a Maoist leader with CPI(M) chief Prakash Karat, the spokesman quoted a statement by Karat describing reports of the meeting as "untrue".

27 MAY 2005

THE HINDUSTAN TIMES

Natwar speaks to Straw, Fischer on G-4 resolution

Statesman News Service

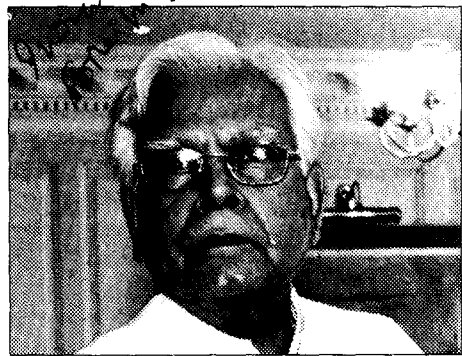
NEW DELHI, June 13. — With the G-4 agreeing to drop their demand for veto power in the draft resolution, there has been an intensification of efforts to lobby for support for expansion of the UN Security Council.

Before leaving for Moscow to accompany the UPA chairperson, Mrs Sonia Gandhi, the external affairs minister, Mr Natwar Singh, spoke to the British foreign secretary, Mr Jack Straw, and the German foreign minister, Mr Joschka Fischer, on the G-4 resolution.

Earlier, he had also spoken to the other members of the G-4, Japanese foreign minister, Mr Nobutaka Machimura and Brazilian foreign minister, Mr Celso Amorim.

The calls are indicative of increased activity on the front both by the G-4 countries and their supporters, as well as the coffee club nations, with China on their side.

Recently, the draft resolution circulated by the G-4 members, India, Japan, Brazil and Germany, had been revised, with the four nations agreeing not to demand veto powers for new permanent



Mr Natwar Singh

members for 15 years. This concession had to be made as the coffee club members have been making hectic efforts to stop the G-4 resolution, sending envoys to various parts of the world. China had thrown its weight in the opposition to the draft resolution, terming it as "immature" as it would prove "divisive".

Indian official sources have tried to put a spin on the development, stating that while India may have agreed to drop the subject of veto, it will ensure that the language reflects its position of non-discrimination. "We may have had to be flexible on the language to get as many people on board as possible," said sources.

FOREIGN POLICY

UPA's Ideas Reveal A Utopian Slant

By MANISH DABHADE

As the UPA completed a year in office, several commentators were quick to point out its successes and failures. What was most surprising was their unequivocal appreciation of the UPA's foreign policy since it assumed office last May. Be it the "irreversible" peace process with Pakistan, or the signing of the political guidelines regarding the border dispute with China, or the strong prospects of nuclear energy cooperation between India and the US, the UPA was congratulated by one and all. It also drew applause for its renewed focus on economic diplomacy and its strong bid for a permanent seat in the UN Security Council.

Utopian ideas

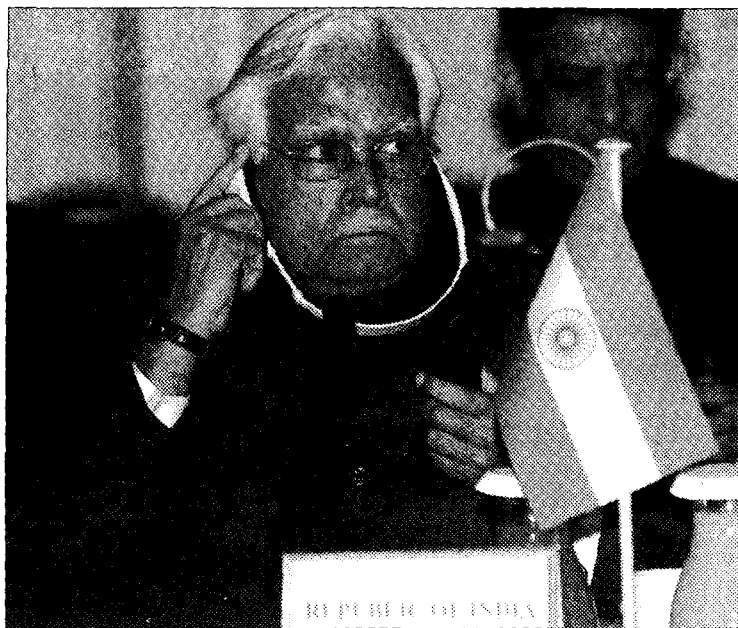
But does the UPA really deserve kudos for the so-called achievements in the foreign policy arena? It should not be forgotten that most of the achievements were, in fact, initiated by the Vajpayee-led NDA government. The present dispensation has imparted a momentum to these initiatives. However, the ideas governing Indian foreign policy in the last few years, but more pronounced in the UPA's foreign policy, are being questioned. These ideas — more utopian, less real in nature — display a lack of understanding of international politics in the 21st century and India's place in it, leading to flawed foreign policy priorities, misguided missions and frittering away of critical diplomatic opportunities.

According to the United States National Intelligence Council Report titled "Mapping the Global Future" by 2020, the international community will have to confront the military, political and economic dimensions of the rise of China and India. This report likened the emergence of China and India in the early 21st century to the rise of Germany in the 19th and America in the 20th, with the impact potentially as dramatic. It is thus clear that India is already poised to assume a great power role in international affairs. The world is waking up to this trend. It also becomes imperative for the Indian foreign policy establishment to

The author is an assistant professor in the School of International Studies, JNU

realise this and grab this historic opportunity to develop coherent, result-oriented strategies. The UPA government seems to be missing the bus owing to its utopian ideas.

First and foremost, UPA foreign policy pundits have a fallacious understanding of the nature of power in contemporary international politics. They believe that India will arrive at the high table by concentrating on



its economic power. This has resulted in India concentrating on forging economic partnerships with important powers. It ignores the history of past, present and emerging great powers. The history of great powers demonstrates that only those powers which have employed their emerging economic power to increase their military clout and vice versa have achieved their national interests. This is more so in the 21st century.

China as case-study

Take the example of China. Its phenomenal rise in the last few years is due to its ability to synchronise its economic power with military strength to achieve its ambition to become the only Asian power of consequence. China is using its impressive economic growth to modernise its military in all spheres, including responding to the RMA (revolution in military affairs). India will not be able to emerge as a great power unless it synchronises its economic and military

goals. India should, therefore, simultaneously concentrate on both internal (modernising its military assets, making a credible nuclear deterrent, acquisition of missile defence and improving strategic missiles) and external (establishing defence links/cooperation with military powers) balancing in the strategic sphere apart from boosting its economic growth if it aspires to play a significant role in

international affairs.

Even a Security Council seat, for which India is spending a lot of diplomatic energy, will not make it a power of consequence if it continues to invest in developing its economic prowess alone. Developing comprehensive national power is the only way to ensure that India achieves its aspirations to emerge as a great power.

The second idea driving India's foreign policy is that resolving disputes with either China or Pakistan will lead to a permanent state of peace with these countries. Conflict resolution, therefore, has become an end in itself for the policy pundits. This ignores the "real" world in which India operates.

The Kashmir problem with Pakistan or the border dispute with China is not the cause, but a symptom, of intense rivalry between India and these countries. Structurally, these countries are placed in international politics where they compete with each other in the

5.6 272
security arena. This reality can be ignored at only one's own peril.

Covert Chinese and overt Pakistani opposition to India's bid for the Security Council seat dramatically reveals this reality. Though India is positively engaged in resolving all outstanding disputes with China and Pakistan, it has not prevented them from opposing India's bid. India should, therefore, not see the resolution of these conflicts as an end in itself but as an opportunity to weave a matrix of relationships in the political, economic, strategic and cultural arenas.

Economic integration

Finally, there is the idea that economic integration is the panacea to all ills in an adversarial interstate relationship. UPA pundits believe that growing economic integration with China and Pakistan would increase their stakes in a peaceful relationship with India and sensitise them on Indian security concerns. The current establishment has also focused on increasing people to people contacts with Pakistan. This ignores the reality that economic interdependence has never and will never mitigate security competition among regional rivals. The recent acrimony between the highly integrated economies of China and Japan should serve as an eye-opener.

The Sino-Japanese estrangement was more about their perceived roles in the Asian balance of power in the near future. The Chinese opposition to Japan's bid for the Security Council seat also reflects the structural reality in Asia and shows that economic interdependence will not prevent countries from competing with each other in the political-strategic arena.

Though the UPA has completed only a year in office and this is an inadequate period to judge its foreign policy achievements, the utopian ideas governing foreign policy are being questioned. There is, in Henry Kissinger's words, "the necessity for choice" to be made. If India is to emerge as a great power in the near future, it has to think big and "real". Flawed ideas will only take India farther away from its great power aspirations.

...CPM cries foul over India-US defence pact

Our Political Bureau
NEW DELHI 7 JULY

THE CPM, which considers cooperation with the US as heresy, termed on Friday the India-US defence pact as yet another violation of the Common Minimum Programme (CMP) and accused the UPA government of seeking to advance US interests in Asia. It also suspected that the promise for co-production of defence equipment was aimed at luring India to buy F-16s and open the market for US weaponry.

The Marxists warned the government that the agreement was "fraught with serious consequences" for India's strategic and security interests and will have a "direct bearing" on foreign policy. It expressed apprehensions that the absence of any mention of collaborations in multinational operations being

under UN auspices meant India agreed to participate in US-led military operations.

"The UPA government has taken a major step in tying up with the US to serve the US strategic goals in Asia. If this agreement is carried forward, India will be placing itself in the same category as Japan, South Korea and Philippines—all traditional military allies of the US," the CPM politburo said in a statement. Seeing a similarity between policies of the UPA government and the Vajpayee regime on expanding collaboration relating to missile defence, the CPM said India was being drawn into the US missile defence shield, of which Japan was already a part, under the cover of providing the patriot missile system.

"Various other clauses in the agreement are aimed at integration of the structures of the two

armed forces and to enhance inter-operability," it said.

The CPM, which has been asking the government to reject the US offer of fighter planes, reminded the UPA that there was no mention of this kind of defence partnership with the US in the section on defence in the CMP.

"Nor has the UPA government seen whether it is in consonance with the commitment to pursue an independent foreign policy and promoting multi-polarity in international relations which is stated in the CMP," the CPM said complaining that the step was taken without any public debate and discussions within the country.

The Left Party also pointed out that the agreement came at a time when the US was actively working to prevent China from enhancing its defence potential.

02 JUL 2005 The Economic Times

ইহার নাম বাস্তববাদ

নটবর সিংহ যাহা পারেন নাই, প্রণব মুখোপাধ্যায় তাহাই করিয়া দেখাইলেন। বঙ্গত বিদেশমন্ত্রী মার্কিন যুক্তরাষ্ট্রের সহিত ভারতের সম্পর্ক অনেকটাই ভঙুল করিয়া দিতেছিলেন জেটনিরপেক্ষতা ইত্যাদি বিষয়ে নেহরুবাদী ভারতীয় বীক্ষা সম্পর্কে মার্কিন প্রশাসনকে জ্ঞান ও উপদেশ দিতে গিয়া। প্রতিরক্ষামন্ত্রী প্রণব মুখোপাধ্যায় ভারতীয় বিদেশ নীতির সেই বিপথগামিতা কিছুটা হইলেও শোধরাইতে চেষ্টা করিলেন। তাহার মার্কিন সফরের উদ্দেশ্য ছিল প্রধানমন্ত্রী মনমোহন সিংহের আসন্ন সফরের অনুকূল রাজনৈতিক পটভূমি রচনা করা। সে কাজে তিনি সফল তো বটেই, তাহা করিতে গিয়া তিনি মার্কিন প্রশাসনের কাছে ভারতের চাহিদা বা প্রত্যাশা কী, সেটাও স্পষ্ট করিয়া জানাইয়া দিয়াছেন। ভারত-মার্কিন প্রতিরক্ষা বিষয়ে দুই দেশের মধ্যে যে বাবাপড়া তিনি সম্ভাবিত করিয়াছেন, তাহাও গুরুত্বপূর্ণ। কেননা এ ক্ষেত্রেও মতাদর্শের স্ব-আরোপিত মহিমার উপর জোর না দিয়া তিনি ভারতের জাতীয় স্বার্থকেই অগ্রাধিকার দিয়াছেন। চার বছর আগে অটলবিহারী বাজপেয়ীর প্রধানমন্ত্রিত্বের কালে তাহার জাতীয় নিরাপত্তা উপদেষ্টা ব্রজেশ মিশ্র ভারত-মার্কিন সম্পর্কে যে নূতন দিগন্ত উন্মোচিত করিয়াছিলেন, প্রণব মুখোপাধ্যায়ের চলতি সফরেও তাহার তুল্য সফল অর্জিত হইয়াছে।

ব্রজেশ মিশ্র যে ভারত-মার্কিন রণনৈতিক অংশীদারিত্বের প্রেক্ষিত রচনা করিয়াছিলেন, প্রণববাবু সেই জমিতেই প্রতিরক্ষা চুক্তির চারাটি রোপণ করিয়াছেন। চুক্তি অনুযায়ী ভারত মার্কিন যুক্তরাষ্ট্রের কাছ হইতে সেই সব সমরাস্ত্রই ক্রয় করিবে, যেগুলির নির্মাণ প্রযুক্তিও ভারতকে হস্তান্তরিত করা হইবে এবং যেগুলি যৌথ ভাবে উৎপাদন করাও যাইবে। এই শর্তটি এ জন্য জরুরি যে মার্কিন প্রতিরক্ষা সংস্থাগুলির অস্ত্রবিক্রয়ে আগ্রহ বিপুল হইলেও সেই সব অস্ত্রের নির্মাণ-প্রযুক্তি বা ব্যবহার-প্রকৌশল রফতানির রেকর্ড খুবই খারাপ। ফলে আমদানি করা অনেক মার্কিন অস্ত্রই তৃতীয় বিশ্বের দেশগুলির কাছে সম্পদ না হইয়া বোঝা হইয়া ওঠে। ইদানীং মার্কিন অস্ত্র উৎপাদক সংস্থাগুলির সহিত নিবিড় বন্ধনে আবদ্ধ জর্জ ডব্লিউ বুশ ও ডিক চেনির মার্কিন প্রশাসন ভারতকে মার্কিন সমরাস্ত্রের বিপুল সম্ভার বেচিতে মরিয়া হইয়া উঠিয়াছে। পাকিস্তানকে এফ-১৬ যুদ্ধবিমান বিক্রির সিদ্ধান্তে ভারতের অভিমান ঘুচাইতে সে জনাই দফায়-দফায় বিদেশ সচিব কম্বোলিজা রাইস এবং ডোনাল্ড রামসফেল্ডকে নয়াদিল্লি পাঠানো হইতেছিল। প্রণববাবু বুশ প্রশাসনকে ভারতের শর্তের কথা জানাইয়া দিয়াছেন এবং মার্কিন প্রশাসনও সেই শর্ত শিরোধার্য করিয়াছে। এ ভাবেই ভারত-মার্কিন রণনৈতিক অংশীদারিত্ব অর্থপূর্ণ হইয়া উঠিতে পারে।

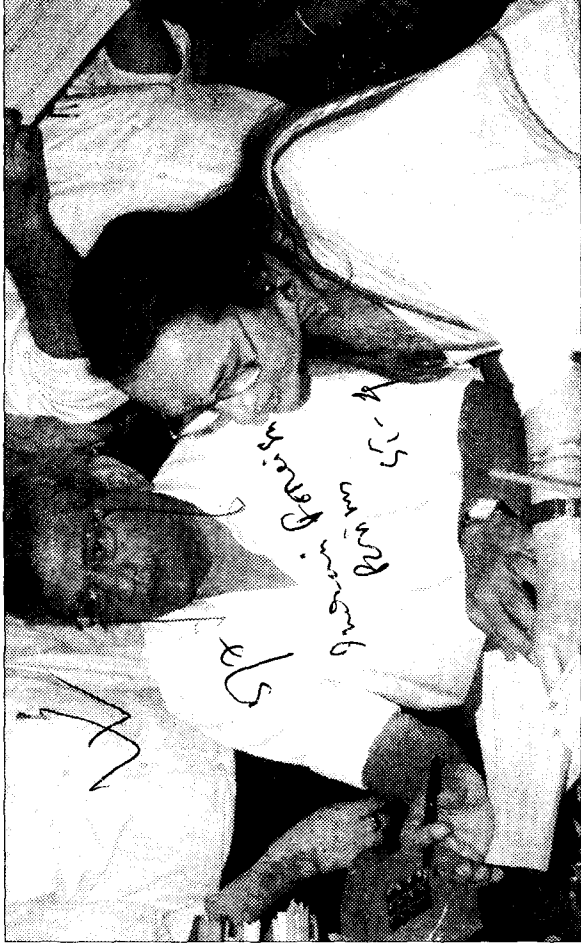
রণনৈতিক অংশীদারিত্বের অন্য বিষয়টি হইল মার্কিন নেতৃত্বাধীন বহুজাতিক সমরাস্ত্রিয়ানে অংশগ্রহণ করার প্রস্তাব। ইরাকে মার্কিন আগ্রাসনের সময় ও পরে সেখানকার যুদ্ধবিধ্বস্ত পরিকাঠামোর নবনির্মাণের কালে বুশ প্রশাসন বারংবার ভারতকে বহুজাতিক অভিযানের শরিক হইতে অনুরোধ করিয়াছে। ভারত দৃঢ়ভাবে সে অনুরোধ প্রত্যাখ্যান করে। ইরাকে মার্কিন অভিযানে ভারতের যোগদান যদি ভারতীয় স্বার্থের পরিপন্থী হয়, তবে সে অভিযান হইতে হাত গুটাইয়া থাকাই সমীচীন। আবার আফগানিস্তানে তালিবান শাসকরা কাশ্মীরে নাশকতায় লিপ্ত জেহাদীদের প্রশিক্ষণ দিত বলিয়া তালিবান-বিরোধী বহুজাতিক অভিযানে ভারতের অংশগ্রহণের পর্যাপ্ত যৌক্তিকতা আছে। কেননা সে ক্ষেত্রে তালিবান জমানার উচ্ছেদের সহিত ভারতের সার্বভৌমত্ব ও আঞ্চলিক অখণ্ডতা রক্ষার প্রশ্নটিও জড়িত। অর্থাৎ ভারতের স্বার্থই ভারতীয় বিদেশ নীতি তথা প্রতিরক্ষা নীতির কঙ্কিপাথর হইবে। মার্কিন যুক্তরাষ্ট্র বা তাহার বুশ প্রশাসনের সহিত সুসম্পর্ক বা বিসংবাদের নিরিখও হইবে ওই স্বার্থই। এখানে কে সাম্রাজ্যবাদী, কে সমাজতন্ত্রী, কে স্বৈরাচারী, কে-ই বা গণতন্ত্রী, তাহা বিবেচ্য হইতে পারে না। কাহার সহিত সম্পর্কে, চুক্তিতে বা অংশীদারিত্বে ভারত উপকৃত হইবে, সেটাই হওয়া উচিত মানদণ্ড। এই মানদণ্ডের ভিত্তিতেই 'গণতন্ত্রী' নওয়াজ শরিফ বা বেনজির ভুট্টো অপেক্ষা ফৌজি মুশারফের কর্তৃত্বাধীন পাকিস্তানের সহিত ভারতের সম্পর্ক সুপ্রতিবেশীসুলভ হইয়াছে। ফৌজি-শাসিত মায়ানমারের সহিত দ্বিপাক্ষিক সম্পর্ক স্বাভাবিক করার পথে আউঙ সান সু চি'র অন্তরিন থাকাকে বাধা গণ্য করা হয় নাই। মনমোহন সিংহের ভারত বিদেশ নীতিতে সাবালকত্ব প্রদর্শন করিতেছে, বাজপেয়ীর আমলে যাহার সূত্রপাত। বাজপেয়ী দৃষ্টিভঙ্গিমুক্ত হইতে পারেন। প্রধানমন্ত্রীকে রাজনৈতিক পত্রাঘাতের আবশ্যিকতা নাই।

Indo-US defence pact worries CPM

Statesman News Service

KOLKATA, July 4. — The CPI-M is concerned over the implications of some provisions of the Indo-US defence pact signed during Mr Pranab Mukherjee's visit to the USA, Mr Sitaram Yechuri, CPI-M Politburo member and the party's candidate for the Rajya Sabha elections from West Bengal, said today.

Mr Yechuri, who filed his nomination papers along with three other Left Front candidates, including Mrs Brinda Karat, during the day, said the defence pact violates both provisions of the UPA government's common minimum programme and the unanimous resolution passed by the Lok Sabha during the Iraq war. "Whereas the CMP and the LS resolution have clearly spelt out that the country approves of multi-lateral military actions



Mr Sitaram Yechuri and Mrs Brinda Karat file their nomination papers in Kolkata on Monday. — PTI

only with UN ratification, the Indo-US defence pact endorses such actions under the US leadership without the UN's involvement," Mr Yechuri said. The CPI-M will take up the matter with the Centre soon, he added.

Commenting on the CPI-M's decision to nominate him and Mrs Brinda Karat for Rajya Sabha, he said this only confirmed his party's "commitment to discharge its responsibilities to the people."

Mr Yechuri also claimed

Cong-backed Arjun swears by Chinese model

KOLKATA, July 4. — Mr Arjun Sengupta, who filed his nomination for the Rajya Sabha seat as a Congress supported Independent candidate, today said that schemes similar to the Chinese models could be tried out in West Bengal to fight unemployment and revive industries. "West Bengal has a lot of potential. I want to do something for this state. The Chinese model cannot be tried out here without modifications but it can be one of the solutions", he said.

"I also met the chief minister and the Left Front has promised to back me. I hope the Trinamul too will not oppose me because I believe Miss Mamata Banerjee loves Bengal more than anything," he said even as Trinamul leaders raised questions about his "closeness to the Left". — SNS

Foreign non-policy

The Left stance on Indo-US defence cooperation betrays its tunnel vision

THE opposition of the Left parties to the "new framework" on Indo-US defence cooperation was expected. Their fury was not. In its ideological opposition to any engagement with the US, the Left was not going to let facts come in the way. If a similar agreement were to be signed with Russia or China, the Left would have hailed it as a triumph for anti-imperialist forces. The Left criticism that the framework "embeds" India in US strategy towards Asia is similar to the right-wing attack on the Indo-Soviet Treaty of 1971. It was seen as a departure from non-alignment that made Delhi a "lackey of Moscow". In comparison to the 1971 defence treaty with Moscow, the new defence framework with the US is limited in its political objectives and identifies a mutually beneficial agenda for cooperative security.

In preventing much needed cooperation between India and the US, the Left would be liable to the charge of diminishing Delhi into a camp follower of Beijing. For all its emphasis on creating a multipolar world, the Left does not seem interested in a multipolar Asia. If India can now have a "strategic partnership" with

China, which in the past has provided nuclear weapons and missiles to Pakistan, where is the problem in defence cooperation with the US? The Manmohan Singh government, sensitive to the tectonic change in Asian geopolitics amidst the dramatic rise of China, is rightly pursuing simultaneous strategic engagement with both Beijing and Washington. India is too big to fit into the pocket of either.

As an important component of the ruling coalition, the Left is entitled to discuss its views within the UPA on major foreign policy issues. While Prime Minister Manmohan Singh and the UPA Chairman Sonia Gandhi must provide for in-depth consultation, they must make it clear that the Left does not have a veto over national security policies. If it succumbs to the Left on US policy, there will be others in the UPA opposing the territorial concessions that India must make in order to finalise a boundary settlement with China. That, in turn, will undercut the growing ties with Beijing. Pandering to ideological interests will undermine the government's strategy to make India the defining element in the Asian balance of power for the first time since independence.

No defence agreement with U.S., clarifies Pranab

*9 - Foreign Press
H.D. - 12
12/7*

Talks "were within the framework of defence relationship between the two countries"

Special Correspondent

KOLKATA: "There has been no defence agreement or pact with the United States of America," Defence Minister Pranab Mukherjee declared here on Monday. The recent discussions with the U.S. Defence Secretary Donald Rumsfeld and other officials of that country "were within the framework of talks on the defence relationship between the two nations," he said.

The Left parties had a different perception on the issue and "I have discussed it with Prakash Karat [general secretary of the Communist Party of India (Marxist) and A. B. Bardhan [general secretary of the Communist Party of India]," he said.

"They have their own views [on the subject]. We have our own perceptions," he said at a press conference after inaugurating a Rs. 1.30-crore state-of-

- Left parties have a different perception on the issue
- Denies having finalised deal for the purchase of Scorpene submarines from French company
- Apologises to mediapersons after they were heckled by security personnel

the-art radial forging plant on the occasion of the centenary celebrations of the Defence Ministry's Metal and Steel Factory at Ichapore in North 24 Parganas district.

Bofors case

On the question of re-opening investigations into the Bofors case although the Delhi High Court had quashed all charges against the Hinduja brothers, Mr. Mukherjee said the Central Bureau of Investigation was looking into the matter.

Mr. Mukherjee denied having

finalised a multi-billion deal for the purchase of Scorpene submarines from a French company. "We are only in the first stage of negotiations [with the company]," he said. The Cabinet Committee on Security had directed him to look into matters relating to the price, cost escalation and new integrity agreement and any purchase would be made only in accordance with the Centre's new defence procurement policy, Mr. Mukherjee said.

Border fencing

As for the progress on the

fencing along the India-Bangladesh border, Mr. Mukherjee said the Border Security Force was entrusted the job unlike in Jammu and Kashmir where the responsibility lay with the Army. There are certain problems being faced by the BSF authorities regarding border alignment in certain stretches along the India-Bangladesh border and the matter had been taken up by the Union Home Ministry, he said.

Mr. Mukherjee profusely apologised to mediapersons covering the inauguration of the plant at Ichapur after being told that they were heckled by security personnel. He received a memorandum signed by the attending journalists protesting the high-handedness of security personnel and said that such an action was "unwarranted."

Mediapersons boycotted the function in protest against the incident.

12 JUL 2005

THE HINDU

PM allays Left fears on foreign policy

923 AGENCIES 1677
NEW DELHI, JULY 15

WITH the Left strongly opposing the Indo-US Defence ties agreement, Prime Minister Manmohan Singh today assured the CPI that India's foreign policy would not be compromised during his visit to the United States starting tomorrow.

At a meeting with CPI general secretary A B Bardhan and his senior colleague D Raja, Singh said the concerns of the Left parties would be kept in mind and nothing would be done to undermine national sovereignty.

Like the CPI(M) and Forward Bloc leaders, who met the PM last night, the CPI also sought strict adherence by the UPA government to the Common Minimum Programme and an independent, non-aligned foreign policy.

Bardhan said the Prime Minister assured them that he was not going to sign any agreement or deal with the US and there would be nothing beyond a joint statement to be issued during the visit.

The CPI leader said that his party was of the view that the government should not succumb to American pressure on any issue. The CMP spoke of improving relations with all countries, including the United States—issues ranging from energy security and nuclear fuel to biotechnology research would come up for discussions.

The Left leaders also pointed out that there should be no change in the present policy of disallowing FDI in the retail trade sector. American chain Wal-mart has shown interest in investing in the retail sector in India.

Left warns against US trap

HT Correspondent
New Delhi, July 13

UNSC BID

THE CPI(M) has said that if India gives in to US pressures for the Security Council seat, it can prove 'counter-productive', and affect its case for the seat as 'an independent power'.

In an article in party organ *People's Democracy's* forthcoming issue, CPI(M) general secretary Prakash Karat says the UPA government is keen to enlist the US support for India's candidature.

The US has so far declared support for Japan and indicated it may support one or two more countries. "This is a clear attempt to inveigle In-

dia into granting more concessions and be amenable to becoming a junior partner of the US in Asia," the CPI(M) has written.

Unfortunately, he says, India has already indicated it is willing to go along with the US strategy by signing the 10-year framework agreement on defence relations.

Cautioning the government against falling into the US trap, Karat said Prime Minister Manmohan was visiting the US when President Bush was into his second term. The Bush

Presidency was marked by an "arrogant unilateralism, bypassing the UN and brazen aggression, the worst example being Iraq".

While the Vajpayee government followed one-sided pro-American policies, the UPA government's Common Minimum Programme (CMP) raised hopes of correcting earlier distortions. The US wants India to allow free flow of international finance capital, but the government must keep in view the CMP framework.

"The Left has stated that FDI flows into the country should augment our productive forces, help acquire new technology and generate employment," wrote Karat.

THE HINDUSTAN TIMES

India not on sale, PM tells Leftists

PRESS Trust of India
Frankfurt, July 16

REACTING SHARPLY to the allegations of a "sell-out" to the US, levelled by the Left parties, Prime Minister Manmohan Singh declared on Saturday that he would safeguard national interests "till the end of my life".

On his way to Washington for discussions with President George W. Bush, he said that such allegations were an insult to the Congress party.

"Can you imagine that any Prime Minister will consciously or unconsciously sell India cheap. Nobody can sell India. India is not on sale", he asserted adding, "Nobody has to teach us lessons on patriotism."

Singh, who arrived here on Saturday evening for an overnight halt before proceeding to Washington on Sunday, was replying to ques-

tions on the Left parties' criticism of India's defence framework with the US.

On his government's foreign policy, the PM said that the Congress had produced most outstanding leaders of India's freedom struggle who sacrificed their lives to defend the dignity and honour of the nation.

"Preservation and protection of our national interest is of utmost importance and concern. I'll safeguard these interests till the end of my life", Singh said.

He listed terrorism, discriminatory restrictions imposed by the US against technology transfer to India, energy, security and trade and investment among the issues for discussions with US leaders.

Recalling the recent terrorists strikes in India and the UK,

Singh said that global terrorism had to be recognised as a serious threat.

He did not appear perturbed by the US opposition to a resolution moved in the UN General Assembly by India and other G-4 countries seeking permanent membership of the Security Council.

"Those who have power do not give it up easily. We have aspirations, all of which cannot be realised in one day. We'll persevere and we'll overcome", he said, adding that the US position was well known and will not change overnight.

It was not essential that the interests of India and the US would coincide.

"But we have to find the areas of convergence", he said.

Nuke tech instead of high table

US OFFICIALS point to the possibility of a forward push on civilian nuclear and space cooperation with India when Prime Minister Manmohan Singh meets with President George W. Bush at the Oval Office on Monday.

But on the key issue of support for India's bid for a permanent seat in the UN Security Council, it seems Washington will wait until other UN reforms go through first.

HTC, Washington

17 JUL 2001

THE HINDUSTAN TIMES

India is not for sale, says Manmohan

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1977

9. Forum
Boris

No compromise on terrorism

FRANKFURT: Asserting that terrorism is a serious threat, Prime Minister Manmohan Singh on Saturday night said India will never make any compromise in dealing with it.

Speaking to journalists on-board his special aircraft en route to Washington, he recalled the recent terrorist strikes in India and the United Kingdom and said global terrorism had to be recognised as a serious threat.

India would never compromise nationally on terrorism and would work internationally to create a system of checks and balances against it.

He listed terrorism, discriminatory restrictions imposed by the U.S. against technology transfer to India, energy security and trade and investments among the issues for discussions with U.S. leaders.

Dr. Singh firmly rejected the Left parties' charge that his Government was making compromises with the country's economic sovereignty, asserting "nobody can sell India...India is not for sale."

"Preservation and protection of our nation's rights is my most important concern. As the bounden servant of the people of India, I will safeguard the nation's interests for the rest of my life."

Dr. Singh, who is accompanied by a high-level delegation, including Planning Commission Deputy Chairman Montek Singh Ahluwalia, will make an overnight halt here and reach Washington on Sunday evening.

Asked to comment on the charge by some Opposition parties, particularly the Left, that he was selling India cheap, he said: "I think it is an insult to the party which I represent. The Congress party is the party which has produced the most outstanding leaders of our freedom struggle, who gave their lives to defend the dignity and honour of our nation."

Dr. Singh was received at the airport by senior India and German officials.

Other members of the delegation include Minister of State in the Prime Minister's Office Prithviraj Chauhan, National Security Adviser M.K. Narayanan and Principal Secretary to the Prime Minister T.K.A. Nair, Prime Minister's Media Adviser Sanjaya Baru told reporters here on Saturday.

In Washington, he will stay at the Blair House, opposite the White House, where guests of the President are put up during official visits.

On July 18, Dr. Singh will be accorded a ceremonial welcome in the morning at the White House after which he and U.S. President George W. Bush will hold talks. There will also be meetings between the two delegations.

Later, Dr. Singh and Mr Bush will jointly address the press. That evening, the Prime Minister will attend a banquet hosted by Mr Bush.

On July 19, Dr. Singh will address a joint session of the U.S. Congress. He is likely to spend most of the day on the Capitol Hill, meeting the India Caucus and other key figures. The Caucus and Indian Americans will host a luncheon for him on that day.

In the afternoon, he will meet senior U.S. officials and others at Blair House.

In the evening, the Prime Minister will be the chief guest at a reception hosted by Indian Ambassador Ronen Sen where prominent Non-Resident Indians and the official Indian delegation accompanying him will be present.

On July 20, Dr. Singh will address an end-of-visit press conference and will address a luncheon meeting at the prestigious National Press Club in Washington.

Meetings with think-tanks and editorial boards of major American newspapers as well as television interviews are being worked out. — UNI

WINTY

Diplomacy lingo gets garbled at MEA

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NILOVA Roy Chaudhury

New Delhi, July 17

THE MINISTRY of External Affairs' (MEA) language of diplomacy appears all mixed-up. There is clearly a communication gap between the language senior Indian Foreign Service officials are trained in and the language they need to communicate in as envoys.

