

About The Author



Avtar Singh Bhasin (b.1935) B.A (Hons); M. A in History. Initially he had short stint of service in the National Archives of India and the Ministry of Defence before joining the Ministry of External Affairs where he served for three decades, retiring in 1993 as Director of Historical Division. He has served in the Indian missions in Kathmandu, Bonn, Vienna and Lagos. He travelled to several other countries in the discharge of his duties in the Ministry. Some of the countries visited were USA, China, South Africa, Kenya, Zambia, Malawi, Botswana, Russia, Ukraine, Belarus etc. He was member of several ministerial and official delegations for discussions with various countries both in India and abroad.

Since his retirement he has taken to academic research. He was Senior Fellow of the Indian Council of Historical Research from 1994 to 1996. He was Honorary Fellow of the Institute of Contemporary Studies, Nehru Memorial Museum and Library from 1997 to 2001. He has authored and edited several books on South Asian affairs. He also contributed several articles in newspapers on developments in the neighbouring countries. His seventy-five pieces on Partition and Freedom were published in the Asian Age consecutively from June 1 to August 14, 1997 coinciding with the Golden Jubilee celebrations of the Indian Independence.

**INDIA'S FOREIGN RELATIONS - 2009
DOCUMENTS**

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P R E F A C E

This is the eighth Volume in the series India's Foreign Relations, published annually in cooperation with the Public Diplomacy Division of the Ministry of External Affairs, Government of India. Set up in 2006, this Division is the public face of the Ministry, reaching out to the think-tanks, academia, civil society and industry both within and outside of the country and interacts with them on the contours of India's foreign policy.

Today there is a paradigm shift from treating foreign relations as an esoteric subject to one of wider debate and discussion. The information explosion, and consequent dissemination of foreign policy related information through the electronic media and the proliferation of newspapers and other sources of information has made the *aam admi* aware of what goes on in the world and how his life is impacted by events in the global village. He wants to be informed how the foreign policy initiatives of the government would make his life better and secure. The government today whether in India or elsewhere cannot take a decision behind closed doors and expect the people to back it too. That is an onerous challenge a democratic and responsive government has to contend with today— to carry the message of foreign policy to the people at large and keep them informed.

India with a population of a billion and one of the largest and fastest growing economies of the world is of interest globally to scholars, academia, diplomats and industry alike. There is a need to reach out to them. The scientific study of foreign relations requires easy availability of original documents as tools of research and analysis. It is the fond hope of this editor that the present series is performing that task.

Over the years the bandwidth of India's foreign relations has increased many folds. Subjects which were not part of foreign policy discourse like, nuclear and thermal energy, climate change, terrorism, financial and monetary issues, trade and investments etc., are today routinely discussed both at the bilateral levels and international gatherings. India is also dialogue partner and/or member of major international organizations/conferences like G-5/G-8, G-20, BRIC, RIC, SCO, EU, ASEM, ASEAN, BIMSTEC, EAS, CICA, IBSA, SAARC, NAM and many more. All these engagements generate a volume

of documents which necessitate inclusion. However the bulk has grown to an extent that it has become difficult to handle. The resort to electronic technology has become the obvious solution to which recourse has been made in the present case. While the printed volume provides the ready reference to the totality of material made available, by placing the text of some of the documents in the accompanying Compact Disc (CD), the bulk has been brought within a reasonable limit. It is hoped the users too will find this format convenient.

The documents have been, as in the past, categorized thematically and region-wise as necessary. Those which do not fall in any particular category and deal with two or more subjects/countries have been placed in the General List with cross referencing wherever necessary.

During the year there were changes at the top echelon of the Ministry. After the general elections in the new Cabinet constituted by the Prime Minister in May Shri S. M. Krishna took over as External Affairs Minister replacing Shri Pranab Mukherjee. At the Minister of State level, Shrimati Preneet Kaur and Dr. Shashi Tharoor replaced Shri E. Ahamed and Shri Anand Sharma respectively. At the top official level there were changes too. On superannuation of Shri Shivshankar Menon on July 31, 2009 Shrimati Nirupama Rao took over as Foreign Secretary. On the superannuation of Shri N. Ravi and on the posting out of Shri Nalin Surie, Ms. Vijaya Latha Reddy took over as Secretary (East) and Shri Vivek Katju as Secretary (West). Shrimati Parbati Sen Vyas took over as Secretary (Economic Relations) from Shri Hardeep Singh Puri on his being posted out as Permanent Representative of India at the United Nations in New York.

In undertaking this task I have as in the past, received help from several sources and friends. I remain indebted to them. Shri TCA Rangachari as always has been generous with his time and went through the Introduction rather meticulously and his advice and critical comments helped to rhyme the text. Many thanks, Sir. Having said that let me hasten to add that I remain fully responsible for any deficiency that may be found either in the Introduction or any where else in the book.

March 20th, 2010.

Avtar Singh Bhasin

INTRODUCTION

I

As India entered the penultimate year of the first decade of the second millennium it found itself active player in a multi-polar world constantly shaped by the forces of globalization. Multi-polarity is a fact of the contemporary globalized order which India as a pluralist society readily accepted. It sought to address a number of global issues and challenges through multilateral consultations at multilateral fora. Effective multilateralism requires understanding and respect for mutual concerns, needs and aspirations of its interlocutors. It is only in this way that coordination and cooperation can develop. The dialogue at the multilateral level enhances the mutual understanding or respect so that the issues of peace, security and development that require bilateral or multilateral cooperation can be effectively addressed. It is in this sense that India's membership and participation in plethora of multilateral organizations/conferences has to be seen. Today India is a member of all important inter and intra regional and international organizations and has been called upon to actively participate in their conferences around the world to help find a solution to global problems whether of a political or economic nature.

2. Unlike prosperity peace is indivisible and it is the key to development and prosperity. Domestic peace cannot be separated from external peace. In determining the foreign policy each country big or small looks to establish peace to attain prosperity for its people. If domestic peace depends on external factors, prosperity of a nation too depends on mobilization of both internal and external resources and hence the need for a peaceful environment becomes critical. Since India's external environment has been threatened by external forces fighting a proxy war, India's search for peace and security has become most urgent. Resources which should have been deployed for development had to be perforce diverted to internal and external security. Peace and security which are the constant prime objectives of any country's foreign policy become more urgent in the case of India. It is the fight against forces of destabilization in the garb of terrorism that drives the energies of the Indian foreign policy establishment today. It must draw the attention of the international community to the scourge of terrorism from

which ever source it emanates and whatever the justification of the cause it seeks to propagate or espouse. Its efforts have brought in mixed results. As the terrorism spreads its tentacles to take more and more nations in its grip, there is greater realization of the Indian point of view that it is a global menace and unless the international community cooperates and acts in tandem, it will not go away.

3. India's need for peace and security is further buttressed by the plethora of problems of development it faces. It is an energy deficit country. Energy is the engine that brings in its train growth. Much of the sources of energy lie beyond its borders. Both to obtain and carry them home, peaceful environment and cooperation of international community is a prerequisite.

4. Concern for Climate has become another impediment to accelerated growth. Clean energy is the new mantra of growth. Faster economic growth has brought in its train its own problem of pollution and green house gas emissions. Temperatures are rising, glaciers are melting much faster now than at any time in the past, threatening to sink small islands and coast lines out of existence. It is a global problem and has to be tackled at the global level. If one were to look back, this problem of climate change has its origin in the consumer societies of the west, who have over the years merrily been eating away into resources of the earth and polluting the environment. Instead of carrying the full burden of correcting the historical injustice, they wish to transfer their burden to the new emerging economies thus further retarding their growth. India is however clear that the control of GHG emissions must be "founded on the principle of equity and common but differentiated responsibilities and respective capabilities". The burden of guarding this principle falls in the realm of foreign policy too. These are new challenges that the foreign policy establishment has to face and develop the expertise for it. The challenges are increasing with the shrinking of the world.

5. In a little more than six decades since India's independence, a plural and diverse nation has with considerable success welded together a democratic political order as also has achieved considerable progress in social and economic development. Economic growth, modernization and the pace of technology driven changes have transformed Indian society at a pace that it has leapfrogged into the new millennium as a galvanized nation. The cliché 'Hindu Rate of Growth' is passe. Now it hits 8 to 9 % and even double digit growth. India is now engaging the world with unprecedented confidence and dynamism as never before. Express highways, super power stations, mega projects dot its landscape. A vast network of railways connects

its various regions more closely than ever before. Our open skies are witnessing traffic jams. India is now more linked with the global economy than it has been for centuries. A major slice of its GDP is accounted for by the external sector. India's needs from the world have changed, as are world's expectation from it and so its capabilities.

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Climate Change

6. The international discourse during the year was dominated with the concern for environment and climate change. As pointed out above, the rising temperature caused by GHG emissions was impacting the global climate threatening the very existence of small island nations and vast coastal areas. Rapid industrialization and use of thermal energy as engine of growth was identified as the culprit causing the problem of emissions. Energy being the catalyst for development, a large number of countries emerging from long colonial rule, had taken to the route of rapid industrialization for their economic development and therefore the need for more and more power houses, the problem of green house gas emissions became critical. The attention of the world environmentalists was naturally drawn to the gathering clouds of green house gases. The carbon dioxide emitted by the burning of hydro-carbon by the automobiles and emissions from power houses fired by coal and oil were identified as the principal reasons for it. With better technologies it became possible to control automobile emissions, the problem finally centered on the super-thermal power stations which were being set up in rapid succession around the world. The real polluters were the nations of the west who during the last two centuries had indiscriminately used thermal energy for their industrialization. The new emerging economies were rather late entrants in the field. The keenness of the west to pin the responsibility on the new emerging economies was stoutly resisted by the latter who insisted that it was the western countries who had to address the historical problem more than what they expected the new economies to do in this direction.

7. The international community was seized of this problem for some time but it gathered the critical mass in 2009 in the run up to the Copenhagen Conference in December. During the year there were many rounds of pre-Copenhagen consultations. The year opened with the Delhi Sustainable Development conference in February. It was attended among others by the Princess of Thailand, Presidents of Finland and Kiribati, Prime Minister of Ethiopia, Secretary General of the United Nations, former Presidents of Maldives, Switzerland and former Prime Minister of Senegal among many

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other luminaries. The Delhi Conference on Climate Change, Technology Development and Technology Transfer in October was attended by 58 delegations, of which 30 were at the ministerial or vice ministerial level. Recalling the Beijing High Level Conference of November 2008 it reaffirmed its commitment to the objective, provisions and principles of the UNFCCC. Other international conferences in the run up to the COP were the Bonn conference in April, the Bangkok in October, Barcelona in November and finally Copenhagen preparatory conference in November itself. In addition, the SAARC countries met in a special conference in October in New Delhi to work out a common position for the Copenhagen. To work out a national consensus, New Delhi too decided to take the state governments into confidence and called a special meeting of the State Environment and Forests Ministers in August.

8. Apart from these conferences which were convened especially and were devoted entirely to climate change, the multilateral conferences held during the year too had it on their agenda. The BRIC Summit in Yekaterinburg and the BIMSTEC in June, G-8 and G-5 Summits at L'Aquila in Italy and the NAM Summit at Sharm El-Sheikh in July, the G-20 Summits at London and Pittsburg in April and September respectively, the India-ASEAN Summit at Hua Hin (Thailand) in October and the India-EU Summit in New Delhi in November too discussed it substantially. The subject was considered so important by the CHOGM that when it met in Port of Spain in November, it held a special session exclusively devoted to its discussion. President Sarkozy of France who had nothing to do with the Commonwealth otherwise, dropped in at Port of Spain to participate in its deliberations, as also the Prime Minister of Denmark. The UN too held a Round Table in New York in September. Sadly, the final CoP at Copenhagen in December, attended by over hundred Heads of State/Government, despite din and excitement it generated, ended inconclusively to the disappointment of all particularly the developing countries, which had pinned a lot of hopes on it.

9. India's negotiating position was summed up by Prime Minister Dr. Manmohan Singh in his message to the nation before leaving for Copenhagen on December 17. He said "the UNFCCC and its Kyoto Protocol embody the international agreed regime for addressing the global challenge of climate change" since these were "founded on the principle of equity and common but differentiated responsibilities and respective capabilities". Therefore as a responsible member of the international community he assured the world that India "was fully committed to working with the rest of the world to preserve and protect the environment" based on these principles.

10. Before the Conference, India too announced unilaterally that it would reduce the emissions intensity by 20-25% by 2020 as compared to 2005. In June 2008 India launched a comprehensive Action Plan on Climate Change and the eight National Missions were set up to achieve its objectives. New Delhi was not unwilling to go a mile further provided there were credible arrangements to provide both additional financial support as well as technological transfers from developed to developing countries in support of programmes for developing clean energy.

11. On June 12, 2009 at Bonn, India had joined 36 other developing countries from Asia, Africa and Latin America, to move an amendment to the Kyoto Protocol which suggested that developed countries committed themselves to GHG emission reduction targets that were considered to be minimum required in view of the enormity of the challenge that the world was confronted from climate change.

12. As stated above, and contrary to expectations, the Copenhagen Conference of Parties held in December after two weeks could not produce a legally binding document. Instead there was a political statement which was not endorsed by the participating countries as a legally binding document. (This was subsequently confirmed officially by the UNFCCC in a notification addressed to the parties by its Executive Secretary Yvo de Boer that since the COP neither adopted nor endorsed the Accord, but merely took note of it; its provision did not have any legal standing with the UNFCCC process even if some parties decide to associate themselves with it.) Disputes between rich and poor countries and between the world's biggest carbon polluters - China and the U.S. - dominated the two-week Copenhagen conference. Tens of thousands of protesters took to the streets and staged demonstrations, to demand action to cool an overheated planet.

13. The political statement contained few specific commitments and a still fewer specific figures or timelines in the global fight against climate change. The UN Secretary General Ban ki-Moon put it tersely: "The Copenhagen Accord may not be everything everyone had hoped for", but added this decision "is an important beginning". He however expressed the hope that it would transform itself into a legally binding treaty in a year's time. It was not adopted failing a consensus, since some delegations had strong objections. Lack of general agreement forced the Chairman to announce it as a "reference document", a political declaration which was not a decision under the UN framework. Hence the countries were left free to add their name to it if they accepted it.

14. The Accord promised a mobilization of \$100 billion in annual funding for developing countries to meet the challenge of climate change from 2020 and also pledged about \$30 billion by 2012. It set a target limiting temperature increases to a maximum of two degrees Celsius, but failed to specify the greenhouse gas emission cuts that nations needed to commit themselves to, in order to meet that goal. There was also no deadline for global emissions to peak.

15. The Minister of State for Environment and Forests briefing the Parliament on December 22 about the outcome of the Copenhagen Conference said: "The Accord recognizes the principle of common but differentiated responsibilities and respective capabilities of the Parties in combating climate change. The Accord recognizes the need to limit the global temperature rise by 2050 to below 2 degree Celsius above pre-industrial levels. While doing so, the Accord clearly sets out the goal in the context of equity and sustainable development. This ensures that in achieving this goal, the right of the developing countries to have an equitable share in access to global atmospheric resources cannot be ignored and is ensured. I might add here that this was a point repeatedly made by the Prime Minister in all his interactions."

16. Regarding peaking of global and national emissions, the Minister said that it was accepted at Copenhagen and included in the Accord that the "time frame for peaking will be longer in developing countries" compared to the developed. It also bears in mind that "Social and economic development and poverty eradication are the first and over riding priorities of developing countries". Minister Jairam Ramesh claimed this to be another "area of success" and "consistent with the position of India as outlined by our Prime Minister over two years ago that our per capita emission will never exceed the average per capital emissions of the developed countries."

17. One of the concrete steps agreed upon at the conference necessary to achieve the funding of some of the programs under the Accord, Mr. Ramesh said was to set up a Climate Fund named "Copenhagen Green Climate Fund". It will seek to provide resources "approaching US\$ 30 billion during the period 2010-2012 to support the adaptation and mitigation actions of the developing country Parties. The funding for adaptation will be focused on the least developed countries, small-island developing States and Africa. They have also undertaken a commitment to mobilize US \$ 100 billion a year by 2020 for such purposes and a high level panel will be set up under the guidance of Conference of Parties to review the progress of these commitments."

18. One major outcome of the Climate debate at Copenhagen was the emergence of the BASIC Group comprising Brazil, South Africa, China and India who not only coordinated their positions at Copenhagen but also vowed to work together in their endeavour not to let the developed countries walk away with a solution at the cost of developing and least developed countries at any future international gathering of this nature. Mr. Ramesh in his Statement in the Parliament emphasized that their unity was instrumental in ensuring that the Accord "was finalized in accordance with the negotiating framework as laid out in the UNFCCC, Bali Action Plan and the Kyoto Protocol". He added that the BASIC countries would "continue to work together" along with other countries of the G-77. The Minister made a significant announcement that the US President Obama in helping to forge the Accord at the end interacted with the BASIC countries, which ensured that "the Copenhagen Accord was clinched to the satisfaction of all present," and that the Basic Group succeeded in getting through with its proposals on global goals and on monitoring and verification besides that "the Copenhagen Accord was not legally binding and that there was no mention of a new legally binding instrument in the Accord."

