



INDIA'S FOREIGN RELATIONS — 2008 DOCUMENTS

Introduced & Edited by
AVTAR SINGH BHASIN

PUBLISHED IN COOPERATION WITH
**PUBLIC DIPLOMACY DIVISION
MINISTRY OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS**

GEETIKA PUBLISHERS



AVTAR SINGH BHASIN

(b.1935). BA (HONS); MA in History. Initially he had short stints of service in the National Archives of India and the Ministry of Defence. In 1963 he joined the Ministry of External Affairs where he served for three decades, retiring in 1993 as Director of the Historical Division. He was posted in Indian missions in Nepal, 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, Hungary etc. He was member of several ministerial and official delegations for discussions with various countries both in India and abroad.

Since retirement he has taken to academic research. He was Senior Fellow of the Indian Council of Historical Research from 1994-96. He was Honorary Fellow of the Institute of Contemporary Studies, Nehru Memorial Museum and Library from 1997 to 2001. He has edited and authored several books on South Asian affairs. He also contributed many articles in newspapers on developments in the neighbouring countries. His 75 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 - 2008
DOCUMENTS
PART - I**

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(The deployment shown above is as on December 31, 2008)

**Dedicated to the Memory of
V. Venkateswara Rao
who was martyred in the terrorist attack
on the Indian Embassy in Kabul
on July 7, 2008.**

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P R E F A C E

Published annually, the present Volume is the seventh in the series India's Foreign Relations. As its name implies, it showcases the documents on India's foreign relations and is published in cooperation with the Public Diplomacy Division of the Ministry of External Affairs. This Division was created in 2006 to reach out to think-tanks, academia, civil society and industry both within the country and abroad to interact with them on the contours of Indian foreign policy and to initiate debate and discussion within the wider public about the key foreign policy issues.

As in 2007, the issue of civil nuclear energy cooperation with the United States, continued to dominate both the foreign policy discourse as well as domestic politics of the country. It was not until the realignment of domestic political forces that the hump was crossed at home that the government felt emboldened to talk the issue over with other international players in the game and signed agreements with institutions like the IAEA, NSG and individual countries. The bombing of the Indian Embassy in Kabul, sea-borne terrorist attack in Mumbai, Pakistan's intransigence in withholding cooperation and adopting bellicose posture, threatened to stall the peace process so arduously put in place in 2004. It is therefore natural that documents on nuclear energy cooperation and relations with Pakistan should form the bulk of the Volume.

Considering the importance of climate change in international discourse today, a separate section has been added for this subject.

The documents have been categorized region-wise, thematically and arranged chronologically. There are documents which do not fall in any particular category, and have references to several subjects/issues; these figure in the General category, with cross referencing, wherever possible. To take care of the bulk, bilateral agreements of only strategic nature having bearing on foreign relations have, as a rule, been included here. However, in the case of neighbours, all agreements have been included comprehensively, as each one has a bearing on the overall relationship.

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In reproducing the documents every care has been taken to adhere to the original in terms of spellings of proper nouns, and punctuations.

The Library of the India International Centre has provided me a great deal of logistic support in my work. I am grateful to its Chief Librarian Ms. Sushma Zutshi and her colleagues.

I wish to acknowledge the support and help of a large number of officers of the Ministry of External Affairs in the preparation of this volume. While not naming every one by name since the list is quite a long one, I would particularly like to acknowledge the contributions of M/s. Amit Dasgupta and Narinder Singh. My personal thanks to all of them. I owe a debt of gratitude to TCA Rangachari for sparing a good deal of his time, to go meticulously through the Introduction with a fine comb to rhyme the text. Thank you, Sir. Whatever deficiencies have occurred in the publication in any manner and form, I do not share the blame for that with any one else. They are all mine.

I am dedicating this book to late V. Venkateswara Rao, who was a Counsellor in the Indian Embassy in Kabul and became a martyr when the Mission came under terrorist attack on July 7, 2008. It was for the first time that an Indian asset was attacked by terrorists outside the country. The Officers of the Indian diplomatic service posted in far flung places, carry out their arduous duties in difficult areas of the world in the service of the nation not caring for their personal security and comfort. They make themselves vulnerable to all sorts of dangers but they honour the call of their duty. I salute the memory of late Venkateswara Rao by this humble dedication.

February 10, 2009.

Avtar Singh Bhasin

INTRODUCTION

India's opening to the world, and its active engagement in different regions, near and far, continued in an active fashion. This policy is reflective of the Indian response to an increasingly multi-polar world. It has served and continues to serve the wider interests of India that is undergoing rapid socio-economic transformation. The engagement with the United States and other institutions like the IAEA and the Nuclear Suppliers' Group for civil nuclear energy cooperation is one strand of this policy. It dominated India's foreign relations and domestic politics for better part of the year 2008. The conclusion of such an agreement with its wider implications had the potential to open the doors of nuclear trade with all other countries. Indian response to the terrorist attack on Mumbai, of engaging the international opinion to put pressure on Pakistan to tackle the menace of terrorism was part of the same policy of active engagement with the world to find solution to the problems which had ramifications beyond our borders. India is convinced that terrorism is not an Indian problem alone, but one that affects the civilized nations around the world.

I

Civil Nuclear Energy Cooperation

2. The nuclear cooperation agreement with the United States encountered hurdles and road blocks all the way, at home and abroad, before fruition. At home, the Left Party allies of the United Progressive Alliance Government, encumbered by their ideological baggage of the past, were opposed to the agreement. They were fully aware, yet refused to recognize that without the US cooperation in this field, similar cooperation with other countries including France and Russia, was out of question. The lengthy consultations between the ruling UPA Alliance and the Left Parties failed to bring the two sides closer than when they started the consultation process in 2007. Aware of the criticality of their support to the government for survival in the parliamentary system, the Left parties held the sword of Damocles hanging all through the negotiations. The Ruling Alliance torn between its international commitments and political compulsions at home was forced to look for an alternative arrangement for the government to survive. In a fast

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developing political domestic conundrum, another political party - The Samajwadi Party - came to the ruling alliance's rescue and the government successfully met the challenge of parliamentary majority. In July, it asked for a vote of confidence and obtained it comfortably, upholding the tradition of good parliamentary practices.

3. Having weathered the challenge at home, the government felt confident to walk the talk with other principal international interlocutors. The International Atomic Energy Agency at Vienna was the first stop. The Safeguards Agreement which had been earlier negotiated with the IAEA after several rounds of negotiations, beginning in November 2007, went before the 35-member Board of Governors who adopted the 22-page framework document by consensus on August 1. Termed an "umbrella" arrangement, it allowed India to add nuclear facilities over time but under IAEA safeguards. The IAEA would begin to implement the new Safeguards Agreement in 2009, with the aim of bringing a total of 14 of the existing Indian reactors under Agency safeguards by 2014. Currently IAEA safeguards apply to six Indian nuclear reactors under agreements concluded between 1971 and 1994. India has also agreed to sign an Additional Safeguards Protocol with the IAEA to complete the process. Meanwhile the document adopted by the IAEA Board of Governors on August 1, 2008 was signed between the IAEA and India on February 2, 2009.