Hence, TCA Rangachari, a Chinese specialist with no knowledge of German and currently India's envoy in Berlin and will move to Paris shortly as ambassador. P.L. Goyal, trained in Japanese, served in missions in Dhaka, Rome, Dubai, Panama, Georgetown, Malta, Glasgow and Berne, none of which, clearly, required expertise in Japanese.

On average, annually, the government spends Rs five crore providing its IFS probationers specialised training in a foreign language. The language most officers speak is Arabic (88), followed by Russian (75), French (70), Spanish (59), Chinese (56), German, Japanese and Persian, and several others. There is also one specialist each in Gurkhali, Burmese, Kazakh, Hungarian, Swedish and Vietnamese.

The most senior IFS official, Dilip Lahiri, learnt Kiswahili when he joined in 1967. Other than his tenure as probationer in Nairobi, Lahiri, who retires this month as ambassador to France, served in New York, Manila, Dhaka, Chicago, Lima and Madrid. The Kiswahili speaker has not done one African posting.

Most ambassadors in neighbouring countries do not speak the local language. Chinese-specialist Shiv Shankar Menon in Islamabad knows little Urdu and less Punjabi, Bengali is less familiar than Russian to Veena Sikri in Dhaka, French-speaking Rakesh Sood's Pashto or Dari is negligible in Kabul, while Shiv Shankar Mukherjee's Arabic specialisation doesn't help much in Kathmandu.

All serve out the 'A, B and C' postings they are assigned, with little use for the language they spent hours in learning.

18 JUL 2005

THE HINDUSTAN TIMES

PM tells Left not to give sermons

By Indrani Bagchi/TNN

On Board PM's Special Aircraft: En route to the US to talk N-energy, investment and trade, Prime Minister Manmohan Singh on Saturday opened a new war front against the Left parties, principal allies of the government.

In a blistering attack, he rubbished the Communist parties' gripes about growing ties with the US and allegations that the UPA government's foreign policies were against India's national interests. The Congress party, he said, did not need lessons in patriotism. "It is an insult to the Congress—it's the party that produced freedom struggle leaders of our lives for the honour of this country. No prime minister of the Congress party can think of selling India cheap. India is not for sale. I will safeguard India's interests till the end of my life," he said.

The PM's unusually strongly-worded retort is a signal of the deeper disquiet with the Left agenda, which has become the biggest obstacle to the government's reform and economic growth agenda. Over the past weeks, the Left has stepped up its attacks, particularly against the new India-US defence framework agreement, FDI in retail, missile defence, even warning the government against taking any new initiative with the US. For the first time, the PM has taken control of the discourse.

Reacting to the criticism, the Left held its fire but made it clear that his actions in US would be under a scanner. RSP chief Abani Roy said, "We will see on his return from the US if his actions and agreements there are in favour of the country or not." He said the Left had never questioned anybody's patriotism but its criticism was made in the context of



The PM arrives in Frankfurt on way to the US on Saturday

the US dictating in every sphere. CPI's D Raja said he would not react to the rhetoric in the PM's statement but argued that "he had actually admitted the correctness of the concerns expressed by the Left which cannot be undermined".

In telling contrast, the PM is preparing to engage the US on issues that are

crucial to India's economic and social growth, as a growing global power. On top of his agenda in the US is energy security. "Energy security is an important concern at a time when high oil prices, uncertainty of supplies, turmoil in West Asia" require additional energy sources. Hence the strong pitch for N-energy.

India and the US may announce the setting up of a joint working group on civilian nuclear energy after PM's meeting with Bush on Monday. Negotiations are on, but if this clears the numerous hurdles, it could pave the way for the two most important things on India's nuclear agenda—access to nuclear fuel for Tarapur and, ultimately, buy nuclear reactors. "We have been subjected to discriminatory restrictive regimes. We accept all the rights and obligations that go with being a responsible nuclear power. That

means these restrictive regimes have outlived their usefulness," he stated. Elaborating, he said, "We want them (US) to help us move our civilian nuclear programmes at a faster pace."

Laying out his agenda in the US, Manmohan said, "The US is the most powerful country. Its role in shaping the international trading and financial systems is immense. I hope the US government will have a better understanding of our needs and the international environment is more conducive to India's development."

Terrorism, which has recently reared its head in Ayodhya, UK and Kashmir, will find special mention in the PM's discussions. Addressing criticism that the UPA was "soft" on terror, he said, "There will be no compromise on terrorism nationally." "Internationally India would work with other nations to fight the scourge targeting the 'civilised world'."

India, US walk the N-talk

Cooperation on nuclear tech for civilian use;
 Manmohan Singh brings up UNSC seat

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S. Rajagopalan
 Washington, July 18

FOLLOWING US President George W. Bush's intervention, India and the US have succeeded in making a forward push on the vexed issue of civilian nuclear cooperation. "The issue has been addressed in a manner which gives me great satisfaction", Prime Minister Manmohan Singh said after his summit meeting with Bush at the Oval Office.

While the joint statement setting out the details was still to be released, Singh said: "We've had a very constructive and productive meeting. I thank the President on his personal role and interest in facilitating resolution of this complex problem". Bush, during his brief remarks on the issue, was emphatic that Monday's steps on conclusion of the NSSP (Next Steps in Strategic Partnership) would enhance US-India cooperation in civilian nuclear and space and high-technology commerce. The issue of India's bid for a permanent membership of the UN Security Council was raised prominently by Singh, who spoke of New Delhi's compelling case to take its place in the most powerful organ of the world body.

Although Bush made no overt reference to the issue during the brief media appearance, Singh said, "The

President and I were of one mind that the contemporary reality should be duly reflected in the central organs and decision-making processes of the United Nations".

Bush was enthusiastic about the new partnerships being forged by the US and India in several areas, including defence and counter-terrorism. He made a pointed reference to the new framework on defence relations signed by the two countries here recently.

He also touched upon the recently launched energy and economic dialogues.

On Kashmir, Bush said Washington's policy of respecting sanctity of the LoC between India and Pakistan had not changed and the Kashmir issue had to be resolved by the two countries. The two leaders also participated in the inaugural deliberations of the Indo-US CEOs' forum.

Ahead of the summit meeting, the Prime Minister was accorded a grand welcome on the South Lawn of the White House.

An impressive guard-of-honour and a 19-gun salute was witnessed by a large number of Americans

and members of the Indian diaspora. Speaking on the occasion, Bush hailed India as a great democracy and an emerging economic power and pledged to give a further push to the strong US-India relations, notably in the economic domain.

"The relationship between our two nations has never been stronger, and it will grow even closer in the days and years to come", he said.

Reciprocating the sentiments, Singh exuded confidence that his current visit would "give us an opportunity to develop and take forward this strategic partnership between India and the US".

He pointedly mentioned that Bush's personal commitment to broaden and deepen the relations was being widely appreciated in India. Bush repeatedly focussed on the shared values and commitments of the two nations in his remarks, prior to a one-on-one meeting with Singh and followed by delegation-level exchanges.

"Our nations believe in freedom", he said. "And our nations are confronting global terrorism. As diplomatic partners, we're meeting this threat in our own nations and abroad."

"And, as economic partners, we're working around the world to displace hatred and violence with prosperity, hope and optimism".



US President George Bush introduces Prime Minister Manmohan Singh to secretary of state Condoleezza Rice.

AP

N-deal triggers chain reaction

We gave too much: Atal

HT Correspondent
New Delhi, July 20

IN AN attempt to outpace the Left in taking an anti-US line ahead of the Parliament session, former Prime Minister A.B. Vajpayee on Wednesday backed his security adviser Brajesh Mishra's criticism of the Indo-US nuclear deal.

He said, "It is difficult to resist the feeling that while India has made long-term and specific commitments in the joint statement, the US has merely made promises which it may not be able to see through in the exclusive nuclear club." He said the Bush administration may have recognised India "as a responsible state with advanced nuclear technology", but is far from recognising the country as a legitimate and a responsible nuclear weapons state.

Mishra said on Tuesday the new deal with US "amounts to a cap on the size of New Delhi's minimum credible nuclear deterrent."

Vajpayee said the understanding between Prime Minister Manmohan Singh and President Bush regarding nuclear technology has already sparked concern among nuclear scientists and defence analysts. "The BJP shares these concerns and fears," Vajpayee said first and foremost was India's offer to identify and separate its civilian and military facilities and programmes. This offer has long-term national security implications. The mili-

tary programmes are a small fraction of our nuclear facilities.

"We believe that separating the civilian from the military would be very difficult, if not impossible. The costs involved will be prohibitive. It will also deny us the flexibility in determining the size of our nuclear deterrent."

Though we believe in a minimum credible deterrent, Vajpayee said the size of the deterrent must be determined from time-to-time "on the basis of our own threat perception. This is a judgement, which cannot be surrendered to anyone else." By effecting a separation between civilian and military facilities, the former Prime Minister said, "We have also accepted a crucial provision of a future fissile material cut-off treaty even before such an international treaty has been negotiated and put into force by other nuclear weapon states."

Vajpayee said the offer to sign and adhere to an additional protocol with respect to civilian nuclear facilities is also fraught with dangers.

Such an additional protocol will, by its very nature, be more intrusive since it will have to allow international inspectors free access to our nuclear facilities, anywhere anytime. Vajpayee said the thorium research programme was of special interest "which would give us freedom from nuclear fuel imports and make us self-reliant in nuclear fuel. "What happens to that programme? The Government of India owes an explanation on this count."



Prime Minister Manmohan Singh during a Press conference in Washington on Wednesday. PTI

Good bargain, say experts

NILOVA Roy Chaudhury
New Delhi, July 20

FORMER PRIME MINISTER A.B. Vajpayee might have dubbed the Indo-US nuclear deal a sellout but defence experts disagree.

Noted analyst K. Subramaniam was emphatic that Prime Minister Manmohan Singh had made a good bargain. "It is a very good arrangement. It suits our interests and allows us to break the shackles of the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT). You cannot hope to be equated with other nuclear weapon powers and not accept the checks that they have accepted, which includes signing and adhering to the Additional Protocol," he said.

Subramaniam reminded that the Vajpayee regime had taken the first steps in this direction and that his objections were more political than practical.

"The BJP had offered to work with the US for conclusion of a multilateral Fissile Materials Cut Off Treaty. In fact, the NSSP (Next Steps in the Strategic Partnership) just concluded by this joint statement was all initiated by Vajpayee. Circumstances have changed. The BJP cannot admit that the Congress is improving on their policies."

"This is an opportunity like Richard M. Nixon's opening up to China in the early 1970's. When Nixon resigned, didn't the US's China policy continue? And see where they have

reached," he added.
According to Subramaniam, President Bush has put his position on the line by promising to "work to achieve full nuclear energy cooperation with India as it realizes its goals of promoting nuclear power and achieving energy security".

"We have to use the leverage granted by President Bush to our advantage," he said. He dismissed fears of foreign reactors swamping the market. Foreign reactors coming in will not affect indigenous capability-- it will enhance our capabilities. Were our markets flooded with Chinese goods when the economy opened up? Americans need India and Indians to sustain their cutting-edge inventiveness. Then why shouldn't we draw on their investments? Consider this a new era and a good thing," he signed off. "We have to use the leverage granted by President Bush to our advantage."

Iran and North Korea signed the Non-Proliferation Treaty and are reneging on their commitment — there is no connection between their case and India's. "Two aspects therefore are very different," he said.

When PM Manmohan Singh referred in his address to the Joint Session of Congress to "Proliferation in the neighbourhood," he was referring not only to Pakistan, but also to China — when Chinese nuclear parts were found in Libya, where were the US non-proliferation 'experts'?

শ্ৰেণী বামপন্থীদের: আমেরিকার দিকেই ঝুঁকলেন মনমোহন

আজকালের প্রতিবেদন: দিল্লি, ২১ জুলাই— বৃশ-মনমোহন যৌথ বিবৃতির মূল ভিত্তি নিয়ে প্রশ্ন তুলল সি পি এম পলিটব্যুরো। সি পি আইয়ের কেন্দ্রীয় সম্পাদকমণ্ডলী বলল, আমরা, বামপন্থীরা সংসদের ভেতরে বাইরে ইন্দো-মার্কিন যৌথ বিবৃতির বিরুদ্ধে প্রতিবাদ জানাব। বৃহস্পতিবার সকালে সি পি এম পলিটব্যুরোর দিল্লিতে উপস্থিত সদস্যরা বৈঠকে বসেন। একইভাবে বৈঠক ডাকে সি পি আইও। বাম দলগুলির মধ্যে নানা স্তরে আলোচনাও হয় মনমোহনের মার্কিন সফর নিয়ে। তারপর বিকেলে দুই কমিউনিস্ট পার্টির তরফেই তাদের অবস্থান জানিয়ে সরকারকে সতর্ক করে দেওয়া হয়। সি পি এম পলিটব্যুরো দ্ব্যর্থহীন ভাষায় বলে, মনমোহন আমেরিকায় গিয়ে যা বলেছেন বা করেছেন সবই অটল জমানার অনুসারী। বিগত কয়েক বছরের বিদেশনীতির ধারা অনুযায়ী মার্কিন যুক্তরাষ্ট্রের কৌশলগত সহযোগী দেশ হিসেবে জয়গা পাচ্ছে ভারত। মনমোহনের সফরের প্রাক্কালে প্রতিরক্ষার কাঠামো নিয়ে যে চুক্তি হয়েছে তাতে এই ধারাই ফুটে উঠেছে। সারা বিশ্বে গণতন্ত্রের রক্ষাকর্তা হিসেবে মার্কিন প্রেসিডেন্টকে সঙ্গে নিয়েছেন প্রধানমন্ত্রী মনমোহন। সম্ভাব্যদের বিরুদ্ধে লড়াইয়ের অঙ্গীকারও করেছেন দুজনে। কিন্তু এ ঘটনার বিচার করতে হবে কিছুটা সন্দেহ বা সংশয়ের সঙ্গেই। এন ডি এ সরকারও আমেরিকার সঙ্গে সম্ভাব্য বিরোধী আন্তর্জাতিক জোট সামিল হয়েছিল ক্রিস্টনের ডাকে সাড়া দিয়ে। প্রশ্ন হল, আমেরিকা কী করে স্পষ্ট বিশ্বে গণতন্ত্র রক্ষার একনিষ্ঠ লড়াইয়ে নামবে? বিশ্বশক্তি হিসেবে আমেরিকা যখন একক সিদ্ধান্তে ও গণতন্ত্র বিরোধিতায় চরম অভ্যস্ত হয়ে উঠেছে তখন ভারত তাকে গণতন্ত্র রক্ষার লড়াইয়ে শরিক হিসেবে নিয়ে কী করবে? এর থেকে বরং তাঁর হত, মনমোহন যদি রাষ্ট্রপুঞ্জের মাধ্যমে গণতান্ত্রিকতাকে মজবুত করার কথা বলতেন তাঁর যৌথ বিবৃতিতে। এ ছাড়া ভারত সরকারকে বুঝতে হবে, কীভাবে সাম্রাজ্যবাদী আগ্রাসন ও রাষ্ট্রীয় সম্ভ্রাসের পরিণাম সম্ভ্রাসবাদী হিংসাত্মক অভ্যুত্থানের রূপ নিয়েছে। আগে এটা ইরাকে দেখা যায়নি। এখন লন্ডন ও মাদ্রিদের ঘটনাও একই কথা বলছে। সম্ভ্রাস রোখাই হোক কিংবা গণতন্ত্রকে ছড়িয়ে দেওয়া, কোনও ক্ষেত্রেই আমেরিকার নেতার জয়গান গেয়ে ভারতের স্বার্থরক্ষা করা যাবে না। পরমাণু সহযোগিতা নিয়ে ইতিমধ্যেই বিতর্ক শুরু হয়েছে। মূল প্রশ্ন যেভাবে এই গুরুত্বপূর্ণ বিষয়টি ঠিক করা হল তা নিয়েই। সংশ্লিষ্ট সব দলের সামনে সরকারের প্রস্তাবগুলি রাখা উচিত ছিল। তা না করেই সিদ্ধান্ত নেওয়া হয়ে গেল। এন ডি এ জমানায় গোপনে চুক্তি করা হয়েছে বহু নিরাপত্তা ও বিদেশনীতি সংক্রান্ত বিষয়ে। সি পি এমের সতর্কীকরণ, ইউ পি এ সরকার যেন এই অগণতান্ত্রিক পথ না নেয়। তা ছাড়া পরমাণু শক্তির রাষ্ট্র হয়ে ওঠার পথে বিশ্বের বৃহৎ শক্তি হওয়ার লক্ষ্যে পৌঁছানোর চেষ্টার সঙ্গে সি পি এম যে সহমত নয় তা জানিয়ে দেয় পলিটব্যুরো। বরং নিরস্ত্রীকরণের প্রশ্নে রাজীব গান্ধীর প্রয়াসকেই এক্ষেত্রে ভারতের শেষ গুরুত্বপূর্ণ প্রয়াস বলে মনে করে। চলতি চুক্তি ভারতের সেই পরমাণু নিরস্ত্রীকরণের প্রয়াসের ইতি। পলিটব্যুরো বলে, আমেরিকা কিয়োটো প্রোটোকল মানতে চায়নি। সি পি এমের দাবি, সরকারকে জানাতে ও ব্যাখ্যা করতে হবে, কয়েকশো কোটি টাকার অল্প বেন্দার চুক্তিতে সই করেছে কিনা। অথচ এত কিছু পরেও নিরাপত্তা পরিষদে ভারতের সদস্যদের জন্য মার্কিনরা খোলাখুলি তাদের দায়বদ্ধতার কথা বলেনি। পলিটব্যুরো চায়, আমেরিকার সঙ্গে ভারসাম্য ও সাম্যভিত্তিক পারস্পরিক মর্যাদার সম্পর্ক প্রতিষ্ঠা হোক।

22 JUL 2018

PM trusts Pervez but prefers to verify first

Press Trust of India

WASHINGTON, July 21. — Dr Manmohan Singh said the role of terror elements in Pakistan couldn't be ignored, but India was ready to work with Islamabad to infuse a greater balance into bilateral relations.

"I wish President Pervez Musharraf well, we want to work with him to bring a greater balance in our own relations. But I have to... recognise the role that terrorists have played in the last few years in the history of Pakistan. Taliban was the creation of Pakistan extremists..." he told the *Washington Post*.

When asked, "if Pakistan asks for a similar agreement (civilian nuclear cooperation), do you expect the US to say no?"; he said: "Well, that's a decision the USA has to make." Dr Singh said Pakistan "is not a democracy in the sense that we know and you know... we wish Pakistan success in emerging as a moderate Muslim state. We will work with President Musharraf... we have



Pakistan's not a democracy in the sense that we know and you (America) know... we wish Pakistan success in emerging as a moderate Muslim state

to recognise what has happened": Dr Singh said India had devised its nuclear programme "because in the region that we live... there was reckless proliferation of WMD... therefore we had to take the necessary preventive measures." Dr Singh also said he might be forced to suspend peace "efforts with Pakistan if it didn't curb militant infiltration into Kashmir". He expressed his worries about "serious consequences if Islamic militants grabbed power in Pakistan and took control of its nuclear weapons arsenal. Asked whether he trusted Gen. Musharraf, Dr Singh said: "Well, I do trust. But I think there is an old saying of

Pipeline concern

Observing that the proposed multi-billion dollar Indo-Iranian gas pipeline via Pakistan is fraught with risks given the "uncertainties in Iran", Dr Singh said he did not know if any international consortium of bankers would underwrite the project.

NEW DELHI, July 21. — Close on the heels of Mr Atal Behari Vajpayee's criticism of India's nuclear deal with USA during Dr Manmohan Singh's US visit, the Left parties today fired salvos against the deal.

Holding that the Indo-US joint statement was a "continuation of the pro-US shift" in New Delhi's foreign policy, the Left said the agreement not only "marks an end" of India's nuclear disarmament policy, but also does not serve its interests in spreading democracy or combating terrorism.

Asserting that no "adequate discussions" were held with UPA allies or supporting Left parties before the government entered into the latest agreements with Washington, the CPI-M and the CPI said Washington also did not make any clear-cut commitment on India's quest for permanent membership of the UN Security Council.

Declaring that the announce-

Left out on nuke pact

ment of the US-India Global Democracy Initiative to strengthen democracy in third countries "must be viewed with scepticism", the CPI-M Politburo said such a bilateral initiative "displays the anxiety of India to align with the USA at a time when the superpower has become notorious for its unilateralist and anti-democratic activities".

The CPI-M said it would have been appropriate if such an initiative was taken through the UN, adding that it would be better if the government realised that a major aspect of global terrorism today was the use of state terrorism and the gross violation of national sovereignty as amply demonstrated in the case of Iraq.

"It does not serve India's interests to applaud the US leadership either for spreading democracy or for combating terrorism," the CPI-M said. — SNS

More reports on page 4

সুর নরম করেও পরমাণু চুক্তি নিয়ে কটাক্ষ বামেদের

স্টাফ রিপোর্টার, নয়াদিল্লি, ২১
জুলাই: কংগ্রেস সমালোচনায় এ বারে
রাজীব গান্ধীর স্মরণ নিল বাম দলগুলি।

প্রধানমন্ত্রী মনমোহন সিংহ মার্কিন
সফর শেষ করে দেশের মাটিতে পা
দেওয়ার আগেই এই সমালোচনার তির
নিষ্ক্ষেপ করেছে সিপিআই-সিপিএম।
তবে, সফরের প্রাক্কালে প্রকাশ
কারাটের গলায় যে কঠিন সুর শোনা
গিয়েছিল, এখন তা যথেষ্টই নরম। তা
সত্ত্বেও, মনমোহনের এই সফরের সব
থেকে বড় সাফল্য হিসেবে যেটিকে
দেখানো হচ্ছে, সেই ভারত-মার্কিন
পরমাণু সহযোগিতা নিয়েই তাঁদের
কটাক্ষ সব থেকে তীব্র। এবং সেই
সূত্রেই তাঁরা সনিয়া গান্ধীর কাছে
জনতে চান, তা হলে কি রাজীব গান্ধীর
নিরস্ত্রীকরণ পরিকল্পনাকে জলাঞ্জলিই
দিল মনমোহন সরকার?

বামেদের অতি-আক্রমণাত্মক না
হয়ে ওঠার পিছনে অবশ্য রয়েছে
কারাটের প্রবন্ধকে কেন্দ্র করে কংগ্রেস-
বামপন্থী তিক্ততা। সমালোচনা করলেও
সেই রাস্তায় এ বারে হটিতে চায়নি স্বয়ং
কারাটের দলই। বরং দুই কমিউনিস্ট
পার্টিই বিবৃতি দিচ্ছে নিরাপদ একটি
বিষয় দিয়ে। তাঁদের প্রশ্ন: আমেরিকা
কতটা গণতান্ত্রিক যে, সে দেশের সঙ্গে
গণতন্ত্র প্রসারের কথা যৌথ বিবৃতিতে
এল? বিষয়টি নিরাপদ, কারণ এ নিয়ে
কমিউনিস্টদের সঙ্গে কংগ্রেস বা
বিজেপি-র বিরোধ যে কখনওই মিটবে
না, তা সকলেরই জানা।

অন্যান্য দেশে গণতন্ত্র শক্তিশালী
করতে ভারত-মার্কিন যৌথ উদ্যোগ
সম্পর্কে সিপিএমের বক্তব্য, বিষয়টি
সংশয়জনক। পৃথিবীতে গণতন্ত্র উর্ধ্ব
তুলে ধরার ক্ষেত্রে মার্কিন ভূমিকা
মোটাই ভাল নয়। এখানে যেন
আমেরিকার সঙ্গে নয়াদিল্লির মিত্র
হওয়ার আকাঙ্ক্ষাই প্রকট। বরং
'আরও ভাল হ'ত যদি যৌথ বিবৃতিটি
রাষ্ট্রপঞ্জের নেতৃত্বে গণতান্ত্রিক প্রক্রিয়া
জোরদার করার কথা বলত।

সিপিএমের আরও বক্তব্য, গণতন্ত্র
বা সম্ভ্রাসবাদ প্রসঙ্গে মার্কিন ভূমিকার
প্রশংসা ভারতের স্বার্থের অনুকূল নয়।
সি পি আই-এর সাধারণ সম্পাদক এ বি
বর্ধনের বিবৃতিতেও ঠিক এই বিষয়টিই
তুলে ধরা হয়েছে।

এই সব বিষয় পার হয়ে শেষ পর্যন্ত

পরমাণু সহযোগিতা প্রসঙ্গেও তুলেছে
সিপিএম। তাদের বক্তব্য, এ ধরনের
গুরুত্বপূর্ণ সিদ্ধান্ত নেওয়ার আগে
দেশের মধ্যে সকলের সঙ্গে কথা বলা
উচিত। বিজেপি আমলে যে ভাবে
স্টোবর ট্যালবট-যশোবন্ত সিংহ
আলোচনার মাধ্যমে সব সিদ্ধান্ত হয়ে
যেত, সেই 'অগণতান্ত্রিক ঐতিহ্য'
অনুসরণ করা বর্তমান সরকারের উচিত
নয়। সিপিআই-ও এই বিষয়টি নিয়ে
সরব। তাঁরা জানিয়েছেন, বিষয়টি
সংসদেও তোলা হবে।

পরমাণু অস্ত্র ভাঙার গড়ে
'মহাশক্তি' হয়ে ওঠার বিরুদ্ধে বামেদের।
সে কথা স্মরণ করিয়ে দিয়ে দুই
কমিউনিস্ট দলই বলেছে, অতীতে
ভারত পরমাণু প্রক্ষেপে বিভেদমূলক
নীতির বিরোধিতা করেছে। সুকৌশলে
এই প্রসঙ্গে রাজীব গান্ধীর সময়কার
নিরস্ত্রীকরণ পরিকল্পনার কথাও উল্লেখ
করেছে সিপিএম। একই সঙ্গে তাদের
বক্তব্য, বিজেপির সময় থেকে পরমাণু
শক্তিদর দেশের মর্যাদা পেতে
আমেরিকার ছোট অংশীদারে পরিণত
হওয়ার চেষ্টা শুরু হয়। আর এ বারের
সমঝোতাটি তো ভারতের নিরস্ত্রীকরণ
নীতিরই সমাপ্তি ঘোষণা করছে।

বামপন্থীদের আরও প্রশ্ন, পরমাণু
জ্বালানি পেতে কি আরও কোনও
প্রতিশ্রুতি দিয়েছেন মনমোহন, যাতে
বাহত হতে পারে এই ক্ষেত্রে
গবেষণা? এই প্রশ্নে সিপিএম বলেছে,
"আশা করি, সরকার একতরফা ভাবে
এমন কোনও ব্যবস্থা নেবে না যার ফলে
জাতীয় স্বার্থ ব্যাহত হয়।" বিদেশমন্ত্রী
প্রণব মুখোপাধ্যায়ের সফরের সময় যে
প্রতিরক্ষা সমঝোতা হয়েছে, তা নিয়েও
উদ্বিগ্ন প্রকাশ করে সিপিএম জনতে
চেয়েছে, প্রধানমন্ত্রীর সফরের সময়
বিরাট অফিসের মার্কিন অস্ত্রসত্তার কোনোর
প্রতিশ্রুতি দেওয়া হয়েছে কি না। এবং,
সব শেষে কমিউনিস্টদের বক্তব্য,
ভারত যতটা ছাড় দিচ্ছে তার তুলনায়
প্যাচ্ছে কম।

তবে, বামপন্থীরা বিষয়টি নিয়ে
সংসদের যাওয়ার বাইরে খুব বড়
আন্দোলনে নামবেন না বলেই মনে
করা হচ্ছে। সমালোচনার সেই ধার ও
ভার কমে যাওয়ায় এই ব্যাপারে
আপাতত তাই কিছুটা নিশ্চিতই
কংগ্রেস নেতৃত্ব।

বাজপেয়ীর মন্তব্যে দলে বিতর্ক

স্টাফ রিপোর্টার, নয়াদিল্লি, ২১
জুলাই: ভারত-মার্কিন পরমাণু
সহযোগিতার বিরোধিতা করে দলেই
বিতর্ক সৃষ্টি করলেন বাজপেয়ী।
প্রধানমন্ত্রীর আমেরিকা সফরের আগে
আডবানী ও বাজপেয়ী দুজনেই তাঁর
সঙ্গে দেখা করে দু'দেশের প্রতিরক্ষা
চুক্তি সমর্থন করেন। প্রাক্তন বিদেশমন্ত্রী
যশোবন্ত সিংহ পরে সাংবাদিক
সম্মেলনে দলের এই মনোভাব স্পষ্ট
করেন। তার পরে কাল বাজপেয়ীর এই
মন্তব্যে দলে আলোড়ন সৃষ্টি হয়েছে।
কারণ, বাজপেয়ী এ বিষয়ে দলের মধ্যে
আলোচনা করেননি। দলীয় সূত্রের খবর,
বাজপেয়ীর এই মনোভাবের পিছনে বড়
ভূমিকা প্রাক্তন জাতীয় নিরাপত্তা

উপদেষ্টা ব্রজেশ মিশ্রের। ব্রজেশও কাল
ভারত-মার্কিন সমঝোতার সমালোচনা
করেন। দলের একাংশ মনে করিয়ে
দিচ্ছে, বাজপেয়ীর জমানায় ব্রজেশ মিশ্র
ও যশোবন্ত সিংহের মধ্যে মাঝেমাঝেই
নীতিগত প্রক্ষেপে বিরোধিতা স্পষ্ট হয়ে
উঠত। এখন বিরোধী দলের
ভূমিকাতেও তার ব্যতিক্রম হল না।
আডবানী এবং দলের বেশ কয়েক জন
নেতা ভারত-আমেরিকা পরমাণু
সহযোগিতার বিরোধিতার পক্ষপাতী
নন। সংসদের অধিবেশনে কী ভাবে
বিষয়টি নিয়ে দল এগোবে তা নিয়ে
বিশ্রান্তিও তৈরি হয়েছে। ঠিক হয়েছে,
যশোবন্ত ফিরলে বাজপেয়ী, আডবানী
ও ব্রজেশ বিষয়টির মীমাংসা করবেন।

PM returns to storm, ready

BHARAT BHUSHAN

On board Air India One, July 22: Prime Minister Manmohan Singh is getting ready for the storm ahead over the nuclear deal with the US. The first draft of Singh's *suo motu* statement to Parliament was ready even before he boarded the flight home from Geneva.

Over the next few days, he is likely to phone or meet predecessor Atal Bihari Vajpayee and other leaders who have apprehensions about the deal.

Singh's strategy is to be sincere and transparent.

First, he will tell them that the agreement will in no way cramp India's nuclear weapons programme — on the contrary, it will preserve it.

Second, he will emphasise that India's problem is not buying civilian nuclear reac-

tors from abroad alone, but also ensuring fuel for its nuclear power reactors — not only for Tarapur. Nuclear fuel availability has fallen so low that more wind than nuclear power was generated last year.

Third, he will tell them that whatever obligations India has accepted will be implemented in a phased manner with reciprocal interlocking of obligations with the US. If the US does nothing, India does nothing.

Fourth, he will impress upon them that the agreement will give India greater manoeuvrability with other nuclear suppliers. India can now legitimately tell France and Russia that if the US is willing to cooperate, so can they.

Singh is likely to spend considerable time briefing political leaders on how the deal

evolved. When he met President George W. Bush in Moscow in May, he had told him that given the trend of hydrocarbon use in the Indian economy, there was no way its commercial energy needs could be met from coal and oil.

He is believed to have told Bush that if the US did not want to supply fuel for the Tarapur plant, which produces electricity at a reduced capacity of 320 Mwe, India could even afford to shut it down.

"We have survived for 5,000 years. We can perhaps survive like this for another 5,000. We are a very patient people," he apparently told Bush.

Singh is believed to have spent a sleepless night on July 17 on the eve of the Bush meeting. Till that time, the deal was uncertain. Not a terribly religious person, he apparently

prayed that night that he should not do anything which would provoke the charge of harming national interest.

US secretary of state Condoleezza Rice met him the next morning, on July 18, and said the paragraphs on nuclear co-operation proposed by India in the joint statement were unacceptable. She asked what else could be done. Seeing the deal fall through, Singh apparently opted for fuel for Tarapur in the first instance and if not even that, he wanted the US to ask its nuclear friends to supply the fuel.

This was the situation when he met Bush. The President told Singh that he wanted to conclude a civilian nuclear co-operation deal. Once the order was given, the agreement became possible.

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"Iran is the largest Shia Muslim country... We have the second largest Shia Muslim population... we can be a bridge"

INDIAN Prime Minister Manmohan Singh reached an historic accord earlier this week with President Bush that will allow his country to buy billions of dollars worth of military hardware and sensitive nuclear technology long denied because of India's nuclear weapons programme.

The broad agreement is a significant victory for the world's largest democracy, which built its nuclear programme in secret in the early 1970s, and it cements New Delhi's role as a key strategic US ally in Asia for decades to come.

In a wide-ranging breakfast interview with *Washington Post* editors and writers on Wednesday, Singh discussed the impact of the deal for India and its nuclear programme. He also spoke about other issues facing his country, including relations with rival Pakistan, terrorism, regional security and the India's growing eco-

We are terribly short of our energy supply and we desperately need new sources of energy. And that's why with Pakistan we have agreed to explore the possibility of the pipeline. But I am realistic enough to realise that there are many risks

nomics prowess.

Here are some excerpts from that interview:

Washington Post: With the new special relationship between the United States and India, do you think that your country can use this new relationship in helping the United States on relations with Iran?