19. New Delhi after carefully studying the implications of the call given in the non-binding statement conveyed to the UNFCCC Secretariat its association to it on January 30th, 2010 by pronouncing its domestic mitigation actions to prevent climate change. It said it would endeavour to reduce the emission intensity of its gross domestic product (GDP) by 20 - 25 percent by 2020 in comparison to 2005 levels. This is the same position which India had earlier unilaterally and voluntarily announced. It was once again made clear that this was a voluntary offer and will not have legal binding character, and this action did not apply to agricultural sector. That it was not a binding accord was once again affirmed by the Minister Jairam Ramesh in Lok Sabha on March 9, 2010. He said: "Accord is a political document and not a legally binding one. The Accord is not a separate track for negotiations outside the UNFCCC and the purpose of the Accord was to bring consensus in the on-going two track process. The two tracks on which talks will continue from April 20, 2010 are the Long Term Cooperative Action on Climate Change and extended Kyoto Protocol."

20. The battle of Climate Change now moves to Mexico where the next COP will take place towards the end of 2010. But before that the battle will be fought at many pre-Mexico conferences.

Civil Nuclear Energy Cooperation

21. If the year 2008 marked the end of nuclear apartheid imposed on India by the international community since the nuclear implosion of 1974, the year 2009 was one of consolidation. The Agreement for Civil Nuclear Energy Cooperation signed in 2008 with France was ratified in 2009. Another similar agreement was signed with Russia too whereby it will help India to set up two additional nuclear facilities. From being an outlier, India was now accepted as a partner in the global nuclear domain. The success of the civil nuclear initiative engendered a sense of assurance and confidence which enabled New Delhi to look, proactively and not defensively, at a new global agenda for nuclear non-proliferation and nuclear disarmament.

22. The concern for climate change through green house gas emissions became the primary motivation to promote the use of nuclear energy. According to some estimates a nuclear power plant in its life cycle emits only 3.24 grams of carbon dioxide per kilowatt hour, much less than fossil fuels. Shrinking stocks of fossil fuel and other sources of thermal energy, make it doubly necessary to promote the use of nuclear power. Research and development of nuclear safety technology has enabled the world to cross the threshold of fear and safety from radiation, which had gripped the world, particularly the countries of the west in the eighties, fanned by the Greens movements in Europe. India's clean record of non-proliferation of nuclear technology too had prompted the members of the NSG to consider the waiver in favour of India. In February 2009 India signed with the International Atomic Energy Agency another mandatory agreement for application of safeguards to civil nuclear facilities. This would further facilitate the process of cooperation with many more countries in the coming years.

23. In 2009, among the countries that agreed to extend their cooperation in this critical area were Mongolia, Canada, the UK, Kazakhstan etc. In February Russia signed with the Department of Atomic Energy a contract for the long term supply of 2000 tons of natural uranium pellets for its Pressurized Heavy Water reactors and another contract for about 60 tons of Low Enriched Uranium (LEU) pellets for Boiling Water units at Tarapur. *The Hindu* on July 16 quoting the Chairmen of the Nuclear Power Corporation Ltd. SK Jain reported that besides Russia India had also received natural uranium as yellow cakes from Areva of France for use in its safeguarded reactors. Mr. Jain said on July 14 that India had also received clearance from the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) for the fabrication of

this imported fuel into fuel rods. The process was now underway at the Nuclear Fuel Complex (NFC), Hyderabad, he said.

24. In October India identified four sites for setting up new nuclear reactors. The sites identified were Chhayamithi Viri in Gujarat and Kovvada in Andhra Pradesh for US and Jaitapur in Maharashtra for the French reactors. The Russian collaboration was for reactors at Kudankulam in Tamil Nadu and Haripur in West Bengal. During the year India too issued a letter of intent for up to 10,000 megawatts of U.S. nuclear power reactors.

25. There were some areas of concern too. The US President had announced his intention to seek ratification of the CTBT and its universalisation as one of the principal instruments of international security architecture and a key measure of non-proliferation and disarmament. India's reservations on the CTBT were already well known. The Declaration issued by the G-8 countries on Non-Proliferation at their L'Aquila Summit in Italy earlier in July, and the references in it to the transfer of enrichment and reprocessing items and technology to non-signatories to the NPT, did cause concern to India albeit temporarily. New Delhi wondered whether an effort was being made by certain countries to deprive it of its newly won waiver!

26. In responding to the concerns raised in the Indian Parliament on July 13, Finance Minister Mr. Pranab Mukherjee, who had led India's negotiations for the nuclear deal in 2008 as External Affairs Minister clarified that only IAEA and NSG were the appropriate agencies in so far as the policy of nuclear trade was concerned and individual countries belonging to whatever group, could only decide individually whether they want to enter into trade with India or not.

27. The visit of US Secretary of State Hillary Clinton to India in July became handy to clear the doubts. When questioned on this, she categorically denied any such intention and assured her interlocutors that US did not want to go back on what had been achieved already. Even before the start of Ms. Clinton's India visit signals from Washington were positive. The Press Trust of India reported from Washington that the U.S. on July 16 had said it was "fully committed" to the nuclear deal with New Delhi and hoped to sign the end-use monitoring agreement. "We hope to be able to sign that [end-use monitoring agreement], and obviously, that will take place next week," Assistant Secretary of State for South and Central Asia Robert Blake told reporters in Washington on the eve of Secretary of State Hillary Clinton's visit to India. "I do not think there should be any apprehensions about the

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future of the civil nuclear agreement," Mr. Blake told reporters. "The [U.S.] Secretary and the President are fully committed to that agreement. I think the Indians are also fully committed," he said. "They [India] are going to be, I am sure, moving forward to file a declaration of safeguarded facilities with the IAEA, which is sort of the next step in that process, and then we're going to start reprocessing talks, probably either later this month or in August," Mr. Blake said. The Press Trust of India further reported from Vienna on July 25 quoting Department of Atomic Energy sources that India and the U.S. had completed the first round of consultations on 'arrangements and procedures' for reprocessing of spent fuel of American origin on Indian soil. Incidentally the end use monitoring agreement was signed during the visit of Ms. Clinton in July.

28. The Prime Minister wishing to put an end to any such apprehensions as a result of the L'Aquila declaration himself made the position clear in Parliament. Replying to the discussions in Parliament on his visits abroad the Prime Minister told the Parliament on July 29 that "as far as the G-8 is concerned, the fact is that we have no civil nuclear cooperation agreement with the G8 bloc per se. We have, however, signed bilateral agreements with France, Russia and the United States. As I have said before, and I repeat it here, when I raised this matter with President Sarkozy, he was gracious enough to tell me that as far as France is concerned, there will be no restrictions. He also said that if we want him to go public on this, he will do so. Therefore, there is no consensus in the NSG to debar India from such technologies. We expect that the countries concerned will honour and implement their bilateral commitments."

29. The concern for non-proliferation reverberated at the UN as well when fourteen Heads of State/Government of the member countries of the UN Security Council met in a special session on September 24, under the president-ship of the US President Barack Obama, since the Presidency of the Council for that month rotated to the United States. The Summit adopted a Resolution on nuclear non-proliferation and nuclear disarmament.

30. India not being a member of the UNSC, was anxious that its views must be before the Council on this sensitive issue. In a preemptive move, a day earlier on 23 September 2009 India's Permanent Representative at the UN Ambassador H.S. Puri, conveyed to the Council, through a letter containing India's approach and perspectives on non-proliferation as well as its reservations. That New Delhi was assured before hand that

the Resolution was not directed against India, was clear from what the Prime Minister told the Indian media at Pittsburg on September 25. He said: "We have been assured that this is not a Resolution directed at India; and that the US commitment to carry out its obligations under the Civil Nuclear Agreement that we have signed with the United States remains undiluted. That, we have been assured officially by the United States Government."

31. Ambassador Puri's letter while emphasized New Delhi's "unwavering commitment to global efforts for preventing the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction and their means of delivery" too sought to point out the infirmities of the non-proliferation regime that have had an adverse impact on Indian security. Supporting the "the two global and non-discriminatory international conventions banning chemical and biological weapons and efforts for strengthening their implementation" the letter recalled the former Prime Minister Rajiv Gandhi's Action Plan of 1988 and said: "Nuclear disarmament can be achieved through a step by step process underwritten by a universal commitment for global elimination of nuclear weapons". India reminded the Council that in order to address the "threat posed by all nuclear weapons to international peace and security it required global elimination of nuclear weapons on a non-discriminatory basis" and "while preventing proliferation is important, an excessive focus on non-proliferation does a disservice to the essential principle of the mutually reinforcing linkage between disarmament and non-proliferation."

32. India suggested that "International efforts in this regard should build the necessary confidence among states so that international treaties and agreements are multilaterally negotiated and freely accepted which remains the true test of their legitimacy and credibility." The letter strongly felt that "states should fully and effectively implement the obligations arising from the agreements or treaties to which they are parties" and that India did not find any specific role for the UN Security Council, which should arise only "if those treaties themselves provide for such a role".

33. In November Prime Minister Dr. Manmohan Singh visited Washington and met several leaders of the US including the President and raised this issue of US cooperation in civil nuclear energy Sector. He was assured as he himself told the Indian media on November 25 "the Government of the United States remains committed to early implementation of Civil Nuclear Cooperation Agreement." Admitting that

"there are some minor problems with regard to agreeing on the reprocessing dedicated facilities that is mentioned in the 123 Agreement" he said these were "not insurmountable barriers, and I am confident that in the next couple of weeks we can sort out these things." He confirmed to the media that the civil liability legislation had already been approved by the Indian Cabinet "and we will be going to Parliament to enact the legislation that is required".

34. The Prime Minister "welcomed President Obama's initiative to host a Summit on Nuclear Security in April next year" and expressed the hope that "our countries can play a vital role in strengthening global resolve to prevent terrorists from gaining access to materials and technologies related to weapons of mass destruction".

35. On the Fissile Material Cut Off Treaty (FMCT) India held a consistent position: envisaged it as a significant contribution to nuclear non-proliferation in all its aspects. It encouraged the negotiation and early conclusion of a multilateral, universally applicable and effectively verifiable treaty on Fissile Material Cut-Off at the Conference on Disarmament. It may be recalled that the Bush Administration had signaled a change in policy, to insist that the FMCT should have no verification procedures and that national means would be relied upon for ensuring compliance. The July 18, 2005 Indo-US Joint Communiqué stated that the two countries would cooperate to bring about an early conclusion of the FMCT in Geneva. The nature of the treaty was left deliberately ambiguous, because India continued to favour multilateral verification procedures. This is also the consensus view among Conference members. India therefore welcomed the Obama Administration's reversion to this consensus and shown its preparedness to work together for the early conclusion of an FMCT.

36. New Delhi drew satisfaction from the fact that as the year 2009 ended, its rearguard action to preserve and consolidate the gains of 2008 had been successful.

37. While India was consolidating and extending its area of international cooperation, an avoidable controversy was raised in the media by some interested elements regarding the success of the Tests conducted by it in May 1998. It died soon enough as the Atomic Energy Commission on September 5 came out with full facts regarding the types of Test conducted, estimated yields, and other essential details to set at rest any doubts. The Prime Minister himself confirmed the success of the Tests.

IV

Multilateral Cooperation**ASEAN and East Asia Summit**

38. In August India signed with the ASEAN two agreements on (1) Dispute Settlement Mechanism and (2) Trade in Goods under the Framework Agreement on Comprehensive Economic Cooperation and a Protocol to Amend the Framework Agreement on Comprehensive Economic Cooperation. This it was hoped would give a new momentum to trade development between India and member countries of the Organization.

39. External Affairs Minister S. M. Krishna at the Ministerial meeting of the India-ASEAN described India's engagement with ASEAN as the central element of its "Look East" policy which was initiated in the early 1990s. This relationship had grown steadily and acquired qualitatively new dimensions, particularly since 2002, when India began its annual Summit level dialogue with ASEAN.

40. The Prime Minister visited Hua Hin (Thailand) in October to attend the 7th India - ASEAN and the 4th East Asia Summits. Overall India's trade with ASEAN amounted to about 10 per cent of India's global trade. It grew at a healthy rate and stood at about US Dollars 48 billion in 2008.

41. The importance of the ASEAN lies in the fact that it is a region that comprises of about 600 million people where the nominal GDP is about 1.7 trillion US dollars. India's relations with the ASEAN countries overall assumed greater salience in the last few years. Particularly, after the emergence of the global economic and financial crisis. It was a matter of satisfaction for India that overall, Asian countries including the ASEAN were able to deal with the after-effects of the global financial crisis with a certain degree of confidence and success. The India-ASEAN Summits are occasions to review the progress in relations with ASEAN countries. India's enhanced engagement with the ASEAN was at the heart of India's 'Look East' Policy.

42. Dr. Manmohan Singh announced the ASEAN countries were deeply appreciative of the fresh initiatives announced by India, to establish an India-ASEAN Round Table, for the preparation of a Vision Statement for our relations till the year 2020, marking of commemorative events in 2012, and offer of assistance of up to 50 million US dollars to fund various projects under the ASEAN Work Plan for the period 2009-2015. He described the conclusion of the India-ASEAN Trade in Goods Agreement as a concrete

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step forward in the process of India's integration with South East Asia. As a follow up to this Agreement, India agreed to expedite the finalization of the Agreement on Trade in Services and Investment.

43. The 16-nation East Asia Summit, established in 2005, comprises the ten ASEAN countries and 6 others, Australia, New Zealand, India, China, Japan and South Korea. It has developed a wider vision of cooperation within Asia encompassing developed, developing, emerging markets and least developed countries. So, it was a mix which gave an opportunity to the members to exchange their expertise in different fields whether manufacturing or capacity-building or training. It gave them a tremendous degree of opportunity. This included energy, environment, climate change and sustainable development, financial cooperation, natural disaster mitigation, education and most importantly a Track II study on a Comprehensive Economic Partnership in East Asia. It is called the CEPEA. Till recently, CEPEA was on a Track II where mostly think tanks and representatives including economic experts were examining how to facilitate and expand trade among the East Asia Summit countries. When the Economic Ministers of the East Asia Summit countries met in Bangkok in August, they decided to enhance the activity of CEPEA from the so-called Track II to Track I in the sense that senior officials of the respective Governments would now meet to discuss how to take this forward.

44. At the end of the two Summits, the Prime Minister expressed his satisfaction with their outcome. He said he found a strong desire among the ASEAN countries to substantially strengthen their links with India in all areas. This included not only economic cooperation and trade but also science and technology, human resource development, protection of the environment, and deeper political and security cooperation.

45. The East Asia Summit shared India's vision of an Asian Economic Community that was based on an open and inclusive regional architecture. The EAS countries recognize the impact of India's socio-economic transformation on the reshaping of the global economic order and the opportunities for accelerating Asia's own growth. The Prime Minister reiterated to the leaders of the EAS India's commitment to the success of international efforts to combat climate change, the urgent need to collaborate in the research and development of renewable energy technologies, the need for Asia to focus on food and energy security and disaster management, all of which were key to finding a path to sustainable development. There was understanding among the leaders of the EAS that the issues of terrorism

and non-traditional threats to security needed to be addressed with resolve and firmness.

46. To New Delhi's satisfaction the EAS Leaders' endorsed the Nalanda University Project to be located in Bihar.

BIMSTEC

47. The External Affairs Minister described India's commitment to BIMSTEC as an integral part of our "Look East Policy". BIMSTEC with a population of 1.4 billion and GDP of US \$ 1.7 trillion is a bridge between India and Southeast Asia. India had hosted the second BIMSTEC Summit in November 2008. There are 14 areas of cooperation identified under the BIMSTEC, some of which are health, energy, technology, HRD, trade, tourism, and counter terrorism. A Free Trade Agreement between India and the countries of the BIMSTEC is under active discussion.

48. While attending the Ministerial meeting of the BIMSTEC in Myanmar in December 2009 India handed over to Myanmar the Chairmanship of the organization. The Ministerial meeting adopted a Convention on Cooperation in Combating International Terrorism, Transnational Organized Crime and Illicit Drug Trafficking, a Memorandum of Association among the Bay of Bengal Initiative for Multi-sectoral Technical and Economic Cooperation for the establishment of Energy Centre, another Memorandum of Association for a BIMSTEC Centre for Weather and Climate and a Memorandum of Understanding on the Establishment of the BIMSTEC Cultural Industries Commission (BCIC) and BIMSTEC Cultural Industries Observatory (BCIO). The meeting expressed its satisfaction at the finalization of the text of the Agreement on Trade in Goods and other provisions relating to the Rules of Origin, Operational Certification Procedures and the Agreement on Customs Cooperation at the 18th Meeting of the BIMSTEC TNC at Phuket in June 2009, and called upon the TNC to finalize the Annexes to the BIMSTEC FTA Agreement on Trade in Goods at the earliest.