4. El Baradei, Director General of the IAEA welcoming the IAEA consensus said: "I believe the agreement is good for India, is good for the world, is good for non-proliferation, is good for our collective effort to move towards a world free from nuclear weapons. What the agreement does is bring India closer to the debate on our ultimate goal, which is the goal of the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT) - to establish a world free from nuclear weapons." Underlying the importance of the event he said: "I have always maintained that if we were to move forward toward strengthening non-proliferation to reduce the nuclear weapons arsenal, toward moving to a world free from nuclear weapons, that dialogue has to be universal and inclusive." El Baradei believed that India Safeguards Agreement had "a lot of positive implications, development implications, security implications, non-proliferation implications, and arms control implications". He felt happy that something he was supportive of from the beginning had been achieved, and that his "judgement has been certified by the Board in approving the agreement by consensus."

5. The Prime Minister Dr. Manmohan Singh who was in Colombo, the day the news of the adoption came in, felt "delighted" and describing the day as "historic" said: "This is an important day for India, and for our civil nuclear initiative for the resumption of India's cooperation with our friends abroad. The civil nuclear initiative is good for India and good for the world. As we move forward towards our goal of sustainable development and energy security, the peaceful uses of atomic energy will play an increasingly important role...I am deeply appreciative of the historic significance of this milestone in our cooperation with the IAEA and the international community in peaceful uses of atomic energy."

6. The next stop at NSG proved more challenging. There were diehard members of the group who held strong views on non-proliferation. They were reluctant to make an exception for India to allow it unrestricted access to nuclear technology without signing the NPT. Even if they were willing to make adjustments, they wished to add some pre-conditions, which were unacceptable to New Delhi. The Greens and the Atomic Non-Proliferation Association too lobbied hard to stall the vote in favour of waiver not only at the NSG but at other possible levels too. The Greens even staged a well-advertised but small protest demonstration outside the NSG meeting.

7. India from the very beginning had bet on unconditional and clean waiver of the NSG's trading restrictions in favour of India. Conscious of the possible opposition at the NSG, India fielded a powerful diplomatic delegation led by the Foreign Secretary Shivshankar Menon and supported by officials from the Atomic Energy Department, Prime Minister's Office and the External Affairs Ministry itself. In addition, Special Envoys of the Prime Minister travelled to all the NSG capitals in the run up to the Vienna meeting to canvass support for the waiver.

8. The NSG meeting which was scheduled for a day only, spilled over to the next day, before the recalcitrant gave in. This was achieved not before last minute high-level diplomacy both on the part of New Delhi and Washington. The Statement that the External Affairs Minister Pranab Mukherjee issued on September 5 proved crucial to clinch the issue. The statement sought to reiterate India's stand on disarmament and non-proliferation. It reminded the international community that "India has a long-standing and steadfast commitment to universal, non-discriminatory and total elimination of nuclear weapons." It assured that India's civil nuclear initiative "will strengthen the international non-proliferation regime." Reminding the NSG members that New Delhi had only "recently submitted

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a Working Paper on Nuclear Disarmament to the UN General Assembly," the Statement reaffirmed to the world India's commitment "to a voluntary, unilateral moratorium on nuclear testing," and "policy of no-first-use of nuclear weapons." Mr. Mukherjee's statement recalled India's impeccable non-proliferation record and showcased the "effective and comprehensive system of national export controls, which has been constantly updated to meet the highest international standards." This manifested in the enactment of the Weapons of Mass Destruction and their Delivery Systems Act in 2005. It sought to assure the NSG that "India will not be the source of proliferation of sensitive technologies, including enrichment and reprocessing transfers. We stand for the strengthening of the non-proliferation regime." "In keeping with our commitment to sign and adhere to an Additional Protocol with respect to India's civil nuclear facilities, we are working closely with the IAEA to ensure early conclusion of an Additional Protocol to the Safeguards Agreement," concluded the statement. The reassuring Statement of Mr. Mukherjee ended the suspense instantaneously, when even China, which the previous night had surprised every body by its adverse stance and abruptly leaving the meeting, withdrew any reservation it had the previous night.

9. The NSG waiver was an event of great importance. It sought to end India's nuclear apartheid it had suffered for more than three decades. The External Affairs Minister, speaking in the Lok Sabha on October 20, metaphorically likened the IAEA clearance and the NSG waiver to a "passport which allows us to engage in civil nuclear cooperation with our international partners. We are now in the process of getting visas by engaging with our international partners to negotiate and finalize bilateral cooperation agreements."

10. Significantly, the IAEA agreement and the NSG waiver made the ratification of the 123 agreement by the U.S. irrelevant as far as India's ability to negotiate nuclear cooperation with other countries was concerned. The NSG waiver enabled India to sign with France its first nuclear cooperation agreement on September 30th itself, without waiting for the US ratification. A similar agreement with Russia did not have to wait long. It was signed in December when the Russian President visited New Delhi.

11. Nevertheless, New Delhi was keen that the cooperation agreement with the US, which kick-started the process in July 2005, should also be clinched. For that, the next stop was Washington. Just then both the President and the US Congress were faced with a new global crisis of economic

meltdown needing their undivided attention. Given the importance of the Agreement and the fact that both the Congress and the President had invested a lot of their precious time on it, both acted with the necessary dispatch and found time to accommodate the ratification process in their tight schedule. The Non-proliferation lobby worked overtime, in its last ditch effort to derail the process, met with little success. The Agreement finally received Congress' approval on October 2 by an overwhelming vote, rejecting some killer amendments. It marked the culmination of a three-year long journey.

12. President Bush hailed the passage of the legislation, saying it would strengthen global nuclear non-proliferation efforts and help India increase its energy production. Significantly both Presidential candidates, Senators Barack Obama and John McCain, threw their weight behind the deal during their election campaigns.

13. In New Delhi both the Government and the Congress Party termed the passage of the India-U.S. civil nuclear cooperation by the U.S. Congress "historic" and said it would address the nation's energy and high technology requirements. The Congress president Sonia Gandhi described it as a "landmark development" and said it marked the successful culmination of a process initiated by the Prime Minister in July 2005, "a process which, guided by India's supreme national interest, the Congress party has throughout endorsed." She said it was an acknowledgement of India's impeccable credentials and paved the way for India's integration into global mainstream.

14. For New Delhi it was a historic initiative towards nation building in respect of energy, sustainable development, technology and other aspects. The *Times of India* in its editorial on October 3 described the India-France nuclear cooperation agreement and the US Congress approval as "double delight" for "Prime Minister Manmohan Singh and his team-who pushed for the deal against formidable domestic and international odds..." The *Deccan Herald* in its editorial on October 3 described it "a landmark event in the international nuclear regime because for the first time the accepted rules for nuclear co-operation have been rewritten for India, which will now be considered a de facto nuclear power." The Mumbai based *Daily News and Analysis* in its editorial on October 2 said: "Now India has to make use of this great opportunity of access to technology denied to it for 34 years. With France quick to sign an agreement with India, there will be a rush to see the commercial possibilities offered by this deal. The thrust

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now will be on getting the best technologies available in the international market and see how these help India's economic growth." The Chennai based *The Hindu* remained somewhat skeptical. It advised the Government against signing the Agreement because of the riders accompanying the ratification, even if these were negated by the accompanying Presidential statement in exercise of his executive overriding powers. The Left parties and the main Opposition Party, the Bharatiya Janata Party, failed to overcome their antipathy and remained critical of the final act. The opposition of the BJP was all the more ironic, since it was the party which initiated the process when in power, under the garb of Next Step in the Strategic Partnership.