Singh: We are entirely one with the rest of the world, that countries which take solemn international obligations, that they must honour those obligations. So we would like Iran, for example, to honour its obligations. Our interest would be to work with other like-minded countries that a constructive solution can be found for the problems that Iran is expressing, that the world community is expressing about Iran. We have strong civilisational links with Iran. Also I would say Iran is the largest Shia Muslim country in the world. We have the second largest

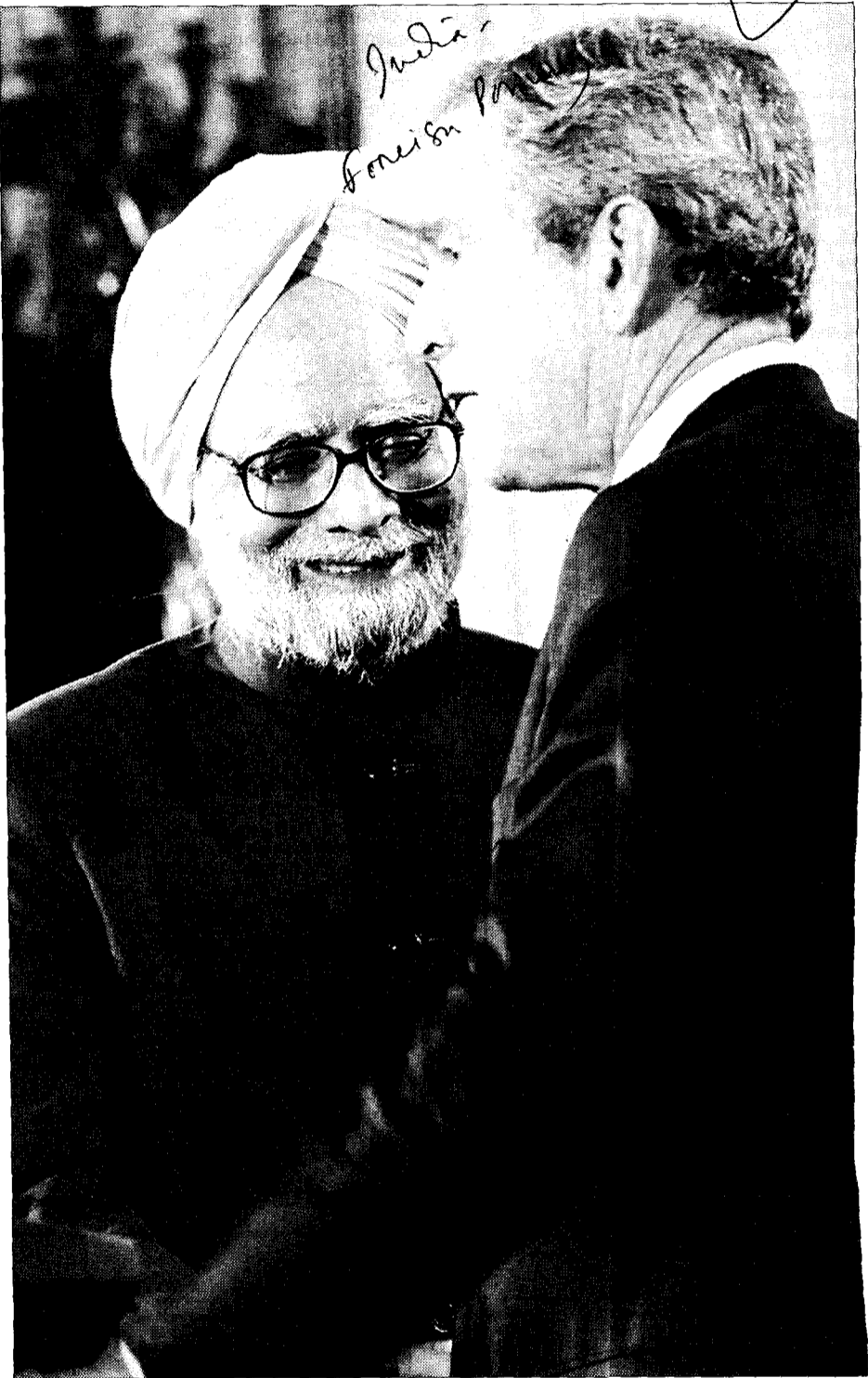
Shia Muslim population in our country and I do believe that thanks to our unique history we can be a bridge.

Washington Post: Can you discuss India's discussions with building a gas pipeline with Iran?

Singh: As far as the pipeline is concerned, only preliminary discussions have taken place. We are terribly short of our energy supply and we desperately need new sources of energy. And that's why with Pakistan we have agreed to explore the possibility of the pipeline. But I am realistic enough to realise that there are many risks, because considering all the uncertainties of the situation there in Iran. I don't know if any international consortium of bankers would probably underwrite this. But we are in a state of preliminary negotiations, and the background of this is we desperately need the supply of gas that Iran has.

Washington Post: Following the announcement of the proposed nuclear technology agreement with the United States, can you discuss the issue of nuclear proliferation? Many people in the United States are concerned about this.

Singh: Our peaceful nuclear programme was not built up by stealing other people's technology. We had this dream that it was better to work toward a world free of nuclear weapons and we had this dream of universal nuclear disarmament. We have been proved wrong and the result is we have seen in our neighbourhood reckless proliferation in disregard of all the international obligations. But although we have nuclear assets, our programme is totally under civilian control. We are a democracy, there are enough checks and balances in our country and we have an impeccable record of not contributing in any way to nuclear proliferation.



I have to be realistic enough to recognise the role that terrorist elements have played in the last few years in the history of Pakistan.... Pakistan is not a democracy in the sense that we know and you know. We wish Pakistan success in emerging as a moderate Muslim state. We will work with President Musharraf but we have to recognise what has happened

Washington Post: If Pakistan asks for a similar agreement, do you expect the United States to say no?

Singh: Well, that's a decision the United States has to make, but quite frankly, the state of Pakistan currently — I wish President Musharraf well, we want to work with him to bring greater balance in our own rela-

tions. But I have to be realistic enough to recognise the role that terrorist elements have played in the last few years in the history of Pakistan. Taliban was the creation of Pakistan extremists, the Wahabi Islam which has flourished, thousands and thousands of schools, the madrassas, were set up to preach this jihad

based on hatred of other religions and Pakistan is not a democracy in the sense that we know and you know. We wish Pakistan success in emerging as a moderate Muslim state. We will work with President Musharraf but we have to recognise what has happened.

The Washington Post
July 20th

'We have to agree to disagree'

9 Foreign
P. M. Singh
Statesman News Service

NEW DELHI, July 22. — The Congress today dismissed the Left parties' criticism of the Indo-US nuclear pact clinched by the Prime Minister, Dr Manmohan Singh, in Washington, saying India has gained considerably without conceding "anything" to the USA.

In a rebuff to the Left, the AICC spokesman, Mr Abhishek Singhvi, said: "It's hardly a time for accolades and endorse-

51-5
ments, and the PM's visit to the USA has proved to be a comprehensive, great success."

To soften the blow, the Congress also said, "the Left have a right to their differing viewpoints, but we don't share their perception on the matter, we will have to agree to disagree on the issue."

"We believe that India has gained. It has its voice heard among the comity of nations. The isolation it had been facing has come to an end. We have not given our sovereign rights but gained recogni-

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tion as a nuclear weapon state," said Mr Singhvi.

Barely concealing the Congress' delight over New Delhi's nuclear deal with Washington, Mr Singhvi said the party stands by the PM's assertions on the issue.

He said India's stature has dramatically risen now.

Asked about the "price" Washington had extracted from New Delhi over the deal, Mr Singhvi conceded that in international relations, every country safeguards its national interests.

He said the US' move might have been propelled by India's emerging economic status.

On being asked about the fate of Rajiv Gandhi's nuclear disarmament policy now, Mr Singhvi said the UPA government has adopted its principles — peaceful use of nuclear energy, no first use of nuclear weapons and no submission to discriminatory nuclear non-proliferation regime — and that they have been advanced by the PM in his just-concluded US visit.

170-10
2/1/7

Stay focussed on the Iran pipeline

J. Foreign Policy

P rime Minister Manmohan Singh has scored an own goal in telling the *Washington Post* that the proposed gas pipeline from Iran was fraught with both risk and uncertainty: "I am realistic enough to realise that there are many risks, because considering all the uncertainties of the situation there in Iran, I don't know if any international consortium of bankers would probably underwrite this." Was this a case of vacillation under pressure or just speaking out of turn? Even if he was merely giving vent to his personal reservations as an economist, Dr. Singh seems to have damaged the financial viability of the ambitious energy link between Iran, Pakistan, and India even before it has had a chance of coming off the drawing board. In the process, he has laid himself open to the charge of changing his mind on the utility of the project in order to appease the Bush administration. Its hostility to the planned pipeline — and indeed all things Iranian — is well known. It is natural, therefore, to ask whether going back or slow on the gas project is a condition extracted from India in exchange for the "full nuclear cooperation" to which President George Bush has committed himself. The Left parties have declared that completing the pipeline will be an "acid test" of the United Progressive Alliance Government's commitment to an independent foreign policy. Their fears are not unfounded. The air has to be cleared, and quickly.

At stake is not just the independence of India's foreign policy but also its energy security and the prospect of improving relations with Pakistan by creating mutually beneficial economic linkages. The decision to explore the pipeline's prospects was taken by the Union Cabinet after due deliberation on all relevant aspects. Thanks to the outstanding statesmanship of Petroleum Minister Mani Shankar Aiyar, who has been quick to recognise the pipeline's positive externalities, discussions with Pakistan and Iran are proceeding well. The proposal to include China in an extended pipeline is also being explored by India and Iran. All told, the Iran-India linkage is vital for ensuring that the country has adequate supplies of low cost natural gas until the middle of this century. If the generating capacity of India's nuclear power industry grows by orders of magnitude as a result of last Monday's agreement, that will be excellent. But India will still need Iranian gas, not to speak of the hydrocarbons of the wider Caspian region that could be brought to South Asia via Iran. If there is an inclination to jettison the Iranian project because Washington is opposed to it, due consideration must be given to the following fact: America's nuclear cooperation could take a good deal of time to come off, and it also depends on several imponderables. The Prime Minister must immediately clarify that his Government has every intention of pursuing the Iranian pipeline — because it is an excellent project and because India makes its own sovereign decisions.



Relax, Your Excellency, India Is A Democracy, MEA Tells Japan Envoy

Foreign Ministry Says One-Off Incident Won't Hit Investment

Our Political Bureau
NEW DELHI 26 JULY

ANGRY over Japanese ambassador Y Enoki's attempts to project labour dispute in Honda Motorcycle and Scooter India's (HMSI's) Gurgaon plant, as a benchmark for judging investment climate in India, New Delhi said much should not be read into an isolated incident. Responding to the statement from the Japanese ambassador, Ministry of External Affairs (MEA) spokesman said the country has efficient systems to deal with such situations. "The country's democratic institutions and its legal system provide an effective mechanism to deal with such incidents in a transparent manner."

The spokesman's comment came hours after Japanese ambassador said the HMSI issue could impact FDI inflows into India. "This is a disadvantage for India's image as an FDI destination and also negative image on Japanese management," Mr Enoki said on the incident at Gurgaon, in which scores of employees of HMSI were injured in a confrontation with local police.

Government leaders here,



who saw the statement of the ambassador as one prompted by his anxiety to serve the business interest of a Japanese investor, said that such sweeping generalisation will not distract the foreign investor. For, investments are made on the basis of a host of considerations and an isolated incident does not guide the reflexes of the investor.

On its part, the government on Tuesday sought to reassure investors saying, "The legal interest of foreign investors will be fully safeguarded." Incidentally, even those shades of political opinion who hold the HMSI manage-

ment's handling of their workers' affairs responsible for the current unrest, did not blame the entire investing community for the troubles.

However, that domestic political opinion will not countenance such "oblique intervention" was clear on Tuesday, when speakers in the Parliament asked the government to guard the interest of the workers. The speakers, who effectively rammed in the point that interest of the investor and workers are not contradictory, asked the government to take steps to see that workers get their due.

Left takes the role of Oppn

THE two Houses of Parliament saw a role reversal on Tuesday, with the Left parties replacing the NDA as the most vociferous critic of the government. The BJP and its allies were only too willing to add to the ruling coalition's discomfort by offering for a change, a helping hand to the belligerent Left. For the Manmohan Singh government, the assumption of a more hostile face by its main alliance partners cannot but be bad news. While all talk of labour reforms have for all practical purposes been given a quiet burial, the coming days are likely to see a hardening of posture by the Left parties on all labour-related problems, putting more pressure on the already tenuous labour-management relations.

The government got a taste of the Left aggression in the two Houses. In the Lok Sabha, the government was subjected to intense grilling by the agitated Left members as soon as the House assembled for the day.

7 JUL 2005 The Economic Times

বামেরা ব্যাখ্যা চাইলেন গ্যাস পাইপলাইন নিয়ে

স্টাফ রিপোর্টার, নয়াদিল্লি, ২৭
জুলাই: ভারত-পাক-ইরান গ্যাস
পাইপলাইনের প্রশ্নে কেন্দ্র যে অনড়,
তা সংসদে বিবৃতিতে উল্লেখ করার
জন্য প্রধানমন্ত্রী মনমোহন সিংহকে
অনুরোধ করলেন বামপন্থীরা।

আমেরিকা নিয়ে কেন্দ্রের অবস্থানে
তারা যে খুশি নন, তা কালই প্রধানমন্ত্রী
মনমোহন সিংহ-সহ কেন্দ্রীয় সরকারের
শীর্ষ কর্তাদের জানিয়ে দিয়ে এসেছেন
বাম নেতারা। বিষয়টি নিয়ে কাল
সরকারের সঙ্গে বাম নেতাদের একপ্রান্ত
বাদানুবাদ হয়ে গিয়েছে। বিজেপি
আমল থেকে ধারাবাহিক ভাবে কী কী
ঘটেছে, সে সব বিদেশমন্ত্রী নটবর সিংহ
কাল বাম নেতাদের বিস্তারিত জানান।
এতে বিরক্ত বাম নেতারা, বিশেষ করে
প্রকাশ কারাট ও এ বি বর্ধন তাঁকে
বলেন, এ সব বিষয় নিয়ে তিনি বরং
বিজেপির সঙ্গে আলোচনা করুন।

এরপরে বাম নেতারা স্পষ্ট জানিয়ে
দেন, সরকার যে ভাবে মার্কিন
যুক্তরাষ্ট্রকে গণতন্ত্রের ধারক ও বাহক
বলে তুলে ধরতে চাইছে তার সঙ্গে
তারা একেবারেই একমত নন। ইরাক
থেকে কিউবা, নানা প্রসঙ্গ উল্লেখ করে
তারা জানিয়ে দেন, কেন তারা মার্কিন

যুক্তরাষ্ট্রকে গণতান্ত্রিক শক্তি হিসাবে
মানতে রাজি নন। সে দেশের সঙ্গে
ক্ষেপণাস্ত্র প্রতিরক্ষা বা তৃতীয় দেশে
যৌথ অভিযানের অর্থ কী, তা নিয়েও
তারা প্রশ্ন তোলেন। এই বিষয়গুলি
নিয়ে দু পক্ষের যথেষ্ট বাদানুবাদও হয়।

প্রাক্তন প্রধানমন্ত্রী অটলবিহারী
বাজপেয়ী, লোকসভা ও রাজ্যসভার
বিরোধী নেতা লালকৃষ্ণ আডবাণী ও
যশোবন্ত সিংহকেও আজ তাঁর
সাম্প্রতিক আমেরিকা সফরের বিশদ
বিবরণ দেন মনমোহন।

বাম নেতারাও সরাসরি প্রধানমন্ত্রীর
কাছে পাইপলাইন নিয়ে তাঁর বক্তব্যের
ব্যাখ্যা চান। প্রধানমন্ত্রী বলেন,
সাম্ভাৎকারে তাঁকে প্রশ্ন করা হয়,
আমেরিকার কাছ থেকে পরমাণু
জ্বালানি চাওয়ার পরেও কেন ইরান
থেকে তারা গ্যাস আনতে চান। এই
প্রশ্নের উত্তরেই তিনি বলেন, দুটো
ক্ষেত্রেই তাঁর সামনে ঝুঁকি আছে, কারণ
কোনটা পাওয়া যাবে তা নিয়ে তিনি
নিশ্চিত নন।

পরেই বাম নেতারা তাঁকে অনুরোধ
করেন, বিষয়টি সংসদে স্পষ্ট করতে।
তাঁদের দাবি, প্রধানমন্ত্রী সেই অনুরোধ
রক্ষা করবেন বলেও কথা দিয়েছেন।

Aiyar denies US pressure on Iran pipeline

ENS & PTI
NEW DELHI, JULY 28

PETROLEUM Minister Mani Shankar Aiyar today told the Lok Sabha that there was no US pressure on India on the Iran gas pipeline but confirmed that at least two US officials had expressed their reservations over the project.

Stung by charges levelled by BJP deputy leader V.K. Malhotra that the US was possibly

putting pressure to shelve the project, Aiyar mounted a counter-attack on the main opposition party, by alleging that that there was "a genuine US pressure" on India when the then Foreign Minister Jaswant Singh had said that there was no way "India could agree to an overland pipeline project unless some fundamentals are addressed."

However, in 1995-96, Aiyar and Singh, who were part of a special group for "Track-II" diplomacy with Pakistan, had

held three rounds of talks with their Pakistani counterparts and prepared a report on risks pertaining to the pipeline project and ways to resolve them, the minister said, adding that the report was submitted to the External Affairs Ministry.

Describing as "misplaced" the apprehensions of some members about "US pressure" against the project, Aiyar said he confirmed that "at least two senior US officials... have expressed reservations about the pipeline".

He said it was a fact that there was an American law of 1996 — Iran-Libya Sanctions Act — which has not been invoked by the US so far.

Aiyar asserted that the pipeline issue "has not been officially raised with us" and said the public position of Washington on India's energy needs was "constructive".

"At no official level, at no stage, has there been any attempt to put pressure on us... The perception of some members in this House is com-

pletely misplaced," Aiyar said.

He refuted suggestions by Malhotra that there were "differences" between him and Prime Minister Manmohan Singh on the pipeline issue, saying that the BJP leader was "trying to mislead the House by selectively referring to the PM's statements" during his recent US visit.

Maintaining that the government functioned on the basis of collective decision-making, he said, the PM was "realistic" in realising that

there were risks to such a major project and those problems need to be resolved first.

Aiyar said both India and Pakistan had agreed on the "crucial importance" of appointing a financial advisor consortia to advise on the project structure "at the earliest".

The minister said both India and Pakistan were giving "top priority" to the project and were trying to resolve basic issues so that they enter into a "framework agreement" by this year-end.

INDIAN EXPRESS

Questions and answers

The PM's response to fears raised about the India-US treaty was forthright and clear

PRIME MINISTER Manmohan Singh's statement to Parliament on Friday on his recent trip to the United States, can well be perceived as a model of forthright statesmanship. The statement achieved three principal objectives. It clearly laid out the terms of the Indo-US cooperation, it responded honestly and convincingly to the apprehensions that have been raised about the India-US treaty, and it provided a forceful articulation of India's national interest. The statement refutes every major objection that has been raised against the treaty. The prime minister clarified, above all, that the treaty did not impinge upon India's autonomy. On the contrary, it enhanced it by giving India access to technologies and fuel that has long been denied to it. In discussions of the treaty, there was some confusion over how the obligations imposed upon India and the United States would be sequenced. The prime minister made it categorically clear that India's obligations were contingent upon the United States fulfilling its obligations. This should allay any fears that the treaty would trap India.

The prime minister also laid to rest anxieties that this treaty would, through a back-handed way, place caps on our military nu-

clear programme. On the contrary, he clarified that the separation of civil and military nuclear facilities would give the military programme greater autonomy and scope. India would also not be subscribing to any caps on fissile material production that was incompatible with its strategic needs. There was also the reiteration that India will continue to work towards ending discrimination in the international nuclear regime. At every stage, India would weigh its options carefully. The words the prime minister used were as loud and clear as, indeed, they should be: India would have "unrestricted, complete and autonomous" control over its nuclear programme.

It was particularly commendable that the prime minister took great care in formulating his statement. He articulated a model of public reason that laid out the facts clearly. He did not seek to dodge any of the difficult questions nor impute motives to the criticism that came his way. Instead he chose to patiently answer all objections. This approach of engaging with positions and arguments from across the political divide should be emulated by others in Parliament, so that issues of national interest can be dealt with the seriousness and commitment that they deserve and require.

30 JUL 2005

INDIAN

We stay in control of N-programme: PM

HT Correspondent
New Delhi, July 29

PRIME MINISTER Manmohan Singh on Friday dispelled misgivings of a "sell-out" to the US with the nuclear deal, asserting that India would retain autonomous control of its nuclear programme.

In a comprehensive statement to both Houses of Parliament, the Prime Minister sought to clear the air on the Indo-US joint statement of July 18. He said India's commitments would be "conditional upon, and reciprocal to, the US fulfilling its side of this understanding".

"Indian actions will be contingent at every stage on actions taken by the other side... Should we not be satisfied that our interests are fully secured, we shall not feel pressed to move ahead in a pre-terminated manner," he said.

"There is nothing in this joint statement that amounts to limiting or inhibiting our strategic nuclear weapons programme over which we will retain unrestricted, complete and autonomous control," he added, effectively taking the sting out of criticism from the Opposition and allies in the Left Front.

"Before voluntarily placing our



Should we not be satisfied that our interests are fully secured, we shall not feel pressed to move ahead

civilian facilities under IAEA safeguards, we will ensure that all restrictions on India have been lifted. Our autonomy of decision-making will not be circumscribed in any manner" he said.

The basis for the understanding with the US was a recognition that India was a responsible nuclear

power with an impeccable record on nuclear non-proliferation.

"Our strategic policies and assets are a source of national security and will continue to be so," he said, assuring that the government "will not allow any fissile material shortages or any other material limitations on our strate-

gic programmes in order to meet current or future requirements".
Outlining the reasons for arriving at this understanding, the Prime Minister said, "Our efforts to undo some of the long-standing restrictive nuclear regimes will enable us to secure access to the significantly greater quantities of energy that we will need to spur massive consumer growth in our industrialisation programme."

Joint to Pakistan

Washington has presented specific evidence for the first time on Pakistan's supply of uranium-enrichment technology to North Korea, a move that may jolt Pakistan's bid for parity with India on nuclear cooperation with the United States. P4

Big two set to meet

Manmohan Singh and Pakistan President Pervez Musharraf are likely to meet on the sidelines of the UN General Assembly session later this year.

HT 1 28/7

Deal with US won't hit India's nuke plan: PM

TIMES NEWS NETWORK

New Delhi: India will get nuclear fuel for its reactors, be part of cutting edge global nuclear research and reverse decades of nuclear technology denial that could propel its economic development on the fast track. And in return, India will accept the "responsibilities and obligations" of a nuke power.

"It was my endeavour to expand our access to energy supplies to fuel our growth, while protecting our strategic interests," Prime Minister Manmohan Singh said on Friday.

As he made a detailed presentation of his visit to the US to Parliament, the Central feature of his *suo motu* statement was clear. The India-US agreement was based on two principles: non-discrimination and reciprocity. India and the US would undertake a series of "reciprocal" steps by which "India should acquire the same benefits and advantages as other such states which have advanced nuclear technology", he said.

"As a result," said the PM, "we expect the resumption of India's nuclear trade and commerce with the US and globally is...achievable...involving the dismantling of the technology denial regimes which have hitherto targeted India."

Nevertheless, the PM also clarified to both Houses that this agreement would in no way impact or inhibit India's strategic nuclear weapons programme "over which we will retain unrestricted, complete and autonomous control". Answering critics both within his establishment and in the opposition, Manmohan Singh stressed: "The government will not allow any fissile material shortages or any other material limitations on our

strategic programs to meet current and future requirements." But reciprocity is the bottomline, Manmohan stressed. "Our commitments could be conditional upon and reciprocal to the US fulfilling its side of this understanding."

He stressed: "Reciprocity is key to implementation of all the steps...Indian actions will be contingent at every stage on actions taken by the other side." He focused on importance of energy to India's growth. "We have assessed our long-term energy resources and it is clear that nuclear power has to play a role in our electricity generation plans." Hence, India needs to access nuclear fuel for its reactors and technologies from the international market, he said. Presently, as PM said, this was not possible "because of the nuclear technology restrictive regimes that operate around us".

It was imperative that India break free of the international regimes that have been crafted over the years to deny it nuclear technology. "The basis for this understanding was a recognition that India is a responsible nuclear power with an impeccable record on nuclear non-proliferation," the PM said. He assured both Houses that the unique nature of the Indian nuclear programme would remain unaltered—the three-stage nuclear power programme consisting of pressurised heavy water reactors, fast breeder reactors in the second stage and thorium reactors in the third stage.

The PM believed, "our effort to undo some of the long-standing restrictive nuclear regimes will enable us to secure access to the significantly greater quantities of energy that we will need to spur growth."

CPM turns tutor on nuke pact

Our Political Bureau
NEW DELHI 31 JULY

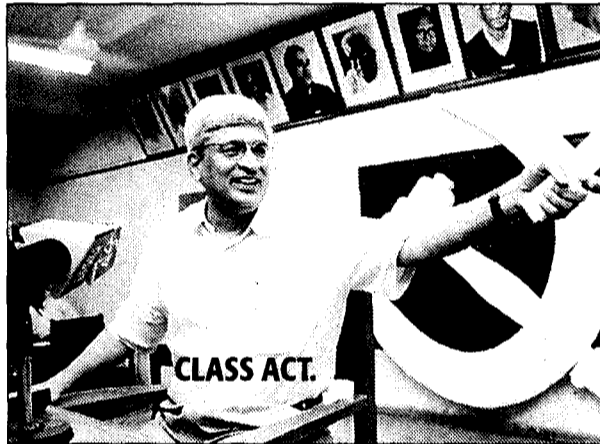
REAFFIRMING its reservations over the Indo-US pacts, the CPM on Sunday declared it would launch a country-wide campaign to 'educate' people about the 'inherent dangers' to India's strategic interests.

CPM general secretary Prakash Karat, who insisted there was a difference between the views of the CPM and the BJP on nuclear cooperation, said his party's MPs will emphasise the need for maintaining independence in

democracy initiative and accepting the US leadership in the fight against terrorism.

This comes a day after Jyoti Basu described the Prime Minister's statement in Parliament as 'generally alright'. Mr Karat said the party was not totally opposed to the nuclear cooperation but objected to certain issues. "The department of atomic energy should not be weakened while implementing the nuclear cooperation agreement on the basis of structured reciprocity," he said.

The CPM sees the UPA's approach as a continuance of the



developing nuclear technology for peaceful purposes when the issue comes up for discussion in Lok Sabha on Monday.

Mr Karat said the Politburo considered the Indo-US defence framework agreement as another step towards India serving the global strategy of the US. Addressing a press conference after a two-day Politburo meeting, he said the joint statement signed by Prime Minister Manmohan Singh and President George Bush showed the trend of India being accommodated as an ally of the US with decisions such as the joint

trend begun by the NDA 'of becoming a strategic US ally'. The party, in its anti-UPA rhetoric, inside and outside Parliament, will focus on what is 'harmful in these agreements for our strategic and security interests'.

The Left had already asked the government not to take any 'unilateral measure' on issues of national interest. They also felt that India was giving more concessions compared to what the US offered and suggested caution in moves in response to measures taken by the US, the Nuclear Suppliers Group and the IAEA.

01 AUG 2005 11:08 AM

'BUSH TOLD AEC MUST RATIFY DEAL'

PM looks to USA through Chinese eyes

Statesman News Service & PTI

NEW DELHI, Aug. 3. — Dispelling apprehensions by the BJP-led Opposition and Left parties, the Prime Minister today told the Lok Sabha that India's close ties with the USA were not aimed at "ganging up" against China or any other country.

India will remain engaged with China, Dr Manmohan Singh said while replying to a four-and-a-half-hour debate on his recent visit to the USA. "We see new horizons in our relations with China. What we have done with the USA is not at the cost of China or any other country," he said.

He rejected the Opposition charge that India had compromised on its strategic autonomy in the nuclear weapons programme. "There is nothing in the (Indo-US) Joint Statement that should convey that we compromised our autonomy in managing our nuclear assets," he said. Dr Singh revealed that when the draft of the joint statement came from the US side, he had made it clear that it had to be approved by the Atomic Energy Commission chairman, who was part of the delegation. It was held up by 12 to 15 hours for full approval.

"I want to dispel illusions. We are not ganging up against any country, least of all China," he said adding "this is not a military alliance or an alliance against any country". "We will never compromise on the autonomy in the management of our strategic nuclear weapons programme."

Earlier during the discussion, Mr Atal Behari Vajpayee focused on features that are "disadvantageous" to India. For example, he said, separation of civil and military nuclear facilities in the deal would "restrict India's defence capabilities". Initiating the discussion, Mr Vajpayee said the country should have been taken into confidence before concluding the agreement.

Iran proposes, India plays coy

NEW DELHI, Aug. 3. — Iran today proposed signing an MoU with India for setting a timeframe for implementation of the long-delayed \$7.4-billion Iran-Pakistan-India gas pipeline. New Delhi, however, appeared unwilling to set a timeframe and said it would go into such an agreement only after it is satisfied with the security aspect (read Pakistan) of the proposal. India's refusal follows Dr Manmohan Singh's remarks in the USA expressing apprehensions about the Indo-Iran gas pipeline. The India-Iran talks on the pipeline took a positive turn this year after India started taking interest in the proposal and told Iran and Pakistan that it "wants to see this project become a reality". Union petroleum minister Mr Mani Shankar Aiyar went a step further and mooted constructing a South-east Asia gas grid to ensure energy security in this region. But Dr Singh's statement in the USA appears to have put the project on a slow track. "India wants the project structure to be developed in such a manner as to address all its concerns of safety of the pipeline and safe delivery of gas," a petroleum ministry official said. — SNS

Dr Singh replied that before going to the USA, he had meetings with Mr Vajpayee, Mr LK Advani and Mr Jaswant Singh as also with leaders of Left parties. "I was not sure of the outcome. So, I could not say all the things before I left," he said. On reservations over the matter of separation of civilian and nuclear components, Dr Singh said the atomic energy establishment agreed that such separation was feasible.

On the issue of India's bid for a permanent seat in the UNSC, the Prime Minister assured that though the USA has not explicitly come out with support for India, he has "reasons to believe" that its case will not be ignored in the days to come.

N-pact for peace: Rocca, page 4

04 AUG 2005

India's interests safe, says Manmohan

TIMES NEWS NETWORK

New Delhi: In a strong rebuttal of criticism by the BJP and the Left, PM Manmohan Singh on Wednesday assured the Lok Sabha that he had not compromised national interests in any of the arrangements he had finalised during his US visit last month.

To the Left that accused him of "continuing the pro-US tilt" of the NDA government, he categorically said that there was "nothing wrong in having close relations with the US, while doing nothing that will affect our sovereignty".

Seeking to clear another Left "illusion", he said Indo-US relations were not aimed against "great neighbour" China with which India was determined to stay engaged, just as it had strategic partnership with Russia and the European Union.

India was for a multipolar world and "engaging the US" was essential in its step-by-step march to emerge as "a powerful pole".

There was "no secret deal or understanding" and the US felt that it was in its own interest to align with "a democracy of a billion people" so as together, they could promote world peace and prosperity.

In a point-by-point response to his predecessor Atal Bihari Vajpayee, Singh said he had signed the nuclear deal only after a final okay from the Atomic Energy Commission chief. He disclosed that he had indeed delayed the signing by 12 to 15 hours.

The deal will help end "nuclear apartheid" that had hampered India's quest for the last three decades, he said amidst thumping of desks.

Separation of civil and military nuclear facilities was perfectly feasible, he told Vajpayee, who opened the debate and made his speech while seated. It would be done in a phased manner. Identifying civil facilities, to be placed under International Atomic Energy Authority (IAEA), was voluntary and would be done by Indians, not Americans. Research by Indian scientists would be hampered. "That is the government's commitment," he said.

He reiterated that the entire



Prime minister Manmohan Singh with Bhutan King Jigme Singye Wangchuk in New Delhi

arrangement was reciprocal, depending upon the US playing its part. "I did not act as a representative of a supplicant state," he said during his 43-minute reply.

He assured the House that India would bank upon the solemn assurance by the Bush administration to see through the entire range of arrangements envisaged in the pact in the event of a disapproval by the US Congress. He admitted that there "uncertainties" on that score, but added that President Bush had made "a personal commitment" of using all his persuasive powers to get the Congress to approve the nuclear deal that would make India's problems about nuclear fuel "a problem of the past".

It was the most peaceful debate lasting four-and-a-half hours heard in the last many months. There was little interruption. A number of diplomats sat through most of the debate in the gallery.

While much of debate was structured, it showed that parties on all sides do not have adequate number of speakers on specialised issues. The better ones

like George Fernandes (JD-U) and Manavendra Singh of the BJP got their turns late, prompting Speaker Somnath Chatterjee to regret having to cut them short.

The PM assured P K Deo (BJP) that locally available uranium in Jharkhand, Meghalaya and Andhra Pradesh would be exploited despite difficulties. He told S S Dhindsa (Akali) that there was special provision for promoting agriculture, farm education and extension, all of which needed updating of technology.