BRIC, SCO and RIC

49. India's contribution in 2008 at G-20 to help in stabilizing world economy and role played by it in other international fora over the years has ensured for it almost a permanent place at the high table of international conferences. Russian President's personal invitation to Prime Minister Manmohan Singh to attend the summit conference of the Shanghai Cooperation Organization at Yekaterinburg, despite India only enjoying an Observer status was a pointer to that trend. He too expressed his anxiety that India joined as full member

of the SCO and insisted that the rules for this be finalized soonest to facilitate New Delhi's entry. New Delhi's own decision to participate in the Conference was India's desire to intensify its engagement with countries in its extended neighbourhood in Central Asia. The issues which connect India with the countries of the SCO were, as Prime Minister Manmohan Singh enumerated in his departure statement on June 15,-- "fight against terrorism and extremism, and cooperation in areas of energy security, infrastructure development, agriculture, transportation, science, and technology and education".

50. The SCO Summit was preceded by the Summit of the BRIC countries namely, Brazil, Russia, India, China. Representing 40 percent of the world's population and global GDP, BRIC has the potential to lead global economic growth.

51. The Summit while endorsing the decisions of the G-20 as a panacea for the economic meltdown of 2008, emphasized that the decision-making and implementation process at the international financial organizations should be "democratic and transparent". Even otherwise the Summit underlined its support for a "more democratic and just multi-polar world order based on the rule of international law, equality, mutual respect, cooperation, coordinated action and collective decision-making of all states."

52. India's main concern, terrorism received due attention at the Summit and this was reflected in the joint statement issued at the end of the conference. The Statement *inter alia* said: "We strongly condemn terrorism in all its forms and manifestations and reiterate that there can be no justification for any act of terrorism anywhere or for whatever reasons. We note that the draft Comprehensive Convention against International Terrorism is currently under the consideration of the UN General Assembly and call for its urgent adoption."

53. There was some commonality between the BRIC and SCO Summits held together. The resolve to reform the United Nations Security Council to reflect the contemporary reality, the SCO summit said that global "multi-polarity is irreversible" while the BRIC summit reaffirmed its "support for a more democratic and just multi-polar world order based on the rule of international law, equality, mutual respect, cooperation, coordinated action and collective decision-making of all states."

54. The 9th meeting of the Foreign Minister of the three of the four BRIC countries namely Russia, India and China (RIC) held on 27 October 2009 in

Bengaluru (India) while exploring new avenues for deepening and strengthening their interaction on various issues, expressed satisfaction that despite the international financial crisis, their "economies improved contributing to faster growth among them". They were satisfied that "enhanced engagement among them had strengthened their influence on the process of democratization of international relations and development of multi-polar world order reflecting the diversity of world cultures and civilizations". The RIC too endorsed the Pittsburg Conference of G-20 decisions as a way out of the financial crisis of 2008. Like the BRIC and SCO the RIC too "reiterated that there was a need for a comprehensive reform of the United Nations with a view to make it more efficient so that it can deal with the current global challenges more effectively". Juxtaposing the expression that "their countries attach importance to the status of India in international affairs, and understand and support India's aspirations to play a greater role in the United Nations" along with the need for democratizing the UN was quite satisfying to New Delhi. India's concern on the question of terrorism too found resonance in the joint communiqué issued at the end of the Bengaluru Conference.

Commonwealth

55. The theme for this year's Commonwealth Heads of Government Meeting (CHOGM) which took place at Port of Spain, Trinidad and Tobago in November, marking its 60th anniversary, was "Partnering for a more Equitable and Sustainable Future". The Concept paper circulated by the host country Trinidad and Tobago entitled "Partnering for a more Equitable and Sustainable Future" urged member states to forge partnerships for a more sustainable future. India while fully supporting sustainable development and understanding the concerns of Small Island States regarding global warming, however believed that the historical responsibility of the current situation had to be addressed under the principle of Common but Differentiated Responsibilities.

56. At this conference Pakistan was reinstated in the Organization following the "conduct of credible elections in the country in February 2008 and the assumption of office by an elected, civilian government in April 2008".

57. Given the importance of Climate Change, a separate session of the Conference, attended by special invitees like the Secretary General of the UN, the President of France and the Prime Minister of Denmark was held along with the main conference. Since a global climate change solution was central to the survival of peoples, the conference in its declaration on Climate

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Change pledged itself to the "promotion of development and facilitation of a global transition to a low emission development path" and determined that the agreement in Copenhagen must address the urgent needs of developing countries by providing financing, support for adaptation, technology transfer, capacity building, approaches and incentives for reducing emissions from deforestation and forest degradation, and for afforestation and sustainable management of forests".

58. To mark this special occasion of the 60th anniversary of the Commonwealth, the Indian Prime Minister announced at the conference several new initiatives like issuing commemorative coins and first day covers and stamps, 250 slots under ITEC programme for Commonwealth countries, funding of the post of Sports Advisor in the Commonwealth Secretariat, a special programme of training for Commonwealth diplomats at its Foreign Service Institute, etc.

European Union

59. The 10th India - European Union Summit was held in New Delhi, when the current President of the EU the Swedish Prime Minister Reinfeldt visited New Delhi in November. An important outcome of this annual exercise was the signing of the India-EU Agreement in the field of Fusion Energy Research, which underscored the growing importance of energy security and clean energy in the India-EU cooperation.

60. A review of the progress on the Joint Action Plan adopted in 2005 was conducted, and measures to speed up its implementation were agreed upon. It was noted with satisfaction that despite the economic slowdown, trade in goods and services doubled over the past five- year period to reach almost Euro 80 billion. It was agreed to expedite the conclusion of a balanced and mutually beneficial Broad Based Agreement on Trade and Investment leading, hopefully, to increased economic opportunities and creation of jobs as well as wealth.

61. The Summit provided an opportunity to exchange views on global and regional issues such as the reforms of international institutions, the global economic and financial crisis, climate change and nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation.

62. The security situation in the AF-Pak region which was the cause for concern to both India and the EU was discussed. It was agreed on the need for concerted international action to combat terrorism. India and the EU agreed to work towards early finalization of the agreement between

EUROPOL and India. It was also an opportunity to review the situation in West Asia, Iran, Myanmar, Sri Lanka and to discuss other regional issues.

63. The Prime Minister Dr. Manmohan Singh in his media interaction expressed his satisfaction with the outcome of the discussions and expressed the desire to take this very important relationship forward in all areas.

64. The summit reflected the growing interdependence across a wide range of issues and areas. It was noteworthy that starting with the first bilateral summit in Lisbon in 2000, the EU -India interaction has become multifold. Within 4 years, at The Hague summit, the landmark Strategic Partnership Agreement was signed and in 2005 a Joint Action Plan (JAP) was adopted which gave the roadmap for action, and continues to guide the deliberations annually. With the geopolitical centre progressively shifting, the EU-India relationship steadily moved from commercial and economic one to that of strategic partnership through trade and investment.

G- 8/G-5

65. In July the Prime Minister attended for the fifth time the Summit of the G - 8 countries at L'Aquila, Italy, as a member of the Other Five namely, Brazil, China, Mexico, India and South Africa. This offered an opportunity to the Prime Minister to interact with leaders of both the major and emerging economies. The issues discussed at such meetings varied according to the need of the time. As Prime Minister said in his departure message "this will be an occasion for projecting India's views on major global issues relating to the world economic and financial crisis and its impact on development, food security, energy security and climate change, international trade negotiations and reform of the international institutions".

66. The Prime Minister during his stay in L'Aquila attended meetings of leaders of the G-5, G-5 + G-8 and Egypt and of the G-8, G-5, Egypt and African countries, besides attending the meeting of the Major Economies Forum on Trade and Climate Change. These meetings he told the media accompanying him on board his special flight to New Delhi, took place "when the world is attempting a recovery from the recession caused by the financial crisis in the heart of the developed world". He said while there were some signs of recovery, the world economy was still a long way from recovering the earlier growth momentum. Other subjects that came up were climate change, food security, energy security, terrorism, nuclear non-proliferation, international trade, restructuring of institutions of global governance including the UNSC. While at L'Aquila, he took the opportunity to meet the leaders of

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Angola, Japan, the USA, Russia, the UK, Australia, Italy, and several other world leaders.

67. When asked if he succeeded in achieving what he had set to achieve, he frankly said "This is a big struggle. I have placed the thinking of India before the G-8, G-5 and before the entire world. I believe there has been a great appreciation of our view point. But it would not be correct to say that all other countries are in agreement with us. Particularly there is going to be greater pressure on India and China. We have to stop it. Alongside we have to make the world understand that as global citizen we understand the responsibilities of India. What is reasonable to stem the climate change we shall do and in fact we are doing."

68. The Conference ended with the adoption of several declarations such as, on food security, counter terrorism, non-proliferation, global agenda, and declaration by the Major Economies Forum on Energy and Climate Change.

69. Regarding the financial crisis, the Prime Minister told the Parliament on July 17 that he had stressed to the Conference the "importance of a concerted and well coordinated global response to address systemic failures and to stimulate the real economy. There is a need to maintain adequate flow of finance to the developing countries and to keep markets open by resisting protectionist pressures".

70. As pointed out in earlier paras there was some apprehension in India about the G-8 Statement on non-proliferation and its impact on India's cooperation on civil nuclear energy agreements with countries like the United States, France and Russia. Prime Minister took pains to assure the people of India through his statement in Parliament on July 29 that their apprehensions were misplaced. While pointing out that India's agreements were with some of the individual countries of the G-8 who had again pledged to stay committed to the agreements and not with the G-8 per se. Besides, in view of the clean exemption accorded to India by the NSG last year on nuclear trade, India had nothing to fear.

G-20

71. The impact of financial crisis which gripped the world in 2008 continued to be felt in 2009. The world leaders met twice in summit at London in April and at Pittsburg in September. The London Conference meeting in April was confronted with the greatest challenge to the world economy in recent times. The global output was contracting at pace not seen since the 1930s. Trade was plummeting. Jobs were disappearing rapidly. It appeared as if the world was on the edge of a depression.

72. The London Conference met the challenge head on and many agreements were arrived at which helped the global economy to stage some fast recovery. There was agreement that credit flows to developing countries must be restored. There was consensus that the development process particularly of the developing countries could not be halted and this realization resulted in ambitious liquidity stimulus measure and growth packages. Importantly the Conference pledged to mobilize US \$ 1.1 trillion of resources for international financial institutions, largely to sustain growth in emerging markets. The steps taken by the G-20 to augment the resources of multilateral development banks led to substantial stepping up of World Bank lending to emerging economies and India benefited too. This summit too agreed the crisis was tackled in a way that did not create other problems for the future like protectionism or restrictions on the free flow of trade and persons that could be counter productive for the developing countries in the long and short run. Similarly there was consensus that development could not be halted or sacrificed in the search for immediate solutions to the financial crisis.

73. By the time Pittsburg Conference convened in September the global economy and financial markets had shown a distinct improvement. The positive results flowing from the London Conference were acknowledged by the Pittsburg in its Communique issued on September 25. It noted: "Our forceful response helped stop the dangerous, sharp decline in global activity and stabilize financial markets. Industrial output is now rising in nearly all our economies. International trade is starting to recover. Our financial institutions are raising needed capital, financial markets are showing a willingness to invest and lend, and confidence has improved..... Our national commitments to restore growth resulted in the largest and most coordinated fiscal and monetary stimulus ever undertaken. We acted together to increase dramatically the resources necessary to stop the crisis from spreading around the world. We took steps to fix the broken regulatory system and started to implement sweeping reforms to reduce the risk that financial excesses will again destabilize the global economy."

74. The Pittsburg Summit was meant essentially to review what had happened since the London Conference and chart the way forward in the light of experience gained. The Conference agreed there would be no premature withdrawal of stimulus. The conference noted that the emergency financing for the International Monetary Fund had been successfully completed and there was now need to address the issue of the IMF quota increase by early 2011. There was agreement to help the World Bank and

other regional development banks to find the necessary resources based on a review of their capital needs to be completed in the first half of 2010.

75. An important decision of the Conference was to phase out and rationalize the medium term inefficient fossil fuel subsidies while providing targeted support for the poorest. There was a recognition that inefficient fossil fuel subsidies encourage wasteful consumption, reduce energy security, impede investment in clean energy sources and undermine efforts to deal with the threat of climate change.

76. The most important conclusion of the Pittsburgh Conference was that the Group of 20 will henceforth be the premier forum for international economic issues. This is an important development to broadening the global governance structure, to incorporate major developing and emerging countries into the new framework. There was speculation that this decision could lead to merger of the role of G-8 with that of G-20.

77. The Pittsburgh Conference pledged to sustain strong policy responses until a durable recovery was secured and to avoid any premature withdrawal of stimulus while preparing exit strategies and adopt policies needed to lay the foundation for strong, sustained and balanced growth in the 21st century. As stated above the London Conference had laid emphasis on avoiding a solution that would create other problems for the future like protectionism or restrictions on the free flow of trade and persons. At Pittsburgh that danger was recognized once again and it was pledged that "We will fight protectionism. We are committed to bringing the Doha Round to a successful conclusion in 2010."

78. To achieve the objective of the Conference, it launched a Framework for Strong, Sustainable, and Balanced Growth and tasked the IMF to help "with its analysis of how our respective national or regional policy frameworks fit together." It identified the World Bank for advice "on progress in promoting development and poverty reduction as part of the rebalancing of global growth". While doing so the Conference pledged to "work together to ensure that our fiscal, monetary, trade, and structural policies are collectively consistent with more sustainable and balanced trajectories of growth".

79. To undertake the work of putting the Framework in place the Finance Ministers and Governors of Central Bank of the G-20 were tasked "to launch the new Framework by November by initiating a cooperative process of mutual assessment of our policy frameworks and the implications of those frameworks for the pattern and sustainability of global growth".

80. Accordingly the Finance Ministers and Central Bank Governors of the G-20 met in November and launched "the G20 Framework for Strong, Sustainable and Balanced Growth". They adopted "a detailed timetable and initiated a new consultative mutual assessment process to evaluate" whether their policies will collectively deliver the "agreed objectives". The IMF and the World Bank were called upon to assist in this task, beside getting input from other international organizations "as appropriate including FSB, OECD, MDBs, ILO, WTO and UNCTAD".

Nonaligned Summit

81. The XV Summit of the nonaligned countries was held in Sharm EL-Sheikh (Egypt) in July. It had for its main agenda the theme of "International Solidarity for Peace and Development" and the current Economic and Financial Crisis. Non-alignment has been the bedrock and an article of faith of India's foreign policy. Talking of the relevance of the nonaligned movement "in the post-Cold War era, when the world is no longer divided into two military blocs", the Prime Minister said in his departure statement it "has a renewed role to play in the emerging world order". He pledged to the members of the NAM that "India will play its part in helping NAM to regain its moral high ground to address issues which are of direct concern and relevance to developing countries such as sustainable development, climate change, food security, energy security, terrorism and reform of the architecture of international governance".

82. Stressing the need for solidarity among the countries of the movement, External Affairs Minister S. M. Krishna on July 15 addressing the Ministerial segment of the Conference said "Our solidarity is crucial for our development and progress. Our problems are common. They range from poverty alleviation, eradicating hunger and deprivation, tackling pandemics, and raising literacy levels. Our responses to them are naturally varied given our differing situations. Many of them need international cooperation and an enabling environment for countries to succeed in these tasks. Solidarity within our Movement and a balanced approach should be our guiding principles."

83. "Nowhere is international solidarity for peace and development most relevant than in combating terrorism," said Mr. Krishna. He did not stop at that and went on to underline its scourge to humanity and warned: "Terrorism threatens democracy and democratic values. It aims to destroy lives and reverse development. It is also a threat to international peace and security. International solidarity and solidarity within NAM are necessary in order to

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combat this scourge effectively. We call upon MAM members to unequivocally condemn terrorism; no cause or reasoning can be used to justify such acts. In this context, the early adoption of the Comprehensive Convention on Terrorism being discussed in the United Nations is an immediate imperative."