15. The taste of the pudding lies in its eating. The signing of the agreements both with France and Russia have opened up the vast vista of international nuclear trade which hopefully will unleash the forces of development through clean energy, something India had hankered for long. The basic principle of diplomacy is that there is no full stop in international relations. Diplomacy is a process by which sovereign nations reconcile their sovereign but conflicting interests. Diplomacy in international relations like politics at home is an art of possible. You make the best of the bargain, when constrained by circumstances and proceed from then on to better what has been achieved. In the search for a gold medal at the Olympics, one has to run and win many heats. To win a war one has to fight many battles! India may not have, in this round, won the war, as some sceptics would like to believe, it certainly has won a decisive battle.

II

Pakistan

16. Before one said adieu to 2008 the terrorist attack on Mumbai on 26 November close on the heels of the terrorist attack on the Indian Embassy in Kabul ripped open the old wounds inflicted by terrorism emanating from Pakistan-based terrorist groups. Looking back, the installation of a civilian government in Islamabad and restoration of democratic institutions gave some hope of a new relationship taking shape based on democratic values. India whole-heartedly welcomed the emergence of the people's government in its neighbourhood after a long time. But alas it was not to be. The two dastardly events in quick succession destroyed the pious hopes, New Delhi had entertained.

17. It may be recalled that it was the tour of an Indian cricket team to Pakistan that marked the beginning of a fresh phase in India-Pakistan relations in 2004 after President Musharraf undertook “not to permit any territory under Pakistan’s control to be used to support terrorism in any manner.” Ironically, four years later, in the wake of the Mumbai terror attack, it was the Indian cricket team’s scheduled tour to Pakistan that became the first casualty. The Board of Control for Cricket in India, on the advice of the Government of India cancelled the projected tour of the Indian cricket team in January 2009 to Pakistan. M. S. Gill, the Minister for Sports echoed the sentiments of millions of Indians when he said: “Is it possible for one team to arrive in Mumbai and indulge in mass murder and have another team go and play cricket in the winter afternoon sun at Lahore immediately after?” The Minister of State for Commerce and Power, Jairam Ramesh, too cancelled his scheduled visit to Pakistan. India was anguished and distressed that Pakistan either did not or could not live up to its commitments. Whatever the reason, the fact was that several Indian cities came under repeated terrorist attacks in which innumerable precious lives of innocent men, women and even children were lost. New Delhi, however, persisted with the peace process in the expectation that people-to-people contacts which had developed at a mass scale, visit of journalists, artists, opinion makers, academics coupled with greater flow of trade, even if not as much as India wished, would create a vested interest in peace and Pakistan would control the Frankenstein in its backyard.

18. Political instability, long dictatorial army rule in several spells, denial of democratic rights, feudal economic structure of the economy, stagnating political, economic and social order, and dire dependence on foreign aid had led to demoralization of the Pakistani society. Over the last few years, Pakistan itself had come under attack from its homegrown terrorists. The assassination of one of Pakistan's most charismatic leaders, Benazir Bhutto, underlined the extent to which the Pakistani society had been brutalized. It was the fond but futile hope of India that Islamabad, now at least, would realize that terrorism was a monster that could gobble it too. Return of democracy and civilian government in Islamabad following general elections, gave some hope that Pakistan, after several spells of disastrous military rule, had perhaps realized after all that democracy, like liberty, needs to be nurtured and cannot be taken for granted. For it to succeed, socio-economic development of society was one of the pre-conditions. But development cannot come without peace, both internal and external, and Pakistan would have to realize that terrorism is the anti-thesis of both peace and development.

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19. India too is a developing society and it needed peace more than anything else to accelerate the pace of its development and sustain it too. Peace, like security, is indivisible. Peace in the subcontinent cannot be the concern of India alone. It cannot come with weapons or military might. The mightiest nations have suffered terrorist attacks despite all the weaponry at their command. As long as terrorists can find safe heavens, no area of the world is safe. Unless all the countries realize this basic postulate, we will all remain vulnerable to terrorism.

20. It would be recalled that after the Mumbai train attack in July 2006, India was outraged when Pakistan Foreign Minister Kasuri had tried to link such terrorist actions to the so-called lack of resolution of disputes between the two countries. This remark had serious implications - one, it was a tacit admission that the attack had its origin in Pakistan and two, Pakistan would not desist using terrorism as an instrument of coercion to resolve outstanding issues with India.

21. At that time Prime Minister Manmohan Singh had warned that the peace process could not move forward "if terror aided and abetted by outside continued to take the lives of innocent citizens..." There would perhaps have been irreparable damage to the relationship then also but for the meeting between President Musharraf and Prime Minister Dr. Manmohan Singh in Havana on the sidelines of the NAM Summit in September 2006 which helped to salvage it. The two leaders decided to continue with the peace process and "put in place an India-Pakistan anti-terrorism institutional mechanism to identify and implement counter-terrorism initiatives and investigations". Much to India's disappointment, the periodic meetings of this group produced no concrete results and India continued to reel under repeated terrorist attacks.

22. The peace process somehow survived, once again, a near fatal blow when the Indian Embassy in Kabul was bombed on July 7, in which lives of senior Indian diplomats and security personnel besides Afghan visitors to the Embassy, were lost. There was incontrovertible evidence, even then of Pakistani involvement, provided not only by India but also by the Afghan and US intelligence agencies. The US conveyed its concern to Pakistan albeit at a low key. American media, however, openly charged Pakistan for abetting the Embassy attack while producing the evidence that America had collected and shared with Islamabad.

23. It was once again summit diplomacy that rescued the relationship. The meeting between the Prime Ministers of India and Pakistan in Colombo

on the sidelines of the SAARC Summit and later between Prime Minister Dr. Manmohan Singh and President Asif Ali Zardari in New York in September on the sidelines of the UNGA helped to prevent the collapse of the peace process. During the latter meeting in New York on September 24, Pakistan was made aware that the peace process had come "under strain in recent months" and President Zardari agreed with Dr. Manmohan Singh "that the forces that have tried to derail the peace process must be defeated" as that was the only way for "the continuation and deepening of a constructive dialogue for the peaceful resolution and satisfactory settlement of all bilateral issues, including Jammu and Kashmir". To confirm his bona fide that he sincerely meant peace and business, President Zardari reiterated that "the Government of Pakistan stands by its commitments of January 2004." India accepted his reassurance at face value.