He was upbeat on nuclear power generation thanks to the pact and promised it would leap-frog in the next 15 years, producing 20,000 to 40,000 MW.

Two failed attempts to reform the Indian foreign service

Under the carpet

DIPLOMACY

K.P. NAYAR

Next year, it will be 40 years since the Pillai committee submitted its report on reforming the Indian foreign service. The committee, which gets its name from N.R. Pillai, who was secretary-general of the foreign ministry in Jawaharlal Nehru's time, undertook the only comprehensive exercise since independence to reform one of the most high profile institutions of government.

Other elements of government — even the cabinet or parliamentary system of administration — and the country's Constitution itself have been periodically debated and examined as needing reform, but not the IFS or the ministry of external affairs. Even more amazing is that very little of the Pillai committee report has been implemented in these four decades, when the IFS has been crying out for reform. In few other democracies would taxpayers tolerate such a situation. Especially when they are told *ad nauseum* that their country is globalizing and becoming more integrated with the rest of the world or that India is the rising power of this century. The demands of such a growing global role also demands a South Block — and its embassies abroad — which can rise to that challenge.

Unfortunately, there has been very little discussion in India about this challenge in the last decade-and-a-half, when the present prime minister and some of his colleagues in the present cabinet opened India to the world in a way that was familiar to Indians only in a bygone era that preceded the country's colonization. Ironically, though, this was a subject of lively discussion last week in Washington, of all places. It was a discussion in which several veterans of the US state department took part, as well as journalists who write on diplomacy, members of think-tanks with an interest in south Asia, and most interesting of all, young diplomats from south-east Asia posted in the US, but eager to get an inside look at the IFS. It has, with all its shortcomings, one of the best and most organized diplomatic cadre among countries which went through the process of decolonization and enjoy a huge reach all across the world.

The discussion took place at the Woodrow Wilson International Centre for Scholars, where Kishan S. Rana — an Indian diplomat for 35 years, former ambassador to Mauritius and Germany and a part of Indira Gandhi's PMO — is currently a public-policy scholar. Rana is engaged in a comparative study of the diplomatic process in five Asian countries — China, India, Japan, Singapore and Thailand — focussing on their foreign ministries and their diplomatic networks, their structures, methods and performance.

The foreign secretary, Shyam Saran, has been making waves in South Block doing things which many foreign offices would think of, in the first quarter of the 21st century, as inconsequential. But, for the IFS, which is looking up to the Pillai committee report for guidance four decades after it came out, Saran's small steps are actually giant leaps forward. For instance, the foreign secretary has resumed a practice, long defunct, of having a daily meeting in MEA of secretaries and additional secretaries. This practice — or similar daily exercises — were discontinued because, intermittent-

advertised the job of ambassador to the Vatican and applications are being taken by a private recruiting firm, Capita Resourcing, which will shortlist and interview candidates for the highly sensitive government post. The FCO is not alone in this trend in foreign offices worldwide, whose ripples are felt nowhere near South Block. Simon Murdoch, who is the equivalent of foreign secretary in New Zealand, goes not by that designation, but by his official title of chief executive of the ministry of foreign affairs and trade.

During last week's discussions in Washington, it came as a surprise



Saran with the US under-secretary for political affairs, Nicholas Burns

ly under some of Saran's predecessors, the foreign secretary was not on talking terms with the fellow secretaries while additional secretaries would not cross the paths of the secretaries.

In the British Foreign and Commonwealth Office or at the US state department, the very idea that the MEA could have gone on for years without daily meetings would be incomprehensible. The FCO and many other foreign offices have gone way beyond the wildest imagination of N.R. Pillai, and have shed their stiff-upper-lip image on which a lot of fiction around diplomats and diplomacy have been created. But not the MEA.

The FCO's top decision-making body is called the FCO Board of Management, and it includes two executives from the private sector — at present, Alistair Johnston, who is vice-chairman of the consulting firm, KPMG, and Alison Platt, director of the United Kingdom's BUPA hospitals. If this would be inconceivable in India, look at this. Tony Blair's government had

to many participants that MEA does not have a mission statement. Nor does it have a published strategy which can tell the public of the direction India's external affairs is taking. The US state department, on the other hand, has a strategic plan for the five year period from 2004 to 2009.

Interestingly, this strategic plan was prepared in August 2003, when there was no certainty that George W. Bush would be re-elected president at the end of 2004 or that a Republican would remain secretary-of-state during the period when this strategic plan would be implemented. For that matter, the current strategic plan outlines the state department's mission till the end of 2009, by which time Bush would no longer have been president for two years.

In France, a new law has gone to effect, as a consequence of which every agency that receives state money has to go before the national assembly in the following year and justify the use of those funds. The finance minister, P. Chidambaram,

said in parliament recently: "For too long in this country we were carried by the outlays — how much has this department spent, how much does this minister have in the Plan and Non-Plan, how much has been given to such and such project, etc. We are now measuring outlays. We have to measure outcomes."

Chidambaram envisages steps in India on the French model, although not as sweeping as the demand for accountability by the French national assembly. He hopes to "convert the financial outlays into physical outcomes with quarterly targets" for each ministry and department "so that at the end of the year, parliament will be able to ask the government, 'What have you delivered for the entire country?'"

It would be interesting to see how the MEA can deliver its outcomes report when it does not even have a mission statement. Even if it did, it would be a curious spectacle how South Block would get around the many holy cows associated with foreign policy — third-world objectives which are no longer India's foreign policy priorities, to which lip service is still mandatory for reasons of political correctness, especially by a government for which loyalty to the Nehru-Gandhi family is paramount.

Meanwhile, the Pillai committee report, which still makes fascinating reading because many of its laudable proposals remain unimplemented, is most likely to continue to languish. Ironically, even as many of its recommendations remained unimplemented, the government, in its wisdom appointed the former diplomat, Samar Sen, to prepare another report on reforming the IFS and MEA. Sen completed the exercise in 1982-83, but his report — unlike Pillai's — has not been made public.

In 2003, the National Democratic Alliance foreign minister, Yashwant Sinha, asked the retired civil servant and Planning Commission member, N.K. Singh, to produce a report on India's economic diplomacy with a deadline of two months. Singh could not stick to the deadline, and before his report could come out, elections were held to the Lok Sabha and the government changed in Delhi. Nothing has been heard of the N.K. Singh report.

Similarly, Sinha's predecessor, Jaswant Singh, initiated an attempt at reforming South Block in 2000, but before that effort could really get off the ground, he swapped cabinet positions with Sinha and nothing more was heard of that initiative. If Rana's project, which is now getting some attention in Washington, is completed, it will hopefully start a public debate on an issue which can no longer be brushed under the carpet if only because of what many Indians believe is the country's global destiny.

A foreign policy for Kolkata

THE chief minister of West Bengal, Buddhadeb Bhattacharjee, is not fond of foreign travel. His last trip abroad as chief minister was more than two years ago — in June 2003 to Italy. That visit was easily forgotten, for it did not result in any concrete outcomes for West Bengal.

But his visit to the Southeast Asia — Singapore and Indonesia — this week, however, could be a memorable one. For one there is some prospect of Bhattacharjee attracting a substantive amount of foreign investment into West Bengal from private companies in both Singapore and Indonesia.

There is a special focus on the potentially huge investments from Indonesia's Salem Group, which wants to set up the Kolkata International Economic Zone, spread over 5,100 acres in South 24 Parganas.

Although political stability and other factors have increasingly made West Bengal an attractive destination for foreign capital, Kolkata has not been able to sustain an extended campaign in order to take advantage of this. Bhattacharjee now appears determined to make up for lost time.

The Indian chambers of industry and commerce are strongly supporting the trip during which Bhattacharjee will meet the prime minister of Singapore, Lee Hsien Loong, and senior ministers of Indonesia, besides interacting with the business communities in both Singapore and Indonesia.

His quest for foreign capital has inevitably generated some ideological debates within the state party unit. But the chief minister has successfully rallied his party behind the proposed plans to offer large tracts of farm land for the Salem group.

While these debates are part of CPI(M)'s wrenching adaptation to the changing world, Bhattacharjee's visit to South East Asia has a larger significance for West Bengal and India's foreign policy as a whole. If



The West Bengal CM's visit to Southeast Asia underlines India's Look East policy

C. RAJA MOHAN

Buddhadeb pursues the logic of his current visit to Southeast Asia to its conclusion, he can restore Kolkata's standing as the hub of economic activity in a region that covers parts of the subcontinent, China, Myanmar and Southeast Asia.

This would necessarily involve greater activism on West Bengal's part in shaping India's foreign policy. Purists will raise their eyebrows at the suggestion of a foreign policy for Kolkata. But for all the claims to monopoly from national governments on foreign policy making, interests of states — especially those on the borders — have always shaped diplomacy over the centuries. In India, too, politics in Tamil Nadu

liking to diplomacy and the Left parties exercise their political clout in Delhi for West Bengal's benefit.

It is natural to see Buddhadeb Bhattacharjee's visit to Southeast Asia as part of India's Look East policy, which has opened up new opportunities for the eastern states to accelerate their development through commercial linkages with the Association of South East Asian Nations (ASEAN).

India is negotiating free trade agreements individually with a number of Southeast Asian countries as well as with the ten-nation ASEAN as a whole. Equally significant has been the BIMSTEC forum which brings together parts of

It is China that offers unprecedented opportunities for West Bengal and should be high on the list of new travel destinations for Bhattacharjee

has always coloured the national policy towards Sri Lanka. Similarly political classes in Uttar Pradesh and Bihar have long had influence on India's Nepal policy.

West Bengal shares a long border with Bangladesh and provides key trade and transportation links to Nepal, Bhutan and was once the natural outlet for goods and people from Western China, including Tibet.

The national leadership of the Left has been so focused on grand ideological issues of India's foreign policy, it had little time or inclination to push the envelope in Delhi on issues which have a direct bearing on West Bengal's peace and prosperity. All that could change if Buddhadeb Bhattacharjee takes a

South and Southeast Asia-India, Nepal, Bhutan, Bangladesh, Sri Lanka, Myanmar and Thailand together in economic cooperation.

While the ASEAN has naturally been the first target of Bhattacharjee, there is no reason why he should limit himself to Southeast Asia. India's own Look East policy has its sights set beyond ASEAN to include cooperation with China, Japan, South Korea and Australia.

It is China, however, that offers unprecedented opportunities for West Bengal and should be high on the list of new travel destinations for Bhattacharjee. At the national level trade with China is growing at more than 50 per cent a year opening up extraordinary possibilities for

trade and investment links between the two economies. China has also been looking at sub-regional cooperation between its frontier regions — such as Xinjiang, Tibet and Yunnan — with the surrounding regions in the subcontinent and Southeast Asia. Whichever way the sub-regional cooperation between India, China and the abutting regions is looked at, Kolkata's role will be front and centre.

While New Delhi, often frightened by its own shadow, has been hesitant to explore these possibilities, West Bengal has a big stake in making such sub-regional cooperation with China a reality. Pushing for such cooperation as well as opening historic trade routes between India and China are in the interest of Kolkata and need to be actively promoted by Bhattacharjee and West Bengal MPs in Delhi. Beyond Southeast Asia and China, West Bengal could contribute significantly to the positive transformation of ties between India and Bangladesh, which have been going downhill for the last many years.

Delhi on its own cannot construct normal and good neighbourly relations with Dhaka. Delhi needs supplementary political efforts from Kolkata that can help overcome the bitter legacy of the Partition in the east.

Only an initiative from Kolkata, similar to the Punjabiyat movement on the western frontier, can help defeat the growing forces of extremism fundamentalism in Bangladesh. Only a conscious effort on the part of Kolkata and Delhi to promote the rapid economic development of Bangladesh can help deal with the challenge of illegal migration.

In thinking creatively about economic integration in the eastern subcontinent and boldly envisaging a global Bengal, Buddhadeb Bhattacharjee can help reclaim the old glory of Kolkata. Economic and cultural diplomacy from a vibrant Kolkata will lend new capabilities to India's foreign policy.

INDIAN EXPRESS

Pakistan dogs PM on Kabul trip

5-1 2918

SUJAN DUTTA

Kabul, Aug. 28: Prime Minister Manmohan Singh and President Hamid Karzai today made common cause in the fight against terrorism, but Afghanistan's ruler brought Pakistan into the frame for a happy South Asian family picture.

So assertive was Karzai on the importance of engaging Pakistan that at one point, discussing Afghanistan's proposed entry into Saarc, he said: "Improvement of relations between India and Pakistan is such a necessity because it overtakes every other issue."

Singh was given a grand

welcome to Karzai's palace and profusely thanked for all the assistance given by India in Afghanistan's reconstruction. He reciprocated the gesture and assured Karzai that Delhi will pull out all the stops in Afghanistan's aid, but the biggest stop was Pakistan that was, as one diplomat put it, refusing even to allow transit to distribute high-protein biscuits to Afghan children.

Karzai's response was quick. He said he was engaged with Pakistan and General Pervez Musharraf was responding positively to requests for transit rights for Indian and Afghan goods and was also involved in the war on terrorists.

Karzai and Singh, on day

one round one of the first state visit by an Indian Prime Minister in 29 years, were talking at different levels. If Delhi says two's great company, Karzai says it takes three to tango. Pakistan's shadow has loomed so large that Singh and Karzai were candid about it. They had a one-to-one session minus diplomats and Rahul Gandhi, who was debonair in diplomatic formal.

At a news conference after a joint statement, Singh and Karzai laid as much emphasis on the war on terrorism as on Indian assistance and Pakistan's importance.

Karzai: With the help of the international community and the desire of the Afghan people we have defeated ter-



Manmohan Singh hugs Karzai in Kabul. (AFP)

GIVEAWAYS

- \$1-m development projects
- Healthcare training
- Farming cooperation
- Parliament house
- Skill-building initiative
- Adopt 100 villages
- Gift 1,000 sewing machines
- Women's job training centre
- 500 scholarships

to see its sons and daughters murdered. Our relations with Pakistan are thriving very well. We are in talks with our

brothers in Pakistan. We need to root out terrorism in our three countries — Afghanistan, India and Pakistan.

Singh: I have much hope that all countries of this region will have the vision and the will for common prosperity and peace to eradicate poverty, ignorance and terrorism. As far as India is concerned, I pledge myself wholeheartedly to work with President Karzai and for that matter with President Musharraf and other like-minded leaders.

The joint statement said India was fully supportive of the goal of a sovereign, stable, democratic and prosperous Afghanistan. "Both leaders agreed that such an Afghanistan is also necessary for

peace, security and stability in the region.

"The two leaders condemned global terrorism as a threat to democracy and declared that there can be no compromise with those who resort to terrorism," the statement said.

Even as Singh was being escorted about Kabul, a candidate in Afghanistan's first post-Taliban parliamentary election was killed, south of the Afghan capital.

Singh announced that India has pledged an additional \$50 million of assistance to Afghanistan. This takes the quantum of Indian financial assistance to Afghanistan to \$550 million.

■ See Page 8

Dixit leaves foreign policy void that is hard to fill

By Siddharth Varadarajan

NEW DELHI, JAN. 3. A hard-nosed strategist with a keen sense of diplomatic history, J.N. Dixit was arguably the most important player in the foreign policy establishment of the Government. While the day-to-day conduct of diplomacy has remained the preserve of the External Affairs Ministry and its leadership, Mr. Dixit, as National Security Adviser, played a decisive role in defining India's evolving terms of engagement on three key fronts: its relations with Pakistan, the United States and China. Unfortunately, Mr. Dixit's departure comes at a time when this process of definition is incomplete.

On all these fronts, crucial issues remain unresolved. India's relations with Pakistan are more precariously poised than the crowded calendar of bilateral meetings suggests — or the Foreign Office bureaucracy is

prepared to admit. On ^{MO} China, talks on the guiding principles for resolving the boundary dispute are only now entering the stage of hardball. And as for relations with the U.S., the central problem that Mr. Dixit was grappling with — harmonising India's long-term quest for a multi-polar world with the imperatives of a 'strategic partnership' with Washington — has still not been satisfactorily resolved.

Mr. Dixit's back-channel contacts with Tariq Aziz, Adviser to General Pervez Musharraf of Pakistan, played a key role in producing a breakthrough on at least two occasions: first, on the eve of the talks on nuclear confidence-building measures when India and Pakistan made a huge conceptual leap in declaring each other's possession of nuclear weapons a factor for stability, and again before Gen. Musharraf met the Prime Minister, Manmohan Singh, on the sidelines of the United Nations General

Assembly meeting in September. Since then, this back-channel process has been less effective — something, Mr. Dixit recently told *The Hindu*, that was directly linked to the Pakistani establishment's tendency to leak details of forthcoming meetings and agendas.

Even so, Mr. Dixit was aware of the role he and Mr. Aziz would have to play in keeping the composite dialogue ticking along — by discussing different scenarios on the big questions of Kashmir and peace and security while producing "deliverables" on some of the smaller issues from time to time. Mr. Dixit, for example, supported the Prime Minister's call for "out-of-the-box" thinking on Kashmir and refused to back those in the Home and External Affairs Ministries who had reservations about last month's Pugwash meeting in Kathmandu between the Hurriyat leaders and politicians from Pakistan-occupied Kashmir.

Tempting though it is to

read Mr. Dixit's role as that of a balancer — many saw his realpolitik and pragmatism as the perfect foil to the Nehruvian internationalism of the External Affairs Minister, Natwar Singh — the truth is that both Mr. Dixit and Mr. Natwar Singh had pivotal roles to play in helping India restore a sense of balance in the articulation of its diplomacy towards the big powers.

If the United Progressive Alliance's victory set off fears in Washington of an "anti-American" turn in Indian policy, the appointment of Mr. Dixit as National Security Adviser was seen as a sign that the new dispensation in Delhi was keen to continue doing business with the United States. Mr. Dixit helped shepherd the Next Steps in Strategic Partnership process along by advising the Government to agree to a set of export restrictions that his predecessor, Brajesh Mishra, had balked from signing. Yet, Mr. Dixit had no intention of putting all of India's eggs in Washington's basket. He pushed for a

strategic partnership with the European Union and decided that India should back the E.U. against the U.S. on both the Galileo satellite system and on France as the location for the fusion energy project.

And yet, several challenges on the U.S. front are still to be handled. India is under pressure from Washington to expand its engagement with the puppet Allawi government in Iraq. U.S. National Security Adviser Condoleezza Rice

wanted Mr. Dixit to commit India to paying a part of the bill for the upcoming Iraq elections. A decision on this has yet to be taken. There is also the collaboration with Washington on missile defence, something Mr. Dixit had raised questions about while in the Opposition but which the UPA Government has chosen to say precious little about. On the question of India joining the controversial U.S.-led Proliferation Security Initiative, Mr. Dixit helped temper the unrestrained enthusiasm in some quarters by outlining a specific set of Indian concerns.

J. P. ...

13-18 IN RELIEF 4/1

Even the most reasonable of stances may have a striking effect. India's refusal of aid for the tsunami disaster from other countries, such as the United States of America, China, or Australia, has been both polite and reasonable. To deal with the immense destruction and destitution that the sea has wrought on India's coastline and on the Andaman and Nicobar Islands is a daunting task, but the government is confident that the country's resources are adequate at the moment. India is so far out of the begging-bowl syndrome that it can go further afield with relief, and is already helping Sri Lanka and the Maldives, and even Indonesia and Thailand. The overseas aid should be channelled to those countries which need it more, India has suggested, and has also said that it will go back to the donor countries' friendly offers if and when necessary. In other words, this is not a snub, but a logical distribution of available aid, and a pragmatic acknowledgement of the long, hard road to rehabilitation that lies ahead, when aid from other countries may become necessary.

The impact of India's stance is manifold. The assurance of officials in Delhi, that the government's decision is based on "ground realities", is welcome news to Indian citizens. It undoubtedly gives a shine to India's image. Its confidence and quick-off-the-mark activity is an indirect assertion of its vision of itself as a regional power, one that can take on a massive natural disaster within its own boundaries while accepting responsibility to ease some of the pain of its neighbours. Talking back to money, with politeness and reason, is a gentle reminder to the world of its potential. Such an image is important for an aspirant to a seat in the United Nations security council. But the story may not end with the refurbished image. The countries most affected by the tsunami comprise a region criss-crossed with global strategic interests. An influx of officials from powerful Western nations at a vulnerable moment may not be welcome. It would also cause disruption where relief machinery is already in place. There is enough confusion in relief distribution as it is. To some extent, this is understandable, given India's map and the kind and scale of the disaster. But it would be even more reassuring for Indian citizens to know that, in spite of confusions, all the aid pouring in from the poorest to the richest, is reaching the victims in some form or the other.

বিচক্ষণ ত্রাণনীতি

ইন্দোনেশিয়ায় ভূকম্পসঞ্জাত সুনামির প্রবল জলোচ্ছ্বাসে ইন্দোনেশিয়া, শ্রীলঙ্কা, ভারত ও তাইল্যান্ডে নিহতের সংখ্যা দেড় লক্ষ ছাপাইয়াছে। যত দিন যাইবে, নিখোঁজের সংখ্যা মৃতের সংখ্যা বলিয়া গণ্য হইতে থাকিবে, ততই বিপর্যয়ের এ খতিয়ান ক্ষীত হইবার কথা। সাম্প্রতিক ইতিহাসে এমন ভয়ানক প্রাকৃতিক বিপর্যয় ও মানবিক সম্পদে তাহার এমন ভারী মূল্য দিবার নজির খুব বেশি নাই। নিহতদের জন্য শোকগাথা রচনা ছাড়া হয়তো বিশেষ কিছু করিবার নাই। কিন্তু যাহারা কোনও ক্রমে রক্ষা পাইয়াও জীবন্ত, সেই লক্ষ-লক্ষ মানুষের ত্রাণ ও পুনর্বাসনের জরুরি কৃত্যটি এ বার শুরু হইয়াছে। স্বভাবতই গোটা বিশ্বই দুর্গত মানুষদের ত্রাণে ঝাঁপাইয়া পড়িয়াছে। পশ্চিমের উন্নত দেশগুলি, বিভিন্ন আন্তর্জাতিক সংস্থা ইতিমধ্যেই সাহায্যের হাত বাড়াইয়া দিয়াছে। এমনকী মার্কিন প্রশাসনও ঘরে-বাহিরে তাহার কুপণতার বিরূপ সমালোচনায় শুদ্ধ হইয়া ১৪শো কোটি টাকার ত্রাণের প্রতিশ্রুতি দিয়াছে। জাপান দিয়াছে দুই হাজার কোটির আশ্বাস। ব্যক্তিগত দানের মিলিত সম্ভারও কম নয়।

ভারতকেও এই বিপর্যয় সহ্য করিতে হইয়াছে। শ্রীলঙ্কার মতো অত ধ্বংসের সম্মুখীন না হইলেও ভারতের চারটি রাজ্যে ইতিমধ্যেই প্রায় পনেরো হাজার মানুষের প্রাণহানির সংবাদ পাওয়া গিয়াছে। ক্ষয়ক্ষতি কয়েক হাজার কোটি টাকার। কিন্তু ভারত এই সমূহ বিপর্যয়েও স্থিতধী থাকিয়াছে। দুর্গতত্রাণে আন্তর্জাতিক সাহায্যের প্রস্তাব বিনীত ধন্যবাদের সহিত ফিরাইয়া দিয়া সরকার জানাইয়া দেয়, ভারত নিজেই বিপর্যয় মোকাবিলা ও ত্রাণ সংগঠনে সক্ষম। শুধু তাহাই নহে, ক্ষতিগ্রস্ত রাজ্যগুলিতে যুদ্ধকালীন তৎপরতায় ত্রাণসামগ্রী পাঠাইবার সমান্তরালে সমান ক্ষিপ্ততায় প্রতিবেশী রাষ্ট্রগুলিতেও ভারত সাহায্য প্রেরণে বিলম্ব করে নাই। নিজের রক্তক্ষরণকে উপেক্ষা না করিয়াও প্রতিবেশীর ক্ষতে প্রলেপ দিতে শ্রীলঙ্কা, মলদ্বীপ ও ইন্দোনেশিয়ায় জাহাজ বোঝাই করিয়া ত্রাণকর্মী ও সামগ্রী পাঠানো হইয়াছে। শুধু শ্রীলঙ্কাকেই একশো কোটি টাকার প্রতিশ্রুতি দেওয়া হইয়াছে। পশ্চিমের ত্রাণ-প্রস্তাবক দেশগুলিকে বলা হইয়াছে, অন্যান্য দেশে সেই সহায়তা পাঠানো হউক। ভারত সরকারের এই অবস্থান ও আচরণ তাহার অর্থনৈতিক সামর্থ্য, মানবসম্পদের সমৃদ্ধি এবং দক্ষিণ এশিয়ায় তাহার মর্যাদা ও বর্ধমান গুরুত্বের সহিত সামঞ্জস্যপূর্ণ। ইহা জোটনিরপেক্ষ আন্দোলনের সুবর্ণ যুগে ভারতের নেতৃত্বকারী ভূমিকার কথাও মনে পড়িয়া দেয়। তা ছাড়া, যে দেশ নিজেই সাহায্যের জন্য অপরের কাছে হাত পাতে, সে কেমন করিয়া প্রতিবেশী দুর্গতকে সাহায্য করিবে? তাই বিদেশি সাহায্যের প্রস্তার প্রত্যাখ্যানের মধ্যে কোনও অহমিকা নাই, আছে কঠোর বাস্তববোধ।

এই বাস্তববোধই ভারতীয় রাষ্ট্রনায়কদের শিখাইয়াছে, দক্ষিণ ও দক্ষিণ-পূর্ব এশিয়ায় আর্থ-রাজনৈতিক প্রভাব বিস্তারের পক্ষেও তাহার এই ত্রাতার ভূমিকা অত্যাবশ্যক। নিজে বিপর্যয়ক্রিষ্ট হইয়াও বিপন্ন ও দুর্গত প্রতিবেশীর পাশে দাঁড়াইয়া ভারত এলাকার রাষ্ট্রগুলির মনে নিজের অভিপ্রায় সম্পর্কে একটি সদর্থক ধারণার সঞ্চার করিতে চায়। পাশাপাশি অন্য এশীয় বৃহৎশক্তি চিনের ভূমিকার তুলনা করিলে বিষয়টি স্পষ্ট হইবে। চিন আর্থিক শক্তিতে ভারত অপেক্ষাও শক্তিশালী, তাহার আর্থিক বিকাশের হারও অনেক বেশি চমকপ্রদ। দক্ষিণ-পূর্ব এশিয়ার সহিত তাহার সাম্প্রতিক আর্থ-রাজনৈতিক সম্পর্কও ভারতের তুলনায় নিবিড়। সর্বোপরি প্রলয়ংকর এই বিপর্যয় চিনকে বিন্দুমাত্র স্পর্শ করে নাই। প্রতিবেশীদের সাহায্য করার জন্য সে দেশ অনেক বেশি সুবিধাজনক অবস্থায় ছিল। অথচ গোটা বিশ্ব যখন দুর্গতত্রাণে ঝাঁপাইয়া পড়িয়াছে, চিনা নেতৃত্ব তখন তাহার খিড়কির দরজায় সংঘটিত এমন বিপদে সেভাবে প্রতিবেশীদের পাশে দাঁড়ায় নাই, শীতল থাকিয়াছে। চিনের এই শীতল প্রত্যাখ্যান ভারতের উষ্ণ ও স্বতঃপ্রণোদিত আলিঙ্গনকে আরও সমাদরণীয় করিয়া তুলিতে পারে। এশিয়ায় প্রভাব বিস্তারের যে প্রতিযোগিতা এই দুই জনবহুল, বিশালায়তন এবং আর্থিক সম্ভাবনাময় রাষ্ট্রের মধ্যে অলিখিতভাবে চলিয়াছে, তাহার নিরিখে দুর্গতত্রাণের মানবিকতাও এ ভাবেই রাজনীতির মাত্রা অর্জন করিতে থাকে। রাষ্ট্রপুঞ্জের নিরাপত্তা পরিষদে 'ভেটো' দানের ক্ষমতা-সহ স্থায়ী সদস্যপদ অর্জনে আগ্রহী ভারত যে সেই গুরুদায়িত্বের অযোগ্য নয়, বিশ্বের কাছে তাহা প্রতিপন্ন করার ক্ষেত্রে ইহাও একটি সুযোগ, যাহার সদ্ব্যবহার নয়াদিল্লি ভালভাবেই করিয়াছে।

A diplomat and a gentleman

In most regional initiatives in South Asia, in crucial negotiations with China, through the sensitive post-Soviet years in Afghanistan, behind tough-talking, no-nonsense deliberations with Pakistan, stood the rock-like presence of J N 'Mani' Dixit. The floppy grey hair, ubiquitous pipe and gentle grin were a camouflage for this fiery champion of independent India. India's former foreign secretary was not only a

formidable intellectual. He was an equally tough strategist. He was an urbane and charming man, yet equally a seasoned and wise warhorse in many a diplomatic battle. As foreign secretary he brought an all-too-rare intellectual vibrancy to India's external relations, perhaps one of a handful of high-ranking foreign service officers who served not in fashionable Western capitals but extensively in the conflict-ridden

South Asian region. Mani Dixit didn't "eat and drink for his country" as diplomats sometimes tend to do. Instead, he carried a sharp wisdom into the far interiors of South Asia. As National Security Adviser he was the UPA Government's voice with China and Pakistan. His tragically untimely death has deprived India of a wise, uncompromising and committed guardian.

"He knew very clearly where India's interests lay and what her priorities were. Not too many officers have the ability to articulate it on the job, on the desk, in the course of a conversation. He understood what India was capable of and what it could not do. He was responsible for opening a new phase of Indo-American ties in 1993 where he negotiated in a very clear-headed manner...He was a tough guardian of Indian interests."

National Security Advisory Board member HAMID ANSARI



To Sir, with love

ARUNDHATI GHOSE

I FIRST met Mani Dixit when he was Deputy Secretary and I was Under Secretary in 1967. He was then at the UN Division and I was in the Nepal Division at the ministry. He had the ability to build great institutions. It was he who created the Disarmament and International Security Division as well as the UN Division at the ministry.

Since Mani's death, early this morning, everyone's been talking about what a brilliant officer he was. That is a fact. It's not just an opinion. 'Mani', as he was referred to by his friends and colleagues, was a very warm yet solid individual. He was particularly good with his junior officers and I was a junior officer when I met him. He completely trusted you with the work he assigned to you. He never questioned or double-checked. He felt we must be accountable. I asked him once why he was simply signing my work without even reading it and he said that it was because he trusted that I had done what I was required to do.

There was always a personal element in everything he did. You could have served with him anywhere but he would always go out of his way to help if he could. That is the person who has gone.

He would help not just for the sake of helping, he would be there, be there in tough times. Speaking for myself, if I was having a tough time, all I had to do is call him and he would ask me to come over and chat with him.

The official and personal side of his life were both equally

important. He would never let his work become affected by personal problems, but he also treated his personal life with as much importance as he did his professional one. He had been separated from his first wife for many years. But when she was ill, when she was dying, Mani sat by her side. That was the stuff which Mani Dixit was made of.

Mani set up the Indian High Commission in Bangladesh. He was a young officer then. In 1971, Mani, with the help of Satinder K Lamba and Chandrashekhar Dasgupta helped set it up and later on I came from Kolkata. Subsequently, the Embassy began to grow.

I met him only last week. He called me to discuss some matters. He suggested we have sandwiches at his office but I said I would much rather go out. Before that he had taken me to lunch at the Oberoi but he said there would be too many people interrupting and we wouldn't get to talk. So I went over to his house to have lunch with his wife and him. Although he had to rush back to work, I asked him to stay and have a smoke with me. He was very fond of his cigars. We wished each other on New Year's day. I remember he said it was a pity I lived so far away. Otherwise, perhaps we would have had more time to chat.

Arundhati Ghose was former Indian ambassador to the United Nations Conference on Disarmament, as well as to South Korea and Egypt

As told to Amba Batra

"Dixit had a most difficult job as he had to deal with the outside world and he was of great help to the PM in this task...It will be very difficult to replace him."

M K NARAYANAN, Special Adviser to the PM, seen here (centre) with him



"He was a colleague and friend for 45 years and an outstanding member of the Indian Foreign Service. It would be difficult to fill the void."

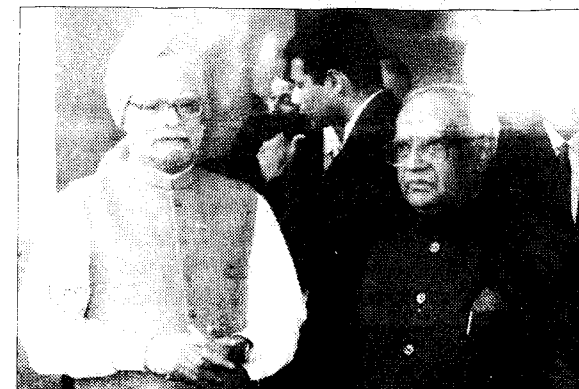
External Affairs Minister NATWAR SINGH

"Dixit played a central role in improving US-India relationship, most notably as foreign secretary in the early 1990s and recently as National Security Adviser...Dixit leaves behind many American friends and admirers."