84. Pointing out the relevance of nonalignment, the Prime Minister in his address to the Summit plenary on July 15, alluded to the unfairness of the system as presently structured both in terms of political and economic institutions. He said while the financial crisis had been brought upon the world by the developed economies, greater burden of it has been unfairly cast on the developing countries which were also non-aligned. Therefore nonaligned movement had a great stake in securing the steps planned to revive the global economy. These include the challenges of food security, energy security, environment and reform of the institutions of global governance. They were embedded in the economic crisis and must be dealt with comprehensively and with a sense of urgency. The Prime Minister regretted that though "we have a global economy of sorts, the global polity does not represent the hopes, fears and aspirations of the majority of the world's people". Regretfully the "decision-making processes, whether in the United Nations or the international financial institutions continue to be based on charters written more than sixty years ago, though the world has changed greatly since then", said the Prime Minister. Prime Minister pleaded that the weight of NAM should be used to achieve a comprehensive, balanced and above all, equitable solution to the economic and political problems of the world.

85. The Sharm El Sheikh Declaration issued on July 16 inter alia demanded the expeditious reform of the Security Council through its expansion and improvement of its working methods; the fundamental reform of the international economic and financial systems and architecture "so as to address its flaws". It asked for enhanced voice and participation of developing countries "in international economic and decision making and norm setting, including in international financial institutions, with a central role of the United Nations and its member states through the General Assembly and the Economic and Social Council, including in mitigating the impact of the crises on developing countries and in materializing the right of developing countries to a legitimate policy space."

86. The Sharm El Sheikh Summit ended with four declarations- Declaration on Palestine, Declaration on ending US embargo on Cuba, the Final Declaration and the Sharm El Sheikh Declaration.

V

South Asia -- The Countries of the SAARC

87. South Asia or the countries of the SAARC represent one-fifth of humanity. It is an enormous landmass. Bonds of geography, history, culture and values tie the peoples of this region together. For centuries, South Asia has been the home for the peaceful coexistence of various peoples in harmony with nature. People of many faiths have lived together for ages and our region has given birth to many religions-- Hinduism, Buddhism, Sikhism and Jainism. Islam enriched the mosaic of South Asian culture for more than millennia. There were practicing Christians on the Malabar coast before Christianity reached Europe.

88. All through the region, efforts were underway to achieve the common good through greater exchanges at multiple levels - governmental, parliamentary, academic, cultural and most importantly at the level of peoples through the promotion of tourism, commerce and cooperation in the field of education. These efforts have to be accelerated for the region to confront its common challenges - poverty alleviation, health, education and industrialization. Internal stability and economic progress in all the region could only solve the problem of poverty which has been endemic for centuries. It is only through shared economic development that the region can achieve its objectives of lasting peace and security. Growth and development are closely intertwined with peace and security.

Afghanistan

89. India's \$ 1.2 billion assistance programme in Afghanistan, makes it the sixth largest donor and underlines its abiding interest in the political stability of the country by strengthening its social and economic institutions to guarantee its self-sustained growth. The Indian programme straddles the road and power projects, small and quick-gestation social projects and indigenous skills and capacity development. India's five medical missions provide free medicines and treatment to over a thousand patients a day. The Indian-aided Indira Gandhi Hospital has now been linked through a telemedicine link with two of India's super specialty hospitals, similar to what India has done for the African countries

90. In 2009 India-assisted 218-KM long Zaranj - Delaram Road, Pul-e-Khumri transmission lines and the substation at Chimtala were inaugurated. The Shimtala sub-station ensures stable 24-hour supply of power to the capital city of Kabul. The Salma Dam on the Hari Rud river in Heart province

and the Afghan parliament building are scheduled to be completed in 2011. Human resource development is an important element of Indian programme in Afghanistan. In this sector India provides annually 675 scholarships each, for undergraduate and graduate studies in India, besides training facilities for public servants in Indian training institutions in areas beneficial to that country. India welcomed the successful completion of second presidential and provincial elections, which marked the maturing of democratic institutions in a traditional society.

91. The set back in the security scenario was indeed a major cause for worry. There was a repeat attack on the Indian Embassy in Kabul. The targeting of the Indian Embassy in Kabul on October 8 by a suicide squad of the Taliban, shocked New Delhi. It may be recalled that on July 7, 2008 there was a similar attack on the Embassy, in which 40 people including two senior diplomats-a military attaché and a Counsellor besides security personnel of the Embassy and Afghan nationals were killed. The present suicide attack killed 17 people and injured another 80. Characterizing the attack on the Indian mission in Kabul as the handiwork of those desperate to undermine Indo-Afghan friendship, New Delhi offered financial and medical assistance to Afghan nationals injured in the terror strike. While India did not point an accusing finger at any one, the Foreign Secretary Mrs. Nirupama Rao said "whoever is responsible for this attack is against peace, is against democracy, is against people of Afghanistan and against the people of India." The Afghan authorities however, had apparently no doubt about the direction the attack came and said that it was planned from "across the border." Refusing to be intimidated by such clumsy attacks Ms. Rao reiterated New Delhi's "unwavering commitment to pursue our bilateral development partnership and assist the people of Afghanistan in realising a democratic, peaceful and prosperous Afghanistan." The External Affairs Minister asked to comment on the developments in Kabul, reiterated in Bengaluru on October 10 India's "determination to continue its work of developing infrastructure there".

92. The irony is that only a day earlier on October 7, Foreign Secretary Mrs. Rao at a Seminar in New Delhi prophetically had warned of the "recent dramatic decline in security", and the "need for an intensified focus on security, governance and development." She called upon the international community to "do what it can to assist" Afghanistan, and to put "effective pressure on Pakistan to implement its stated commitment to deal with terrorist groups in its territory including the members of the Al Qaeda." She cautioned "failure in Afghanistan's stabilisation will entail a heavy cost for both the Afghan people and the world at large". Mrs. Rao was quite forthright in

analyzing the reasons for the decline in the security scenario and the source of turbulence, when she said: "the increase in terrorist actions in Afghanistan is linked to the support and sanctuaries available in the contiguous areas. That explains the particularly high-level of violence in the border areas of Afghanistan". Mrs. Rao warned that unless security was ensured "the gains made over the past eight years will be compromised and it will become difficult to forestall the restoration of status-quo-ante, to a situation similar to what prevailed prior to 11 September 2001." Underlining Indian conviction that "terrorism cannot be compartmentalized" she warned that "any facile attempts to strike Faustian bargains with terrorists often result in such forces turning on the very powers that sustained them in the past." She had no qualms in pointing out the "sense of defeatism (that) pervades certain sections of international opinion" and the need to guard against this, "because it runs the risk of encouraging insurgent groups, besides weakening the authority of the Central Government and its institutions". In sounding her warning, she had on the back of her mind the recent rumbling of the call for differentiating between good and bad Talibans; bring the former in the mainstream by sharing power with them and in the process isolating the latter. The question which bothered New Delhi was 'can the out laws of so many years' standing--some accused of most barbarous crimes, really be given a share in running the country? New Delhi continued to be disbelieving. However it is a losing battle India is fighting. The NATO powers have put their weight behind it. Afghan President Hamid Karzai with Pakistan's enthusiastic backing is sold to the idea, New Delhi's options are limited.

93. In March 2009 India had welcomed the US Af-Pak policy in the hope that it augured well for the security of Afghanistan since the strategy started with a clear, concise, attainable goal: disrupt, dismantle, and defeat al Qaeda and its safe havens. For the first time Afghanistan and Pakistan were clubbed together as two countries but one challenge. Despite western efforts and deployment, the security situation however remained fragile and there was not much decline in terrorist activity. It looked as if the security forces both internal and external were not in a position to meet the challenge and there was a danger of their getting bogged down in the Afghan quagmire. Then in a dramatic move on December 1, 2009 President Obama announced surge of another 30, 000 troops in Afghanistan to augment the American deployment to bring the situation under control expeditiously. But President Obama's brave announcement too had a dampening ring about it. He announced the timetable for starting the American pull out of its troops from that country in the next 18 months. While New Delhi welcomed the "surge" as a step to strengthen the Afghan security forces to meet the challenge of

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terrorism in that country and President Obama's call on Pakistan to ensure "terrorists do not enjoy safe havens on its territory", New Delhi knew well that the hope was too fanciful. If past experience was any guide Pakistan was indeed a weak link who in search for its "strategic depth" played a different ball game from the one the US had in mind. Therefore while welcoming US surge New Delhi, harbouring its doubts of Pakistan's bona fide, appealed the international community "to impress upon Pakistan that it must use all its influence and resources to implement its commitments to dismantle the infrastructure of terrorism and to deny sanctuary to all terrorist groups who operate from its soil". New Delhi too was not sanguine on the time table the US set for it to begin withdrawing from Afghanistan. The Official Spokesperson of the Indian Ministry of External Affairs on December 3 gave expression to his doubts when he said that it was "imperative that the international community shows sustained and long-term commitment to assisting the Government and people of Afghanistan."

Bangladesh

94. As a result of the landslide victory of the Awami League in the December 2008 elections, Sheikh Hasina took over as Prime Minister of Bangladesh on January 7, 2009. India welcomed the new government and the Prime Minister Dr. Manmohan Singh in his message of congratulations to Sheikh Hasina assured her that he looked forward to working closely with her to further strengthen and expand the multifaceted bilateral relationship in a manner that responded to the aspirations of the people of the two countries.

95. In February the External Affairs Minister visited Bangladesh and received the most positive response to New Delhi's concerns on the question of security. Bangladesh's Foreign Minister Ms. Moni's words were most reassuring. She said Dhaka believed that "the terrorists don't have any borders, they don't have any religion, they don't have any nationality. They are terrorists. Whoever tries to use our territory to harm anyone we will put a stop to it. We will be vigilant. We are reassuring not just the honourable Foreign Minister of India but like to reassure all of us that we will be vigilant and we will not let anyone use our territories for any kind of terrorist activities." During his call on Prime Minister Hasina, Mr. Mukherjee proposed a Task Force to combat terrorism. Adding her bit Ms. Moni said Bangladesh would have dialogues with its other regional neighbours", since "terrorism is a problem, which is not contained by any borders, so combating terrorism also needs cross-border regional cooperation to be effective". All this was most reassuring to New Delhi.

96. Bangladesh's trade deficit with India had been a matter of concern to Dhaka for a long time. Though India had been responsive to Dhaka's concern, latter failed to understand that it was not always possible to address this problem in arithmetic terms. Showing understanding of Bangladesh's concern on this account EAM tried to argue that while imbalance may not be possible to eliminate, it certainly was "possible to reduce the gap and to keep it within manageable limits." Recalling his last visit to Dhaka he reminded Dhaka that New Delhi had removed or reduced tariff barriers on a number of items. Reassuring Dhaka of India bonafide he said: "This time, during my interaction with the Foreign Minister I have requested them to give me a list in which Bangladesh Government is interested so that we can further prune the negative list. We have already pruned the negative list. In this connection you may recall, unilaterally, we declared at the 14th SAARC Summit - India will allow large number of items without any duty from the least developed countries, including Bangladesh".

97. During the EAM visit two Agreements - one on bilateral trade and the other on bilateral investment promotion and protection were signed in the hope that these would further strengthen the framework for trade and investment between both countries. To further promote trade between closes neighbours External Affairs Minister stressed the importance "to enhance connectivity, linkages" which would bring prosperity to the region. The subject of connectivity was again a subject of discussion in September when Bangladesh Foreign Minister paid a return visit to New Delhi. It was then agreed that the Indian side would facilitate Nepal-Bangladesh and Bhutan-Bangladesh connectivity.

98. The September visit of Dr. Moni was important for both the countries from many angles. It was supposed to be a curtain raiser for the scheduled visit of Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina before the end of 2009. Since both the Prime Ministers of India and Bangladesh had to make unscheduled visits to Copenhagen for the Climate Change Summit, her visit was postponed and it took place in January 2010.

99. Among the many important decisions taken during Dr. Moni's visit, the most momentous decision of far reaching importance was to enhance cooperation in the power sector. India agreed to provide at least 100 MW of power to Bangladesh on a priority basis. Dhaka had expressed concern at the Tipaimukh Dam project on Brahmaputra, but New Delhi to allay Dhaka's misgivings assured it that India "would not take steps that would adversely impact Bangladesh". Similarly to resolve the long pending question of sharing

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of waters of the Teesta river, while mandating the two foreign offices to urgently discuss the technical and other parameters of this issue, it was agreed to immediately commence joint hydrological observations on the river and undertake bank protection works.

100. The visit of Dr. Moni provided an opportunity to give shape to the concerns expressed by both for their mutual security during the External Affairs' visit to Dhaka in February. It was now agreed to conclude two important agreements -- Agreement for Mutual Legal Assistance in Criminal Matters, and Agreement on Combating International Terrorism, Organized Crime and Illegal Drug Trafficking. It was also agreed to conclude another agreement for transfer of sentenced persons in each other's country.

Nepal

101. In May the Nepalese government led by the Maoist leader Pushpa Kamal Dahal "Parchanda" resigned on issue of civil control over armed forces, since the Cabinet decision to replace the Chief of Army Staff was not accepted by President Dr. Ram Baran Yadav. In the ensuing developments a new coalition government under CPN (UML) leader Madhav Kumar Nepal and supported by 22 parties, took office. Political instability in the neighbourhood of India did cause unease in New Delhi. The Prime Minister giving his expression to his anxiety on this account said on May 4 "Today there is lack of peace and stability in India's neighbouring nations- be it Nepal, Pakistan or Sri Lanka. It [the developments] can also affect the security situation in our country." The Union Home Ministry directed Seema Suraksha Bal (SSB) which patrols 1750-km border with Nepal, to remain on high alert.

102. The fast developing scenario in Kathmandu saw Foreign Secretary Shiv Shankar Menon in Kathmandu on June 20-21 to reiterate India's commitment to "assist Nepal in its transition to multi-party democracy and in its peace process to achieve a peaceful and prosperous future".

103. India was concerned at the stalemate in constitution making and lack of political consensus in Nepal. External Affairs Minister S. M. Krishna told the Lok Sabha on July 9 that due to the nature of our "relations and the open border, the developments in Nepal had a direct impact on us". Of particular concern to New Delhi was lack of tangible progress in the process of integration and rehabilitation of the combatants of the Maoist army and their cadres. As the year ended the process of constitution making too remained stalemated, essentially due to disagreement among the political parties on the structure of governance and polity.

104. In August both the Nepalese Prime Minister and the Prime Minister visited New Delhi separately. The visit of Prime Minister Madhav Kumar 'Nepal' offered an opportunity to discuss and resolve many outstanding issues relating to trade, and transit, borders and border management, cross border crime, connectivity, hydro-power and water management, development assistance, supply of essential commodities, infrastructure, education and human resource development, investments etc. The Prime Minister of India assured his Nepalese counterpart India's full support and cooperation in its political process and constitution making. The longstanding Nepalese urge for revision of the 1950 Treaty was discussed and the two Foreign Secretaries were directed "to discuss and review the 1950 Treaty of Peace and Friendship and other bilateral agreements with a view to further strengthening the bilateral relationship".

105. Security has remained a major area of concern between the two countries. The Nepalese side assured New Delhi that it would not allow its territory to be used for any activity against India and the Indian side also gave the same assurance to the Nepalese side. The two sides agreed to consider steps to further facilitate cross-border arrangements in order to resolve border related issues and to assist local populations in the border areas on both sides. They also stressed on the need for strengthening the legal framework, in order to counter their common cross border security challenges. Unfortunately the extradition treaty which was initialed in January 2005 has remained unsigned for one reason or the other.

106. Following the Nepalese Prime Minister's visit, the Indian Foreign Secretary Mrs. Nirupama Rao visited Kathmandu in September to exchange views on further improvement of bilateral relations and to focus on the implementation of the vast agenda agreed upon during the visit of the Prime Minister of Nepal, as contained in the Joint Press Statement. At the Civil Aviation Secretary level talks both sides agreed to promote tourism between the two countries by increasing the number of seats from 6000 to 30, 000 between Kathmandu and the Indian metros.

107. It may be recalled that the appointment of Indian priests to perform the traditional puja at the sacred shrine of Lord Pashupatinath in Kathmandu had created some avoidable trouble by some elements for which the political leaders, with whom Mrs. Rao interacted, conveyed their regret. The Government of Nepal reassured her that "they have taken all necessary measures to ensure the security and well being of the Indian priests and continuation of regular prayers at the temple".

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108. Mrs. Rao reinforced Prime Minister's assurance to the Nepalese political leaders India's "abiding interest in the success of Nepal's transition to multi-party democracy and the completion of the peace process" since a peaceful, democratic and prosperous Nepal was in the interest of the both countries and their people and South Asia.

109. In October the two countries signed the Treaty of Trade and the Agreement of Cooperation to Control Unauthorized Trade. The new Trade Treaty revised the 1996 Treaty which was a turning point in the trade relations between the two countries and resulted in phenomenal growth of bilateral trade from Rs. 28.1 billion in 1995-96 to Rs. 204.8 billion in 2008-09. While the Nepalese exports to India increased from Rs. 3.7 billion to Rs. 40.9 billion, the Indian exports to Nepal increased from Rs. 24.4 billion to Rs. 163.9 billion during the period 1995- 2009. Yet the two sides felt there was a need to shift the Indo-Nepal trade to the higher level and attain better qualitative dimensions.