24. When relations seemed returning back to normal, tsunami struck again in true fashion via the Arabian Sea. The sea-borne terrorist attack on Mumbai on November 26 practically broke the proverbial camel's back. New Delhi cried foul. It said it could take no more and enough was enough. Two hundred lives from all communities and even foreigners (including American, British and Israeli) were lost. Its psychological impact on the people of not only Mumbai but also the entire country was horrendous. Such terrorist attacks have the potential to break the delicate fabric of communal harmony of the multi-religious Indian society. If this and other similar attacks had failed to hurt this harmony and India came out stronger from these tribulations, the credit should go to the institutional strength of the society so assiduously built over generations. Since there was no immediate direct evidence of Pakistan Government's involvement even if the footprints were clear, there was no attempt to blame it on that country. In his first reaction to the attack, an upset Prime Minister while addressing the nation on November 27, without naming Pakistan said: "We will take up strongly with our neighbours that the use of their territory for launching attacks on us will not be tolerated, and that there would be a cost if suitable measures are not taken by them." It did not take long for impeccable evidence of Pakistani involvement to emerge. Though it was a suicide squad that attacked Mumbai, one of its members was arrested alive. He and other pieces of evidence that emerged from the preliminary investigations left little doubt about the source of the attack.

25. Pakistan's first reaction was one of innocence and assurance of full cooperation in investigations. President Asif Ali Zardari in his telephonic talk with the Prime Minister while extending sympathy promised to send immediately the Director General of the Inter Services Intelligence (ISI) to

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New Delhi to help in the investigations. Speaking on a television interview a couple of days after the attack, Zardari, describing the terror attack on Mumbai as a "world incident," said "let me assure you [that] if any evidence points to any individual or group in my part of the country, I shall take the strictest of action in the light of the evidence and in front of the world." Promising to deliver on his assurances he said: "I am delivering for Pakistan; I am delivering for the existence of Pakistan. I have a personal threat. I have a country threat by these same forces. They may not be the same individuals, but they are definitely the same forces with the same mindset." All this sounded music to Indian ears.

26. The Pakistani Foreign Minister Qureshi after a Cabinet meeting on November 29 felt relieved that the Indian leadership had not blamed the Pakistan Government and was only suspecting "groups or individuals" in his country. He told a press conference in Islamabad that Pakistan's "hands are clean, we have nothing to hide, we have nothing to be ashamed of." He asserted his government attached "the highest importance to good neighbourly relations with India [that are] essential for regional peace and stability."

27. These initial sound bites from Pakistan gave hope of Pakistan's sincerity to cooperate in investigations. Alas it was not to be. It did not take too long for good sense to evaporate. Zardari, perhaps not realizing or not being aware of the involvement of his infamous Inter Services Intelligence (ISI), soon went back on his offer to send the DG of the ISI. He described his earlier promise a mis-communication, and instead offered, in the first instance, to send one of the Director level officers of the ISI and later, if the need arose, the Director General himself. Even this stance had a short life. It was then adumbrated that unless India officially provided evidence of Pakistani involvement, there was no point in sending anyone. In yet another somersault, Pakistan offered instead a joint investigation into the dreadful incident, which New Delhi promptly rejected. Initially President Zardari did not rule out the possibility of his non-state elements being involved. Later realizing that a State cannot abdicate its responsibility for the acts of omission and commission even of non-state actors from its territory, altogether denied that any Pakistani was involved. All these somersaults had a subtle message to convey: the army brass had vetoed the President and cooperation, for they found the civilian sweet song too jarring for their ears. Similarly, there was a volte-face on Maulana Masood Azhar of the outlawed Jaish-e-Mohammed, the most wanted terrorist in India. Pakistan initially said he had been put under arrest. A week later Foreign Minister Qureshi surprised everyone saying that he was out of the country. A couple of weeks later,

Information Minister Sherry Rehman told NDTV, a private T V channel in India, that these people have their own network, and it was not difficult for them to escape. An incomprehensible statement from a person holding a responsible Cabinet position of Information Ministry!!

28. Soon enough the identity of the captured terrorist, Ajmal Amir Kasab as a Pakistani was proved beyond an iota of doubt. His father recognized his wayward son after he saw his images on the television screen. The Pakistani media carried out due diligence and declared him to be a Pakistani. Former Prime Minister Nawaz Sharif raised pertinent questions about the hesitation of the Pakistani authorities to recognize his identity (though, later, under pressure he too tried to change his tune). But Islamabad's official stance to New Delhi's chagrin, remained one of complete denial and non-cooperation.

29. Pakistan came under heavy pressure both from New Delhi and international community to give up its lethargy and act against those responsible for the carnage. The US Secretary of State Dr. Rice and the British Prime Minister Gordon Brown visited both New Delhi and Islamabad. In New Delhi they offered their condolences for the killed and had little difficulty in recognizing Pakistani footprints on the appalling crime committed by the gang coming from the sea. While in Islamabad they made the Pakistani leadership squirm with embarrassment on the involvement of Pakistani actors. The British Prime Minister, to Pakistan's mortification and discomfort, while still in Pakistan, bluntly told the Pakistanis that 80 percent of the terrorist acts investigated by the British intelligence found Pakistani footprints. The United Nations Security Council was seized of the horrendous situation and it called upon Pakistan to act.

30. Speaking to journalists Prime Minister Manmohan Singh on 23rd December while saying that "no body wants war" India would insist that Pakistan dismantle the "terror infrastructure". He appealed to the international community to bring upon Pakistan the necessary pressure to persuade it to end this menace of terrorism. "The issue is not war, but terrorism being aided and abetted by Pakistan. We want Pakistan to make objective efforts to dismantle the terror infrastructure," he said. Prime Minister pointed out that there was no dearth of UN resolutions besides, the latest one, on the need to end terrorism and Pakistan should comply with them.

The External Affairs Minister Pranab Mukherjee too told reporters the same day that the real issue was "that there has been an attack on Mumbai that

originated from Pakistan's soil" and "India has requested Pakistan to take action against the perpetrators of the crime. We have again urged the Pakistani authorities to fulfil their commitment." Mr. Mukherjee once again repeating himself emphasized: "My request to friends in Pakistan is to address the issue that is terrorism and not create war hysteria. They should act against those responsible for the Mumbai terror attacks."

31. Against a mountain of evidence of Pakistan's involvement, its leadership from President down to the man in the street became aggressive. The media which initially embarrassed the Government by identifying the arrested terrorist as a resident of Pakistan thought it prudent to buy the official line. Pakistan deflected the issue of arrested terrorist Ajmal Amir Kasab by simply saying that he did not figure on the National Database of Registration Authority (NADRA) as if every citizen of Pakistan was so registered. (In September 2007, NADRA had announced it had issued computerized National Identity Cards to 60 million of Pakistan's approximately 180 million population). In the same denial mood, it found fault with the letter Kasab wrote to the Pakistan High Commission in New Delhi asking for consular access.

32. The Interior Minister claimed that the Lashkar-e-Taiba did not exist having been banned earlier in 2002. Meanwhile on December 9, acceding to India's strong plea, UNSC discussed the question of terrorism and the Committee on Terrorism set up under the earlier resolutions of the Council called upon Pakistan to ban the Jammāt-ud-Dawā and arrest four of its top functionaries including Hafeez Saeed. Fearing non-action on this account could lead to Pakistan being branded a Terrorist State, it did ban the Jammāt and arrested the four terrorists. This fear of being branded a terrorist state was articulated both by Pakistani Prime Minister and his Defence Minister. It was clear that Pakistan chose to act under compulsion than compunction.