A release by the US Embassy

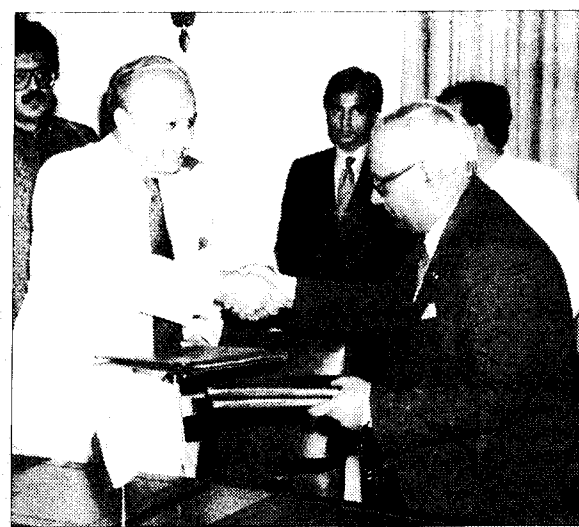
"In recent months, he was engaged in the efforts to promote composite dialogue between Pakistan and India."

Pakistan Foreign Ministry



"I have lost a close friend, a valued colleague and a great source of support...The nation has lost a true patriot, a great diplomat and wise strategist."

Prime Minister MANMOHAN SINGH



J N Dixit with prime ministers of the day and regional leaders like Sri Lankan President Chandrika Kumaratunga (above) and with then Pakistan foreign secretary Shaharyar Khan in 1992



J N DIXIT / 1936-2005

"He was a man who was very in control, balanced and never flustered. One was always sure that we had a man in that situation who would not panic and make mistakes. Another thing I admired about him was that even if he went home late from work, he would always write a few lines in his diary. As a result he had very correct records of important events and it is with the help of this, a tremendous memory and a deep understanding of the situations that he was able to write so many books."

Former ambassador to Japan, Italy and Vietnam KULDIP SAHDEV

* "We went together to open the High Commission in Bangladesh in 1972. In our first few days, we all became a family...He was very pragmatic, had a no-nonsense approach and had a lot of integrity. He is the perfect example of a person who had not been to a public school but rose to such great heights. He should be the role model for all young diplomats."

Former ambassador to Germany, Russia and Hungary and high commissioner to Pakistan SATINDER LAMBAH

"Not only was he at the right place at the right time, he was also the right man for the right job."

Former high commissioner to Pak G PARTHASARATHY

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India to offer expertise to tsunami-hit countries

Forum
Papers

By P. S. Suryanarayana

JAKARTA, JAN. 5. India is likely to offer the tsunami-affected countries help based on the skills that have been acquired on the "frontline" of managing natural disasters.

The External Affairs Minister, Natwar Singh, indicated on the eve of the conference that the gesture would be made at the one-day extraordinary multilateral summit to be held here tomorrow to address the tsunami crisis in the Indian Ocean region.

Mr. Singh will represent India at the meeting which will be attended by the United Nations Secretary-General, Kofi Annan, leaders from the United States and others in the "core group," besides China, Japan, and the Association of South East Asian Nations (ASEAN) which took the initiative for the conference.

A document produced by India's Disaster Management Group will be circulated among the participants. The document

was reflective of what "India is doing, can do and how we are right in the frontline," Mr. Singh said.

Pointing out how New Delhi has already rushed to the help of Sri Lanka, the Maldives, Indonesia and Thailand, Mr. Singh turned the spotlight on what might come to be known as India's skill-derived offer. He said: "We are in a position to provide training for the search and rescue teams and setting up web-based disaster-management information systems." India now possessed a "world class infrastructure" for dealing with natural calamities.

Coincidentally, a hospital ship and another vessel laden with humanitarian supplies worth \$1 million, both provided by India, arrived in Indonesia on the eve of the summit.

Answering questions on the role and relevance of the "core group" and the circumstances in which it came into being at the U.S. initiative, the External Affairs Minister said he did not think there was any controversy

over the genesis of the group for "a major humanitarian work". New Delhi's participation was traceable to the recognition that "India has the experience, the expertise and the capacity and the wherewithal to be able to assist in this [tsunami relief] in spite of India itself being badly hit". It was also widely known that India was "the larger country in the [affected] area having the equipment and the reach and the experience" to render help.

On the U.S. being seen to be jockeying for a "leadership role" in the tsunami relief efforts, Mr. Singh said: "We are not getting into this. Our relations with the United Nations are very good. Whatever the U.N. wants, if we can do, we will certainly do. It is not a game of one-upmanship. Lives are involved... We have always said the U.N. should be involved. It is the international agency par excellence to deal with such situations. That is why the [U.N.] Secretary General is here."

Navy on alert for relief efforts, says Natwar Singh

By P. S. Suryanarayana

JAKARTA, JAN. 6. The External Affairs Minister, K. Natwar Singh, today assured the leaders of the States along the Indian Ocean rim and in South-East Asia that New Delhi would be "happy to place the strengths of the Indian Navy for use in humanitarian relief in the region."

Addressing the extraordinary summit on the tsunami disaster, organised by the Association of South-East Asian Nations (ASEAN), Mr. Singh said: "We have placed a hospital ship off the coast of Aceh, Indonesia, which has been the worst hit area. This ship is providing emergency rations, medicines, tents and first-aid kits. It is also equipped to set up on-shore medical facilities."

"Another naval ship has brought relief and emergency medical supplies. Even as I speak, the Indian relief effort at Meulaboh is in full operation. An on-shore field hospital has been set up in this devastated town, and relief supplies are being delivered and distributed to the victims. We are ready to do more to assist Indonesia in required areas."

Outlining India's logistical efforts to meet the relief needs at home and in Sri Lanka and the Maldives and spelling out New Delhi's efforts to reach out to other affected countries, Mr. Singh said, "India wholeheartedly supports the efforts of the United Nations" in coordinating international relief and in "finding ways and means to address the gaps in the relief process."

It was in this context that he offered to place the resources of the Indian Navy in readiness for suitable use in meeting the tsunami challenges.

Space technology

Mr. Singh said India and the ASEAN had agreed to cooperate in the field of space technology and its applications for weather forecasting and disaster mitigation. He spelt out India's commitment to provide

its expertise such as those of trained search-and-rescue teams, designers of "web-based disaster management information systems" and other skilled professionals.

During the conference, the U.S. Secretary of State, Colin Powell, said the core group, formed by Washington in collaboration with India, Japan and Australia, was now being disbanded in the context of today's show of international solidarity in meeting the tsunami challenges.

Early warning centre

World leaders agreed that "a regional tsunami early warning centre" should be set up for the benefit of the countries along the Indian Ocean rim and those in South-East Asia.

In a declaration, the heads of state or government and special envoys of nearly 40 countries and international organisations decided to "request the United Nations to mobilise the international community to support the national relief emergency programmes in the affected countries."

Special representative

The U.N. Secretary General, Kofi Annan's "flash appeal" for a new initiative worth about \$1 billion was welcomed.

The U.N. was also requested to appoint a special representative to cope with the present challenges and convene an "international pledging conference."

The U.N. should explore the establishment of a "standby arrangement" at the global level to meet tsunami challenges, the leaders said.

While the issues of debt moratorium or even forgiveness and assistance by international financial institutions and others were discussed by the assembled "community of grief" the overall mood was one of shared sentiments, diplomats and officials noted.

**Natwar holds talks with
Wen Jiabao: Page 13
U.N. launches relief
effort: Page 16**

দীক্ষিতের পরে 'ট্র্যাক-টু'র দায়িত্বে মেনন

জয়ন্ত ঘোষাল ● নয়াদিল্লি

১৪ জানুয়ারি: ইসলামাবাদে পাক প্রেসিডেন্ট পারভেজ মুশারফের সঙ্গে নিয়মিতই গফ্ব খেলেন তিনি। আগে ছিলেন চিনে ভারতের রাষ্ট্রদূত, তাই বেজিংয়ের সঙ্গেও তাঁর ঘনিষ্ঠ সম্পর্ক। পাকিস্তান আর চিন, দুই গুরুত্বপূর্ণ প্রতিবেশীর সঙ্গেই সম্পর্ক মসৃণ করার কাজ সামলাতে পারেন তিনি।

এ হেন শিবশঙ্কর মেননকেই ভারতের হয়ে কাশ্মীর-সূত্র খোঁজার দায়িত্ব দিচ্ছেন মনমোহন সিংহ। জাতীয় নিরাপত্তা উপদেষ্টা জে এন দীক্ষিতের আকস্মিক মৃত্যুর পরে পাকিস্তানে ভারতের রাষ্ট্রদূত মেননের উপরেই ভার পড়ছে পাকিস্তানের সঙ্গে দ্বিপাক্ষিক আলোচনা এগিয়ে নিয়ে যাওয়ার। ঢাকায় সার্ক সম্মেলনের আগেই পাকিস্তানের নিরাপত্তা উপদেষ্টা তারিক আজিজ এবং প্রেসিডেন্ট মুশারফের সঙ্গে কথা বলবেন মেনন।

প্রশাসনের নানা স্তরে দ্বিপাক্ষিক আলোচনার পাশাপাশি তারিক আজিজের সঙ্গে কথা বলে নীরবে কাশ্মীর-সূত্র খোঁজার চেষ্টা চালাচ্ছিলেন দীক্ষিত। কূটনৈতিক পরিভাষায় যাকে বলা হচ্ছে 'ট্র্যাক-টু ডিপ্লোমাসি'।

দীক্ষিতের মৃত্যুতে উদ্বিগ্ন তারিক দিল্লি ছুটে এসে প্রধানমন্ত্রী ও বিদেশমন্ত্রীর সঙ্গে দেখা করে গিয়েছেন। মনমোহনের সঙ্গে তাঁর আলোচনায় স্থির হয়েছে, আপাতত মেননই হবেন প্রধানমন্ত্রীর স্বীকৃত দূত। ১০ জানুয়ারি এক দিনের দিল্লি সফরে দীক্ষিতের বাড়ি গিয়ে তাঁর স্ত্রীকে সমবেদনা জানিয়েছেন তারিক।

অভ্যন্তরীণ নিরাপত্তায় প্রধান উপদেষ্টা এম কে নারায়ণন আপাতত



দীক্ষিতের দায়িত্বও সামলাচ্ছেন। কিন্তু নারায়ণনকে যে পাকিস্তানের সঙ্গে দ্বিপাক্ষিক আলোচনার দায়িত্ব দেওয়া হচ্ছে না, সেটা মনমোহনের সিদ্ধান্ত থেকেই স্পষ্ট হয়ে গিয়েছে। তারিকের ঝটিকা সফরে নারায়ণনের সঙ্গে তাঁর কথা হয়নি।

প্রাক্তন গোয়েন্দা প্রধান নারায়ণন আজীবন নেপথ্যে থেকেছেন, আজও তেমনই থাকতে চান।

পাক প্রেসিডেন্টের সঙ্গে যেমন 'বন্ধুত্বপূর্ণ' সম্পর্ক, তেমনই চিনের সঙ্গেও শিবশঙ্কর মেননের সম্পর্ক ভাল। চিন-পাকিস্তান সম্পর্কের পাশাপাশি ভারতও চিনের সঙ্গে সম্পর্ক আরও মজবুত করতে আগ্রহী। এই কাজে মেননই গুরুত্বপূর্ণ ভূমিকা পালন

করছেন। ঢাকায় সার্কের অবসরে পাক প্রধানমন্ত্রী শওকত আজিজের সঙ্গে মনমোহনের বৈঠক হবে। মুশারফের সঙ্গেও কথা বলে মেনন ভারত-পাক দ্বিপাক্ষিক আলোচনার নীল নকশা তৈরি করবেন। বিদেশমন্ত্রী নটবর সিংহের ইসলামাবাদ যাওয়ার কথা ১৫ ফেব্রুয়ারি। কিন্তু মনমোহন চান, ঢাকার আগেই কাশ্মীর-সূত্র নিয়ে মেনন কথা শুরু করে দিন।

ইউ পি এ সরকার আসার পরেই বিদেশমন্ত্রী নটবর সিংহ পাকিস্তান সম্পর্কে যথেষ্ট কঠোর মনোভাব নেন। বাজপেয়ী জমানার শেষ দিকে কাশ্মীর-সূত্র বার করতে যে তৎপরতা চলছিল, নটবর আসার পরে তা অনেকটাই টিলে হয়ে যায়। প্রাক্তন প্রধানমন্ত্রী বাজপেয়ীকে ফোন করে পরিস্থিতি স্বাভাবিক করার আর্জি জানান উদ্বিগ্ন মুশারফ। আলোচনা আবার শুরু করতে পাকিস্তান নানা ভাবে ভারতকে চাপ

এর পর সাতের পাতায়

ট্র্যাক-টু'র দায়িত্বে

প্রথম পাতার পর

দিতে থাকে। তখনই মনমোহনের নেতৃত্বে মন্ত্রিসভার নিরাপত্তা বিষয়ক কমিটি সিদ্ধান্ত নেয়, বিদেশসচিব পর্যায়ের আনুষ্ঠানিক আলোচনা চলবে। ভারত কখনওই এই বার্তা দেবে না, যাতে মনে হয় আলোচনার প্রক্রিয়াই বন্ধ করে দেওয়া হচ্ছে। কিন্তু প্রকৃত কাশ্মীর-সূত্র খোঁজার জন্য আলোচনা হবে প্রধানমন্ত্রীর চিহ্নিত রাজনৈতিক দূতের সঙ্গে।

বাজপেয়ীর সময়ে নিরাপত্তা উপদেষ্টা ব্রজেশ মিশ্র তারিক আজিজের সঙ্গে 'গোপনে' এই আলোচনা শুরু করেছিলেন। সেই উদাহরণ অনুসরণ করে পাকিস্তানের সঙ্গে ফের সমাধানসূত্র খুঁজতে বসার জন্য আমেরিকাও ভারতকে চাপ দেয়। মনমোহন তখন সেই দায়িত্ব দেন দীক্ষিতকে। সেপ্টেম্বরে দীক্ষিত-তারিক প্রথম বৈঠক হয়। বেশি হইচই হয়ে

যাওয়ায় অমৃতসরে পরবর্তী বৈঠকের পরিকল্পনা বাতিল হয়। এই নিয়ে আরও আলোচনা চলতে চলতেই দীক্ষিত মারা গিয়েছেন।

দীক্ষিতের জায়গায় কে আসবেন, তা নিয়ে এখনও জলঘোলা হচ্ছে। আমেরিকায় ভারতের রাষ্ট্রদূত রণেন সেনকে এই দায়িত্ব দেওয়ার প্রস্তাব আছে। কিন্তু রণেনের বর্তমান দায়িত্ব অত্যন্ত গুরুত্বপূর্ণ। বৃশ-ব্রহ্মারের কূটনীতি তাঁর কাছে অত্যন্ত পরিচিত বিষয়। তাঁকে সরিয়ে আনলে সেই কাজের জন্য আবার যোগ্য লোক দরকার। এখন অভ্যন্তরীণ ও বহির্বিষয়ের নিরাপত্তা পরস্পরের পরিপূরক। সে জন্য কেউ কেউ নারায়ণনকে দিয়েই কাজ চালাতে চান। এই অবস্থায় উদ্বিগ্ন পাকিস্তান জানতে চেয়েছিল, কাশ্মীর-সূত্র নিয়ে তারা গোপন আলোচনা করবে কার সঙ্গে। মেননের কথাই বলেছেন মনমোহন।

Boeing and the F-16

INDIA is among a handful of democracies that believe in total consensus and continuity in foreign policy which rarely dominates our electoral rhetoric. With the one prominent exception of Indira Gandhi exploiting the Morarji government's covert diplomacy with Israel (topped by Moshe Dayan's secret, but not-so-secret visit to India), rarely has somebody been able to exploit a foreign policy issue for partisan advantage.

This has obvious advantages. The rest of the world never has to live in any uncertainty in its dealings with us. Even the Pakistanis, who had many apprehensions when the NDA government lost, now acknowledge that the dialogue has carried on seamlessly. The non-partisan nature of the process also gives our policy-maker a great deal of elbow room. Parliamentary debates on foreign policy are so pedestrian, so unquestioning and so naam-ke-vaaste. In fact, if you study the debates closely, the Opposition questioning is mostly confined to whether a particular move amounts to a shift from the holy consensus or not.

But like all arrangements of great comfort, continuity and stability, we have to pay a price for this, and the price is not just boredom. It keeps us trapped in formulations of the past. It makes any kind of fleet-footedness difficult, tempting the policy-maker to avoid changing the inherited script or, in the event that he does dare, to do so behind the back of the system.

IN the past two decades we have seen three such major shifts. First, Rajiv Gandhi's approach to China, forgetting 1962 and a policy ossified over a quarter of a century. That new policy, of putting the border issue and the bitterness of war on the backburner and moving ahead with normalisation, is one of the greatest legacies of Rajiv's five years. The second was Narasimha Rao's calibrated westward-tilt in the wake of the eastern bloc decline. This was a seminal shift too because an essential feature of this was to drop all hypocrisy on the Middle East and upgrade our relations with Israel. Central to this shift was the belief that India could not integrate itself with the new emerging global economy without aligning its foreign policy with changing times. The third, of course, was a series of shifts under the Vajpayee government, starting with the nuclear tests and then leading on to an unabashed strategic partnership with the US.

While you could argue with

NATIONAL INTEREST



India's foreign policy challenge: dump the mindset of a lobbying nation and celebrate its status as a buying power

■ SHEKHAR GUPTA

much of the business of high strategy and diplomacy anyway, each one of these shifts was made entirely behind the back of Parliament, media and the political system. Each one entered our public discourse after the decisions had been implemented. Each one also involved a great deal of discretion

and demands and appeals for the UN Security Council membership, made even more comical by the argument on whether we will accept it with or without the veto, are a part of the same disease. It must be acknowledged, though, that it was the NDA that started this ridiculous "satyagraha" first to tumul-

The past two decades have seen three major shifts. First, Rajiv's approach to China, forgetting 1962. The second was Rao's westward-tilt in the wake of the eastern bloc decline. The third was a series of shifts under Vajpayee, starting with the nuclear tests and then to an unabashed strategic partnership with the US

and silence on the part of the main players. You might say it is to the credit of our political system that these changes were not only accepted but also carried forward energetically by the successors. But it is a far from satisfactory arrangement in a world changing so rapidly. If you do a little research on the foreign policy discourse around the world, at least among the ten or so key nations, you

would find almost nobody referring to any past formulations, because they are now irrelevant, they had never anticipated the kind of world we have today.

PLEASE do a search on the press coverage of all visits by foreign dignitaries in the last year or so, and you will find some headline in each case saying he/she supports India's case for the perma-

India's leverage today should be seen not so much in terms of whether it can deny the F-16 sale to Pakistan as in whether it chooses to buy from Boeing or Airbus the 50-odd aircraft even its state-owned carriers will need in the next few years. That is real leverage. India has to raise itself in its own eyes and then embrace a new worldview

nent membership. Any Indian dignitary or parliamentary delegation that goes abroad has to mouth the same demand, de rigeur. It is as if all the respect and stature we have achieved in the world since Silicon Valley discovered the Indian hand there is of no use until we get this very Cold War acknowledgement. We know nobody will give us such a

distinction just because we go on shouting the slogan, hamaari maangein poori karo, trade union style, around the world. But we are now caught in this trap. Even my indiscretion in questioning this emotion, my underlying argument that nobody gives you something, least of all a Security Council veto, just because you demand it, that these privileges come when you become so powerful nobody can deny these to you, will bring me a flurry of angry letters. That is why I must stick my neck out now to underline the next trap of a similar nature we are about to walk into.

This is the F-16 trap. The Americans are talking of resuming supplies to Pakistan and the next foreign policy slogan could be to oppose that, as if all the gains in the India-US relationship over the past five years were now to pass the F-16 test. Already, all American visitors, from Brownback to Blackwill, are being asked the same question. Soon enough our politicians, diplomats and certainly a lot of the pundits — particularly those who lived through the first F-16 phase in the eighties — will jump on the bandwagon. We can by no means look the other way if anybody hands over force multipliers to Pakistan or disturbs the military balance. But this is the India of 2005, a nuclearised subcontinent, and the introduction of no single tactical weapon system is going to alter the balance. India's leverage today should be seen not so much in terms of whether it can lobby in Washington to deny — or delay — the F-16 sale to Pakistan as in whether it chooses to buy from Boeing or Airbus the 50-odd aircraft even its state-owned carriers will need in the next few years. That is real leverage, and that is the reward of 20 years of robust economic growth and political stability. India has to raise itself in its own eyes and then embrace a new worldview. The great foreign policy challenge for India at this moment is to finally dump the old mindset of a lobbying nation and celebrate its new status as a buying power. Then the world would look different. Also, more welcoming and comfortable.

So, here is the greatest peril a consensual, doctrinaire foreign policy, driven by history rather than the future brings. We can get so trapped in continuity as to miss the great moments of turn and change. This is one of those moments. How we handle our evolving relationship with the US under Bush II would determine whether we emerge as a major buying power, or go back to being another lobbying Third World state.

Write to sg@expressindia.com

Looking East

57-6
18/1

Energy diplomacy bears fruit

From
2005

Delhi's "look East" policy is beginning to bear fruit with an agreement, in principle, for a pipeline from gas-rich Myanmar routed through Bangladesh to Kolkata. The deal is beneficial for all concerned. Gas is Yangon's principal export earner, and the advantage to it is obvious. Dhaka gets \$125 million annually in transit and management fees; besides, it gains the infrastructure, free of cost, to transport its own fuel from gas-producing regions in the east to consuming areas in the west of the country. As a deal sweetener, it is also likely to get transit rights for its own commodities through India to Nepal and Bhutan. India is short of gas, needing 120 million cubic meters daily but producing only 74 million cubic meters. Demand is expected to go up to 284 million cubic meters by 2010. A pipeline would be the cheapest means to ferry gas from Myanmar, in whose fields ONGC Videsh and GAIL hold stakes, to eastern India. Surplus gas could be piped from Tripura's ONGC fields, where gas production is capped at present, to Bengal and Bihar. In addition to the \$40 billion deal that Delhi entered into with Teheran for the supply of liquefied natural gas, the pipeline will go some way towards meeting India's projected energy demand.

It is this interdependence that countries in Europe and Southeast Asia enter into, which has brought these regions prosperity and diplomatic stability. Delhi has long neglected its eastern neighbours as well as its own eastern regions, while Dhaka has been a difficult customer. That is why the east remains poor, the north-east turbulent, while relations with Dhaka and Yangon are rocky. Smoothing relations with Yangon has helped - help is promised in flushing out north-eastern rebels, the gas pipeline deal is in the works and Delhi can hope to counter Beijing's influence on Yangon, a matter of strategic value. The pipeline has also persuaded Dhaka to agree, for the first time in 30 years, as the petroleum minister points out, on transport of commodities through its territory. One of Dhaka's complaints against Delhi has been the trade deficit Bangladesh incurs. Once the benefits of the gas pipeline start to flow and Dhaka overcomes its distrust of Delhi, it can be encouraged to address this deficit through gas exports — all it needs to do is add its own gas to the pipeline. It can also allow transit of other commodities to the north-east, which will be another mutually beneficial deal.

মহড়ার জন্য ইজরায়েল থেকে আসছে এফ-১৬, ফ্লুক বামেরা

সৌভদ্র চট্টোপাধ্যায় • নয়াদিল্লি

২১ জানুয়ারি: এফ-১৬ কুটনীতিতে নয়াদিল্লির নতুন সঙ্গী হচ্ছে ইজরায়েল।

এ বছরের মাঝামাঝি ইজরায়েলের সঙ্গে যৌথ বিমান অনুশীলনে নামছে ভারত। তাতে থাকছে ইজরায়েলি বিমানবাহিনীর এফ-১৬। পাকিস্তানকে যখন আমেরিকা অত্যাধুনিক ফল্ট্রট-১৬ যুদ্ধবিমান দিতে চায়, তখন ভারত ও ইজরায়েলের সমঝোতাকে তাৎপর্যপূর্ণ বলে মনে করছেন বিমানবাহিনীর কর্তারা। কারণ, পাকিস্তানের তীব্র আপত্তির ফলেই ভারত বারবার চেয়েও আমেরিকার এফ-১৬-র সঙ্গে মহড়া দিতে পারেনি। এখন মার্কিন-মিত্র ইজরায়েলের মাধ্যমে ঘুরপথে সাধ পূরণ করতে চাইছে নয়াদিল্লি। বিশ্বের অন্যতম সেরা যুদ্ধবিমানের বিরুদ্ধে লড়াইতে কেমন লাগে, তার একটা আন্দাজ এ বারই প্রথম পাবে এ দেশের বিমানবাহিনী।

তবে মনমোহন সিংহ সরকারের এই কৌশলগত সিদ্ধান্ত নিয়ে প্রবল

আপত্তি রয়েছে বামপন্থীদের। সিপিআই নেতা ডি রাজার বক্তব্য, “এই সব করে প্যালেস্টাইনের কাছে কী সংকেত পাঠানো হচ্ছে?”

বাজপেয়ী সরকারের আমলে ইজরায়েলের সঙ্গে প্রতিরক্ষা সহযোগিতার দরজা খুলে দেওয়া হয়েছিল। ইউপিএ সরকার ক্ষমতায় আসার পরে প্রতিরক্ষামন্ত্রী প্রণব মুখোপাধ্যায় তাঁর প্রথম সাংবাদিক বৈঠকেই জানিয়েছিলেন, এই সহযোগিতা চলবে। যদিও ইজরায়েলের সঙ্গে সমস্ত প্রতিরক্ষা সহযোগিতা বন্ধ করতে প্রধানমন্ত্রীর কাছে দাবি জানিয়েছিলেন বামপন্থীরা।

মাসখানেক আগে প্রতিরক্ষাসচিব অজয়বিক্রম সিংহ ইজরায়েল গিয়েছিলেন। তখনই ঠিক হয়, ২০০৫-এর মাঝামাঝি দুই দেশ যৌথ বিমান মহড়া চালাবে। সেখানে ভারতের সেরা অস্ত্র সুখোই সু-৩০ এম কে আই থাকবে। ইজরায়েল আনবে তাদের এফ-১৬। এই যুদ্ধবিমান আমেরিকার থেকেই পেয়েছে ইজরায়েল। ভারতের সঙ্গে অনুশীলনের চুক্তিতে তাই বুশ

প্রশাসনের সম্মতি আছে বলেই মনে করা হচ্ছে। আগামী মাসে বাঙ্গালোরে ‘এরো ইন্ডিয়া ২০০৫’ প্রদর্শনীতে অংশগ্রহণকারী মার্কিন সংস্থাগুলি ফল্ট্রট বিমান নিয়ে আসবে বলে প্রাথমিক ভাবে জানিয়েছে। তবে সেটা হবে নিছকই একক প্রদর্শনী উড়ান।

আমেরিকার কাছ থেকে পাকিস্তান যে এই প্রথম এফ-১৬ পাচ্ছে এমন নয়। তাদের প্রাথমিক ভাবে ৪০টি এফ-১৬ দিয়েছিল পেটাগন। তার মধ্যে এখন মূশারফ প্রশাসনের হাতে আছে ৩০-৩২টির মতো যুদ্ধবিমান। কিন্তু এই বিমানগুলি থেকে পরমাণু অস্ত্র ফেলার সুযোগ ছিল না। পাকিস্তান যে নতুন এফ-১৬ পেতে যাচ্ছে, তার থেকে আকাশ থেকে আকাশ এবং আকাশ থেকে মাটিতে ছোড়া যায় এমন পরমাণু ক্ষেপণাস্ত্র বহন করা যাবে। ফলে ভারতীয় বিমান বাহিনীর যে বাড়তি সুবিধা ছিল, তা অনেকটাই খর্ব হয়ে যেতে পারে। আর সেটাই নয়াদিল্লির উদ্বেগের কারণ। প্রতিরক্ষা মন্ত্রকের খবর, পাকিস্তান পেটাগনের কাছে আরও ৭১টি এফ-১৬ চেয়েছে।

China not a rival, says Natwar

PRANAY SHARMA

New Delhi, Jan. 27: Foreign minister K. Natwar Singh today made it clear that India does not see China as a rival or wants to "counter-balance" Beijing's influence in East Asia by playing a more meaningful role in the region.

"There are many who look at India-China relations with the old mindset of 'balance of power' or 'conflict of interests' and see East Asia as a theatre of competition between these two countries," he said.

"Such theories are losing relevance in today's dynamics of Asia's quest for peace and prosperity."

The comment was in sharp contrast with the "potential

threat No. 1" label slapped on China by George Fernandes when he was defence minister during the NDA regime.

Singh was delivering the inaugural lecture at the seventh Asian Security Conference organised by the Institute of Defence Studies and Analysis on Changing Security Dynamics in Eastern Asia.

The minister's observations gather significance as they come within days of the first strategic dialogue between India and China held here.

Moreover, Chinese Premier Wen Jiabao is due to visit India in March-end. The trip is being seen as a major event that can contribute significantly to the upswing in rela-

tions between the two Asian giants.

However, sceptics both within the region and outside have often raised doubts over growing ties between the two sides that used to be rivals. Singh's remarks appear to be addressed at both the sceptics as well as the leadership in Beijing.

The minister pointed out that developments in East Asia were of "direct consequence" to India's security and development. "We are, therefore, actively engaged in creating a bond of friendship and cooperation with East Asia that has a strong economic foundation and a cooperative paradigm of positive inter-connectedness of securi-

ty interests," he said.

Singh pointed out that India and China are engaged in the expansion of the commonalities while pro-actively addressing differences, including the question of boundary. "Despite the differences, our 3,400-km-long border with China has largely remained tranquil over the last 25 years. This is by no means a minor achievement and should be enough to silence those who look at India-China relations only from an adverse prism," the minister said. "It is for everyone to see that we have not allowed our differences to hold development in our relations across an impressive range of areas."

Singh underlined the "in-

creasingly greater realisation" that there is enough space and opportunity in the region for both India and China to prosper. "We are not just passively embedded in our region bound by our common neighbourhood, but are constantly interacting through endeavours which have brought huge dividends to both."

He pointed out that trade between the two sides — worth a few million till some years ago — has now crossed \$13 billion.

"We are mindful of the overarching importance of a peaceful surrounding environment for us to pursue our most fundamental task of national development."

28 JAN 2005

THE TELEGRAPH

As Left attacks UPA policies, Basu advises

tolerance

Kolkata: Close on the heels of an attack by Left parties on the economic policies of the UPA government, Marxist veteran Jyoti Basu on Friday said



tolerance and mutual understanding on the part of both the Congress and the left groupings were essential for the smooth sailing of the government at the Centre.

Basu was speaking at a special convocation of the Institute of Advanced Studies in Education, which conferred on him special honours for his 'remarkable achievement in long political career'.

Stating that he and his party CPM were strongly in favour of ensuring full five-year term of the UPA government, Basu said that it had been agreed that the Left parties had the right to openly criticise the government in and outside Parliament and take recourse to movements if there was disagreement in the joint committees of Congress-led government and them (Left parties). "But we desire that the coalition government at the Centre continues for five years in the interest of secularism and for strengthening our noble objective of unity in diversity and following an independent foreign policy not subservient to the USA", he said.

The veteran Marxist said that the Left parties were now providing support to a Congress-led government for strengthening the secular fabric of the nation as well as ensuring its overall development. ^{PTI}

Powershift: MEA regaining control of foreign policy

By Indrani Bagchi/TNN

New Delhi: At an IDSA security conference on Thursday, foreign minister Natwar Singh took time out for a special meeting with Vijay Nambiar, one of MEA's crack former diplomats. "The suspense will be over soon," he said, referring to reports that Nambiar might become special envoy to China. Nambiar is slated to take over the job while SK Lambah is reportedly in the running for special envoy to Pakistan.

The incident is significant in one re-

spect: That after several years of being browbeaten into playing second fiddle to national security adviser, MK Narayanan had renewed con-

tact with Tariq Aziz, Pervez Musharraf's special adviser and the Pakistani counterpart for back-channel talks with India. The negotiations have been hit hard by the sudden death of JN Dixit and Pakistani officials have been quoted as saying that his shoes might be too big to fill.



Vijay Nambiar

The tussle for the foreign poli-

cy space in elite policy circles remains keen between MEA and PMO. The government's structure as it has evolved over the past few years leaves the Prime Minister as the last stamp of authority, giving rise to a structure that could bypass the bureaucracy of the foreign office. In that respect, both Brajesh Mishra, NSA under Atal Bihari Vajpayee, and JN Dixit being one-man foreign policy armies, power automatically flowed in that direction, often at the cost of the MEA, and sometimes with serious consequences for the policy.

The MEA, even when there was no NSA, has found itself relegated to the foreign policy margins under foreign policy strong PMs like Narasimha Rao and I K Gujral.

For instance, the very significant deletion of the word "terrorism" in the joint statement between Musharraf and Manmohan in New York left the foreign office fuming — it's a fundamental line in any MEA document on Pakistan. The "oversight" was because the PMO decided to handle the matter itself, leaving MEA out in the cold.

Iraq vote forces rethink in Delhi

By Indrani Bagchi/TNN

New Delhi: The stunning turnout in the Iraq polls has forced the UPA government to revisit its Iraq policy and prepare for an early re-engagement with the new authority in Baghdad.

"The Americans have pulled it off, first in Afghanistan and now in Iraq," said a senior foreign ministry functionary with grudging admiration, while acknowledging that India will have to recalibrate its stance towards Iraq.

While the government here is in the "wait and watch" mode, it is being recognised that neither the UN nor the European Union or even Iraq's neighbours will be able to ignore the fact of record participation of Iraqis in the US-secured polls which has put a stamp of legitimacy on the exercise. "We cannot refuse to reach out to Baghdad once the UN and the Europeans come on board."