110. A fundamental feature of the 2009 Agreement of Cooperation to Control Unauthorized Trade was to allow export of goods imported by Nepal from India to the third countries without necessity of carrying out any manufacturing activity in Nepal. This would enhance exports from Nepal to third countries where it had a better market access as compared to India. Similarly it will allow export of the goods imported by India from Nepal to third countries. This will help Nepalese exporters to take advantage of the third country market access developed by the Indian export houses.

Sri Lanka

111. It was a decisive year in Sri Lanka's history. The Sri Lankan security forces for the first time took the battle in the LTTE's territory and beat them too. New Delhi was anguished that political structure of talks was abundant in favour of a solution by use of arms. It repeatedly impressed on Colombo to work for a political solution through peaceful negotiations between all the parties. It appealed to the LTTE too to abandon the path of armed conflict, lay down arms and sit across the table with the Sri Lanka Government to find a political solution. Unfortunately that was not to be. LTTE's obstinacy and obduracy shrank the ground for New Delhi to help in a peaceful political solution. The conflict resulted in large scale suffering for the people in the North province, which bore the brunt of the fighting. About three lakh Tamils were displaced from their homes and hearths, many were killed and many more injured in the cross fire.

112. The killing of LTTE Chief Villupalli Prabhakaran during the security operations and the defeat of the LTTE though eliminated the militarist fringe of the Tamils; it did not bring a political solution to the ethnic issue any closer. A permanent solution admittedly may take a little time. The priority was to heal the wounds inflicted by decades of protracted conflict, to make a new beginning and to build a better future for the people. The External Affairs Minister S. M. Krishna on December 4 in his speech in the Parliament emphasized to the Sri Lankan Government that "the time had indeed come to focus on issues of relief, rehabilitation, resettlement and reconciliation". India while expressing its readiness to work with the Government of Sri Lanka in the rehabilitation and reconstruction process of Northern Sri Lanka and in restoring normalcy offered an assistance of Rs. 1000 crores.

113. Presence of nearly 300,000 Internally Displaced Persons (IDPs) in camps in Northern Sri Lanka posed a major challenge to the Sri Lankan Government. The need was immediate humanitarian attention and urgent steps to resettle them in their original places of habitation so as to restore semblance of normalcy in their lives after the traumatic experience they had undergone.

114. Sri Lanka Government had announced that by the end of 2009 a couple of lakh displaced persons would be settled. By all accounts Sri Lanka government did struggle to achieve the rehabilitation and humanitarian objectives of the problem on an expeditious scale. By the end of the year about a couple of lakh IDPs had indeed been settled.

115. In October, a delegation of Tamil Parliament Members visited Sri Lanka to see things for themselves. They witnessed the distribution of the humanitarian relief items donated by India and held discussions with a cross-section of the leaders of the Sri Lankan Tamil community and the Indian Origin Tamils. They called on the President of Sri Lanka Mahinda Rajapaksa. The parliamentarians came back by and large satisfied at the pace of rehabilitation and relief work in Northern Sri Lanka.

116. The Government of India assisted and worked with the Sri Lankan Government to ensure the resettlement of all IDPs. 2.5 lakh family packs from Tamil Nadu, consisting of dry rations, clothing, utensils, footwear etc, were provided to the IDPs. The 60-member emergency field hospital set up by India in March 2009 operated for six months till September and treated more than 50,000 patients, many of them serious cases requiring surgery. Two consignments of medical supplies were also gifted.

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117. Speaking in the Lok Sabha on December 4, Mr. Krishna assured the Tamil community that besides Rs. 1000 crore already promised, India was committed to doing more. "Our humanitarian effort in Sri Lanka has transitioned from a purely relief effort to a broader rehabilitation and reconstruction phase," announced the External Affairs Minister. To facilitate speedy resettlement of IDPs, India extended much needed de-mining assistance. To ensure that returning IDPs had a roof over their heads, India donated initially 2,600 tonnes of shelter material. An additional 2,600 tonnes of shelter material was again provided. To address the vulnerable sections of the society emerging out of a military conflict, especially war widows, New Delhi undertook to construct a project for their rehabilitation as well.

118. For the rehabilitation of agriculture in the devastated North Province, India supplied 20,000 agricultural starter packs in the first instance followed by an additional 50,000 packs. A team led by the Indian Council of Agricultural Research visited Sri Lanka to work out a blueprint for assistance to revive agriculture there.

119. To help in the priority area of infrastructure under Lines of Credit India committed to take up projects in railway infrastructure, reconstruction in Northern Sri Lanka and provision of rolling stock. India too is anxious to rejuvenate the cultural and social life amongst the people in the North and East provinces. Skill development and capacity building are areas of focus, as also vocational training and the provision of enhanced educational opportunities.

120. But rehabilitation and resettlement was one part of the story; the other and more important was finding a political solution to the ethnic problem within the framework of a united Sri Lanka, which would meet the legitimate interest and aspirations of all sections of the population that caused the conflict and the attendant ruin all round. Revival of such a political process and an inclusive dialogue would help bring the minority communities into the political mainstream and offer a dignified life to all. India continued to emphasise to the Sri Lankan Government to put forward a meaningful devolution package that would go beyond the 13th Amendment. This naturally was expected to take some time. The Government time table is progressing to a schedule. The presidential election, which was advanced by a couple of year, was completed in January 2010 and the incumbent president emerged victorious.

121. There was a need to evolve a national consensus and hold an all party meeting on this crucial issue. One only hopes this process will not be unduly prolonged and meaningful dialogue will be held in a business like manner leading to an all round acceptable solution which will be harbinger of social, economic and political harmony in the island.

Pakistan

122. India-Pakistan relations during the year remained under the 26/11 cloud. New Delhi was anguished that Pakistan had not shown enough earnestness to prosecute the leaders/handlers of the gang who mounted the terror attack on Mumbai. Despite India providing copious evidence to meet the insatiable and repeated Pakistani demands for more and more evidence, Pakistan did not show enough seriousness to put up a cast-iron case in the court, particularly against their ring leader Hafiz Mohammad Saeed. It found space behind the smokescreen provided by the Lahore High Court which threw out the case against him since court felt there was not enough evidence to prosecute him. External Affairs Minister S. M. Krishna in his gentle manner gave vent to Indian frustration when he told Karan Thapar in an interview on June 14 "Pakistan could have made more serious attempts in fighting the case and I believe that not enough was done in pursuing the case".

123. The Jahadi outfits that were declared unlawful were still operating freely, albeit under different names. The Pakistani cities too came under repeated terror attacks resulting in the killing of scores of people. The tiger Islamabad was riding was roaring back for once. But it did not spur Pakistan enough. They continue to have a field day. Unfortunately, Pakistan failed to realize that terrorism is a two-edged sword. The Frankenstein that it allowed to grow in its backyard for years to 'punish' India for its failure to address Islamabad's perceived grievances, including one on Kashmir, had now chosen to strike back, giving Pakistan the taste of its own pudding. Perhaps the cries of the innocent Pakistanis were not loud enough for the deaf Pakistani leadership. It nevertheless remained oblivious of the Indian pain and anguish.

124. Under the US prodding and perhaps in gratitude for massive US financial assistance Pakistan did move a little finger but only selectively. It chose to act against only those operating in its western region targeting western interests. It remained ambivalent on action against those operating on its eastern borders. Never mind if in targeting India they were neither sparing Pakistan's premier cities like Islamabad and Lahore. It perhaps did not matter to Pakistan even when the guest sportsmen were not spared.

125. Complicity of Pakistan in terror attack on the Indian Embassy in Kabul in July 2008 was no less galling for New Delhi. Pakistan, in search of an illusionary strategic depth in the west, employed the instrument of terror to sanitize Afghanistan of Indian presence. The grudging acquiescence of the outside powers, anxious to use Pakistan in securing their larger objective in that country was unfortunate. And this when it was admitted by all that the Indian programmes were beneficial for the people of Afghanistan. Failure of these powers to persuade Pakistan to allow its corridor for the import by Afghanistan of the much needed Indian goods, and allow the export of its produce to India points to that failure.

126. The outraged Indian public opinion backed the government's decision taken last year to suspend the on-going 'Composite Dialogue', until Pakistan took credible action against the people whom India held responsible for the Mumbai attack and against whom sufficient evidence was provided to Islamabad in several dossiers. That India made this a litmus test of Pakistan's sincerity was articulated by the Prime Minister himself on the floor of the Parliament when he said that if Pakistan showed the sincerity that was necessary to convey to us that they were rearing to go the whole hog in trying to destroy the instrumentalities of terrorism, which was directed against India, perhaps India would be too willing to resume the dialogue with Pakistan.

127. During the year India unsuccessfully tested waters several times to see if there was even a glimmer of hope that Pakistan was serious about taking action towards dismantling the structure of terrorism directed against India. At Yekaterinburg, on June 16, on the sidelines of the SCO Summit, Prime Minister Manmohan Singh chose to deliver a tough message to President Zardari. He was left in no doubt about India's seriousness. Mr. Singh told Mr. Zardari in the presence of the media that while he was happy to meet him, his mandate was to tell him "quite frankly that I have come with the limited mandate of discussing how Pakistan can deliver on its assurances that its territory would not be used for terrorist attacks on India." It took not only President Zardari by surprise but the entire media and the public at large. It was India's frustration at Pakistan's pussyfooting on the terrorist question that was oozing out.

128. By the time the Prime Ministers of India and Pakistan met at Sharm El Sheikh on the sidelines of the NAM Summit, not much had happened to give India the satisfaction that it was looking for. While Pakistani Prime Minister Yusuf Raza Gilani was anxious for resumption of the composite dialogue, Dr. Manmohan Singh assured him that New Delhi was not against

the talks per se, but "the dialogue cannot begin unless and until the terrorist acts of Mumbai are fully accounted for and the perpetrators are brought to book". Pakistan putting a spin of its own on the joint statement interpreted the phrase "Prime Ministers recognized that dialogue is the only way forward. Action on terrorism should not be linked to the Composite Dialogue process and these should not be bracketed." The use of the phrase "Action on terrorism" preceding the words "not linked to the Composite Dialogue process" clearly put the onus of "Action" first on Pakistan which was to be followed by Dialogue and not the other way round as Pakistan sought to interpret.

129. The Prime Minister explained in Parliament on July 29 while speaking on his visits abroad that it was "in our vital interest to make sincere efforts to live in peace with Pakistan. But despite the best of intentions, we cannot move forward if terrorist attacks launched from Pakistani soil continue to kill and injure our citizens, here and abroad. That is the national position. I stand by it. I have said time and again and I repeat it right now again: it is impossible for any government in India to work towards full normalization of relations with Pakistan unless the Government of Pakistan fulfills, in letter and spirit, its commitment not to allow its territory to be used in any manner for terrorist activities against India." This was the sum and substance of what he tried to explain to the Pakistan Prime Minister Gilani notwithstanding what he made out to understand. The truth was ringing loud and clear when Dr. Manmohan Singh added "over the past seven months, we followed a policy, using all effective bilateral and multilateral instruments at our command, to ensure that Pakistan acts, with credibility and sincerity, as we would expect of any civilized nation". In the face of Pakistani intransigence on the question of terrorism, if any body expected that Dr. Singh offered to resume talks or de-link terrorism from the dialogue, it would sound incredulous.

130. The mention of Pakistan's problem area of Balochistan in the Shram El Sheikh Joint Statement created avoidable confusion in a section of the media and the public. The Prime Minister explaining its rationale said that Prime Minister Gilani had expressed to him the apprehensions of a section of the Pakistani people that India "meddled in that Province". But he assured him that their concerns were unfounded since India was "neither interested in destabilizing Pakistan nor it harboured any ill will towards Pakistan". He firmly believed and told Mr. Gilani as well that "a stable, peaceful and prosperous Pakistan living in peace with its neighbours is in our own interest". He reiterated to the Lok Sabha, what he had told Gilani "that we are not afraid of discussing any issue of concern between the two countries. If there

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are any misgivings, we are willing to discuss them and remove them". He also told Prime Minister Gilani that the Indian Consulates located in Kandhar and Jalalabad, which were there for the past sixty years, had never before been accused of any thing like that since they were only involved in purely diplomatic work. Besides the diplomatic work, the Consulates now were additionally engaged in the reconstruction work in Afghanistan, which was beneficial to the common people of that country. Being sure of the bona fide of the Indian agencies in Afghanistan, the Prime Minister assured Mr. Gilani that if Pakistan had any evidence to the contrary, India would not shy away from looking into that since "we have nothing to hide." Concluding the Prime Minister said that he believed that "it is as much in Pakistan's vital interest as it is in ours to make peace. Pakistan must defeat terrorism, before being consumed by it. I believe the current leadership there understands the need for action." "Our objective" the Prime Minister said, "must be a permanent peace with Pakistan, where we are bound together by a shared future and a common prosperity". Dr. Singh believed that there was a large constituency for peace in both countries and the majority of people in both countries wanted an honourable settlement of the problems between them that had festered far too long and want to set aside the animosities of the past. That was the hope that inspired the Prime Minister to extend the hand of friendship to Pakistan at Sharm El Sheikh despite 26/11.

131. Despite all his efforts not to let Pakistan get off the hook easily and his disappointment, Prime Minister Singh still persisted in his peace efforts, because there was no alternative and said so in his speech: "I say with strength and conviction that dialogue and engagement is the best way forward". That was Prime Minister's commitment to peace because there is no alternative to peace, and peace comes with dialogue and not sitting back and sulking at home. The question is what is the right time for talks? There can be difference of opinion on the timing but not on act of it. To convince the House that there was no alternative to talks and dialogue, the Prime Minister referred to the repeated efforts of his predecessor who despite Hijacking of the IC plane, Kargil, and Parliament attack persisted in dialogue starting with his visit to Lahore in 1999 and Agra Summit in 2001, and Islamabad talks in 2004.

132. The last opportunity in 2009 for the two countries to meet came in September on the sidelines of the UNGA. Indian foreign Secretary and the External Affairs Minister met their counterparts from Pakistan in New York. India once again conveyed to Pakistan its concern at "very very slow pace of action" being taken against the conspirators and other responsible for the

Mumbai terror attack. But if at the end of 2009, one was looking for satisfaction at the action taken by Pakistan either to dismantle the structure of terrorism or to bring the culpable elements for the Mumbai attack to book, there was nothing positive on the credit side. But hope is eternal and one lives with hope. As the Prime Minister said several times, one can choose one's friends but not neighbours. So where is the choice? It was perhaps with this hope that India once again, in the New Year, tried to test the waters by inviting Pakistan's Foreign Secretary for talks, which took place in New Delhi towards the end of February, 2010. In so doing it made it clear that the talks were not under the umbrella of the 'Composite Dialogue'. These were essentially to find out the progress Pakistan had made in bring the guilty men of Mumbai to book. That Pakistan gave it a different spin to hoodwink its public opinion is another story.

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Southeast, East Asia & Pacific

133. Ever since India embarked on its 'Look East' policy in the nineties, its engagement with the countries of the region has been on the upswing. India no longer regards the region as its extended neighbourhood, but its immediate neighbourhood given India's 1600 km long common border with Myanmar. With the Kaladan Multi-Modal Transit Project, agreement for which was signed in April 2008, coming up it will give India's northeast complete connectivity with Southeast Asia through Myanmar. Similarly the free trade agreements/comprehensive economic cooperation agreements would give India intensive and extensive trade and economic links, which would integrate Indian economy with the region. India is already founder member of the East Asia Summit and dialogue partner with the ASEAN. India is expected to become a member of the Asia Pacific Economic Cooperation grouping with the end of moratorium on new memberships in 2010.

Australia

134. India-Australian relations during the year were dominated by the problem of the Indian students studying in that country and coming under racial attacks from the fringe elements of the Australian society. This caused a good deal of worry to their parents in India. Naturally the Government of India was concerned. The Prime Minister and the External Affairs Minister spoke to their Australian counterparts who were assured of the Australian sincerity of good treatment for the Indian student community.

135. In August the External Affairs Minister S. M. Krishna visited Cairns

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(Australia) in connection with the Pacific Island Forum's - Post Forum Dialogue and availed of this opportunity to convey to the Australian Foreign Minister Stephen Smith India's concerns. This issue dominated the discussions with the Australian Prime Minister Kevin Rudd and the Premier of the South Wales Government when they visited New Delhi later that year. New Delhi was assured of their full cooperation to safeguard the interests of the Indian students and promised stern action against the culprits. The high priority that New Delhi attached to the students' welfare was oozing out in the joint statement issued at the end of the visit of Australian Prime Minister Kevin Rudd on November 12. Mr. Rudd once again "reiterated that Australia had a zero tolerance approach to violence and was committed to taking all possible measures to protect the safety and welfare of all international students including Indian students."