33. Unfortunately there was hardly any touch of sincerity in its actions. Hafiz Saeed was allowed to hold a press conference in Lahore and instead of being arrested was put only under house arrest. Defence Minister Ahmed Mukhtar said that unless evidence was made available to bring charges against him, he would be released after 90 days. It is a questionable decision but Pakistan has done it so often in the past.

34. Even this half-hearted action, whether against Saeed or JuD, was claimed to have been taken in fulfillment of UNSC obligations rather than as required by the State itself, against an individual or an organization involved in terrorism or to assuage the ruffled feeling of a friendly neighbour. JuD's

website was functional, its headquarters at Muridke was not sealed. Only under further international pressure Pakistan finally took over some of its assets under provincial control. Islamabad needed to be reminded that there were other Resolutions of the UNSC like 1269, 1566, 1626 adopted in the past which enjoined member states to act against the terrorists by denying them safe heavens, finance, and requiring to extend cooperation in the fight against terrorism etc.

35. India, on its part, continued to mount pressure on Pakistan to act and cooperate. The International Conference of Jurists on Terrorism and Rule of Law, in session in New Delhi at that time, adopted at its conclusion on December 14 a Resolution declaring harbouring of terrorist groups and providing logistic and financial support to them no less crime than terrorism. It denounced the tendency to identify terrorism with freedom struggles and urged world leaders to impose multilateral sanctions against countries providing sanctuary and financial and logistic support to terrorist groups. It asked countries to take concrete steps to address these issues on a priority basis and "impose multilateral sanctions against nations not extending their cooperation in this regard." The resolution described terrorism as a serious threat to the maintenance of the rule of law and the worst form of human rights violation across the globe.

36. Prime Minister Manmohan Singh on December 14 ruled out normal relations with Pakistan until it ensured that its soil was not used for terrorist activities against India. Speaking in Kashmir, he said the fight against terrorism would continue at all cost and at all levels. "Pakistan should control situation in its country as it is evident that some people in Pakistan are engaged in carrying out terrorist attacks like the recent Mumbai attack in our country. Our relations with Pakistan will not improve until it curbs the terrorists who are operating on its soil to carry out terrorist attacks on India," he said. Dr. Singh said India had always wanted to have good relations with them but "our kind desire should not be treated as our weakness." "We want solution to all the problems, including Kashmir, through friendly relations," he said but repeated that "borders cannot be changed but unnecessary restrictions on the people's movement could be removed." He mentioned the steps taken by his government to open the roads across the Line of Control and said: "There is much headway and we will take further steps to remove the bottlenecks to make the exercise meaningful."

37. The next day on December 16 India cautioned that improvement of ties would have to wait until Islamabad took demonstrable action to get to

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the bottom of the Mumbai terror attacks. External Affairs Minister Pranab Mukherjee and Defence Minister A.K. Antony delivered the same message in Srinagar and New Delhi respectively: Pakistan must follow up on its promise of action against the "elements" which orchestrated the attacks in Mumbai last month and the future of bilateral ties depended on Pakistan sincerely investigating the incident. "We expect good sense will prevail in the backdrop of these assurances and [hope] a conducive atmosphere can be built up. That is possible only after words are followed by action," Mr. Mukherjee told media persons. Referring to Maulana Masood Azhar, Mr. Mukherjee asked, "What is the problem in handing him over?"

38. Dispelling any doubts that India wished to create panic or war hysteria Defence Minister AK Antony on the occasion of Vijay Diwas (Victory Day) marking the 37th anniversary of India's military victory over Pakistan in Bangladesh said on December 16: "We are not planning any military action... but at the same time unless Pakistan takes actions against those terrorists who are operating from their soil against India and also against all those who are behind the Mumbai terrorist attack, things will not be normal." On the issue of troop deployment along the Indo-Pak border, Antony said the situation there was "normal" and armed forces were "always ready". When further questioned he said "I cannot say what course of action we will take but unless Pakistan shows sincerity in whatever they are saying through their actions, one thing is very sure that there is no question of things as usual."

39. Repeated urgent messages for action against terrorist groups operating from Pakistani soil from the Indian leaders did not elicit any positive response from Islamabad. In its obdurate mood it continued to deny every thing and, as pointed out above, denied that the arrested terrorist Kasab was a Pakistani national notwithstanding the fact that Kasab's father had identified him and the Pakistani media both print and electronic had after an on the spot enquiries and investigations had declared him to be the resident of the village Faridkot in Okara district.

40. In its efforts to obfuscate the issue, Pakistan found reason to believe Indian involvement in an incident in Lahore, in which a woman was said to have been killed. It was claimed that of the four Indians involved, one had been arrested, *a l' affaire* Kasab of Mumbai. Pakistan drummed up war hysteria, its fighter aircraft made maneuvers over Lahore, Rawalpindi, Karachi and some other cities in apparent preparation for an any 'untoward eventuality'. The speeches from the Pakistani leaders created a sense of

panic in border areas on both sides of the border. The Pakistani leadership both at the highest level of political and military hierarchy made inflammatory statements in order to make the whole issue look one of India - Pakistan war than one of terrorism. Prime Minister Manmohan Singh was right in his observation that the issue was not one of war but one of terrorism and the option of war were not on Indian table at least. The External Affairs Minister Pranab Mukherjee in his statements never used 'the ready for war' rhetoric of the type emanated from Pakistani leadership both civil and military. As a minister looking after external relations he was always speaking of various international options to which he hoped Pakistan would respond. No senior Indian military officer indulged in bellicose lingo. Defence Minister *ab initio* had explicitly ruled out any military action in making Pakistan see reason.

41. India still persisted with its diplomatic pressure to make Pakistan see reason. On December 26, the Indian High Commissioner in Islamabad Satyabrata Pal called on the Pakistani Foreign Secretary and impressed upon him the need for action to bring the perpetrators of the Mumbai attack to justice. At the same time, he assured him that India had not moved any of its troops along the Pakistani border and the reports of any such movement were without foundation. Mr. Pal reportedly told Islamabad that the UN resolutions on terrorism required Pakistan government to take "judicial action" against the Jamat-ud-Dawah and individuals designated by Resolution 1267 as "terrorists". The next day, December 27 External Affairs Minister Mukherjee said in Behrampur, West Bengal "an unfortunate atmosphere is being created....I would like to state that the issue is not the defence of Pakistan or war. Instead the issue is the strike in Mumbai." Reacting to Indian pleas for action against the terrorists even if they were "non-state actors," President Zardari speaking on December 27, at the function to mark a year of the assassination of Benazir Bhutto, promised his country would act against "non-state actors" responsible for terrorism. A day earlier, Bruce Riedel, terrorism advisor to President-elect Obama transition team said in an interview to the *New York Times* that he saw the terrorist network in the mountains of Pakistan's northwest as the biggest threat to the incoming Obama Administration. He accused Pakistan of fleecing Washington of billions of dollars, ostensibly to be used in the fight against terrorism, while actually allowing the Al-Qaida to regroup in the tribal agency areas.