While the government faces a challenge in persuading the Left parties—which had called for continuing the boycott of Iraq until after the US had left—and getting around the parliamentary resolution for a close embrace, the first steps on a more realistic road have

already been taken. The ministry of external affairs dashed off a welcoming statement on the elections. "The holding of elections is a noteworthy development. We hope that these events will set in motion a process that will lead the Iraqi people to taking full control of their destiny."

India is also looking to send back an ambassador to Baghdad in place of B B Tyagi who returned a couple of months ago. But until then, the newly appointed special envoy to the Middle East, Chinmaya Gharekhan, will set off to gather a realistic appraisal of the region and the fallout the elections might have in Iraq's neighbourhood.

The process will gather momentum if the US is able to nudge the Middle East peace process. The first meeting of the quartet—the US, the EU, the UN and Russia—is slated for March 1, and any forward movement will help the government bring around the Left and forge a consensus on calling off the hands-off posture towards Iraq. The Left ignored the turnout, with CPI leader A B Bardhan doubting the figures and calling for continuing the resistance.

► **India for role in reconstruction, Page 7**



Saarc meet called off

India pulls out citing Nepal, Bangla chaos

HT Correspondent
New Delhi, February 2

INDIA TODAY showed its displeasure with King Gyanendra's royal coup by opting out of the February 6-7 Saarc summit in Dhaka, thus putting the meet off for a second time after a tsunami-induced delay.

New Delhi cited as reasons for the pullout the political developments in Nepal and the deteriorating security situation in Bangladesh, which has been rocked by political murders and violent protests.

It prompted a furious reaction from Dhaka, which said India's reasons were "unacceptable and (have been) rejected outright. We are shocked and dismayed at the unwarranted and unexpected decision of the government of India," a Bangladesh foreign ministry statement said.

Prime Minister Manmohan Singh's decision not to attend the summit — which came after consultations with Opposition leaders A.B. Vajpayee and L.K. Advani — means it has to be put off. Under the Saarc charter, a summit can take place only if all heads of state or government of the seven member countries participate.

Foreign secretary Shyam Saran denied that the Indian move was a result of New Delhi's strained ties with Dhaka. "It is not directed against this or that country. This decision has been taken against the background of recent developments in our neighbourhood which have caused us grave concern," he told reporters. "The developments in Nepal as well as the continuing and deteriorating security situation in Bangladesh — these are the two key factors."

Saran said the decision was based on an on-the-ground assessment of the security situation by a high-level security team that is currently in Dhaka. He said there had been

three bomb blasts in Dhaka on Tuesday, including in the high-security zone around the Sheraton Hotel where the Saarc leaders were to stay. He cited the death of former finance minister and Opposition lawmaker S.A.M.S. Kibria in a grenade attack on a political rally a few days ago.

Although the brief three-paragraph statement made no reference to King Gyanendra sacking the Nepal government and imposing Emergency, Saran said that, too, was behind the Indian government's decision.

Was India not attending because the Prime Minister did not want to share the same platform with King Gyanendra, he was asked.

"What we have said has nothing to do with personalities. What we are speaking about is a serious situation that has developed in Nepal," the bureaucrat replied.

"Even as I speak there is no communication (between New Delhi and Kathmandu). I don't think our decision should be seen in the context of our willingness or non-willingness to share the stage."

India's move once again reflects the serious political challenges facing the regional grouping as it enters its 20th year of operation with no tangible results to show. Saarc summits have been postponed earlier, too, due to bilateral differences between member countries, especially India and Pakistan.

Pakistan indicated it was unhappy with the postponement. "Frequent postponements of the Saarc summit conference have raised doubts about the seriousness with which the agenda for regional cooperation is being pursued in South Asia," Pakistani foreign ministry spokesman Masood Khan said in a statement.

More reports on Page 2



Nepalese in India shout slogans against King Gyanendra in New Delhi on Wednesday.

Tense wait for stranded tourists

HT Correspondent
Kolkata, February 2

ABOUT 2,000 tourists from Bengal remain stranded in Nepal a day after King Gyanendra dismissed the Sher Bahadur Deuba government and proclaimed Emergency.

Though flights have resumed to and from Kathmandu, the Himalayan Kingdom remains largely cut off from the outside world with road communication uncertain and phone lines down. Which means, most low-budget travellers, who had entered Nepal on bus and rail routes via Raxaul, Biratnagar or Kakarvitta, are stranded, travel agents said.

But 15 foreigners, who were in Kathmandu on a tour organised by Cox & Kings, were flown back today to New Delhi and are expected soon in Kolkata. "These tourists, all of them from Madrid, are safe. But the situation in Nepal is still too unsafe for the tours to go ahead. We have cancelled all bookings for next week," Soumitra Ghosh of Cox & Kings said.

Hissay Lama, senior executive with SOTC Kuoni Travel, said, "Today two tourists, Debopriya Das and his wife, cancelled their trip to Nepal. Yesterday they were willing to risk it. They backed out today."

Most tour operators in Kolkata are worried. "We are unable to contact our agents there and have no idea of the fate of those who have availed our package tours. I have heard that some airlines are operating special flights to evacuate stranded tourists. We are trying to bring our customers back," a senior official with a leading travel agency told HT.

But Ghanashyam Lamshal, consul in the Royal Nepal Consulate in Kolkata, denied any attempt or need to evacuate tourists. "Flights have resumed and no tourist is stranded in Nepal," he said.

The crisis has also led to a long line of stationary Indian trucks and goods vehicles at Raxaul, Sonali, Biratnagar and Naxalbari, towns on the Indo-Nepalese border, with transporters too scared to venture in. A Bhat-tacharjee, treasurer of the West Bengal Truck Operators' Association, said truckers had been advised to stop loading goods for Nepal.

Vinod Jain, owner of Hanuman Roadways, which sends about 200 trucks and trailers into Nepal every month, said his company was planning to suspend operations. "Some trucks have been offered police escort, but most drivers are scared," Satyajit Banerjee, secretary, West Bengal Truck Operators' Association, said.

Delhi seeks tryst with Gyanendra



King Gyanendra
In demand

Keshav Pradhan
Kathmandu, February 8

THE INDIAN Prime Minister wouldn't share the dais at Saarc with him; will Nepal's king now shake hands with the Indian envoy?

All eyes are trained on a proposed meeting between King Gyanendra and ambassador Shiv Shankar Mukherjee.

An Indian embassy source said, "We're awaiting the palace's response to our request for a meeting with the king made on Monday." The same day, Mukherjee had met Nepal army chief Pyarjung Thapa at the soldier's request, despite pressure on New Delhi at home and in Nepal not to extend further military assistance to the Royal Nepalese Army, which is fiercely loyal to the king.

Some Nepalese feel that the request for a meeting with the king signifies a climb-down by New Delhi, which had frowned on Gyanendra's "coup" and cited it as a reason to skip the Saarc summit. They feel the palace might use Delhi's willing-

ness to talk in its efforts to win global recognition for the king's government. On Monday alone, Nepalese foreign minister Rameshnath Pandey met 10 EU, Asian and Australian envoys.

If he can get a meeting with the king, Mukherjee is expected to highlight the possible fallout of the "coup" in the two countries. Several mainstream political activists have already crossed into India. Besides, New Delhi has been complaining about the growing links between the Nepal Maoists and India's CPI (Maoist), Ulfa and KLO.

Some Nepalese hope that the meeting would give New Delhi a chance to make the king realise the need for re-establishment of democratic rule and close cooperation between him and the mainstream parties to resolve the Maoist crisis.

Phones ring again: Nepal ended the weeklong suspension of ISD and internet services on Monday evening, but the ban on cell phones and UTL phones is likely to continue. (See also Page 13)

Petro ministry wants to gas directly, MEA says can it

Srinjoy Chowdhury in New Delhi

Feb. 8. — A petroleum ministry proposal to lead or participate in bilateral or multilateral negotiations with Iran, Pakistan, Bangladesh and other countries regarding the setting up of transnational pipelines to import gas is before the Union Cabinet. During the inter-ministerial consultations, the external affairs ministry raised some security issues on the move.

If cleared, the petroleum ministry will take steps to hold discussions with the concerned nations, but keeping everyone informed. If the pipelines are in place, it would increase supply of cheaper gas and increase energy security.

Discussions at the diplomatic level have already been held with Iran, Myanmar and Pakistan. There are several pipelines involved. A possibility is one from Iran to India via Pakistan. The alternatives to this are: a pipeline along Pakistan's continental shelf or the very expensive deep-water pipeline. There is also the possibility of pipeline gas imports from Myanmar either through Bangladesh or skirting it.

A similar deep-water pipeline is

a very costly option as well. Some talk of petroleum-related ties with Afghanistan and Turkmenistan is also on the anvil.

There are security issues involved as Pakistan is concerned and the external affairs ministry had worried about the possible disruption of supplies. The pipeline should also be in the context of trade and economic ties with



TURF WAR

Pakistan. At one time, the petroleum ministry had said that such pipelines existed between the Soviet Union and western Europe during the Cold War.

Also, when there are strong mutual interests, these treaties tend to succeed, the ministry opined.

Also, it had suggested that an

international agency like the World Bank could be involved. The petroleum ministry believes that the arrangements involving Pakistan could be done by Iran with a multinational firm helping, if necessary.

■ The external affairs ministry believes that the Pakistan pipeline shouldn't necessarily be a stand-alone project but there should be other trade proposals between the two countries.

■ It doesn't appear very keen on a World Bank proposal nor does it want regular statements on the possibility of an energy crunch in the future.

■ There is a suggestion in certain quarters that an India-Iran bilateral deal would be easier and then Iran and Pakistan could have a separate treaty.

Also, while the petroleum ministry believes that the Iran-Pakistan-India pipeline could be linked to the gas reserves of Qatar, there is hesitation about it in other quarters.

The demand for natural gas is huge. Currently, India needs 150 MMSCMD, but availability is half that. In future, both demand and supply will go up enormously.

India won't stop military aid to Nepal

Vishal Thapar & PTI
Bangalore/Kathmandu, Feb 9

AMBITIOUS KINGS are bad but revolutionaries are worse. So thinks the Indian government, at least while carrying out foreign policy.

On a day New Delhi made its first contact with King Gyanendra since his "coup", India declared it would continue to provide military assistance to Nepal despite having serious reservations about the suspension of democracy in the kingdom.

Defence minister Pranab Mukherjee explained the Indian stand at a Bangalore air show shortly before Gyanendra received Indian ambassador Shiv Shankar Mukherjee and discussed with him the political situation in the kingdom. New Delhi has a big stake in the stability of Nepal, the minister said, for a spillover of the Maoist violence could jeopardise India's security.

After Gyanendra's takeover, this was the first clear statement from New Delhi that it would not do anything that could destabilise the Nepalese monarchy. This means that while India would join the Nepalese parties and the Maoists in condemning the "coup", it would help the king's army battle the Maoist guerrillas.

Besides, S.S. Mukherjee's meeting with Gyanendra would help the king in his efforts to win global recognition for his new government. Till now, the envoys of only two countries — the US and Britain, which, along with India, were supporting the government in its fight against Maoist rebels — had met the king after he assumed all executive power.

"India's relationship with Nepal is of a very special nature," the defence minister told a press conference at the Aero-In-



If the security situation in Nepal deteriorates, it will in turn heighten our own security threat. Our response is based on this

Pranab Mukherjee

dia Show, 2005. "It is a long-standing relationship. We do recognise that if the security situation in Nepal deteriorates as a consequence of enhancement of Maoist influence, it will in turn heighten our own security threat. Our response is based on all these aspects."

Pranab Mukherjee hinted at "close links" between the Nepalese Maoists and Left extremists in India, which has an open border with Nepal. He revealed the Nepalese military was anxious for Indian assistance to continue.

After the King assumed power, the chief of the Royal Nepal Army sent a communiqué to his Indian counterpart, seeking a reiteration of the special military relationship. "This (relationship) will continue," the defence minister said.

The Nepalese army is heavily dependent on Indian military aid. **Related report on Page 13**

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FUELLING PEACE J.F. P... 10-10

THE MANMOHAN SINGH Government's decision to examine favourably the possibility of transporting Iranian natural gas to India via a pipeline traversing Pakistani territory represents the welcome triumph of sound economics over dubious diplomacy. Ever since Islamabad first mooted the pipeline as a stand-alone project, the Indian side — and particularly the bureaucratic arm of the Ministry of External Affairs — has tended to be overly suspicious. Although the proposal had obvious economic benefits for India, the question that preoccupied South Block mandarins was why the Pakistanis were willing to make an exception to their own stand that there could be no movement in economic relations unless there was matching progress in resolving the 'core issue' of Jammu and Kashmir. When the Vajpayee Government was in office, this line of reasoning produced two responses, both negative. First, if India went ahead, Pakistan would use the estimated \$ 600-800 million in transit fees to shore up its 'near bankrupt' economy and finance terrorism against India. Secondly, Pakistan would hold India's energy security to ransom by shutting down the pipeline at will. The United Progressive Alliance Government did soften India's approach by downplaying the concerns about transit fees and security but introduced a new caveat. While the joint statement issued by Prime Minister Manmohan Singh and General Pervez Musharraf in September 2004 brought the Iran pipeline on to the bilateral menu, New Delhi subsequently tied the project to the question of reverse transit rights for Indian goods through Pakistan to Afghanistan and Iran.

As matters stand, the insistence on linking the pipeline to reciprocal economic concessions has been set aside. This shift, combined with the innovative idea of India signing an agreement with Iran for the delivery of gas at the Indian border with Pakistan, means a path has been

cleared for Teheran to start negotiating the issue of transit fees and security directly with Islamabad. Petroleum and Natural Gas Minister Mani Shankar Aiyar, who is dynamically and in a well-strategised way spearheading India's pipeline diplomacy, hopes to clinch a preliminary deal with Iran in June. To be sure, subsequent negotiations will not be easy. Security remains a major concern, with the Pakistani authorities unable to secure their own domestic supplies from Sui in Baluchistan. The three countries will also need to put their heads together to devise innovative risk-mitigating financial instruments. However, given goodwill and patience all round, there is no reason why an agreement that satisfies India's security concerns and Pakistan's quest for transit fees cannot be reached.

At a time when it is not clear how soon the composite dialogue process will start yielding tangible results, the Pakistan-India pipeline is sure to keep the bilateral relationship ticking along. Similarly, on India's eastern borders, the proposed gas pipeline from Myanmar to West Bengal via Bangladesh opens up the possibility of a wider set of trans-border economic exchanges that can help transform the Northeastern region of India. Energy is one aspect, but road and rail linkages can be another catalyst for the speedy integration of South Asia. That is why India need not look askance at the Bangladeshi attempt to link the Myanmar pipeline issue to better transit facilities to and from Nepal, and to Indian cooperation in the event of Bangladesh seeking to buy hydroelectric power from Bhutan. New Delhi, too, has transit issues with Dhaka, with its longstanding demand for the right to trans-ship Indian products from West Bengal to the Seven Sisters of the Northeast still pending. Once the gas starts flowing and India starts paying transit revenues, Dhaka — and even Islamabad — might be inclined to show greater flexibility on the question of transit rights.

Delhi talks tough with Kathmandu

Press Trust of India
New Delhi, February 14

SEEKING EARLY restoration of multi-party democracy in Nepal, India on Monday said its military aid to the Himalayan Kingdom is under "constant review".

However, it ruled out any intervention to "impose" democracy in Nepal and noted that New Delhi will have to deal with the government that is in power there.

External affairs minister K. Natwar Singh met Nepalese Ambassador to India Karna Dhoj Adhikari and sought immediate restoration of multi-party democracy and freedom of the media and steps for the release of political leaders, journalists and human rights activists. He also stressed that efforts should be made in Nepal to evolve a national consensus to address the problems faced by the country.

"The issue of defence supplies is constantly under review," foreign secretary Shyam Saran said in an interactive session after delivering a lecture on 'India and its neighbourhood' here.

In a stern message to King Gyanendra, who seized power on February 1, by ousting the government of Sher Bahadur Deuba, Saran said, "Detraction from and abandoning democracy cannot be an answer to economic or political challenges that Nepal faces. We are trying to put across this point to the Monarchy and political parties there."

The minister emphasized that India wishes to see a stable, peaceful and prosperous Nepal in its neighbourhood, External Affairs Ministry spokesman Navtej Sarna said in a statement.

Singh conveyed that "it would be desirable that immediate steps are taken towards the release of political leaders, journalists and human rights activists; freedom of media restored; multi-party democracy is reinstated, and efforts are made to evolve a national consensus to address the problem faced by the country."

The minister reinforced government's position spelt out in the official statement issued on February 1 following the dismissal of the multi-party government of Sher



REUTERS
Newly appointed vice-chairmen of the Council of Ministers, Dr Tulshi Giri and Kirtinidhi Bisht (left), take the oath at the Narayanhiti Palace on Monday.

Bahadur Deuba and assumption of executive powers by King Gyanendra.

Seeking early restoration of multi-party democracy, the foreign secretary said, "It is very essential."

To a question, he said it is not for India but for the people of Nepal to decide which kind of democracy they want. "The Constitution of Nepal, which has been adopted by consensus, talks of Constitutional monarchy and multi-party democracy being the two pillars of democracy," he said.

United front to restore democracy

REPRESENTATIVES OF six Nepalese political parties, coming together for the first time since the 'royal takeover', announced on Monday the formation of a united front to restore democracy in the Himalayan kingdom. They appealed to India and other concerned countries to stop all military assistance to King Gyanendra. Declining to answer questions on the ultimate fate of the monarchy, leaders of the Nepali Congress, Nepali Congress-D Nepali Communist Party, NCP United, NCP-Masal and NSP-A accused the King of "murdering democracy along with the Constitution of Nepal".

HTC, New Delhi

HT
15 FEB 2005

Strategic paradigm shift

India should use arms purchases from the US not only to diversify sourcing but also to climb to the next level of strategic cooperation with the superpower, advocates K Subrahmanyam

IN THE 1960s, India was compelled to start purchasing Soviet defence equipment, for a combination of strategic reasons and non-availability of western alternatives. Starting with the MiG-21 aircraft in 1962, it expanded to surface-to-air missiles SA-2, supply dropping aircraft (AN-12), helicopters (MI-4), 130-mm guns, light tanks PT-76, submarines and patrol vessels. By 1965, the USSR emerged as our main weapon supplier, despite opposition from the Services.

The Services, the defence bureaucracy and the foreign office initially did not trust Communist Soviet Union which they felt would ultimately side with China. The Russian language would hinder training; if India started large-scale arms purchase from USSR, western countries would stop training our Service officers. Western equipment was considered superior. Yet, as part of a larger strategic vision, the political leadership of the day was able to overcome strong popular prejudice.

The arguments that swayed the government into entering the Soviet relationship included acute paucity of foreign exchange, a long-term line of credit, acceptance of non-convertible rupees as payment, discovery that Soviet equipment was not inferior, though not as sophisticated as the western equivalent and the post-1964 disappointment with the Americans (after the Chavan-McNamara agreement) who refused to supply combat equipment for fear of offending Pakistan. The 1971 War reaffirmed the soundness of the Soviet military option. Eventually, the Services grew so comfortable with Soviet equipment that they and the civilian bureaucracy oppose change despite the compulsions of the new global situation.

In the next two decades, there will be only three centres for defence equipment: the US, European Consortium and Russia and we have to start evaluating today the merits of working with each of them. The latter two will not be able to keep up with the US in terms of equipment quality. Furthermore, as the dominant power in the foreseeable future, there would be greater



MANJUL

advantage in building a security relationship that inevitably accompanies the purchase of substantial defence equipment.

Today, the Bush administration is poised to make two important decisions that will directly impinge on our security:

- Supply of sophisticated weapons, including F-16 aircraft, to Pakistan; and
- Press for maintenance of an arms embargo on China, perceived by US policymakers in adversarial terms

We do not have to respond immediately on the second, but lack of action on the first possibility could have serious short-term consequences. In formulating our policy, we should consider the following:

It is not realistic for us to continue to boycott US military vendors and yet expect our concerns to be taken into account regarding the nature of arms supplied to Pakistan. We must build countervailing stakes as quickly as possible.

Pakistan has historically relied on the US national security lobby. Our military-to-military relationship has expanded vastly and the US was very impressed with the tsunami response. If we could raise the level to include defence equipment purchases, we can deal with Pakistan on equal

terms or better in Washington. Unlike Pakistan, or in our previous experience with Russia, we have the ability today to translate defence equipment purchases into a larger technology relationship that would cover high-end outsourcing. As a result, even in a short time span, we can foster a reverse dependency by the US.

AREFORM in defence procurement strategy is urgently needed to keep pace with change in economic equations. The Russian relationship was a product of the Cold War. Today, greater competition and wider options are available and advantageous. A false argument of reliability of supplies has been advanced to block sourcing from the US. No US president can give an assurance that Congress would not interrupt sales in the future. But we have to make a risk assessment rather than approach this in pedantic terms. After our 1998 nuclear tests, there is no probable contingency where the US could invoke sanctions against India. Secondly, if our purchases and collaborations turn substantial, the stakes for the US companies and legislators dependent on them would be too high to invoke sanctions

lightly. Third, a strategy of increasing US dependency through more sophisticated outsourcing would discourage sanctions. Fourth, a combination of licensed production, warehousing and spare parts indenting, all provided by the US law, would minimise supply interruptions.

A war fighting window is at best likely to extend to two weeks. Our planning could easily cater for such contingencies without necessarily leaving us vulnerable to pressures.

European suppliers, including France, are not likely to be very much more reliable than the US. In a situation of conflict, they would come under pressure to adopt a unified G-8 position. Their ability to deliver on other concerns, while useful, is likely to be less than that of a US administration which would have the last say on any important global issue.

The prospect of the Indian Air Force purchasing 126 aircraft offers a unique opportunity to refashion Indo-US relations. Whether we pass up the opportunity altogether, or allow it to place ourselves on par with Pakistan, or intelligently exploit it to achieve a strategic paradigm shift depends on us. The political leadership took the lead in the initiative of the '60s. Today, there is a strong case to once again re-evaluate our strategic perspective. If managed well, as in the economic field, we can play off the US, Europe and Russia against each other to our advantage.

The growing trade gap with the US is likely to lead to pressures on outsourcing. The debate over data privacy could easily assume a protectionist colouring. Our defence purchases from the US could help diffuse outsourcing pressure and perhaps even encourage its higher end through R&D collaborations.

The Indian community in the US is a potent political instrument that we have yet to fully exploit. Equipping them with a stronger case is very important. Given their socio-economic profile, they could take full advantage of a growing Indo-US security relationship to intensify their lobbying capabilities.

Rice trouble cooks for Kathmandu

PRANAY SHARMA

New Delhi, March 16: India and the US today joined hands to step up pressure on Nepal's King Gyanendra to take immediate steps to restore democracy in the country.

US secretary of state Condoleezza Rice joined foreign minister K. Natwar Singh in describing the king's February coup, when he took away all powers from the executive, as a "setback" to the goals of democracy and pluralism.

The signals follow a strong message that Delhi sent to Gyanendra through Shiv Mukherjee, the Indian ambassador to Nepal. Mukherjee, who was here three weeks ago to consult the leadership on "options" to deal with the situation in Kathmandu, has not been granted an audience with the king since his return.

The US government has stressed that it would like to go along with the Indian assessment and work closely with it to resolve the political crisis in Kathmandu. By joining hands with India, the US has made it clear that the king is fast running out of choices.

India, the US and the European Union have combined forces to withhold supply of weapons to Nepal. All three are using this as a leverage with Gyanendra to force him to take steps to restore democracy in his country.

In this backdrop, Islamabad's offer to supply arms to Kathmandu is not being taken very seriously by Delhi. South Block believes that the tough public posture notwithstanding, the king will ultimately refuse Pakistan's offer as he is aware of India's sensitivity on the issue.



US secretary of state Condoleezza Rice with Congress chief Sonia Gandhi in New Delhi on Wednesday. (PTI)

"The wider implications of accepting Pakistan's offer of arms supply will have to be taken into account by the palace," a South Block official said.

However, what concerns India is the economic blockade Maoist rebels are planning in that country later this month to exert pressure on

Gyanendra. If allowed to drift, the situation may take a serious turn and the common people will be affected more than anybody else.

During his trip to Kathmandu in October last year, Pakistan Prime Minister Shaukat Aziz had offered arms and military hardware

worth \$5 million for the Royal Nepal Army. But six months have passed and the king has not made any move to accept the offer.

Last week, Pakistan renewed the offer through its outgoing ambassador to Nepal. It created ripples in the Nepalese and Indian media as it

came at a time when Delhi was taking pains to explain that it had not made any arms supply to Nepal since the coup.

"Our decision on arms supply to Nepal is well thought one and there is no change in that," foreign ministry spokesperson Navtej Sarna said yesterday.

THE BIGGER PICTURE: *In the new balance of power, India has a central role*

Asian carousel

BY MANOJ JOSHI

THREE VISITS — that of US Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice and the forthcoming ones of Chinese premier Wen Jiabao and Japanese Prime Minister Junichiro Koizumi — provide a snapshot of the emerging contours of India's changing place in Asia. Conventional wisdom has it that we have been bested by China in the pace of economic growth and can do little but watch and envy its rise. Actually, the situation is more complex. The world that is learning to live with the rapid ascent of China must also adjust itself to the rise of India, slower though it may be.

It is the geopolitical consequences of this that are bringing a spate of important visitors to India. Take Rice, for instance. By itself her visit is part of a 'get acquainted' tour of Asia, considering its 8-day, 6-nation itinerary. North Korea will be the undoubted focus of its East Asian leg that will take her to South Korea, China and Japan. The ongoing war against Islamist terrorism will be at the heart of the Pakistan and Afghan segment. With no real problem on the plate (including the F-16s and Iran), the New Delhi stopover has a different, longer-term perspective — nudging India towards balancing the rising weight of China. The Next Steps in Strategic Partnership, the closer military-to-military cooperation, are the means to that end.

There is nothing sinister or even hidden about this since the US, China's leading trade partner, is not seeking a military alliance. Its goal is to see an India with an economic and military mass that will exert some gravitational pull on South-east and Central Asia, in other words, aid in providing a new Asian balance of power. To this end, the Bush administration is willing to go some distance, for example, in shelving traditional American concerns about India's nuclear weapons capability.

This is a perspective that the Chinese know a lot about since in the last two decades, they have seen Pakistan as a counterweight to India in the South Asian region. Providing Islamabad with nuclear weapons and missile technology kept India in check. But since 1998, there has been a qualitative shift, as much a product of our nuclear tests as our economic growth and achievements in the information technology sector.

Even now, the Chinese do not see India as any kind of a threat. Apart



AGREEING TO AGREE: Chinese Premier Wen Jiabao

from some residual vulnerabilities in Tibet, there is little India can threaten China with. In fact, many observers have remarked at the relative indifference of China towards India. But like all countries, particularly those that have something good going in economic growth, the Chinese do not want to have an antagonistic neighbour, especially one whose strategic weapons capability is set to steadily increase. The thinking within the post-Jiang leadership in Beijing seems to be that the time may have come to take the relationship to another plane by getting the border dispute out of the way. In other words, just as India must adjust to the rise of China, so, too, must China learn to relate to a growing India.

The important consequences of this appear to be a Chinese decision to abandon its dilatory policy *vis-à-vis* the settlement of the border dispute. In 1993 and 1996, China agreed to sign agreements that would keep the border tranquil through a number of CBMs. Principal among these was one that sought to define just exactly where the Line of Actual Control (LAC) lay. As of now, this line is an artificial one, each side claims that the other knows where it runs. But the fact is there is nothing on the ground, nor are there mutually accepted maps (as is the case with the LoC with Pakistan in Kashmir) defining it. At a number of important points on the border, the Indians and Chinese contest each other's version. And this, mind you, is just the LAC since both sides claim vast chunks of each other's territory — India claims Aksai Chin and China says that the entire state of Arunachal Pradesh belongs to it.

While there was, in 1960 and again in 1980, some talk of swapping claims, in recent decades the Chinese had insisted, formally though pretty firmly, in pressing their full claim, even as India pursued its own, albeit with lesser enthusiasm. So the 1993 agreement to define the LAC has been going nowhere and while the Chinese agreed to exchange maps of the least controversial central sector, they have held out on doing the same with the eastern and western sectors. With Premier Wen Jiabao's March 14 declaration that the Chinese are willing to look at a settlement based on an "accommodation of reality" as well, the stage is set for a quick deal on the border.

In this Asian cauldron, the third and somewhat distracted power is its former dynamo Japan, which, however, still remains the world's second largest economy. The coming visit of Prime Minister Koizumi could see the beginning of a process of enhanced Indo-Japanese cooperation. So far, Japan has invested heavily in China but in political terms remained content to shadow US policy. But with the Asian tectonic plates being rudely shifted by the rise of China, Japan is beginning to take another look at India. Its major motive is not dissimilar to that of the US, but it has an added edge provided by growing concerns in Tokyo about the way in which anti-Japanese feelings are being stoked by the political class in China.

The Japanese are following the US lead on India, but while Washington is willing to make adjustments and go beyond its stated positions to work out a new *modus vivendi*

with India, Japan appears stuck in an old groove. Though in recent years, Japan has become India's largest official aid giver, its private sector companies and banks have been laggard. Nothing sums up the state of Japan's relations with India more than the dismal trade statistics. In 1997-98, the trade between the two countries was \$ 4 billion; that is about the same figure it reached in 2004, actually remaining below that figure through the first half of this decade. Japanese companies have blamed the business climate in India for their lack of success. But in the same environment, South Korean companies like Samsung and Hyundai have done rather well for themselves.

In great measure, the new alignment created by the shifting geopolitical plates in Asia will be decided by trade. This is where the most interesting developments are taking place between India and China. In 2004 alone, trade grew at a dizzying 80 per cent to reach \$ 14 billion, where it used to be a few hundred million five years ago. By the end of this year it could well be \$ 20 billion. This is within striking distance of the slower growing Indo-US trade which currently stands at around \$ 22 billion. At this pace, there is nothing to stop China from becoming India's leading trade partner within this decade itself, displacing the US from its perch. Such a development cannot but have a profound impact on the conduct of our foreign and security policies.

Needless to say, trade alone does not create a *weltanschauung*, and India is unlikely to alter its long-held view of abjuring politico-military alliances with any great power. But it does need friends and well-wishers. We are at a unique juncture where three major Asian powers — the US is one as well — are in a new process of engaging India.

All of us have our motives and priorities, but some of them — security and prosperity — cannot but be common. India's economic goals are easy to define: more trade with everyone, but specifically, investment and hi-tech from Japan, skills of large-scale manufacture from China and hi-tech from the US. More difficult is our global political perspective. We do need a sharper clarity of our geopolitical aims, and an ability to balance them so as to become a force of peace and prosperity for the world and ourselves.