136. New Delhi however felt that all assaults were not necessarily racist and emphasized the need for "orientation for students on living conditions and other information that would help them integrate with the society" in Australia. It was announced that specially designated student welfare officers would be available in the Indian High Commission and Consulates in Australia who would focus on issues related to Indian students.

137. The visit of Premier of the State of Victoria John Brumby in September gave him an opportunity to reassure the Ministers for Overseas Indian Affairs and Human Resource Development of heightened protection to the students studying there. While announcing a series of measures in this direction, he announced scholarship of AUD \$ 10,000 to five Indian students in 2009 as part of a new International Scholarship programme. The Ministry of External Affairs also issued on June 12, an advisory to the Indian students going to Australia on how to prepare for their studies, the living conditions and the precautions etc during their stay in that country.

138. As a result of the Government of India's efforts, the student community felt secure. The Indian missions in Australia solicitous of the students' welfare as they always have been in the past, are now even more than ever before keeping themselves in touch with the student community and the local authorities on their problems.

139. On the political plane, Australia has been quite keen to keep the bilateral relations on an even keel, despite its reluctance to allow nuclear trade with India even after India had last year secured the necessary exemption from the NPT requirements from the Nuclear Suppliers' Group. New Delhi on its part too, appreciating the Australian policy compulsions, did not allow

Canberra's disinclination to come in the way of reciprocating Australian eagerness for closer relations.

140. The visit of the External Affairs Minister Mr. S.M. Krishna to Australia in August, and the visits of Australian Foreign Minister and Prime Minister to New Delhi and the India-Australia Framework Dialogue went a long way to create a better climate of understanding between the two countries on both bilateral and regional issues. Australia supported India's quest for a permanent seat on the United Nations Security Council (UNSC) and also its membership of the Asia Pacific Economic Cooperation grouping when the membership moratorium ended in 2010. The high Point of the Prime Minister Rudd's visit was the Joint Declaration in which the two countries committed themselves to security cooperation that "will strengthen cooperation in a wide range of security and related areas including counter-terrorism, defence, disarmament and non-proliferation and maritime security". The Declaration enumerated eight elements of cooperation in this regard viz., information exchange, and policy coordination on regional and long term strategic and global issues, cooperation within the EAS and ASEAN Regional Forum, efforts to combat terrorism, trans-national organized crime, disaster management, maritime and aviation security, and police and law enforcement. They also identified the mechanism to achieve these objectives of cooperation. In the preamble to the separately issued Joint Statement, the two countries underlined their shared interests and values as pluralist democracies, global in outlook, but also closely integrated into the Asian region with rapidly expanding economic relationship and a shared desire to enhance and maintain peace, stability and prosperity in Asia through multilateral institutions which also needed to reform.

China

141. It was a mixed year for India - China relations. There were both areas of understanding and misunderstanding. The mature manner in which the two countries handled their problems ended on a happy note and solid cooperation at Copenhagen, which saved the day not only for them but also for the developing countries as a whole.

142. The relations between the two countries were summed up by the External Affairs Minister S. M. Krishna in his statement in the Lok Sabha made on December 9. He said "Our relations with China get very high priority in our strategic thinking. We would like to develop this cooperative partnership based on equality in which each side should be sensitive enough to the concerns, aspirations and sentiments of the other nation." India would

celebrate the 60th year of establishment of diplomatic relation with China next year in "a befitting manner" since "these are reciprocal symbolic gestures which we make to our neighbours," said Mr. Krishna. Saying that India "value China's friendship, association and we would like to further take it to certain strategic levels" and he felt assured that "China is willing to reciprocate".

143. Prime Minister Dr. Manmohan Singh met his counterpart Wen Jiabao in Hua Hin on the sidelines of the India-ASEAN summit in October. Wen Jiabao recalled PM's remark that there was "enough space for both sides to develop and cooperate" and that "for the Asian Century to become a reality it is important that India and China should live in harmony and friendship and enjoy prosperity". Prime Minister Dr. Manmohan Singh at his press conference in Hua Hin on October 25 giving a broader perspective of his meeting with the Chinese Premier said: "I had a frank and constructive exchange of views with Premier Wen both during our formal meetings and at the gala dinner last night. We discussed all these issues and agreed that existing mechanisms for bilateral cooperation should be used to resolve all issues amicably in the spirit of the strategic and cooperative partnerships." Adding he said "The Premier and I reaffirmed the need to maintain peace and tranquillity on the border pending a resolution of the boundary question. Both of us agreed that we should continue and strengthen efforts to build political trust and understanding."

144. The External Affairs Minister Krishna too met the Chinese Foreign Minister twice during the year. The first meeting between the two was on July 22 at Phuket (Thailand) on the sidelines of the India-ASEAN Ministerial Conference and the second on October 27 on the sidelines of the RIC foreign ministers' meeting in Bengaluru. At Phuket they resolved to further deepen their ties, especially in bilateral trade targeted at \$60 billion by the end of 2010. At Bengaluru they agreed once again on the "importance of further developing high level exchanges, of enhancing trade and economic cooperation" and added the need to further develop their "defence contacts". Speaking to the Bangalore Press Club on October 28 Mr. Krishna said "China wants to have good ties and I have often said India would like to have very friendly relations with China. Our effort is to take this relationship to the level of partnership. Hence there is goodwill on both sides and it augurs well."

145. On the India-China boundary question the two-day 13th meeting of the Special Representatives took place in New Delhi on August 7- 8. A statement issued by the Ministry of External Affairs said that "apart from the

boundary issues, discussions covered a broad agenda which included the entire gamut of bilateral relations and regional and international issues of mutual interest". Describing relations with China as a key foreign policy priority for India, the National Security Advisor who led the Indian delegation to the talks said "the joint document on a 'Shared Vision for the 21st Century' signed during Prime Minister's visit to China in January 2008 has taken bilateral relations to a new level. There has been a significant expansion in bilateral cooperation in areas such as trade and investment, defence, culture, education and people-to-people exchanges".

146. His sentiments were reciprocated by the leader of the Chinese delegation who referred "to rapid growth witnessed in the bilateral relations in recent years". He "highlighting the importance of ongoing consultations and coordination between the two countries at multilateral fora", and expressed the hope that "the two countries will jointly meet global challenges in the spirit of the Shared Vision". Mr. Dai Bingguo said that "China takes a positive view of India's development and progress, and also supports a bigger role for India in international affairs."

147. A Chinese statement on the talks issued separately pointed out that "the Chinese Government and people value the strategic and cooperative partnership between China and India, the largest two developing nations with a combined population accounting for 40 percent of the world's total. Friendly coexistence, mutual beneficial cooperation and shared progress between the two neighbours will contribute not only to the people of the two countries but also Asia and the whole world. China and India have no other option than living in peace and developing side by side. China stands firmly committed to working with India to press ahead with the bilateral ties."

148. The growth in business and commercial ties which has been the biggest leitmotif in the relations between India and China provided the setting for the establishment of a new body - the India Business Forum (IBF) - launched on the 15th April in Beijing jointly by the Indian Ambassador Mrs. Nirupama Rao and Mr. Wang Jinzhen, Vice Chairman of the China Council for the Promotion of International Trade (CCPIT).

149. There were occasion causing concern in the relations between the two countries. The Chinese objection to the visit of Dalai Lama to Arunachal Pradesh was one. The other was the Chinese decision to issue visa to the residents of the Indian State of Jammu and Kashmir visiting China on a separate sheet of paper than stamping it on their Indian Passport. The media

perception that the Chinese were constructing diversion dams on Brahmaputra river which flows from Tibet to India and which could lead to reduced flows to the north-eastern region thus upsetting India's own plans to exploit the river in its territory, did not come true. The un-demarcated nature of the India - China border was also the source of some media speculation on the nature of patrolling of the border by the Chinese. The official New Delhi response that such misapprehension was not correct since both sides patrolled the border according to their individual understanding of the Line of Control in the absence of a clear demarcated line helped to calm the media raucousness. In fact the media was warned that such misplaced concerns could cause avoidable tension between the two countries. The Chinese financial assistance to Pakistan projects in the Pakistan-Occupied Kashmir too caused some unease to New Delhi. An article by a unknown Chinese scholar advocating disintegration of the Union into several regions was dismissed by New Delhi as "expression of individual opinion" and not "in accord with the officially stated position of China on India - China relations conveyed to us on several occasions, including at the highest level". India' deft handling at the ADB of Chinese stalling efforts for a loan for a project in Arunachal Pradesh saw Chinese quiet acquiescence to the Indian application for the loan. Thus on all the issues that could have caused some disquiet in the relations between the two countries, both the countries acted and reacted in such a subdued manner as to ensure that no irreparable damage was done to the long-term relationship.

Japan

150. The victory of Democratic Party of Japan under the leadership of Prime Minister Yukio Hatoyama with commitment to reorient Japan's relations with the West to look more towards East augured well for India's own policy of developing new links with the countries of East and Southeast Asia. Hatoyama's initiative for an East Asian community has therefore been a welcome move. India and Japan with no conflict of strategic interest, and sharing common goals to build stability, power equilibrium and institutionalized multilateral cooperation in Asia, have for some time been engaged in forging many bilateral institutional links, and can hope to build on that framework. New Delhi too did not fail to notice new government's keen desire to reorient Japan's traditional policy towards Washington. The announcement by Tokyo to end its 8-year old Indian Ocean refueling mission in support of US led war in Afghanistan, and desire to reexamine the earlier agreement on the storage and or transshipment of nuclear weapons on Japanese soil, was clear signal that Japan intended to look more towards

its traditional area of influence in Asia than to be playing a second fiddle to the West in its pursuit of global objectives.

151. The institutionalized annual summit brought Mr. Hatoyama to New Delhi before the year 2009 drew to a close. This offered an opportunity for the two countries to go over the existing relationship to build a new one on it. The two prime ministers during their summit talks agreed to continue with the on-going economic cooperation in several fields. This cooperation had in recent years particularly contributed substantially to India's economic progress, and to strengthen the existing institutional links for strategic dialogue. They recognized the need for enhancing cooperation in strengthening security and to that extent expressed their satisfaction "at the finalization of the Action Plan with specific measures to advance security cooperation based on the Joint Declaration on Security Cooperation between India and Japan issued in October 2008" at the end of summit talks. During this visit, a new 'Action Plan' was agreed upon between the two prime ministers. The Japanese Prime Minister gave sufficient indication of the strategic cooperation envisioned by the two leaders when he told the media that the stepped up cooperation in the defence of the sea lanes of communication "would be very meaningful".

152. India too took the earliest steps to establish rapport with the new government as it took office. National Security Advisor visited Tokyo as the Special Envoy of Prime Minister. The Prime Minister himself met the new Prime Minister Hatoyama at Pittsburg in September and at Hua Hin in October. The Defence Minister AK Antony went to Tokyo in November and established mechanism for annual defence talks between the two countries at the ministerial and official levels. Foreign Secretary Mrs. Rao's visit in December was to prepare the groundwork for the Summit later that month.

153. There has been a steady growth in trade, economic relations and investments. As per the Japanese statistics, during 2008-09, the bilateral trade crossed 12 billion dollars despite the global economic slowdown. There is a trade target of 20 billion dollars by 2010. Japan already is the sixth largest investor in India with actual investments, already exceeding three billion dollars. The pace of investments has picked up in recent years. In the preceding eight or nine years alone, actual investments from Japan have been over 2.5 billion dollars.

154. The two sides, encouraged by the trend of growing economic and commercial relations and wanting to consolidate that trend, are in the process

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of concluding a Comprehensive Economic Partnership Agreement (CEPA). Twelve rounds of discussions have already been held which shows the importance that the two countries attach to this agreement. The last round was in Tokyo in September-October 2009..

155. Japan valuable assistance in large infrastructure development projects including the dedicated freight corridors and Delhi-Mumbai Industrial Corridor has been greatly appreciated in India. Since 2004, India has been the largest recipient of Official Development Assistance (ODA) from Japan. In 2008-09 India received ODA of 2.5 billion dollars which was almost 30 per cent of Japan's global ODA.

156. Recent years witnessed greater people-to-people contacts, cultural and educational exchanges. In September 2009 an India Cultural Centre was set up in Tokyo. Also the first ever Chair on India in the prestigious Tokyo University was set up. Japan is also extending assistance in the establishment of a green-field project, an IIT in Hyderabad.

157. The year too witnessed a number of defence exchanges including the trilateral Malabar Exercise in April-May and also the visit of three Japan Maritime Self-Defence Force ships to Goa in May.

158. India's multifaceted ties also cover a number of other important areas including energy. Other important areas are high-technology trade, science and technology cooperation, urban development etc.

159. Earlier in July when External Affairs Minister SM Krishna visited Tokyo for the 3rd India-Japan Strategic Dialogue he highlighted the fact of "the Strategic & Global Partnership between us (India and Japan)" being "an important factor in furthering our ties, as well as in promoting peace, stability and prosperity in Asia and the world."

Mongolia

160. In September India welcomed the Mongolian President Elbegdorj on his first visit to India which was also his first overseas visit after his election to the Mongolian presidency in June 2009. During the visit the two countries signed agreements in the field of peaceful uses of radioactive minerals and nuclear energy, health, culture and statistics. The agreement for peaceful uses of radioactive minerals and nuclear energy made Mongolia the sixth country after the U.S., Russia, France, Kazakhstan, and Namibia to sign the civil nuclear pact after the 45-member Nuclear Suppliers Group lifted the ban on nuclear trade in 2008. India too agreed to provide Mongolia a

soft loan of 25 million US dollars to help it to stabilize its economy in the wake of the global financial crisis.

161. To help Mongolia in the human resources development and capacity building 60 slots allotted to it under the ITEC programme were doubled to 120. India too will assist Mongolia in the field of education, particularly in teaching English language, and information technology, besides extending assistance to set up an information technology centre. Regular consultations between the Foreign Ministries of the two countries were constituted.

162. The Prime Minister Dr. Manmohan Singh in his remarks after his talks with the Mongolian President said: "India attached importance to its expanding defence exchanges and cooperation with Mongolia, including regular joint exercises between the armies, and agreed to strengthen cooperation in this area." It may be recalled that an agreement on Cooperation in Defence Matters was signed in 2001. The 5th joint military exercise under the agreement was held in Mongolia in September. The 3rd meeting of the Joint Working Group on Defence Cooperation was expected be held in Ulaanbaatar in 2010.

163. President Shrimati Pratibha Devisingh Patil in her banquet speech in honour of the Mongolian President highlighted the fact that both "India and Mongolia share common views on international peace, security and development". She welcomed the commitment of Mongolia along with that of India "against the menace of international terrorism that is afflicting our region".

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West and Central Asia

164. India has extensive relations with the West Asian region. The bedrock of goodwill between India and West Asia comprising the Arab world resulted in the emergence of a strong edifice of political, economic, defence and security. India has noted the perceptible shift in the policies of the Arab countries from the West to the East. The Arab countries have shown considerable confidence in the stability of India's political, economic, and social institutions. Our democratic institutions have withstood all the tremors and upheavals caused by the shake up of the old economic and social order in the last six decades. The ability of Indian financial system to take in its stride the recent economic meltdown, and expeditiously recover from its worst impact, which caused the western financial system to crumble, did not go unnoticed in the region. The gulf is important for India's trade in the

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area. Trade in goods and services between India and the Gulf expanded rapidly and it exceeded US\$ 87 billion in the fiscal year 2007-08. The year 2008 witnessed several high-level visits, highlighting the importance of the region in India's foreign policy, peaking with Prime Minister Dr. Manmohan Singh's visit to Qatar and Oman in November of that year. India's stake in the security of the waters around the Arabian peninsula are high, since the bulk of Indian trade with the west depends greatly on the security of its sea lanes. India-Qatar Defence and Security Agreement of 2008 is manifestation of the same concern. Trade in goods and services between India and the Gulf is expanding rapidly and it exceeded US\$ 87 billion in the last fiscal year.

165. To enhance economic and commercial relationship with the Gulf there was now in place the necessary institutional arrangement-- the India-GCC Framework Agreement signed in 2004. There is a proposal to liberalize trade relations for which a Free Trade Agreement between India and GCC is under active consideration. The negotiating teams for this purpose have held three rounds of discussions so far. The Free Trade Agreement would complement the ongoing and rapidly expanding bilateral economic engagement with individual member countries of the GCC. The MOU signed between India and the GCC in 2008 for an India-Arab Cooperation Forum as a framework for dialogue for strengthening cooperation in such diverse fields as sustainable development, economic and commercial, educational, scientific, information technology etc., would go a long way in forging new links and enhancing cooperation in these fields.