42. It was not until the visit of Chinese Vice Foreign Minister He Yafei on December 29 that conciliatory noises emanated from Islamabad. Mr. He during his stay in Islamabad met President Zardari, Prime Minister Gilani and Foreign Minister Qureshi and on the military side, both the Chief of Staff of the Army

General Kayani and Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff Committee Gen. Tariq Majid. A press release issued by the Public Relations of the ISI said: "COAS highlighted the need to de-escalate and avoid conflict in the interest of peace and security." The second release from the same source on the Chinese visitor's meeting with Gen. Majid said: "CJCSC emphasized the need for avoidance of provocative belligerent posturing, initiation of reciprocal measures for immediate de-escalation and earliest resumption of the peace dialogue." He's meeting with Zardari resulted in a sober statement emphasizing that "cooperation and dialogue are the only way forward." Even though all the three top leaders of Pakistan government told Mr. He of Pakistan's joint investigation offer, their efforts failed to elicit Chinese support to this dubious game plan. Pakistan's effort to involve China in a mediatory role declaring that Mr. He had been given a blank cheque by Pakistan, was spurned by New Delhi without a second thought. India's uncompromising stance on Pakistan accepting its responsibility and action, saw Pakistan slowly but surely coming out of the denial mood. A day after the change of track by the top brass of the government and the army, the National Security Advisor Mahmud Ali Durrani opened a small window of hope, though at the cost of his job, that Pakistan after all wished to make amends. He said that the arrested terrorist Ajmal Amir Kasab "could be" a Pakistani national. Cautiously, he added, "I am not saying anything more than that", since Pakistan did not have the proof. About the other terrorists involved in the Mumbai attack, he was not sure. Thanks for small mercies, but one has to sympathize with him since he lost his job pronto.

43. Islamabad tried another trick to shrug off action. Now it said in the absence of an extradition treaty with India, Pakistan could not extradite its people suspected of involvement in Mumbai attacks. Unfortunately for Islamabad it held little water. Pakistan was reminded that as a signatory to international conventions including the SAARC Convention it was expected either to prosecute terror suspects or extradite them to the country that wanted to try them.

44. Taking a tough posture, the Home Minister P. Chidambaram said Pakistan would have to give "cast iron guarantees" that its soil was not used to launch terror attacks on India or else it would pay an "enormous price." Clarifying he said "guarantees have to come from those who control the levers of power and that means, the elected civilian government, plus the army. These are not guarantees that you can execute on a piece of paper. These are guarantees that have to be given to the international community."

45. On January 5, India provided full evidence showing that the Mumbai attack had its roots in Pakistani territory. The same evidence was provided to the United States, the United Kingdom, Israel, and others whose nationals were among those killed in the terror attack. To further mount international pressure, same evidence was shared with other members of the international community including China, to enable these countries to satisfy themselves of the Indian charge and bring pressure on Islamabad to cooperate.

46. Pakistan came out with one after another ploy to extricate itself. It said the evidence provided was information and not proof; it was examining it; it was conducting its own investigations; no Pakistani national can be extradited to India; the crime was not planned from the Pakistani soil, (without denying that its nationals were involved). Faced with the strength and enormity of the evidence provided to it, Pakistan has lately come out with yet another subterfuge. It leaked out stories that the attack was planned by the Bangladeshi outfit HUJI and some elements in Dubai were also involved. In short to absolve itself of any blemish in this sordid affairs, it sought to make it look like an international plot against India in which one or more Pakistani nationals were somehow involved.

III

Africa

47. In a major initiative to turn the existing relationship with Africa into one of partnership, New Delhi organized an India - Africa Forum Summit. The Common Market for Eastern and Southern AFRICA (CoMESA) with 405 million people, encompassing 25 countries stretching from Egypt and Libya to Zambia to Mauritius and Seychelles is one of the largest economic groupings in Africa with which India has already close interaction. Another grouping with which India has developed close affinity is South Africa Development Community (SADC). India - SADC Forum was launched in April 2006 in Namibia and is a framework for promoting technical cooperation in all fields of economic activity. A Techno-Economic Approach for Africa - TEAM-9 - was set up between India and eight West African countries in March 2004 to accelerate economic, social and cultural development of the member countries through transfer of technology, know-how and knowledge management involving governments, experts, and entrepreneurs. In April 2006 India had invited a high level delegation from the ECOWAS, which included four ministers and Executive Secretary of ECOWAS. India has the largest line of credit with ECOWAS countries amounting to 500 million US dollars. In 2006, during the visit of the ECOWAS delegation another 250

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million dollars line of credit was pledged. It may be recalled in 2006 at the G - 8 Summit India had presented a Non-paper underlining the close relations with Africa not as one of donor-recipient but of partnership for mutual development. India's technical cooperation programme with Africa is four decades old. It provides a wide range of training facilities and project expertise to African countries. The Indian approach has been one of strengthening of south-south linkages and promoting self-reliance through transfer of technologies appropriate to the needs of India's African partners. In monetary terms India has spent over a billion dollars on its technical cooperation programme for Africa and continues to provide training annually to almost 1000 officials in various capacity-building programmes. This is apart from hundreds of African students who join Indian universities and colleges annually. In 2004 during the visit of Indian President to Africa, India had announced its willingness to share the benefits of satellite-based technologies with the countries of Africa. Following that the Indian Space Research Organisation developed an ambitious plan to link 53 countries of Africa through a network that uses satellite fiber optic and wireless links. Since then India has established a network that joins learning centers, universities and hospitals in every African country with the counterpart institutions in India, with proven expertise in those fields.

48. It was in this background of already existent strong ties that the initiative for the Summit has to be seen. It was attended by the leaders of the 14 African countries and heads of the continent's regional economic groupings. The joint declaration adopted at the end of the summit identified food security, high oil prices and climate change as the top concerns of the developing world. India and Africa pledged to work together as partners to meet the economic and political challenges facing them. "The partnership will be based on the fundamental principles of equality, mutual respect and understanding," the joint statement stressed.

49. India received the best tribute for its efforts from Alpha Oumar Konare, Chairperson of the Commission of the African Union, when he said that the Summit showed that India "truly understood" the African continent's needs and aspirations. He said today's Africa did not need a "guiding hand" from any country and the continent could benefit from the advances India had made in areas such as health, information technology and agriculture. Prime Minister Manmohan Singh, highlighting the strong ties between India and Africa, hoped that the Summit would provide a solid foundation for a "new framework of cooperation".

50. The India-Africa summit and the meticulous preparations behind it underlined New Delhi's earnestness to engage Africa in a more dynamic way. Unlike the Western countries which reminded the African countries of the old colonial relationship, India, on the other hand, was looked upon as a role model. The Indian initiative to launch Africa Fund for dismantling the apartheid infrastructure in South Africa has not been forgotten.