দাঙ্গা প্রসঙ্গ তুলে মার্কিন ভিসা নামঞ্জুর

মোদীর পাশে দাঁড়িয়ে ক্ষোভ জানাল কেন্দ্রও

স্টাফ রিপোর্টার, নয়াদিল্লি, ১৮ মার্চ: নরেন্দ্র মোদীকে মার্কিন ভিসা প্রত্যাখান নিয়ে ফোভের ঢেউ আমদাবাদ থেকে সাউথ ব্লক সর্বত্র ছড়িয়ে পড়ল।

পরোক্ষে গুজরাত দাঙ্গার প্রসঙ্গ টেনে আজ সকালে গুজরাতের মুখ্যমন্ত্রীকে ভিসা না দেওয়ার কথা জানিয়ে দেয় মার্কিন যুক্তরাষ্ট্র। এই সিদ্ধান্তের প্রতিবাদে মোদী থেকে শুরু করে বি জে পি শীর্ষ নেতৃত্ব যে ক্ষোভে ফেটে পড়বেন, তা প্রত্যাশিতই ছিল। কিন্তু তাৎপর্যপূর্ণ ঘটনা হল, কেন্দ্রের কংগ্রেস নেতৃত্বাধীন সরকারও এই বিষয়ে পুরোপুরি মোদীর পাশে। এমনকী, মার্কিন দূতাবাসের এক কর্তাকে ডেকে নিজেদের ফোভের কথা জানিয়ে সিদ্ধান্ত পুনর্বিবেচনা করতে অনুরোধও করেছে কেন্দ্র।

আমেরিকায় 'এশিয়ান-আমেরিকান হোটেল ওনার্স অ্যাসোসিয়েশন' এর একটি অনুষ্ঠানে যাওয়ার কথা রয়েছে মোদীর। তাই গত মাসেই মার্কিন দূতাবাসের কাছে ভিসার জন্য আবেদন জানানো হয়। দূতাবাসের বক্তব্য, মার্কিন অভিবাসন ও নাগরিকত্ব আইন অনুযায়ী মোদীকে কূটনৈতিক, পর্যটন বা বিজনেস—কোনও ভিসাই দেওয়া যাবে না। গুজরাত দাঙ্গায় ইফ্রান জোগানায় মোদীর ভূমিকার ইঙ্গিত করে দূতাবাসের মুখপাত্র ডেভিড কেনেডি জানান, আইনে বলা হয়েছে, 'ধর্মীয় স্বাধীনতায় কোনও সময় ব্যাপক ভাবে হস্তক্ষেপ করেছেন এমন ব্যক্তিকে' ভিসা দেওয়া যাবে না।

কিন্তু এক জন নির্বাচিত মুখ্যমন্ত্রীকে এ ভাবে ভিসা থেকে বঞ্চিত করার বিষয়টিকে কেন্দ্র মোটেই সঙ্কীর্ণ রাজনৈতিক দৃষ্টিকোণ থেকে দেখেনি। দীর্ঘদিন ধরে মোদী কংগ্রেসের আক্রমণের নিশানা হলেও কেন্দ্র কিন্তু বিষয়টিকে কূটনৈতিক স্তরের সমস্যা হিসাবেই দেখেছে। বিদেশমন্ত্রী নটবর সিংহ সকালে জানান, বিষয়টি নিয়ে তাঁরা মার্কিন সরকারের সঙ্গে কথা বলবেন। কথা ও কাজে ফারাক রাখেনি নয়াদিল্লি। আজ বিকেলেই আমেরিকার 'ডেপুটি চিফ অফ মিশন' রবার্ট ব্লেককে ডেকে ভারতের বিদেশসচিব জানিয়েছেন, সিদ্ধান্ত পুনর্বিবেচনা করুক ওয়াশিংটন। একই সঙ্গে প্রায় নজিরবিহীন ভাষায় এক বিবৃতি দিয়ে বিদেশমন্ত্রক জানিয়েছে, ভারত সরকার এই ঘটনায় শুধু উদ্বিগ্নই নয়, মার্কিন এই সিদ্ধান্ত 'অহেতুক' ও 'অসৌজন্যমূলক'।

ইতিমধ্যেই নানা সঙ্কটের মধ্যে থাকা কেন্দ্রীয় সরকার অবশ্য মোদীর পাশে দাঁড়িয়ে গিয়ে ইউ পি এ নিয়ে বি জে পি-র ক্ষোভকে ভোঁতা করে দিতে সক্ষম হয়েছে। এই ঘটনা নিয়ে সংসদের বাইরে এবং ভিতরে বি জে পি শীর্ষ নেতৃত্ব যাতে আন্দোলনের রাস্তায় না যেতে পারে সে ব্যাপারে সতর্ক থেকেছে মনমোহন সরকার। ঝাড়খণ্ড-বিহার কাণ্ডের পর আর কোনও ভাবেই যাতে বিরোধীদের হাতে অস্ত্র না ওঠে,

তা নিশ্চিত করাই সরকারের লক্ষ্য।

দুপুরে আমদাবাদে সাংবাদিক সম্মেলন করে গুজরাতের মুখ্যমন্ত্রী বলেছেন, "আমেরিকার এই একতরফা সিদ্ধান্ত ভারতের সংবিধানকেই অপমানিত করেছে। এই সিদ্ধান্ত গণতন্ত্র, মানবাধিকার ও বিচারবিভাগীয় নিয়ম-বিধির বিরুদ্ধে।" গোধরা-কাণ্ডের কথা তুলে মোদী বলেছেন, কোনও আদালতই তাঁর বিরুদ্ধে রায় দেয়নি। ওয়াশিংটনের বিরুদ্ধে দ্বিচারিতার অভিযোগ এনে মোদী প্রশ্ন তোলেন, পারভেজ মুশারফকে তা হলে মার্কিন ভিসা দেওয়া হয় কেন? তাঁর আক্রমণ, "পাক-মদতের সন্ত্রাসে কাশ্মীরে লাখে লাখে লোক নিহত হয়েছেন। অথচ সে দেশের প্রধানকে স্বাগত জানাচ্ছে আমেরিকা।" এ দিকে দিল্লিতে বি জে পি নেতা ও প্রাক্তন বিদেশমন্ত্রী যশবন্ত সিনহার বক্তব্য, "এই সিদ্ধান্ত কোনও ভাবেই মেনে নেওয়া যায় না। আইনের চোখে মোদী অপরাধী নন। আমরা যদি ভারতে কাজে আসতে ইচ্ছুক মার্কিন নাগরিকের সঙ্গে একই রকম ব্যবহার করি, তা হলে তো তাঁরা প্রবল ভাবে বিচলিত হয়ে পড়বেন।"

সরকারি বিবৃতিতে বলা হয়েছে, "২৮ ফেব্রুয়ারি বিদেশ

মন্ত্রক নোট দিয়ে দূতাবাসে ভিসার জন্য আবেদন করেছিল। মার্কিন দূতাবাসের এই আচরণ এক রাজ্যের সংবিধানস্বীকৃত উপায়ে নির্বাচিত মুখ্যমন্ত্রীর প্রতি সৌজন্যহীনতা ও অসংবেদনশীলতারই প্রমাণ।" কেন্দ্রের এই অবস্থানে খুশি নরেন্দ্র মোদী। তাঁর কথায়, "দলীয় রাজনীতির উর্ধ্বে উঠে সরকার যে ভাবে ভারতীয় নাগরিকদের



অনুভূতিকে সম্মান জানিয়েছে তা প্রশংসার যোগ্য।"

আজ দুপুরেই মার্কিন দূতাবাসের 'ডেপুটি চিফ অফ মিশন' রবার্ট ব্লেককে ডেকে পাঠানো হয়। বিদেশসচিব শ্যাম সারনের সঙ্গে আধ ঘণ্টা বৈঠক সেরে ব্লেক জানান, দিল্লি এই সিদ্ধান্ত পুনর্বিবেচনার অনুরোধ জানিয়েছে। ব্লেকের বক্তব্য, "ভারতের বিদেশসচিব মার্কিন সরকারের নেওয়া সিদ্ধান্তে ক্ষোভ প্রকাশ করে তাঁদের উদ্বেগের কথা জানিয়েছেন।... তাঁর বক্তব্য, এই উদ্বেগের কথা মাথায় রেখে মার্কিন সরকারের সিদ্ধান্ত পুনর্বিবেচনা করা উচিত।" যদিও জবাবে ব্লেক শুধু বলেছেন, বিষয়টি তিনি ওয়াশিংটনকে জানাচ্ছেন।

আজ সকালেই সংসদ ভবন থেকে বেরিয়ে মোদী-কাণ্ডে ক্ষোভ প্রকাশ করেন বিদেশমন্ত্রী নটবর সিংহ। তিনি তখনই স্পষ্ট ভাষায় জানিয়ে দেন, আমেরিকাকে সিদ্ধান্ত প্রত্যাহার করার জন্য চাপ দেবে ভারত। সাংবাদিকদের নটবর বলেন, "ভারত সরকার বিষয়টি দেখবে। প্রধানমন্ত্রী ও অন্যদেরও বিষয়টি জানানো হবে। বিদেশ মন্ত্রকের তরফেই মোদীর জন্য মাল্টি-এন্টি ভিসার অনুমোদন চাওয়া হয়েছিল।"

● মোদীকে আটকানোর প্রস্তুতি ছিল আগেই...পৃঃ ৫

After much effort, some progress has now been recorded in the project to bring natural gas by pipeline from Iran to India across Pakistan.

Petroleum Minister Mani Shankar Aiyar's energy and drive have made the difference and have enabled this decade-old project finally to take a few tottering steps forward. Many questions remain, for it is a complicated matter to fashion a tripartite project of this type, made more complex by the endemic bad relations between two of the parties.

Yet the gas pipeline has emerged as one of the real achievements of the current thaw in Indo-Pakistani ties. In truth, there is not so much beside, apart from the Srinagar-Muzaffarabad bus service, among concrete measures that have emerged so far.

And now, unexpectedly, US Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice has thrown a spanner into the works. During her Delhi visit, she expressed her country's disfavour for the Iranian pipe-

US spanner in pipeline

line. This lends a major blow to the scheme, making inadequate the small but real successes of the last few months. Suddenly the prospects do not appear encouraging.

American hostility towards Iran is an old story, and

wide angle

SALMAN HAIDAR

America has never been comfortable with the idea of a gas pipeline from Iran to South Asia. Hence it encouraged the Unocal oil and gas company, and there was also an Argentinian one, to propose an alternative supply source in Turkmenistan, to be brought through a pipeline crossing western Afghanistan and Pakistan on its way to India.

This was at a time when the Taliban was in Kabul, still engaged in a life-or-death struggle with the Northern Alliance.

In those unsettled condi-

tions, there was no chance of anyone being prepared to make any sort of investment in this alternative pipeline, and despite recent improvements in Afghanistan, that remains true today. Indeed, in the murky world of oil and politics, it was believed by some that the second pipeline, wholly unfeasible, was projected only as a spoiler for the first, which though difficult had real prospects. Since then, major changes in the geopolitics of this region have taken place with US military operations in Afghanistan and Iraq.

Iran's cautious, non-provocative diplomacy while war raged around it briefly raised hopes of a bit of a thaw in its dealings with America.

But today, under the second Bush administration, things have deteriorated further. There are tough demands that Iran should abandon its effort to acquire a complete nuclear fuel cycle capacity, and much is being said about "regime change" in Teheran. It is against this background that Dr Rice expressed opposition to the Iranian pipeline.

What has now occurred is a good illustration of how the preoccupations of the sole superpower can upset others' applecart. Our plans could be adversely affected by American enmity for Iran, with which we are wholly uninvolved — though it is worth observing in passing that some of our smaller neighbours at times blame us for comparable insensitivity in pursuing our concerns while ignoring theirs.

Iran is, and will remain, a major source of energy for us, and the economic case for a pipeline is self-evident.



US Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice: American hostility to Iran influencing foreign policy. — AFP

What is no less significant is how this project has become a building block in fashioning a new, cooperative relationship between India and Pakistan.

It is a major outcome of the "composite dialogue" and is seen as a way of giving the two countries a reciprocal stake in each other. The bilateral dialogue is supported on all sides, and in fact America has long been pushing us towards the negotiating table, even at times when we were in no mood for it. It is thus an irony that its own perceived regional interests should drive America towards bringing the pipeline venture, one of the most important results of the dialogue, to a halt.

It must be assumed that when she went to Islamabad Dr Rice was equally set against the pipeline. One unfortunate outcome of this diplomatic journey to South Asia is that it could encour-

age the South Asian "refuseniks".

There are plenty of functionaries in both India and Pakistan who remain unconvinced by the dialogue but have had to go along with it as the tide is in its favour.

Not everyone wants progress, and the vested interests in support of the status quo remain strong. The slow advance of the dialogue reflects not so much the complexity of the issues as the strength of the rearguard effort to hold back.

So, what now? It is uncomfortable to find one's hard-fought plans placed at risk in the manner now being witnessed. A project like the pipeline that holds much importance for India cannot be readily set aside.

But it is also difficult to pursue the project in the face of American opposition. Concessional international financing will not be available, and

even commercial borrowings will be difficult if the lending parties face the risk of American sanctions. Dr Rice's visit showed that the Indo-US relationship has matured to the point that we can disagree on specific issues, even major ones like F-16s for Pakistan, without rancour and acrimony.

Strategic, political and economic considerations underpin the current healthy state of relations.

If India is indeed firmly committed to the pipeline, it must do all it can to persuade America, and others, of the part this project can play in stabilising the region and improving cooperation between currently unfriendly states. That is the best and the most reasonable way forward.

(The author is a former Foreign Secretary, Government of India.)

BJP blasts Bush, says ties with US will take a knock

Our Political Bureau
NEW DELHI 22 MARCH

THE BJP on Tuesday condemned the Bush administration's refusal to reconsider its decision to deny visa to Gujarat chief minister Narendra Modi, and maintained that the development will affect Indo-US ties. The issue figured prominently in the BJP's parliamentary party meeting held on Tuesday morning under the chairmanship of L.K. Advani. What was particularly unpalatable to it was the US government's assertion that the denial of the visa to Mr Modi would in no manner undermine the views shared by the two countries on strategic ties.

"Mr Modi is not an accused. There is no case registered against him anywhere. The US action is based on hearsay and propaganda," BJP spokesman V.K. Malhotra said here on Tuesday afternoon. The reaffirmation of the US decision on Monday has landed the BJP in a spot. It was during the NDA regime that relations with Washington touched a new high. Disregarding reservations from other Sangh parivar affiliates, BJP leaders abruptly transformed themselves into strong votaries of better Indo-American ties.



President George Bush's decision to open fronts against the Taliban-ruled Afghanistan and Saddam Hussain-run Iraq had even these Sangh parivar affiliates singing paeans about the US' worldview. Mr Bush became their new poster boy, who would eventually lead the clash of civilisations.

The denial of American visa to Mr Modi is likely to force the BJP to revert to its cold war reflexes. Its approach towards the only super power in the world will be guided in the coming days by the latest developments. Party leaders, including Mr Advani, have admitted that the visa denial issue will have a bearing on Indo-US ties.

In the past few days, the BJP

and the Sangh parivar have sharpened their attack against the US administration, describing the decision to deny visa as one taken under pressure from the evangelists and the "moral majority", who have come to acquire a considerable hold over the main institutions of the American government.

The Manmohan Singh government, which made out a strong case for a review of the US decision on Mr Modi, has come in for praise from the BJP leadership, including Mr Modi. Having made their point, there is, however, very little that the Centre can do now. It would not like to queer the pitch of bilateral ties at the expense of the Gujarat chief minister.

PM's neighbourly visits put off

Statesman News Service

NEW DELHI, March 24. — With the security situation deteriorating in some neighbouring countries, the possibility of the Prime Minister, Dr Manmohan Singh, visiting all neighbours in the first year of the UPA government's tenure now looks very dim.

A senior government official said that visits to Nepal and Bangladesh were now virtually impossible. The Nepal situation is clear with the Maoists in control of a large number of districts and King Gyanendra, who took over after a coup of sorts, not completely in charge outside Kathmandu, the capital. The Bangladesh situation is even more complicated. "The SAARC summit was cancelled not only because of the Nepal developments but also the security inside Bangladesh," the official said.

Of the others, Pakistan is a big one, and clearly, much preparation is necessary

No consensus irks Manmohan

NEW DELHI, March 24. — Dr Manmohan Singh tonight expressed concern over "weakening" political consensus on issues like VAT and called for introspection over "talking in different voices to suit the occasion". In his address to the corporate leaders and media on the occasion of the 30th anniversary of a financial daily, Dr Singh said the political consensus that has been the bedrock of the reform process since 1991. The PM in the same address also supported FDI in print media and asked domestic media to invest abroad. — PTI

before such a visit can take place. It would mean some breakthrough to have happened and there isn't anything that major on the cards right now. The easiest option would be Bhutan, which could happen easily. This leaves Sri Lanka and the Maldives. Meanwhile, the PM will be leaving for Mauritius shortly.

উপমহাদেশে অস্ত্র-প্রতিযোগিতা চায় না ভারত

স্টাফ রিপোর্টার, নয়াদিল্লি, ২৭ মার্চ: পরমাণু শক্তির ক্ষেত্রে সহযোগিতায় আগ্রহী হলেও আমেরিকার কাছ থেকে নতুন যুদ্ধবিমান কেনা নিয়ে ধমে রয়েছে নয়াদিল্লি। পাকিস্তানকে এক-১৬ সরবরাহের পাশাপাশি ভারতকে আরও উন্নত যুদ্ধবিমান দেওয়ার কথা বলেছে পাকিস্তান। পরমাণু ও মহাকাশ ক্ষেত্রে সহযোগিতার হাতও বাড়িয়েছে তারা। শক্তি উৎপাদনের ক্ষেত্রে পরমাণু প্রযুক্তির সহযোগিতার প্রস্তাবকে ইতিমধ্যেই স্বাগত জানিয়েছে বিদেশ মন্ত্রক। অস্ত্র সরবরাহের মার্কিন প্রস্তাবকে 'ইতিবাচক' আখ্যা দিলেও কেন্দ্র সর্বক, যাতে এই অঞ্চলে নতুন করে অস্ত্র কেনার প্রতিযোগিতা শুরু না-হয়। কলকাতায় প্রতিরক্ষামন্ত্রী প্রণব মুখোপাধ্যায় স্পষ্টই বলেন, "একটা কথা জোর দিয়ে বলতে চাই। অস্ত্র দৌড়ে যোগ দেওয়ার কোনও অভিপ্রায় আমাদের নেই।"

কেন্দ্রীয় সরকারের সমর্থক বামেরাও আজ মার্কিন অস্ত্র কেনার প্রস্তাব খারিজ করার দাবি জানিয়েছে। সিপিআই নেতা ডি রাজার বক্তব্য,

"মার্কিন ফাঁদে পা দিয়ে যুদ্ধবিমান কেনা উচিত নয়। মার্কিন প্রস্তাব এসেছে আসলে ওদের যুদ্ধাস্ত্র শিল্পকে বাঁচাতে।" কংগ্রেস অবশ্য জানিয়েছে, এই 'স্পর্শকাতর' বিষয়ে, কাল বিবৃতি দেওয়া হবে। পেটগন এ বার যে প্রস্তাব দিল্লির সামনে রেখেছে, তা অতীতে কখনও দেয়নি। এমনকী, পাকিস্তানকে এক-১৬ দেওয়ার পাশাপাশি আরও উন্নত এক-১৮ ভারতকে দেওয়ার কথা বলেছে বৃশ প্রশাসন। তা সত্ত্বেও প্রতিরক্ষামন্ত্রী প্রণব মুখোপাধ্যায় আজ এই নিয়ে কোনও উদ্ভাস দেখাননি। তিনি বলেছেন, "এই প্রথম আমেরিকা যে আমাদের এত উন্নত সরঞ্জাম দিতে চাইছে, সেটা ইতিবাচক বিষয়। কিন্তু প্রতিরক্ষা প্রস্তুতির কথা বিচার করে তিন বাহিনীর কী প্রয়োজন, তার ভিত্তিতেই মার্কিন প্রস্তাব বিবেচনা করে দেখা।"

কেন্দ্রের একটি সূত্র অনুসারে, মার্কিন অস্ত্র কেনার ক্ষেত্রে প্রধান সমস্যা ধারাবাহিকতা নিয়ে সংশয়। যুদ্ধাস্ত্র বা তার যন্ত্রাংশ সরবরাহ বন্ধ হবে না বলে বৃশ প্রশাসন গ্যারান্টি দিক, এমনটাই চায়

দিল্লি। কিন্তু তা দিতে রাজি নয় ওয়াশিংটন। এশিয়ার এই অঞ্চলের কী পরিস্থিতি, তার দিকে নজর রেখেই মার্কিন কংগ্রেস হঠাৎ সরবরাহ বন্ধ করে দিতে পারে। শুরুবারের প্রস্তাবে ভারতকে অত্যাধুনিক অস্ত্র দেওয়ার ইচ্ছা প্রকাশ করলেও ধারাবাহিক সরবরাহের সমস্যা কতটা মিটিয়ে, তা নিয়ে সন্দেহ প্রশাসনের একাংশ। আমেরিকা দিতে চাইলেই ভারত তা কিনবে কি না, সেটাও প্রশ্ন। কয়েক দিন আগেই প্রণবের ঘনিষ্ঠ মহলে ইঙ্গিত দিয়েছেন, পাকিস্তানের সঙ্গে পাল্লা দিতে এ ভারে বিপুল টাকা খরচ করার পক্ষপাতী নয় দিল্লি। পাক বিদেশমন্ত্রী খুরশিদ মেহমুদ কাসুরিও বলেছেন, তারা অস্ত্র প্রতিযোগিতা চান না।

ভারতকে এক-১৬ বিজির বিষয়ে আগেই ইচ্ছা প্রকাশ করেছিল পেটগন। কিন্তু বিমানবাহিনী বিশেষ উৎসাহী নয়। দিল্লি ১২৬টি 'মাল্টিরোল কন্সট্রাক্ট এয়ারক্রাফট' কেনার তোড়জোড় করছে। 'রিকোয়েস্ট ফর ইনফরমেশন' পাঠানো হয়েছে আরও তিনটি

দেশে। সুইডেনে গ্রিপিন বিমানের জন্য, রাশিয়ার কাছে মিগ-২৯-এর উন্নত সংস্করণের জন্য, ফ্রান্সের কাছে মিরাজ ২০০০-এর জন্য। এক ১৬-র প্রস্তাব থাকলেও বিমানবাহিনী কিন্তু প্রাথমিক ভাবে জানিয়েছে, তারা মিরাজ ২০০০ পেতেই বেশি আগ্রহী। তবে এক ১৮-এর যে প্রস্তাব পেটগন পাঠিয়েছে, তা একেবারেই নতুন।

কূটনৈতিক স্তরে ইসলামাবাদকে এক-১৬ সরবরাহ নিয়ে দিল্লির প্রতিবাদ তীব্র হলেও বিমানবাহিনীর একটি বড় অংশ অবশ্য আশঙ্কার বিশেষ কারণ দেখাচ্ছে না। তাদের বক্তব্য, কয়েক বছর ধরে ভারতীয় বিমানবাহিনী প্রস্তুত হয়েছে পাকিস্তানে এক-১৬ আসরে ধরে নিয়েই।

পাকিস্তান প্রায় ১৪ বছর ধরেই এক-১৬ কেনার জন্য দর কষাকষি চালাচ্ছিল। যুদ্ধবিমানের সংখ্যার ক্ষেত্রেও ভারত পাকিস্তানের থেকে অনেক এগিয়ে রয়েছে। বিভিন্ন চুক্তি অনুযায়ী ভারতের হাতে যে অস্ত্রসত্তার আসতে চলেছে, তাতে চিত্তার কারণ দেখাচ্ছে না বিমানবাহিনী।

CPM HOWLS, PM PARRIES

F-16 claws come out

OUR BUREAU

March 28: The first wave of euphoria has ebbed and the velvet gloves are slowly coming off.

India today said the US decision to lift the ban on F-16 sale to Pakistan would have an "adverse impact" on the ongoing composite dialogue with the neighbour.

"The US decision to supply F-16s to Pakistan at this point is inappropriate and ill-timed since the two countries are engaged in a composite dialogue on improving bilateral relations. This will have an adverse impact on the ongoing dialogue," defence minister Pranab Mukherjee said in Calcutta on the sidelines of a business meeting.

Prime Minister Manmohan Singh had expressed "deep disappointment" when President George W. Bush had called him on Friday to convey the decision to sell the fighter planes to Pakistan.

However, once the Americans tried to pacify Delhi by offering F-16s, dangling advanced F-18s and promising access to nuclear technology, the foreign policy establishment had sought to convey an impression that India had gained more than Pakistan.

The defence minister said Pakistan needs F-16s not to fight terrorism but to wage

war. "The previous track record has shown that Pakistan had not fired a single shot at any other direction but India," Mukherjee said.

The minister's blunt statement coincided with a demand by the CPM that the government should not accept the offer of F-16s.

But the Prime Minister adopted a cautious stand, saying it would be "premature" to talk about the US offer. But Singh added that his government was willing to discuss the subject with the US.

The CPM politburo said: "India should outright reject the proposal to join the infamous national missile defence system (America had also hinted at cooperation in missile defence)."

Referring to the F-16 offer, the party added: "It suits the US to fuel an arms race between India and Pakistan with the sale of sophisticated weapons to both countries. It also provides a good market for its arms manufacturers."

Singh, however, was non-committal: "As far as we are concerned it is an offer. We do not know the terms and conditions. It would be premature for me to comment."

He added that "we have good relations with the US. We do not know what we will be getting. We will discuss with them."

F-16 offer to Pak ill-timed: Pranab

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE
KOLKATA, MARCH 28

THE US offer to supply F-16s to Pakistan will affect the ongoing confidence building measures (CBM) between New Delhi and Islamabad, Defence Minister Pranab Mukherjee said today.

Speaking after inaugurating the 77th annual general meeting of the Indian Chamber of Commerce, the Minister called the US offer ill-timed as India and Pakistan had been trying to build bilateral relations. He pointed to the repeated entreaties made by India on this issue to the US, including conversations on the phone between US President George W. Bush and Prime Minister Manmohan Singh on Friday last.

While India is not interested in an arms race, Mukherjee said all steps will continue to augment defence facilities.

On the US argument that Pakistan was a crucial ally on the 'war on terror,' the Defence Minister said the F-16s were not for fighting terrorism, but for waging a full-fledged war. "The previous track record had shown that Pakistan had not fired a single shot towards any other direction, but against India," he said.

Premature to comment on F-16 offer to India: PM

NEW DELHI: PM Manmohan Singh has said it would be "premature" to comment on the US offer of F-16 and F-18 fighter aircrafts to India.

Speaking on the sidelines of the Padma awards investiture ceremony on Monday, Singh said there was an offer from the US for India. "But we do not yet know the terms and conditions... So it would be premature to comment about it," he said. Asked if whether he was satisfied with the offer, he emphasised, "We do not know what we will be getting."

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Earlier, addressing members of the ICC, he said the government that the speeding up the highway programme, the NHDP-III, has been approved. The government has also embarked on a programme for road construction, providing additional investment avenues for private capital, he said. Similarly, he said, the Finance Minister will soon be providing further details of the special purpose vehicle being set up for providing investment capital for infrastructure projects. (With PTT)

F-16s for Pakistan disappointing: Congress

By Our Special Correspondent

NEW DELHI, MARCH 28. The Congress today described the United States' decision to sell F-16 fighter planes to Pakistan as "unfortunate and disappointing" while the Communist Party of India (Marxist) cautioned the United Progressive Alliance Government to be wary of Washington's offer to India to sell the fighter planes along with missile defence systems and discussions on civilian nuclear technology.

The party spokesman, Anand Sharma, said the decision violated the long-term policy perspective because Pakistan was known for its nuclear proliferation.

Washington's argument that these planes and earlier weapons

system given to Pakistan were to help it fight terrorists and Al Qaeda elements was not correct. He said these planes and weapons were not required in the region and whenever these were used, it was against India. Pakistan, he said, continued to be a haven for terrorists.

Mr. Sharma expressed the hope that the U.S. Congress would take all these factors into consideration, especially Pakistan's persistent undermining of international laws and the U.S. laws with regard to nuclear proliferation. As regards the offer to India, he said it was for the Government to take an appropriate view.

Be wary, says CPI (M)

Reacting to the offer to India,

the Communist Party of India (Marxist) Polit Bureau said the Bush administration intended to draw the country into a strategic military relationship just as Pakistan had been involved in one for decades.

The fuelling of the arms race between India and Pakistan with the sale of sophisticated weaponry to both countries suited the U.S. interest perfectly as well as providing a good market for its arms manufacturers, it said.

The party said the Government should be wary of such offers on two counts. One, India had been accessing defence equipment from a number of countries and experience showed that the U.S. could not be relied upon to be a dependable supplier for political

reasons. Two, the U.S. was trying to draw India into its global strategic plans by asking India to join the defence missile system.

"India should outright reject the proposal to join the infamous National Missile Defence System as joining it will be tantamount to becoming a junior partner of the U.S. Acceptance of these offers will also adversely impact India-Pakistan relations."

Pursuing an independent foreign policy and forging closer ties with all major countries, including China should not be sidetracked by the U.S. effort to inveigle India into a strategic military alliance. An independent policy was also required to ensure that the gas pipeline project between India, Pakistan and Iran went ahead.

পাক নিন্দায় নটবর, কেন্দ্রকে তোপ বিজেপির

স্টাফ রিপোর্টার, নয়াদিল্লি, ২৮ মার্চ: পাকিস্তানকে এফ-১৬ যুদ্ধবিমান দেওয়ার মার্কিন সিদ্ধান্ত এ বার ভারতে ঘরোয়া রাজনীতিতে চাপানউতোরের বিষয় হয়ে উঠছে। এক দশক ধরে পাকিস্তানকে এফ-১৬ না দেওয়ার পরে এ বার আমেরিকা উদার হওয়ায় বিরোধীরা এর মধ্যে নয়াদিল্লির দুর্বলতা দেখতে চাইছেন। বি জে পির তরফে স্থির হয়েছে, প্রাক্তন বিদেশমন্ত্রী যশোবন্ত সিংহ আগামিকাল এই বিষয়ে সাংবাদিক সম্মেলন করবেন। এই ঘটনাকে ইউ পি এ সরকারের 'ব্যর্থতা' হিসাবেই তুলে ধরা হবে।

অন্য দিকে সরকারও পাল্টা প্রচার শুরু করেছে। প্রধানমন্ত্রী মনমোহন সিংহ আমেরিকার এই সিদ্ধান্তে প্রকাশ্যেই হতাশা প্রকাশ করেছেন। আর বিদেশমন্ত্রী নটবর সিংহ আজ নাম না করে পাকিস্তানের গোপন পরমাণু কর্মসূচি সম্পর্কে আন্তর্জাতিক মহলের 'ভুল' দৃষ্টিভঙ্গির উল্লেখ করেছেন, মনে করিয়ে দিয়েছেন একটি রাষ্ট্রের তরফে গোপনে পরমাণু প্রযুক্তি রফতানি অব্যাহত থাকায় গোটা অঞ্চল বিপজ্জনক হয়ে উঠেছে। কংগ্রেসের তরফে অভিযোগ করা হয়েছে, পাকিস্তানকে অত্যাধুনিক সরঞ্জাম দিয়ে আমেরিকা নিজের ঘোষিত নীতিই লঙ্ঘন করেছে। প্রধান বিরোধী দল বিজেপি এই যুক্তিতে ভুলতে নারাজ।

কিন্তু গোটা ব্যাপারটায় আমেরিকার পাকিস্তানের প্রতি অনুকূল মনোভাব যে ভাবে প্রতিফলিত হয়েছে, তাতে নয়াদিল্লির সাউথ ব্লক হতাশা ও ক্ষোভ গোপন করতে পারেনি। আমেরিকা পাকিস্তানকে এফ-১৬ দেওয়ার সিদ্ধান্ত জানিয়ে দেওয়ার তিন দিন পরে এই প্রথম প্রকাশ্যে প্রতিক্রিয়া জানালেন প্রধানমন্ত্রী। এক সরকারি অনুষ্ঠানে এ নিয়ে সংক্ষেপে তাঁর মন্তব্য, "আমেরিকার সঙ্গে ভারত বিষয়টি আলোচনা করবে।" আর প্রতিরক্ষামন্ত্রী প্রণব মুখোপাধ্যায় জানিয়ে দিয়েছেন, ওয়াশিংটনের এই সিদ্ধান্তের ফলে ইসলামাবাদ ও নয়াদিল্লির মধ্যে যে শান্তি-আলোচনার পরিবেশ তৈরি হচ্ছিল, তাতে বিঘ্ন ঘটতে পারে।

নটবর সিংহ আজই এক আলোচনাচক্রে পরমাণু অস্ত্র প্রসার রোধের ব্যর্থতা এবং গোপন পাচার, দু'টি বিষয়ের উপরেই জোর দেন। তাঁর বক্তব্য, অস্ত্রপ্রসার রোধ নিয়ে আন্তর্জাতিক মহল যা করেছে তা 'তা যথেষ্ট নয়।' বিদেশমন্ত্রীর কথায়, "দুর্ভাগ্যজনক ভাবে এ ক্ষেত্রে আন্তর্জাতিক মহলের দৃষ্টিভঙ্গির অসঙ্গতিই চোখে পড়ছে। যারা গোপনে পরমাণু প্রযুক্তি সংগ্রহ করছে তাদের দিকে নজর রাখা হচ্ছে। অথচ কোথা থেকে তা সরবরাহ হচ্ছে, সে দিকে নজর দেওয়া হচ্ছে না।" ভারতকে এ জন্য 'মূল্য' দিতে হচ্ছে বলেও বিদেশমন্ত্রী মন্তব্য করেন। তাঁর বক্তব্য, 'বর্তমান রাজনৈতিক অবস্থার' পরিস্থিতিতে পরমাণু অস্ত্রপ্রসার রোধ ব্যবস্থার 'পর্যালোচনা ও পুনর্মূল্যায়ন' করতে হবে বিশ্বকে।

নটবর পাকিস্তানের নাম না করলেও কংগ্রেসের তরফে পাকিস্তানি পরমাণু বিজ্ঞানী কাদিরের নাম উল্লেখ করেই সমালোচনা করা হয়। দলের মুখপাত্র 'আনন্দ শর্মা বলেন, "পাকিস্তানকে এ ভাবে সামরিক সরবরাহ শুধু দুর্ভাগ্যজনক নয়, চিন্তার বিষয়ও।" কংগ্রেসের বক্তব্য, পাকিস্তান অন্য দেশে পরমাণু প্রযুক্তি পাচার করে। পাকিস্তানের পক্ষে এফ-১৬ ব্যবহার করা সম্ভব শুধু ভারতের বিরুদ্ধে।

এ ছাড়া, ভারতের বিরুদ্ধে যে সব জঙ্গি শিবির পাকিস্তান করেছিল সেগুলি এখনও আছে। এই অবস্থায় আমেরিকা সন্ত্রাসবাদের বিরুদ্ধে লড়াইয়ের ঘোষিত নীতিগুলি নিজেই লঙ্ঘন করছে বলে আনন্দ অভিযোগ করেন। তিনি বলেন "আশা করি মার্কিন কংগ্রেস যখন বিষয়টি বিবেচনা করবে তখন তারা সব কিছুরই ভেবে দেখবে।" সি পি এম-ও আজ একটি বিবৃতি দিয়ে অস্ত্র দৌড়ে সাংগঠন না-হতে অনুরোধ জানিয়েছে সরকারকে।

প্রধান বিরোধী দল বি জে পি অবশ্য সরকারের সমালোচনা করতে কোমর বেঁধে আসরে নামছে। ইউ পি এ সরকারের 'কূটনৈতিক ব্যর্থতা' তুলে ধরে জোরদার প্রচার শুরু করার সিদ্ধান্ত নিয়েছে দলীয় নেতৃত্ব।