166. The West Asian region remained active on the Indian radar in 2009. In April the Vice President M. Hamid Ansari visited Kuwait, It may be recalled that in June 2006 the Amir of Kuwait His Highness Sheikh Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah had visited India. Since then there were two sessions of the Joint Commission between India and Kuwait - one in November 2006 followed by another in July 2008. In addition there were various exchanges at the Ministerial and official levels which sustained the momentum in bilateral relations across many sectors. At last count there were a little under 600,000 people of Indian origin working and living in Kuwait contributing to the economic development of Kuwait. Kuwait is an important trading partner of India. In 2007-08 bilateral trade amounted to about \$ 8.4 billion. It accounts for about 12 per cent of Indian crude oil imports. The Indian Oil Corporation has recently renewed its contract for purchase of about nine million metric tonnes of crude and about 351 trillion cubic metres of gas from Kuwait. Obviously Kuwait's role in providing energy security to Indian economy is substantial.

167. In June Minister of State Dr. Shashi Tharoor visited Dubai and had meetings with Sheikha Lubna, Minister for Foreign Trade as well as with Minister of Cabinet Affairs Mr. Mohammad Al Gergawi. The meetings gave Mr. Tharoor an opportunity to review India-UAE bilateral relations and discuss further measures to intensify them. In the same month the Foreign Minister of UAE Sheikh Abdullah Bin Zayed Al Nahyan, was on an official visit to India and had detailed discussions with Minister of External Affairs Shri S.M. Krishna on bilateral relations, regional and multilateral issues and on new avenues of cooperation, especially in the domain of trade and economy. It was acknowledged that the presence of over 1.5 million Indians in the UAE had contributed to the development of the economies of both India and the UAE. The UAE Minister conveyed his desire to enhance UAE's investment in India which currently stood at US \$ 4.5 billion through FDI and FII routes and was among the top ten investors.

168. Dr. Tharoor visited the Republic of Yemen in June to participate in the 9th Ministerial meeting of the Indian Ocean Rim-Association of Regional Cooperation. He however, took the opportunity to call on the President of the Yemen Republic Ali Abdullah Saleh, and handed over a letter from the President Smt. Pratibha Devisingh Patil reiterating the excellent state of bilateral relations and inviting the President of Yemen to visit India. President Saleh while expressing his gratitude for the invitation expressed his happiness at the deepening of the historic and civilizational relationship between India and Yemen. Dr. Tharoor also met with Dr. Abubakr Al Qirbi, Minister of Foreign Affairs of Yemen and exchanged views on bilateral, regional and multilateral issues of mutual concern including increasing incidence of terrorism and piracy and urgent need to further bolster the joint efforts for safe and secure transit of trade and other exchanges which are so vital for the economic growth of the region.

169. After the visit of Syrian President in 2008, the cooperation with Syria is increasing. As a first step a Memorandum of Understanding was signed on 14th May, 2009 between Department of Fertilizer, Ministry of Chemicals and Fertilizers, Government of India and General Company for Phosphate and Mines, Ministry of Petroleum and Mineral Resources, Government of the Syrian Arab Republic for providing consultancy services for preparation of technical, economic and environmental study report for development of rock phosphate resources of Syria. The study by an Indian consortium will be completed within 1-year. Cost of the feasibility study will be borne by the Government of India.

170. Palestine continues to be an important aspect of India-Arab relations. India's solidarity with the Palestinian people and its attitude to the Palestinian question reflects, perhaps more than any other issue, the enduring nature of Indo-Arab ties. In 1974, India was the first non-Arab country to recognise the Palestine Liberation Organization as the sole and legitimate representative of the Palestinian people. In March 1980, the Government of India announced in Parliament India's decision to accord full diplomatic recognition to the PLO office in New Delhi. In 1988, India recognised Palestine as a State. India has now constructed the Palestine Embassy building in New Delhi, a gift of the people and Government of India to the Palestinian people. Chairman of the Palestinian National Authority Mahmoud Abbas visited New Delhi in October 2008. During his visit India extended US \$ 10 million budgetary support to the Authority and another US \$10 million for development projects besides signing an MOU to construct a school in the Palestinian territory at its cost.

171. New Delhi was greatly anguished when at the beginning of 2009 Gaza came under Israeli attack. India regretted that when talks were going on in Cairo among representatives of all concerned under the guidance of the French and the Egyptian officials, there was no sign of sorrow or concern about the plight of the million and half Gazan civilians living in a permanent state of fright. India expected an early end to the suffering of the people of Gaza and a return to a dialogue and resumption of the peace process. In October India increased its contribution to the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East (UNRWA) to \$1 million. In January 2009, in response to an UNRWA Flash Appeal, the Government of India had made a special assistance of \$1 million for relief work in Gaza Strip.

172. India has continued to maintain its contacts with the countries of Central Asia in 2009 as in the previous years. At the start of the year, in January President of Kazakhstan paid a state visit to New Delhi.

173. Sharing Indian concern about the menace of terrorism President Nursultan Nazarbayev strongly condemned the 26/11 terrorist attacks in Mumbai and reiterated the need for intensifying global cooperation in combating international terrorism. He conveyed assurance that Kazakhstan stood firmly with India in dealing with the scourge of global terrorism. He joined India in calling for early conclusion of the Comprehensive Convention on International Terrorism within the UN framework. The signing of the Extradition Treaty would help law enforcement agencies to develop mutually beneficial cooperation, render required assistance and support to each other,

which would be an important step towards controlling international crime and terrorism.

174. After the waiver by the NSG in 2008 Kazakhstan has come forward to cooperate with New Delhi in the civil nuclear energy field. The signing of a Memorandum of Understanding between Nuclear Power Corporation of India and National Atomic Company Kazatomprom JSC for the supply of uranium by Kazakhstan was a step in that direction. Both the countries agreed to the early conclusion of an Inter Governmental Agreement for cooperation in Peaceful Uses of Nuclear Energy. India-Kazakhstan Inter-Governmental Commission on Trade, Economic, Scientific, Technical, Industrial and Cultural Cooperation was an important instrument to develop and enhance trade and economic cooperation as well as cultural cooperation.

175. As part of her visit to Russia in September President Shrimati Pratibha Devisingh Patil visited Tajikistan, which remained an important partner for India in the Central Asian region. The President described Tajikistan as "our extended neighbourhood"-- a young nation with "an old civilization". Her visit was the first ever by an Indian President to Tajikistan. It was an historic occasion for the President to address the people of Tajikistan on their National Day and "convey to them the greetings and best wishes of the people and Government of India for their progress and prosperity". The President had fruitful exchange of views on global and regional issues with President Rahmon, whom, she recalled, she had hosted in Jaipur in August 2006. There too were fruitful discussions between the Indian trade delegation traveling with the President and Tajik delegation. The President extended an invitation to the Tajik President Rahmon to visit India.

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Africa

176. The relations with the countries of Africa gained a new momentum in the wake of the India-Africa Forum Summit in 2008. The Delhi Declaration which was a political document covered bilateral, regional and international issues. These included Indian and African common positions on UN reforms, climate change, WTO, international terrorism, etc. The India-Africa Framework for Cooperation spelt out the agreed areas of cooperation. These areas span human resources and institutional capacity building, education, science & technology, agricultural productivity and food security, industrial growth, small & medium enterprises and minerals, health sector, development of infrastructure, and ICT.

177. Relying on the latest technology to secure greater depth in its diversified relationship with the continent, India launched an India-Africa Website to provide new avenues for exchange and dissemination of information, a new vehicle to reach out to them and a renewed commitment to Africa that even when living in another part of the world, it was not far from India. It is a matter of great satisfaction for New Delhi that its "duty-free preference scheme" for the Least Developed Countries, covering 94 per cent of India's tariff lines extended to 33 African countries.

178. As the year 2009 opened, the Federation of Indian Chamber of Commerce and Industry (FICCI) organized the India - Africa Business Partnership Summit. It offered an opportunity to the External Affairs Minister to reiterate India's commitment, made at the India-Africa - Forum Summit to more than double the amount of Lines of Credit to US\$ 5.4 billion for the five-year period beginning 2008-09. India too is committed to provide US\$ 500 million over the next 5 to 6 years for projects in critical areas such as higher and vocational education, science, IT, agriculture and renewable energy, from the 'Aid to Africa' budget. India has so far extended over US\$ 3 billion of concessional lines of credit to countries in Africa.

179. Another significant chapter added in the year 2009 in the history of India-Africa relationship was the Pan-African e-Network Project, inaugurated on 26th Feb, 2009 by the External Affairs Minister amidst the presence of the Heads of Mission of the African countries in New Delhi. As of now 47 countries have signed up with the Telecommunications Consultants India Limited (TCIL), the project consultants for the link, to join it. Sao Tome was the 47th country to join it, with its Foreign Minister Dr. Carlos Alberto Pires Tiny signing the MOU in December 2009, during his visit to New Delhi.

180. With the commissioning of the Network Project, former president Dr. A P J Abdul Kalam's vision of connecting India with all 53 countries of the African Union with a satellite and fibre optic network for sharing India's expertise in education and health care, was translated into reality. The project is a unique example of South-South Cooperation based on similarities of circumstances and experiences. India has always been open to sharing its strength, democratic model of development and appropriate technologies that are cheap, yet effective with the developing countries particularly of Africa. It is no wonder that Africa has become the largest partner of India's technical assistance and capacity building programmes.

181. Under the Network project India has gifted a dedicated satellite for e-connectivity in sub-Saharan Africa to help bridge the digital divide. The Project

created significant linkages for tele-education and tele-medicine, making available to the people of Africa, the facilities and expertise of some of the best universities and super-specialty hospitals in India.

182. The Ministry of External Affairs administered project, in addition, was equipped to support e-governance, e-commerce, infotainment, resource mapping and meteorological and other services in the African countries. It too provided VVIP connectivity among the Heads of State of the African countries through a highly secure closed satellite network. The Project budget of Rs. 542.90 crores covered the cost of supply, installation, testing and commissioning of hardware and software, end-to-end connectivity, satellite bandwidth, O&M support and provided the tele-education and tele-medicine services for 5 years.

183. It would provide tele-education services to 10,000 African students to undertake Post-Graduate, Under-Graduate, PG Diploma and Diploma and skill enabling certification courses in subjects such as Business Administration, IT, International Business, Tourism and Finance. The seven leading universities and educational institutions in India associated with the Project are: Amity University, NOIDA; University of Madras, Chennai; Indira Gandhi National Open University (IGNOU), New Delhi; Birla Institute of Technology and Science (BITS), Pilani; University of Delhi; IIT Kanpur and Indian Institute of Science (IISc.) Bengaluru.

184. As part of the tele-medicine services, online medical consultations are provided for one hour every day to each participating African country for a period of 5 years in various medical disciplines such as cardiology, neurology, urology, pathology, oncology, gynecology, infectious diseases/HIV-AIDS, ophthalmology, pediatrics etc. The twelve leading Indian Super Specialty Hospitals associated with the Project are: Apollo Hospital and Sri Ram Chandra Medical College and Research Institute, in Chennai; All India Institute of Medical Sciences, Escorts Heart Institute and Moolchand Hospital in New Delhi, Fortis Hospital in Noida, KEM Hospital in Mumbai, Care Hospital in Hyderabad, Amrita Institute of Medical Sciences, Kochi; Manipal Hospital and Narayan Hrudayaylaya, Bengaluru and Santosh Hospital, Ghaziabad. With the commencement of this service, some of the best medical specialists of India would be available for consultations online for the African patients.

185. Another important element of tele-medicine service is the Continuing Medical Education (CME) in various specialties which is intended to update the knowledge and upgrade the clinical skills of the practicing physicians

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and paramedical staff in the African countries. President Shrimati Pratibha Devisingh Patil eloquently underlined the importance of India's Africa programme in her banquet speech in honour of the visiting Benin President on March 4. She said the "cornerstone of India's policy on external relations is to help our friends in Africa with their socio-economic development and for the continent of Africa to emerge as a vibrant entity, well integrated with the world economy".

186. India's bilateral trade with Africa has grown manifold and reached a level of US\$36 billion in 2007-08, up from US\$3 billion in 2000-01. Given the concrete opportunities that exist between the two sides, India-Africa trade could easily be doubled to US\$70 billion over the next five years.

187. That Africa has come into its own was forcefully demonstrated at the Copenhagen Climate Change Conference in December 2009. The backtracking of the developed countries on their draft after the Africans backed by India chose to walk out on their draft. It was indeed a turning point at the Conference. Despite the severe constraints faced by them, African countries have been making special efforts to achieve their development goals while controlling the green house gas emissions.

188. Africa unfortunately was badly hit by the financial meltdown of 2008. It was critical that the international community provided concrete assistance for their efforts to overcome the crisis, through provision of greater financial resources, technology transfer and capacity building. There was the need for easier access for African countries to developed markets. There was too the need to focus on actions that added value to African exports. The international community had to recognize and respect the indigenous and traditional knowledge available in Africa and the use of such knowledge in development efforts, climate change, and GHG emissions. The need for support for their own efforts was succinctly underlined by the UN Secretary General in his 7th Report on New Partnership for Africa's Development. The Report emphasized the need for concerted and urgent action by international development partners to mitigate the socio-economic impact of the global financial and economic crisis and help the African countries in their progress towards implementation of NEPAD and realization of the Millennium Development Goals. It was a matter of satisfaction for New Delhi that the report highlighted India's contribution towards Africa's development in the context of South-South cooperation.

189. India is also exploring possibilities of comprehensive economic cooperation agreements with the Common Market of Southern Africa

(COMESA) and the East African Community (EAC). Significantly the FICCI sponsored India-Africa Business Partnership Summit in January 2009 was attended by the Rwandan President Paul Kagame, who was also the current Chairperson of the East African Community.

190. A framework agreement for a Preferential Trading Arrangement between India and the South African Customs Union (SACU) is in the pipeline. New Delhi in cooperation with the South African Development Community (SADC) was also developing projects in a number of sectors thereby expanding the scope for India-Africa cooperation in the coming years.

191. Since the inception of the Indian Technical and Economic Cooperation (ITEC) Programme in 1964, capacity building and human resource development in Africa has been an area of high priority for the Government of India. The ITEC programme has benefited thousands of experts and students from Africa who came for training courses in professional institutions in India. Drawing satisfaction from the success of this programme, New Delhi has increased the number of training slots for African countries from 1100 to 1600.

192. In addition, several thousand African students are currently studying in Indian universities and colleges. The number of scholarships for them has been doubled. Over the next five to six years India hopes to undertake in Africa, on a grant basis, projects in critical areas such as higher and vocational education, science, IT, agriculture and renewable energy. A sum of US\$500 million has been allocated for this endeavour.

193. India too was extensively involved in peacekeeping efforts in Africa. Presently, India has over 7000 peacekeepers serving in Africa, including a 5000 strong contingent in the Democratic Republic of Congo. India's first full all-female formed police unit is currently deployed in Liberia. In addition to peacekeeping, this unit has been reaching out to the most vulnerable sections of the society i.e. women and children in inspiring them to stand on their own in their war torn society.

194. In recent years Oil has become a thrust area in Africa. India was happy to be collaborating in this sector too and identified five thrust areas in the oil and gas sector for cooperation. These include; buy more crude from Africa, invest more in upstream opportunities on bilateral basis in the continent as well as in third countries, explore opportunities to source more LNG from Africa, make available our skills, talent and technology in cost-effective manner for the benefit of the people of Africa. In his valedictory address to the India-Africa Hydrocarbon Conference held in New Delhi in December

the Indian External Affairs Minister assured Africa that "India's approach to African resources is not a one way street," and added, "We will draw equal satisfaction when African oil fuels Africa's own development and growth. Our long standing priority is to serve as a partner in Africa's development". This approach underlines all the Indian efforts in this continent.

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The United States of America

195. There were some trepidations in New Delhi with the inauguration of the Obama Administration in Washington, particularly in view of his stand on non-proliferation. But soon enough New Delhi felt assured that despite the President's views on this sensitive issue, there would be no change in the US position on the implementation of the India - US Civil Nuclear Energy Cooperation Agreement of 2008. Even when the US President led the UN Security Council to adopt a Resolution on Non-Proliferation, Washington understood India's position as conveyed in its letter of 23rd September addressed to the Security Council President which happened to be the United States. Another sign of warmth noted in New Delhi was when contrary to media reports the Administration in appointing a Special Envoy to tackle the problem of terrorism in Afghanistan, in deference to Indian sensitivities, confined his role to Afghanistan and Pakistan. In a special gesture to Prime Minister Dr. Manmohan Singh the President called him on December 1, when he announced his plan of 'surge' in Afghanistan to explain the US policy to him.