51. India's trade with Africa rose from \$97 million in 1991 to \$20 billion in 2007. Lest India's initiative should be misunderstood as competing with the Chinese, Prime Minister Manmohan Singh said that India's renewed interest in Africa had nothing to do with Chinese expansion in the region. He told the media in New Delhi that India was "not in a race or competition with China or any other country". He pointed out that India and Africa had a shared colonial experience and had worked together in bilateral, regional and multilateral fora.

52. At the Summit, New Delhi pledged easier access for African exports to the Indian market. Prime Minister announcing this said that the 21st century could be turned into a "century of Asia and Africa". The India-Africa Framework of Cooperation agreed at the summit pledged to boost trade and investment and share expertise in agriculture, science and technology, water management and education. India pledged to provide preferential markets to the 34 "least developed" African nations. Prime Minister said that in the next five to six years, India would issue grants for projects in excess of \$500 million. He added that developing infrastructure in information technology, telecommunications, power and railways would be the priorities in Africa for the Indian government.

53. Mr. Jakaya Kikwete, President of Tanzania and the current Chairperson of the African Union (A.U.), made a significant announcement that the continent was "determined to take India to the citadel of power - the United Nations Security Council. We have reaffirmed our commitment to India."

54. The feelings of the African leaders, which found expression at the Summit that India should not look at Africa simply as a source of raw materials but should invest in the continent's human capital and share know-how and expertise with its nations already is at the core of its African policy pursued during the last four decades.

55. Since the liberalization of the Indian economy, the Indian entrepreneurs are looking outward and Africa is an important direction in line of their sight. Tata Steel has a \$1.5 billion joint venture in an iron project in Cote d'Ivoire,

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and Tanzania has become a magnet for Indian companies, attracting some \$825 million in investment since 1990. These companies are making up for time lost until the early 90s, when Africa's economic difficulties and India's inward-oriented development had kept them apart.

56. This is only the beginning and the hope is always in the future. One such prospect lies in Angola where a major breakthrough was achieved during the year when Angola's largest diamond producing company Endiama agreed to do business directly with the Indian diamond industry. In return, India promised to open an 'institute for jewellery manufacturing' and also a diamond cutting and polishing centre in Angola, which is the third largest producer of roughs in the world. Angola is particularly impressed with the success of Tata Motors, Angola's diamond company Endiama showed interest to tie up with Tata Motors to manufacture its own commercial vehicles, while Mahindra and Mahindra are too in demand for its tractors. Angola, a member of the Organisation of Petroleum Exporting Countries (OPEC) and third largest producer of crude in Africa, has also agreed to facilitate the bid of an oil consortium that includes ONGC Videsh, in three off-shore oil blocks. ONGC Videsh will be investing \$1 billion in these oil blocks. Angola has also offered a 30 per cent stake to India in its upcoming Libito refinery. On its part, India has promised to set up a centre of excellence in petroleum technology, besides constructing gas-based 300 MW power plant, rebuilding its railway infrastructure and its financial sector. India will also give technical support in the field of education and mining, particularly in the field of coal and iron ore.

57. Similarly, India and Namibia agreed to set up a joint working group to prepare a detailed plan for long-term partnership in the diamond sector where India would help Namibia in value-addition to its diamond industry, while India got the advantage of being able to procure rough diamonds for its own cutting and polishing industry. India will help Namibia on major infrastructure projects including modernisation of its crucial 300-km rail link between Walvis Bay and Windhoek. India has also offered help to set up a 300 MW power plant in Namibia, while the two governments have agreed to cooperate in the mining sector covering exploration, beneficiation and processing. In the education sector, India will help the University of Namibia to establish a Faculty of IT, a Faculty of Mining Technology and a Faculty of Management.

58. The success of Indian information technology giants in South Africa has now led to demands from various other African nations to TCS, Infosys, and Wipro to set up their units so that they too can catch up with the IT revolution that is happening around the globe. All in all a new chapter has begun with the Summit and its success will add luster to the existing shining relationship between India and Africa.

IV

Sri Lanka

59. As the year 2008 came to an end, Sri Lanka's security forces were buoyed by the success of their military operations against the LTTE. Having flushed out LTTE from the Eastern Province, Sri Lanka government was determined to push them out of the North too. At the start of the year, Colombo formally abrogated the Ceasefire Agreement of 2002, ending the fiction of ceasefire. Sri Lanka now felt free to deploy all its resources to achieve a decisive victory and have since claimed complete successes in that direction driving the Tigers out of most of their strongholds, destroying their naval wing, driving them out of their administrative capital Kilinochchi, and pushing them to the jungles of Mullattivu. This resulted in the civil population in the conflict zone suffering 'collateral' damage and their displacement from their hearths and homes. The Government of India was deeply concerned at this unfortunate development. Responding also to the sentiments and concerns of the Tamil population in Tamilnadu, a concerned New Delhi interceded with Colombo on several occasions to avoid casualties among the civil population. In October there were reports that a large body of civil population had been trapped in the conflict zone and was in distress. New Delhi felt disturbed. The National Security Advisor, Mr. Narayanan, summoned the Deputy High Commissioner of Sri Lanka and conveyed New Delhi's distress to him. The Prime Minister too personally being concerned told journalists on October 15 in New Delhi that Sri Lanka must respect the human rights of ethnic Tamils. He said the Government was concerned at the escalating hostilities, losses suffered by civilians and increasing number of displaced persons. "We always believe that the situation in Sri Lanka does not call for military victory. It calls for a negotiated, political settlement which respects the unity and integrity of Sri Lanka and at the same time respects the essential human rights of minorities, particularly Tamil minorities."

60. On its part, Colombo, at the highest level, assured New Delhi, that every effort would be made to minimize the difficulties of the internally displaced persons caught in the conflict zone. Colombo too responded

positively to the request of New Delhi that the relief supplies sent from Tamilnadu would be allowed to reach the internally displaced persons, who needed this assistance the most.

61. While New Delhi did not interfere with the decision of Colombo to fight out the issue with the LTTE, it remained convinced that "there is no military solution to the ethnic problem", which was the real issue in Sri Lanka. The way forward was "a peacefully negotiated political settlement within the framework of a united Sri Lanka acceptable to all communities, including the Tamils." This basic postulate of Indian policy towards Sri Lanka's ethnic problem was repeatedly conveyed by the Indian leadership at the highest level and on several occasions to Colombo. Colombo on the other hand while appearing to do every thing to relieve the distress of the civilian population caught in the conflict zone, was not prepared to settle for any thing short of LTTE's surrender.

62. Every time New Delhi expressed its fears on the plight of the civil population, Sri Lanka too on its part, went on repeating its assurance to be solicitous of the safety, security and well-being of the civil population caught in the conflict zone. This assurance was conveyed by President Mahinda Rajapaksa himself to Prime Minister Manmohan Singh in August and again in October when the two leaders met on the sidelines of the SAARC and the BIMSTEC Summits. Prime Minister Dr. Singh's remarks that one cannot envisage a prosperous India without strong links with her neighbours, were reassuring to Colombo. A reassured President did not hesitate to acknowledge the benefits Sri Lanka derived from the investments of Indian entrepreneurs and the Indian development cooperation to Sri Lanka, including the rehabilitation of the tsunami-affected Sri Lankan Railway.