এফ-১৬ বিতর্ক

ANAND JOURNAL

29 MAR 2005

এফ-১৬ ও ভারত

মার্কিন সমরাস্ত্র সম্ভার হইতে পাকিস্তানের বহুপ্রতীক্ষিত এফ-১৬ যুদ্ধবিমান লাভের ঘটনায় ভারতে স্বভাবতই তীব্র প্রতিক্রিয়া সৃষ্টি হইয়াছে। প্রেসলার সংশোধনীর নিষেধাজ্ঞা বৃশ প্রশাসন আগেই তুলিয়া লইয়াছিল। তাহার পর সন্ত্রাসবাদ-বিরোধী মার্কিন অভিযানে পাকিস্তানের অংশীদারির কথা যে ভাবে ওয়াশিংটন হইতে ঘন-ঘন প্রচারিত হইতেছিল, পাক প্রেসিডেন্ট পারভেজ মুশারফকে বৃশ প্রশাসনের কর্তারা যে ভাবে শংসাপত্র দিতেছিলেন, তাহাতে এই অস্ত্রসাহায্য মঞ্জুর করা ছিল নিছক সময়ের ব্যাপার। তবে ভারতে এই মার্কিন সিদ্ধান্তের প্রতিক্রিয়ার কারণ অন্য। এফ-১৬ একটি আক্রমণাত্মক জঙ্গি বিমান, যাহা সন্ত্রাস দমন কিংবা আল-কায়দা নাশের মতো কাজে ব্যবহৃত হইবার জন্য নির্মিত হয় নাই, 'শত্রুরাষ্ট্র'র সহিত রীতিমত যুদ্ধ করার জন্যই ওই বিমানের নির্মাণ। আর পাকিস্তানের সমরাস্ত্র নেপাল, ভূটান, শ্রীলঙ্কা কিংবা মালদ্বীপের বিরুদ্ধে নয়, সর্বদাই ভারতের বিরুদ্ধেই প্রযুক্ত হইয়াছে। এফ-১৬ যুদ্ধবিমান চাহিবার পিছনেও ইসলামাবাদের তাগিদ যে একই, তাহা না-বোঝার মতো মুঢ় বিশেষজ্ঞরা নিশ্চয় মার্কিন বিদেশ দফতর আলো করিয়া বসিয়া নাই। নয়াদিল্লির উদ্বেগ, দুশ্চিন্তা বা প্রতিক্রিয়া তাই অকারণ নয়।

দৃশ্যত সেই কারণেই মার্কিন যুক্তরাষ্ট্র ভারতকেও রকমারি যুদ্ধাস্ত্রে সজ্জিত করার সমাস্ত্রাল প্রস্তাব দিয়াছে, এফ-১৬ অপেক্ষাও উন্নততর জঙ্গি বিমান, অন্যান্য সমরাস্ত্র এবং অসামরিক পরমাণু প্রযুক্তিতে সহযোগিতার আশ্বাস যে প্রস্তাবের অন্তর্গত। নয়াদিল্লি সেই প্রস্তাবে সাড়া দিবে কি না, তাহা একান্ত ভাবেই ভারতের নিজস্ব ব্যাপার। একটা সময় ছিল যখন ভারতীয় বিদেশ নীতি সোভিয়েত শিবিরের সহিত নিবিড় সম্পর্কে এমন ভাবে আবদ্ধ ছিল যে তাহার যুদ্ধপ্রস্তুতিও প্রধানত রুশ অস্ত্রসম্ভারেই সাঙ্গ করিতে হইত। জেটনিরপেক্ষতার মতাদর্শই তখন অগ্রাধিকার পাইত। ঠাণ্ডা লড়াইয়ের অবসান এবং সোভিয়েতের পতনের পর বিদেশ নীতির সেই বিকৃতি ভারত অনেকখানি শুদ্ধ করিয়া লইয়াছে। এখন জাতীয় স্বার্থই অস্ত্রশস্ত্রের কেনাবেচায় অগ্রাধিকার পায়। ফ্রান্স, সুইডেন সহ ইউরোপ, এমনকী ইজরায়েলের সহযোগিতাও এখন সাদরে ব্যবহৃত। কাহার প্রস্তাব কত লোভনীয়, যন্ত্রাংশ সরবরাহের ক্ষেত্রে কথার দাম কাহার বেশি, বিক্রয়োত্তর পরিষেবা ও প্রযুক্তি হস্তান্তরে কে কত অকৃপণ, সেই সবের উপরেই নির্ভর করে চুক্তি। মার্কিন যুক্তরাষ্ট্র যদি ভারতীয় প্রতিরক্ষার চাহিদা পূরণ করে, তবে তাহার কাছ হইতে যুদ্ধবিমান কেনা যাইতেই পারে, অন্যথায় অন্য বিক্রেতার কাছ হইতে। তবে অস্ত্র সরবরাহকারী হিসাবে মার্কিন যুক্তরাষ্ট্রের রেকর্ড খুব উজ্জ্বল নয়। এ ব্যাপারে এমনকী তাহার বন্ধুরাষ্ট্র পাকিস্তানের অভিজ্ঞতাও খুব উৎসাহব্যঞ্জক নয়।

কিন্তু বামপন্থীরা যে ধরনের আপত্তি বা প্রতিবাদ জানাইয়াছেন, তাহা ঠাণ্ডা লড়াইয়ের যুগের মতাদর্শগত অগ্রাধিকারকেই মনে পড়াইয়া দেয়। সত্য, পাকিস্তান উন্নত মার্কিন অস্ত্রে সজ্জিত হইলে তাহা উপমহাদেশে অস্ত্র-প্রতিযোগিতায় ইন্ধন জোগাইবে। ওয়াশিংটন তাহা সম্যক জানিয়াও এমন সময় ইসলামাবাদকে এফ-১৬ বিক্রয়ের সিদ্ধান্ত লইয়াছে, যখন ভারত-পাক দ্বিপাক্ষিক সম্পর্কে মৈত্রীর সুপবন প্রবাহিত হইতেছে। প্রতিরক্ষা মন্ত্রী প্রণব মুখোপাধ্যায় এ ব্যাপারে দ্ব্যর্থহীন সতর্কবার্তা শুনিয়াছেন। প্রধানমন্ত্রীও তাহার হতাশা গোপন করেন নাই। কিন্তু তাই বলিয়া ক্ষেপণাস্ত্র প্রতিরক্ষা সহ বিভিন্ন ক্ষেত্রে মার্কিন সহযোগিতার প্রস্তাব 'আদর্শগত কারণে' প্রত্যাখ্যান করা হাস্যকর। দুই দেশের নৌবাহিনীর যৌথ মহড়া চলিতেছে। সেনাবাহিনীর মধ্যেও উচ্চ পার্বত্য এলাকায় লড়াইয়ে প্রশিক্ষণ এবং দুর্যোগ মোকাবিলার করণকৌশল বিনিময় হইতেছে। সন্ত্রাসবাদ ও সন্ত্রাসবাদীদের মোকাবিলায় দুই দেশ তথ্যবিনিময় করিতেছে। এই চলমান প্রক্রিয়ায় ছেদ টানিবার বামপন্থী দাবি চোরের উপর রাগ করিয়া মাটিতে ভাত খাওয়ার মুঢ়তার মতো। আসলে বামপন্থীরা এখনও ঠাণ্ডা লড়াইয়ের যুগের মানসিকতা উত্তীর্ণ হইতে পারেন নাই। তাই মার্কিন-বিরোধিতার প্রাচীন অভ্যাসও ছাড়িতে পারেন নাই। কিন্তু কোনও দেশের প্রতিরক্ষা নীতি বা বিদেশ নীতি সেই দেশের জাতীয় স্বার্থ দ্বারাই নির্ধারিত হইবে। সেই স্বার্থ যদি মার্কিন সহযোগিতায় সিদ্ধ হয়, তবে তাহা গ্রহণে মর্যাদাহানির প্রশ্ন নাই। আবার দক্ষিণ এশিয়ায় ভারতের প্রাধান্যের অবস্থান যদি পাকিস্তানকে ওয়াশিংটনের যুদ্ধাস্ত্র সরবরাহে বিয়িত হয়, তবে নয়াদিল্লিকেও যাহা করণীয় করিতে হইবে।

A bigger, bolder policy

FROM Iraq to the Indian Ocean, from the forthcoming NPT conference to the Proliferation Security Initiative, from the Japanese overtures to the March 25 statement from Washington, Indian foreign policy is facing opportunities like never before. If Delhi has the boldness to dump the non-aligned rhetoric of the past, the country stands to gain in many areas.

In Iraq, attempts to make it a modern democracy seem to follow the early years of the Indian state. India elected a constituent assembly in 1949, Iraqis elected theirs in February 2005. The first constituent assembly had an overwhelming Congress majority. No Indian suggested at that time, or recently, that the Congress was a Hindu party, except for the Muslim League which had raised the demand for Pakistan. Most Indians had no doubts that Hindu and Muslim opinion would be represented fully within the Congress party. The presence of Zakir Hussain and the Maulana ensured that this was factually so, although many Muslims who migrated to Pakistan did cast aspersions on the integrity of both leaders. So it is with some despair that one reads the many reports in the press, by Indian intellectuals and journalists, that the Iraqi elections are not fair because the Shiites have a majority, that this majority is not "good" or stabilising for Iraqi democracy, that the Sunnis need "special" representation and that Sunni terrorism is secretly justified on grounds of the inevitable injustice which will be done to them by the brute Shiite majority.

This stand, which only repeats Jinnah's arguments, is also so unfair to the desperate attempts being made by Ayatollah Ali Khamenei to move his country to as secular a democracy as is possible in the volatile Middle East region. We have our own volatile region in Kashmir, where the strategy of



India's journey must leave Pakistan behind, and the F16s don't matter

■ RAJA MENON

the Indian Republic has been to push political democracy on the Kashmiri people. They too have seen a partial boycott of the democratic process, mainly by a coalition of Sunni fundamentalists whose real grouse is quite different from their ostensible complaint. In Kashmir, fundamentalists fear that in a fair election they would simply disappear, so they want to shift it to a vote on religion. The Iraqi Sunnis have a replica of the same strategy. The first Iraqi election produced a voter turnout of 58 per cent in an election marred by violence and forty deaths. In the first election held after Governor's Rule in Kashmir, the voter turnout was considerably less, but that elec-

Congress in the first Indian election, or the victory of Mufti's party in the J&K elections.

What is most daunting is the timeline for the Iraqi democratic process. If the referendum approves the constitution in October 2005, the Iraqi people will vote in another general election on December 15 and a new government is to be installed by December 31. The challenging deadlines are probably set so the Americans can begin to hand over power and commence their withdrawal sooner rather than later. The government that emerges in Iraq will be democratic, perfectly legal and enjoy broad-based popular support. Indians have often pointed out the

Foreign policy can always be run on the principle of 'wait and see' but that will only produce successful diplomats, not a successful foreign policy

tion led to the next one which gave the present government. Today no one in India would question the democratic credentials of the Mufti government.

The Iraqi Constitution is to be written by August 2005, five months after the election results were announced and submitted for a national referendum by mid-October. If the Sunnis missed their chance to vote in the election, they may have a chance to register their feelings in the referendum. The Shias are already voting in a split fashion, apart from fielding a number of Sunni and Kurd candidates in the United Iraqi Alliance. So the overall pattern that emerges in Iraq is not far different from the victory of the

fact that of the hundreds of jihadi terrorists arrested world-wide, none was an Indian Muslim. It is time for Indian analysts to also recognise that none of the 19 involved in the World Trade Center bombing was a Shiite.

The winds are changing in the region and New Delhi needs to acknowledge the change sooner. Even Saudi Arabia is beginning to change. In the first ever elections in Saudi Arabia, for half the seats in all municipal councils, it is an even chance that some Shiite candidates might get elected in the eastern territories. Added to these changes are the exciting possibilities of a Palestinian settlement with the courageous Abbas leading his people. The Syr-

ian withdrawal from Lebanon might even see the transformation of the Hezbollah into a full-fledged political party.

The Congress party was asked to make a difficult choice immediately after coming to power on whether to help in Iraqi peace-keeping efforts. The decision, eventually, was to play it cautiously. Foreign policy can always be run on the principle of "wait and see" but that will only produce successful diplomats, not a successful foreign policy.

On India's access to high-tech military technology, the American offer today is stunning. Our thirty year old complaint that the NPT, the NSG and the dual use technology denial regimes have targeted India has now been rubbished with the American offers of joint production of world class combat aircraft. This is not to be mistaken for a hardware sale, but a realisation that the Americans can live with a regional power like India, which operates F18s, the P3Cs, and the SU30 MKI.

The UN restructuring committee's report recommends that nations join the PSI, a decision long pending in Delhi and Washington. Secretary Rice's visit is to be followed by visits of the treasury and transportation secretaries, leading to visits by both heads of states. India's aspiration to be a regional power has found acceptance in Washington, and quite possibly with the EU and Japan. With this status come responsibilities, and a willingness to shed the diplomatic autarky that may have served us well earlier. A number of new initiatives have to be taken that go beyond the charter of the desk officers in the MEA. Political management is also called for, particularly with many ex-ministers, now in the Opposition, making opportunistic statements that disadvantage the country, to benefit their party. This journey must leave Pakistan behind, and if twenty-four F16s make Pakistan feel secure, all the better.

Kashmir talks with Pak Prez possible: PM



ALL THE PM'S MEN: Mauritius Prime Minister Mr Louis Berenger welcomes Prime Minister Dr Manmohan Singh and his wife Mrs Gursharan Kaur on their arrival at Port Louis on Wednesday. Earlier, all the major ministers of the Cabinet turned up to bid farewell to the Prime Minister as he left for the four-day state visit. Despite earlier suggestions by Dr Singh that the send-off ceremony should not disrupt the functioning of the ministers, almost the entire Cabinet, including defence minister Mr Pranab Mukherjee and home minister Mr Shivraj Patil were present in strength at his 7, Race Course Road residence. — AFP picture & SNS report

Press Trust of India

ON BOARD SPECIAL AIRCRAFT, March 30. — Ahead of his crucial diplomatic engagements, Prime Minister Dr Manmohan Singh today indicated that Kashmir would be discussed with Pakistan President Pervez Musharraf who will get a warm welcome in India.

Setting off on his four-day visit to Mauritius, the Prime Minister also talked about his coming meeting with his Chinese counterpart Wen Jiabao when he hoped that the process of agreeing on the basic principles for guiding a solution to the vexed boundary issue will be carried forward. On the US offer of sale of F-16 fighter jets as also cooperation in nuclear energy, Dr Singh said India would have to discuss the matter with Washington.

Dr Singh has since arrived in Port Louis for talks with Mauritius Prime Minister Paul Raymond Berenger and other leaders on enhancing bilateral ties, including cooperation in combating terrorism. On his meeting with Mr Musharraf, when the Pakistan President visits India to watch the last One-Day cricket match in Delhi on 17 April, Dr Singh said when the two leaders meet they cannot confine their discussions barely to the state of weather. He was asked by reporters accompanying him to whether Kashmir would figure in his talks with Mr Musharraf, who is arriving in Delhi on 16 April.

Referring to his meeting with the Chinese premier, who will be paying a four-day official visit to India from 9 April, Dr Singh hoped the discussions would carry forward the process of clarifying or agreeing on the basic principles which should guide the

solution to the boundary problem. To a question whether the US decision to sell F-16 fighter aircraft to Pakistan would be a setback to the Indo-Pak peace process, Dr Singh said he has publicly stated that the F-16 issue has come at a time when "we are engaged in this process." "It has come to me as a disappointment," he said.

The Prime Minister said India would have to discuss with the US details of its offer of cooperation in the field of nuclear energy as well as its willingness to sell F-16 fighter jets to New Delhi. Dr Singh said India needed strong support of the world community, including the US, to achieve the goal of becoming a major global power.

National security advisor Mr MK Narayanan said India recognised the cooperation extended by the US and its recent decision was a "positive step." Strengthening of bilateral cooperation in defence and security areas, including counter-terrorism, human resources development, air links and cultural contacts are expected to dominate the talks Dr Singh would have with Mauritian leaders.

The two sides would also discuss ways for an early conclusion of negotiations on Comprehensive Economic Cooperation and Partnership Agreement and would sign four accords, including one on setting up of Joint Working Group in combating international terrorism.

Dr Singh, who was accorded a red carpet welcome at the Sir Seewosagar Ramgoolam International Airport, is accompanied by his wife Mrs Gursharan Kaur and minister for information technology Mr Dayanidhi Maran.

He will also address the Mauritian National Assembly.

Threat bump ahead

SNS & Agencies

JAMMU, March 30. — Four Kashmiri militant groups today warned people against travelling by the inaugural peace bus to Muzaffarabad saying that it will be waylaid. Though the reports emanating from Srinagar said that the terrorist groups had faxed their statement to newspaper offices, yet no newspaper confirmed having received such a fax till late this evening.

Reports said Al-Nasreen, Al-Arifeen, Farzandane-Millat and the Save Kashmir Movement warned people against boarding the bus and dubbed it a "coffin". Meanwhile, militants launched a fidayeen attack on a north Kashmir BSF camp. Lobbing grenades and opening fire, they tried to force their way in. Security forces returned fire and two ultras were shot dead. But, their identity could not be established. One BSF jawan, TN Singh, lost his life while another Dharam Vir was injured.

■ The statement in Urdu language, also carried a list of 40 prospective passengers who are being vetted by authorities to ride the first bus. It directed newspaper editors to "publish the lists that these people stand warned and are not among the traitors."

VIP list

National Conference chief Omar Abdullah and PDP president Ms Mehbooba Mufti are among eight political leaders who will be travelling to Muzaffarabad on 7 April.

Ladakh entry fee

Foreign tourists visiting the Ladakh frontier in J&K will be charged Rs 400 from April. This was decided by the Ladakh Autonomous Hill Development Council. An inner line permission fee of Rs 800 each has also been fixed for other areas.

India to fight terror with Mauritius

Island nation friendly gateway to Africa: PM

Pankaj Vohra and Agencies
Port Louis, March 30

PRIME MINISTER Manmohan Singh, who arrived here on a four-day visit on Wednesday, is likely to sign various agreements, include setting up of a joint working group for combating international terrorism and a free trade agreement.

The Prime Minister is also likely to sign an MoU for cooperation in environment protection, an agreement for preferential line of credit for \$10 million between Exim Bank and the Bank of Mauritius and another on air services.

This is Singh's first bilateral visit since assuming office last May. Singh and his wife, Gursharan Kaur, were accorded a ceremonial welcome. Mauritius Prime Minister Paul Berenger and other dignitaries greeted him at the airport.

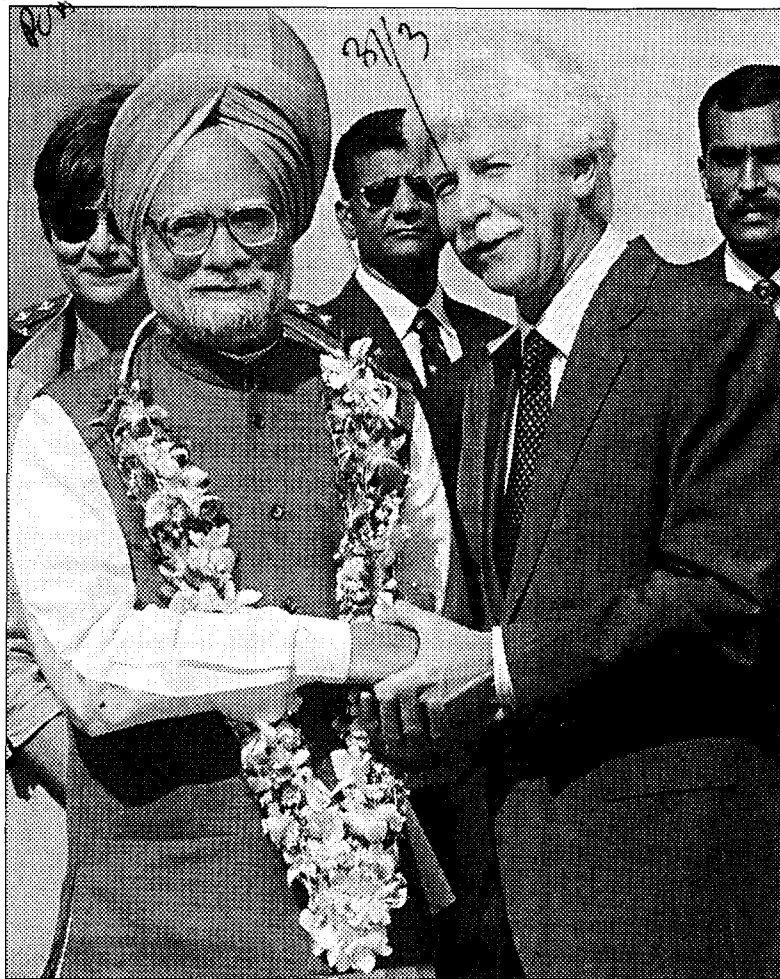
The external affairs ministry described the visit as "totally non-partisan", coming just ahead of elections in the country.

The Prime Minister described Mauritius as a "friendly gateway to the African continent" and an "invaluable partner at multilateral fora". "I hope to discuss with the Mauritian leadership ways of further deepening the economic content of our relations including through the early conclusion of negotiations on a comprehensive economic cooperation and partnership agreement," Singh told reporters at the Delhi airport before leaving.

The high point of the visit will be inauguration of a state-of-the-art Cyber Tower at Ebene, built with Indian assistance. The tower has been constructed to strengthen the capacities of Mauritius in the field of information and communication.

Singh said India has provided support and assistance to Mauritius to emerge as a knowledge hub and recalled that UPA chairperson Sonia Gandhi had inaugurated the Rajiv Gandhi Science Centre during her visit to the country last November.

The Prime Minister will also address the national Assembly and meet top leaders, including Presi-



PTI
Mauritius Prime Minister Paul Raymond Berenger welcomes Manmohan Singh at the international airport in Mauritius on Wednesday.

dent Sir Anerood Jugnauth and Opposition leader Dr Navinchandra Ramgoolam.

Singh grilled

Earlier on board the flight from New Delhi to Port Louis, the Prime Minister was grilled on Bihar and the inability of the government to appoint advisers to the Governor. "We are in the process of appointing advisers". Asked if there was any rethink on his party's position vis-à-vis the

RJD, he said that there was no change; the RJD was a valued ally.

He also denied that his government was not in sync with his party. The core group constituted by the party met regularly. "There are no differences at all."

He refused to comment on the speculation about changes in the top echelons of bureaucracy and the PMO. "You will know about it in the normal course. The new home secretary has been appointed as the present one is retiring tomorrow."

Homesick Indian prisoners go on hunger-strike

Reuters
Port Louis, March 30

INDIAN PRISONERS in Mauritius who want to be transferred home began a hunger-strike on Wednesday to draw Prime Minister Manmohan Singh's attention. Twenty-two inmates, serving sentences ranging from 12 to 30 years for drug or smuggling offences, said the PM's visit was a prime opportunity.

"The sole reason is to draw the PM's attention to our plight and on the need to transfer us to an Indian prison, where we would be closer to our families," the prisoners said in a statement through their lawyer.

About 68 per cent of Mauritius' population is of Indian origin. "While other foreign prisoners have been transferred home, Indian prisoners continue to languish in Mauritius jails, despite close ties between the two countries," Elias Oozeerally, a lawyer representing the inmates, said. Both countries have passed laws allowing for international prisoner transfers.

The Indian High Commissioner to Mauritius, Pripuran Singh Haer, said both countries were close to resolving the matter, pending Cabinet approval in India. "We are very sensitive to the situation of Indian prisoners and India and Mauritius have agreed on the text of an agreement on the transfer of prisoners," Haer said.

Oozeerally said each prisoner costs Mauritius \$5188.50 a year, and sending them home would ease overcrowding and Mauritius' prison budget.

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India, Mauritius plan Free Trade Agreement

By K. Venugopal

PORT LOUIS, MARCH 31. India and Mauritius today decided to pursue a Free Trade Agreement between the two countries, and set up a team to negotiate the terms.

The idea had been mooted by a joint study group and was endorsed today by the Prime Ministers of the two countries at their bilateral discussions here this morning.

The Free Trade Agreement is expected to anchor the proposed Comprehensive Economic Cooperation and Partnership Agreement that will encompass existing arrangements to encourage investment flows and avoid double taxation.

The capital of Mauritius had its fill of the visiting Prime Minister, Manmohan Singh, today. The morning's newspapers devoted several pages in the main section and supplements to detail the warm welcome he got on arrival on Thursday. Conspicuous on the

traffic islands on all the main thoroughfares were framed photographs of the Prime Minister and his host, Prime Minister Paul Berenger.

In a nation that is headed for elections later this year, extra-sensitive political watchers were already reading meaning into the posters and the association they conveyed.

And at the banquet hosted by Mr. Berenger where a band had played good music, Dr. Singh went up to the artistes and shook their hands. Mr. Berenger who accompanied him was then heard remarking, "Mr. Prime Minister, why don't you hold my hand."

Political balance

When he addressed the National Assembly, Dr. Singh seemed to provide the political balance by paying rich tributes to the memory of the island nation's first Prime Minister, Seewosagur Ramgoolam, whose Mauritius Labour Party is led by his son, Navin, and is the principal opposition. Dr.

Singh also had wholehearted praise for the Mauritius people and their "resolute commitment to representative democracy." Addressing the Mauritius General Assembly, he said that the success of the democratic experience was doubly impressive given the multi-lingual, multi-ethnic and multi-religious character of the population. India and Mauritius should show history that pluralism works, and in embracing pluralism, "we embrace global security."

Praising the island for its robust economic growth helped by the remarkable sugar, textile and tourism industries, he cautioned that the relentless forces of globalisation provided challenges even as it presented opportunities. He noted that Mauritius had embarked on an effort to reinvent itself to acquire new skills and diversify into high value products and services such as information technology. The Cyber Tower, the information technology complex set up with Indian

line of credit, was an example of what the two countries could build together, he said.

Among the bilateral agreements signed earlier in the day were:

1) The setting up of a joint working group for combating international terrorism. The task would be to identify international links between terrorists and their sponsors, and to find the means to prevent the flow of funds to terrorist networks

2) The provision of a \$10-million loan to the Government of Mauritius for construction of a sewerage project, and

3) A Memorandum of Understanding on increasing air services between the two countries and on allowing the airlines to operate services to take passengers beyond to third countries. Air Mauritius, for instance, can extend its flights to Karachi and Shanghai or Beijing while airlines from India can fly on to South Africa from Port Louis.

Manmohan discusses Wen's visit with Vajpayee, Advani

By Amit Baruah

Foreign Policy
10/1

NEW DELHI, APRIL 9. The Prime Minister, Manmohan Singh, today met his predecessor, Atal Bihari Vajpayee, the Leader of the Opposition in the Lok Sabha, L.K. Advani, and the former External Affairs Minister, Jaswant Singh, ahead of discussions with the Chinese Premier, Wen Jiabao, on Monday and the Pakistan President, Pervez Musharraf, at the end of next week.

The discussions with the top BJP leaders and with the Left parties on Friday are part of the Government's efforts to evolve a consensus on key foreign policy issues. Mr. Wen arrived in Bangalore from Colombo today.

After the meeting, Mr. Advani said there were references to Mr. Vajpayee's visit to Beijing in June 2003 and Islamabad in January 2004 and the need to maintain continuity in the position taken by different governments.

Mr. Advani said the Government had briefed the BJP leaders on the current state of dialogue with Pakistan, adding that they

were "working in the same direction" adopted by Mr. Vajpayee during his Pakistan visit.

The Government functionaries have made repeated references to the January 6, 2004 agreement between Mr. Vajpayee and General Musharraf on not permitting the use of Pakistan territory to "support terrorism" in any manner.

"New Delhi hopeful"

The Home Minister, Shivraj Patil, today said that New Delhi was hopeful of resolving its border dispute with China but cautioned against expecting overnight results after Mr. Wen's visit.

"They [Dr. Singh and Mr. Wen] will discuss how to solve this [border] problem, about trade and how to maintain peace," Mr. Patil was quoted as saying after distributing gallantry awards to 40 Central Reserve Police Force (CRPF) personnel. "We should not expect that talks will be held today and tomorrow there will be results. But we are going on the right path and in the present circumstances, we are very hopeful [of resolving

this dispute]," he said.

The Foreign Secretary, Shyam Saran, held discussions with his Chinese counterpart, Wu Dawei, this morning to fine-tune the agreements that are to be signed at Hyderabad House on April 11.

Finishing touches

Tomorrow, the National Security Adviser, M.K. Narayanan, and the Chinese Vice-Foreign Minister, Dai Bingguo, will hold talks in their capacity as "Special Representatives" to address the boundary dispute.

They are expected to give the finishing touches to the "guiding principles and political parameters" of a possible boundary settlement. In the next phase of discussions, they are expected to work on a "framework" to resolve the boundary dispute.

While Mr. Narayanan will have his first formal meeting with Mr. Dai since being appointed Special Representative, four earlier rounds of meetings of the "Special Representatives" have taken place, with India being initially represented by Brajesh Mishra and then by the late J.N. Dixit.

10 APR 2005

THE HINDU

CPM foreign policy stuck in cold war era

96-5 1979
g-f foreign policy

DIPTOSH MAJUMDAR
 NEW DELHI, APRIL 14

MARXIST foreign policy standpoints are yet to break out from the Cold War perspective. The 18th CPM Congress decided to "engage" with "economic realities", but did not accept the stark political truth that the world had become unipolar 15 years ago.

General secretary Prakash Karat lashed out at three enemies — "US imperialism" featured in that list. The congress adopted a resolution against American hegemony and the

"unilateral" waging of war in Iraq. Questions were even raised by a few delegates on why Chinese foreign policy revealed a spirit of compromise with the US on a number of issues.

While China has moved on and forged a mutually advantageous relationship with the US, the CPM refuses to assess the Chinese position with a degree of candour. Party insiders agree that if the CPM's economic perspective is changing, it is because the party is running two state governments in West Bengal and Tripura.

On foreign policy issues, the party refuses to admit the changes in the international en-

vironment because it does not really have a stake. After all, foreign policy is the headache of whoever is running the Union Government.

Sources say that nobody is suggesting that the CPM forfeit its right to criticise the US. But as a responsible Communist party, it cannot hope that India would make its diplomacy as "independent" as it was in the early NAM days of the Nehru era.

The American "hegemony" is a reality and instead of "wishing it away", the CPM has to think of ways of dealing with it far more concretely. But "America" is such a dirty bourgeois word that even comrades

who want a frank discourse on the issue dare not refer to it for fear of being branded a stooge of Washington. The Chinese does not accept the American world view but still does business with Washington.

Linked to this inability to react to the changing international scenario is the CPM penchant for keeping alive dead Communist icons. The party continues to befriend and even flaunt its camaraderie with the North Korean Communist Party without realising the degree of isolation that its soul-mates from Pyongyang faces. Even the Chinese do not give them the kind of protection

they used to when dictator Kim Il Jong was still alive. Two North Korean delegates were present at the last congress.

In fact, the CPM is not really evaluating what the neo-Communists are thinking and doing in the rest of the world. The Indian Communist experience can never really be compared with the Latin American model, however much the CPM looks up to Venezuelan leader Hugo Chavez as a cult leader. Democracy is not as deep-rooted in countries south of the Panama Canal, and Communist governments that have gained power in different South American countries

have tended to be dictatorships or at best small oligarchies.

The CPM lashed out at Bush's foreign policies without taking a closer look at the perspective (from Communist Washington's prolonged Iraq war. It did not look at the resurgence of the Communist parties all over Europe. It did not even look at the new trends, including how Communists have come closer to the environmental groups or small peacenik organisations during the war to liberate Iraq. Instead, it took the easy path of America-bashing as it has done through the Cold War days.

15 APR 2005

INDIAN EXPRESS

We value relations with both China, U.S.: Natwar

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'Reports that U.S. wants India to counter China are simplistic'

Sridhar Krishnaswami

WASHINGTON: The External Affairs Minister, Natwar Singh, has brushed aside as "simplistic" reports that the United States was offering arms and other defence technology to India to counter China.

At a press conference at the end of his official visit to Washington, Mr. Singh stressed that the United States had given no indications that they wanted India to "play any game. And I don't think they will."

"We are not in this game at all," Mr. Singh said. "We have very, very good relations with America. We greatly value them. We want to widen them, deepen them and broaden them. The same is the case with China.

"So this idea that there is going to be any kind of gang-up anywhere — neither has it been mentioned nor will it work... is rather a simplistic view of things." Mr. Singh said he had briefed American leaders about the discussions with the Chinese Prime Minister during his



External Affairs Minister Natwar Singh

recent visit and about the signing of 12 agreements.

Calling the Chinese leader's visit to India a "resounding success," Mr. Singh spoke of the expanding cooperation with Beijing on a number of fronts, including trade which is expected to touch \$30 billion by 2010.

Terming his visit to the U.S. as constructive and positive, Mr.

Singh said the interactions had taken the existing relationship a step or two further in all areas. Asked whether he was disappointed that the Bush administration had remained noncommittal on India's claim to permanent membership of the United Nations Security Council, Mr. Singh said the American position was well-

• U.S. briefed about Chinese leader's visit to India

• Talks constructive and positive

• India fulfils all criteria for permanent U.N. seat

known. The Secretary of State, Condoleezza Rice, said Security Council reforms should be in the context of broader U.N. reforms and that discussions were on with a number of partners on the issue. However, she also said, "...international organisations in general will have to take into account India's growing role in the world in order to be updated and to be effective." Responding to Dr. Rice's remarks, Mr. Singh said: "Our credentials are impeccable... Take any aspect of U.N. life; India has played a leading role and by any criteria that you apply, India qualifies for a seat in the expanded council as permanent member."

17 APR 2005

THE HINDU