196. New Delhi too appreciated the President's gesture to invite Prime Minister Manmohan Singh as his first State Guest at the White House after assuming the Presidency. The United States too did not shirk from putting pressure on Islamabad to cooperate with New Delhi to tackle the problem of terrorism in the Sub-continent and take sufficient action against the culprits held responsible for the 26/11 attack in Mumbai. As a mark of solidarity with India, Secretary of State Ms. Clinton visiting India in July, first landed in Mumbai and stayed at the Hotel Taj Mahal which bore the brunt of the terrorist attack. While at the Hotel she interacted with the staff and paid tribute to those killed during the terror attack.

197. The External Affairs Minister besides welcoming the US Secretary of State Ms. Hillary Clinton to New Delhi in July, had another meeting with her in September in New York on the sideline so the UN General Assembly session. Foreign Secretary visited Washington in March and the Assistant Secretary of State William Burn paid a return visit to New Delhi in October.

The US National Security Advisor too paid a visit to New Delhi in June. These high level visits helped to keep the channels of communications active at personal level between leaders of the two countries. As pointed out above in the section on Civil Nuclear Energy Cooperation there was some misgivings in India about the US commitment on cooperation in this vital field of particular interest to India in view of President Obama's new found zeal for non proliferation, the same were dispelled at the highest level as announced by the Prime Minister himself.

198. The high point of the India - US relations in 2009 was the State visit by Prime Minister to Washington for a summit meeting with US President Barack Obama in November. At their first meeting in April on the sidelines of the G-20 Conference in London they had established personal rapport. President Obama after his meeting made significant remarks about the relations between the two countries that set the tone for the rest of the year -- "We are the world's two largest democracies. India, like America is full of diversity, full of energy and it is a complicated place like the United States is complicated. But there are very few countries that have such a strong affection and affinity between the two as between India and the United States. What is also true is that, I think, the United States sees India as a global power, and a critical partner in helping deal with the challenges of twenty first century- every thing from climate change, to poverty, to trade, to science and innovation." President Obama and Prime Minister Dr. Manmohan Singh along with leaders of the other BASIC countries interacted closely at the Copenhagen summit in December to save it from complete collapse.

199. Desire of both the countries to raise the level of cooperation in other fields like defence, climate change, high technology commerce, civil aviation, education and human resource development, were confirmed during the visit of Prime Minister to Washington in November. The preamble of the Joint Statement issued on November 23 made a significant declaration that "the common ideals and complementary strength" of the two countries "today provide a foundation for addressing the global challenges of the 21st century"; and their resolve "to harness these shared strengths and to expand the U.S.-India global partnership for the benefit of their countries, for peace, stability and prosperity in Asia, and for the betterment of the world." To New Delhi's satisfaction Washington agreed with New Delhi that "the threat posed to regional and global security" emanated "from India's neighbourhood" and its impact was "beyond the region" and in this context agreed that it was "absolute imperative to bring to justice the perpetrators of this terrorist attack".

Europe

200. Prime Minister Dr. Manmohan Singh's visit to France as Guest of Honour at the Bastille Day Parade and his visit to Russia for the annual summit, President's visits to Russia, the UK, Cyprus, Spain, Poland and External Affairs Minister's visit to Belarus and British Foreign Secretary's visit to New Delhi during the year kept the relations between India and Europe on an active trail.

France

201. The Prime Minister's presence at the Bastille Day Parade was particularly important since a contingent of the Indian army was also invited to take part in the parade. In 2008, President Sarkozy was the Chief Guest at the Indian Republic Day parade. In his remarks after the parade Dr. Manmohan Singh spoke of the global significance of the Bastille Day and the ideals of the French Revolution of liberty, equality and fraternity. After the lunch organized in his honour by President Sarkozy, the latter introduced Dr. Singh to thousands of people gathered at the Elysee Palace National Day Reception.

202. During the brief visit of the Prime Minister and among his very busy schedule President Sarkozy found time to review bilateral relations between India and France, who are now strategic partners. Their bilateral cooperation extended to education, health, defence, space, peaceful uses of nuclear energy and several other fields. Both leaders expressed satisfaction at the steady deepening, broadening and development of the relationship. There was a strong convergence of interest on threats posed by terrorism and measures to counter it. They agreed to further strengthen cooperation in this area. They also expressed satisfaction at the implementation of the civil nuclear energy cooperation agreement signed in 2008 and cooperation in space and wide ranging defence cooperation.

President's Visits to Spain and Poland

203. The President Shrimati Pratibha Devisingh Patil's visit to Spain was the first ever State Visit by the President of India to that country. The visit to Poland was the fourth State Visit by an Indian President. Both the visits took place in April. While in Madrid the King and the Queen hosted a banquet in her honour, in Warsaw President Mrs. Kaczynska hosted it. In both the countries, she addressed meetings between the Indian business delegation accompanying her and their business delegations. She also addressed the

members of the Indian community in the two countries. In Madrid she was honoured with the Key of the City by the Mayor. In Poland two agreements on Tourism and Health and Medicine were signed, which the President said would open "new areas of cooperation in these sectors". She expressed the hope that these initiatives would "provide a sound framework for expanding people-to-people level contacts between our two countries".

204. At the end of her visit to the two countries, in a statement to the media she expressed her happiness that the objectives of her visit to the two countries had been "fulfilled", and that she "found, both in Spain and Poland, a common resonance and desire to more effectively and meaningfully cooperate in matters pertaining to trade, investment, development of infrastructure, renewable energy, energy, pharmaceuticals, agriculture, the auto sector, defence, tourism, IT, culture and education".

205. About her discussions in the two capitals she said "I also had a detailed exchange of views with the leadership both in Spain and Poland on the situation in our respective regions and agreed to strengthen our already useful cooperation in multilateral organizations, especially the United Nations. The global financial crisis was another factor that brought home to all of us that this is the right opportunity for us to leverage each others' complementarities and synergies."

President's Visits to the United Kingdom and Cyprus

206. In October the President visited the U.K and Cyprus. In UK it was the third state visit by an Indian President but after almost twenty years. The previous two visits took place in 1963 and in 1990 when President S. Radhakrishnan and R. Venkataraman visited the UK. The Queen hosted a banquet in her honour. She had a meeting with Prime Minister Gordon Brown and held important discussions with him. She also addressed a business meeting organized by the UK-India Business Council in which the business delegation accompanying her participated. The Lord Mayor of the City of London hosted a banquet in her honour at the Guild Hall. In addition, President Patil also interacted with British Members of Parliament in a meeting organized at the Westminster by the All-Party Parliamentary Group on India.

207. The President had an interaction with the Members of the Indian Community soon after her arrival in London on the 26th October. She attended the function held at India House, where memorabilia associated

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with Mahatma Gandhi was handed over to her. She made significant remarks when she said: "It was a profoundly emotional moment for me. We are carrying these precious items back to India." She too visited the Royal collection at Windsor where she saw a small shawl made with yarn spun by Gandhiji and gifted in 1947 to Her Majesty the Queen and the Duke of Edinburgh for their wedding.

208. She also participated in the ceremony at the Buckingham Palace where the Queen's Baton Relay was launched for the Fourteenth Commonwealth Games being held in India in 2010.

209. In February, consultations between the Foreign Offices of India and the UK were held in London. The Indian delegation was led by Foreign Secretary Mr. Shivshankar Menon and the British delegation by Permanent Undersecretary Sir Peter Ricketts. The last Foreign Office Consultations were held in New Delhi on 5th September, 2007. This was an occasion to review bilateral and International developments including the global financial meltdown and reform of International Financial Institutions, the G-20 Summit and Climate Change. The Foreign Secretary also met Lord Malloch-Brown, Minister for Asia, Africa and the UN. Both sides expressed happiness at the positive growth in bilateral relations and satisfaction at the strategic partnership which has developed between the two countries over the last years.

210. The President's state visit to Cyprus was from October 29th to October 31st. During the visit the President had bilateral talks with her Cypriot counterpart Mr. Dimitris Christofias. She also met the President of the House of Representatives of Cyprus Mr. Marios Karoyian and the Archbishop of Cyprus Archbishop Chrysostomos II.

211. A business delegation from India representing FICCI, CII and ASSOCHAM accompanied her. It interacted with the business delegations from the Cyprus-India Business Association and the Cyprus Chamber of Commerce and Industry. She met with the Indian community which is about 4000 strong and consisted of professionals, students and others.

212. The warmth of relations with Cyprus was reflected in various landmarks in Nicosia like location of the Cypriot Parliament on the Jawaharlal Nehru Avenue with the Statue of Mahatma Gandhi at the entrance and the Indira Gandhi Street where the Indian High Commission is located. In her farewell message summing up the significance of her visit she said: "my visit to Cyprus reinforced the strong bonds that already exist and helped define the contours of a future cooperation within the context of a rapidly changing world."

Russia

213. The highlight of the India-Russia relations in 2009 was the annual summit in Moscow. The three-day Moscow visit in December by Prime Minister Manmohan Singh culminated in the signing of six agreements. This provided enough proof that New Delhi's relations with Moscow were stand alone and not at the cost of any other relationship. This was confirmed by the Prime Minister himself while addressing the media in Moscow on December 7. He said India - Russia relationship "stands on its own footing and is not influenced by our relations with any other country". Of the agreements signed, the agreement for joint production of multi-role transport aircraft, a \$100 million credit line for Indian goods and services in Russia, close cooperation in the field of civil nuclear energy, and an agreement on the pricing of Admiral Gorshkov, the aircraft carrier underlined the message that the two countries were not prepared to dilute their old relationship because of New Delhi developing newer relationships. The participation by Prime Minister Dr. Manmohan Singh in the SCO summit in June at Yekaterinburg at the Russian President's personal invitation, despite India being only an observer, was another signal of the warmth of personal relationship between the leaders of the two countries. Russia reciprocated in full measure the Indian gesture, by insisting that the rules of the membership of the SCO be finalized early, to facilitate Indian entry into it. It would give India a toehold in Central Asia, a strategically important area, particularly from the energy security angle. At the beginning of year in February, Russia in a display of its friendship towards New Delhi had signed a contract for the much needed long-term supply of 2000 tons of natural uranium pellets for Heavy Water Reactors and another 60 tons for Low Enriched Uranium pellets for Boiling Water Reactor. India too announced the two sites for the setting up of new reactors with Russian cooperation, agreement for which was signed in 2008.

214. Otherwise also 2009 was a special year in India - Russia relations. It was the Year of India in Russia. As stated above, in June Prime Minister had visited Russia for the Yekaterinburg summit meetings of the BRIC and the SCO. In September President Pratibha Patil paid a five-day state visit to Russia. In the same month Commerce and Industry Minister Anand Sharma led a 70-member delegation of Indian business leaders to a Russian-Indian Forum on Trade and Investment, which was followed in quick succession by the visits of External Affairs Minister S.M. Krishna and Defence Minister A.K. Antony. The appointment of heavyweight Deputy Prime Minister Sergei Sobyenin as the Russian co-chair for the Indo-Russian Inter-Governmental

Commission (IRIGC) on Trade, Economic, Scientific, Technological and Cultural Cooperation did not go unnoticed in New Delhi as also his gesture in visiting New Delhi in October to prepare for the Prime Minister's visit to Moscow for the annual Summit. In forging closer relationship the two countries are conscious that the global power is fast gravitating to the Asia-Pacific region, and there was mutual advantage as Russia begins to redevelop Siberia and the Far East.

215. The global economic crisis too played a role in pushing the two countries closer to each other. Despite a world trade slump, Indo-Russian commerce grew more than 10 per cent in 2009 to hit the figure of US \$ 7.5 billion. The target to 2010 was set at \$10 billion. At its annual session in October the Inter-Governmental Commission set a new target for 2015 - \$20 billion, which was still considered a modest figure, but would mark a big leap from the past decade when bilateral trade stagnated at \$2-3 billion a year. Energy is emerging as an important focus between the oil rich Russia and energy starved India. New Delhi had invested US \$ 2.8 billion in an oil field on Sakhalin off Russia's east coast and was in talks with the energy firms Rosneft and Gazprom for more blocks in north Russia. Now that India has obtained the necessary waiver from the NSG for nuclear trade, Russia is also emerging a major player in the development of nuclear energy. Besides the two new reactors agreement for which was signed in 2008 as mentioned earlier, possibility of Russia setting up more nuclear reactors remains wide open for the future.

216. The visit of President Shrimati Pratibha Devisingh Patil to Moscow in September was an important occasion for a review of ongoing bilateral cooperation between India and the Russian Federation and exchange of views on ways and means to further strengthen India-Russia bilateral ties in the future. She also exchanged views on regional and international issues of importance with the Russian leaders.

217. She noted with satisfaction the level of contacts between the political leadership of the two countries including at the annual Summit level as well as meetings and exchanges at Ministerial and other levels.

218. She too expressed satisfaction with ongoing efforts to achieve the bilateral trade target of US\$ 10 billion by 2010 which she felt, given the potential for economic cooperation that existed, was much below their potential. The private sectors in both countries need to take a lead on this issue, she stressed.

219. She was happy that her visit coincided with the celebrations of The Year of India in Russia. President Medvedev and the President participated in a Gala Concert showcasing the colorful mosaic of Indian culture during her stay in Moscow.

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220. With the increase in the bandwidth of India's engagements globally, the Ministry of External Affairs in New Delhi and its diplomatic missions, which are its eyes and ears are facing new challenges. Foreign Relations are no longer confined to what has been classically understood the role of a diplomat, observing protocol, interacting with the chancelleries of the world and delivering the messages of war and peace. Until some years ago it was enlarged to pursuing trade and economic interests. This too is passé. The sophistication, the growing needs of the developing economy and globalization have brought about qualitative change in the functioning of the Ministry and the Missions. Energy, environment and climate change, terrorism, science and technology, biotechnology, I.T, nano technology, space, and the like are the core of the new diplomatic vocabulary. The World Trade Organization has ruled out trade protectionism. It has dismantled the trade barriers which had segregated economies for centuries. It has given way to market economy, competition and free trade. The challenge of high growth and social change is no longer the attribute of domestic politics but has today assumed international ramifications. The need to bridge the gap between the rich and the poor is the demand of a democratic polity on which India prides itself. The development is no longer the process of mere planning, it needs attracting foreign investments and modern technology and even participation of multinational companies. All these have foreign policy implications even if they are governed by domestic compulsions. While much of the burden of reconciling the conflicting demands of modernization and globalization may fall on the technocrats, the Foreign Service bureaucracy today cannot escape shouldering its own share of the challenge.

221. The Ministry of External Affairs conscious of the new challenges has taken steps to meet them head on. New divisions have been created with duly qualified and trained officers to head them; training programmes are organized for its personnel to keep them up-to-date with new developments. The Foreign Service Institute in New Delhi is geared to meet the new challenges and needs.

222. As part of the same exercise the conference of the heads of mission has been institutionalized as an annual affair. The structure of international

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system has changed beyond recognition; time and space stand cut short by the electronic means of communication, the challenges have become rapid and give little time to think and ponder. Responses have to be quick and instant. It is in this perspective that the utility of the conference has to be seen. It provides an opportunity to the personnel at home and abroad to understand each other and develop a common outlook on global problems allowing local orientation as necessary to meet the demands of the time and situation.

223. The second conference of Heads of Indian Mission was inaugurated by the External Affairs Minister on August 24. In his inaugural speech he laid down the strategic goals-'development, inclusive economic growth and alleviation of poverty'- and laying down the task of the foreign service, he said "the main purpose of our foreign policy is to assist in the fulfillment of these goals by providing an enabling external environment which ensures security, promotes trade, enhances our influence in the world". Describing terrorism as the main challenge he said the foreign service has to ensure that "neighbourhood is stable and peaceful and that our surrounding environment is conducive to the pursuit of our national goal of comprehensive socio-economic development".

224. The Prime Minister in his address "emphasized the integral link of India's foreign policy with domestic policies particularly economic policy" and said "the country's foreign policy should be aimed at addressing the challenges of mass poverty, ignorance and disease in the country, which were the primary concern of the Indian state and polity".

225. Widening the scope he identified "three pillars of our global engagement -(i) sustaining capital inflows to supplement our investment efforts, (ii) the need to take advantage of rapid scientific and technological developments in the world which provide an opportunity for India to leap frog its technological development, and (iii) the need to ensure that the country's growth is not constrained by scarcity of natural resources.

226. Making it clear that "insularity was not an option" he underlined the imperative of India playing a role in the international arena "in a manner that makes a positive contribution to finding solutions to major global challenges, whether in the field of trade or climate change". He flagged terrorism as a menace and the need to tackle it with "full vigour".

227. The road map is laid down. The task of the Ministry of External Affairs and its missions is cut out. The Challenges are evident and need no

elaboration. Both the External Affairs Minister and the Prime Minister have spoken loud and clear. The Year 2010 would test the mettle of the Foreign Office personnel in fulfilling the mandate entrusted to them.



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