63. In January 2009, both the Foreign Secretary and the External Affairs Minister crossed the Palk straits to be in Colombo to convey again their concerns for the safety of the civilians and Sri Lanka once again at the highest level assured both that Colombo will do every thing to ensure the safety of the civil population caught in the conflict zone. It warmed the cockles of Sri Lankan leadership when they heard Mukherjee saying that India was "fighting terrorists and all sorts of terrorism. Therefore, we have no sympathy for any organization indulging in terrorist activity, particularly the LTTE, which is a banned organization in India."

64. Following on Indian concerns, and vouching to prove that it was really concerned with the safety of the Tamils trapped in the conflict zone, Sri Lanka on 29th January 2009 announced a 48-hour ceasefire to enable the trapped

civilians to move to safer areas. It was Colombo's contention that the Tigers were holding the civilians to ransom and using them human shield. According to reports emanating from the war-zone, the LTTE would not let the people move out to safer areas to prove to the world that the civilians were not anxious to move out since they feared for their lives without its protection. The result was not many civilians either did not come out or were not allowed to move out of the conflict zone as the cease-fire limit expired, and the Sri Lankan security forces resumed their campaign with full force.

65. The safety of the Indian fishermen fishing in Gulf of Mannar remained another concern of New Delhi. There were innumerable occasions when the Indian fishermen fishing in the Gulf came under attack of the Sri Lankan navy, often with loss of life. The Sri Lankan navy maintained that such attacks were unavoidable since the Indian fishermen often crossed the International Maritime Boundary Line and got mixed up with the LTTE vessels. In October Senior Advisor to President and his brother Basil Rajapaksa visited New Delhi. Along with the plight of the internally displaced persons, the plight of fishermen figured in the talks. It was agreed to put in place practical arrangements to deal with the bona fide Indian and Sri Lankan fishermen crossing the International Maritime Boundary Line (IMBL). The practical arrangements included the "designation by the Government of Sri Lanka of sensitive areas along the Sri Lankan coastline and their intimation to the Government of India." The Indian fishing vessels were not to venture into the identified sensitive areas. The Sri Lankan navy agreed not to fire on Indian fishing vessels. For proper identification of Indian fishing vessels, they would carry valid registration/permit and the fishermen would have on their person valid identity cards issued by the Government of Tamil Nadu. With these arrangements in place, it is hoped there would be no more repetition of firing incidents in the Mannar involving Indian fishermen.

In the meantime, in May 2008, New Delhi extended its ban on the LTTE for another two years as a terrorist organization. This was also confirmed by the Review Tribunal as required by law in this regard.

V

Nepal

66. The constitutional process which was stuck for some time, received a shot in the arm, with the Nepalese Government responding positively to the concerns of the people from Tarai and reaching an agreement with them on February 28. It cleared the road for holding the elections to the Constituent

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Assembly (CA), which were completed in May. The Communist Party (Maoists) emerged as the single largest party.

67. This elections and the victory of the Maoists were welcomed in New Delhi. India's policy towards Nepal since the emergence of new forces was not only to strengthen democracy but also mainstream the Maoists. The elections finally brought into place a structure with greater legitimacy than the outgoing parliament which was elected nine years ago. On April 15 External Affairs Minister Pranab Mukherjee spoke to Maoist leader Pushpa Kamal Dahal, 'Prachanda' over the phone, to congratulate him and to convey India's willingness to work with his party towards building a stable Nepal.

68. The first action of the Constituent Assembly (C.A) was to abolish monarchy. The King in compliance with the CA resolution made his quiet exit, thus allowing the constitutional process to go ahead. Nepal was declared a Federal Democratic Republic. In July Dr. Ram Baran Yadav and Permand Jha were elected the President and Vice President, respectively of the new republic.

69. In September 2008, new Prime Minister 'Prachanda' made his first official visit to New Delhi and conveyed his appreciation of "the positive support extended by the people and Government of India throughout the peaceful political democratic transformation in Nepal". Dr. Manmohan Singh once again expressed "full support to the peaceful, political, democratic transition in Nepal". The visit was marked by bonhomie and friendly understanding of the issues on both the sides. The Joint communiqué issued at the end of the visit underlined "the need to inject new dynamism into the relations between the two countries for a forward looking change, in tune with the realities of the time as well as the wishes and aspirations of the people of both the countries." To forge a forward looking relationship the two prime ministers agreed on the need "to review, adjust and update the 1950 Treaty of Peace and Friendship and other agreements, while giving due recognition to the special features of the bilateral relationship." India recommitted itself to continue to extend its assistance towards building economic assets, particularly in the infrastructure sector. As an immediate measure, New Delhi agreed to provide Rs.20 crores as immediate flood relief to the people in Nepal and rebuild the segments of the East-West Highway, damaged in the recent Kosi floods. To tie over the shortage of petroleum products India agreed to provide a credit of Rs. 150 crore and ensure for the next three month uninterrupted POL supplies in Nepal. To

relieve the shortage for the essential commodities New Delhi agreed to lift its ban on the export of rice, wheat, maize, sugar and sucrose for quantities agreed with Nepal.

70. As far as the review of the 1950-treaty was concerned, this was an old issue under discussion between the two countries for more than a decade. India never shied away from discussing it with a view either to review it or amend it to accommodate the Nepalese sensitivities. Even before Parchanda came to New Delhi, treaty revision had attracted a lot of political dust in Kathmandu and it was therefore natural for him to raise this issue to satisfy his domestic constituency.

71. Responding to the Nepalese aspirations for a treaty revision, Foreign Secretary Shivshankar Menon had as early as April 29 told journalists: "We have said consistently for many years now that we would be quite happy to discuss with Nepal new arrangements to govern the relationship." Mr. Menon, however drew satisfaction from the fact that the demand was either for "replacing it or changing it" and not scraping it altogether. "We are quite happy to do that exercise.and we will be happy to work with Nepal to that end." The matter rests there for the time being, while Nepal mulls the pros and cons of the emotional but sensitive question in its relations with India.

VI

Afghanistan

72. India remained committed to Afghanistan's development despite terrorism creating some problems. In January two of Indian personnel working on road projects there became victims of terror attack. The Indian Embassy in Kabul too came under terrorist attack in July when two senior diplomatic officers, security personnel and many Afghan visitors to the Mission lost their lives. President Karzai visited New Delhi in August on way back from Colombo after attending the SAARC Summit to convey his condolences and express his anguish at the dastardly incident. Both Prime Minister Dr. Manmohan Singh and President Hamid Karzai agreed that terrorism posed a serious threat not only to the security of the two countries but to the entire region, since it knew no barriers. But they determined that they would not let it stand in their way and fight it "unitedly and with full determination".

73. New Delhi conveyed to Mr. Karzai its "abiding commitment to Afghanistan's efforts to build a democratic, pluralistic and stable polity".

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During the visit, India committed an additional amount of US \$ 450 million over and above the already committed amount of US \$ 750 million to meet the requirements of the ongoing and forthcoming projects to be financed by India.

VII

Bangladesh

74. Bangladesh Chief of Army Staff and Advisor to the caretaker government General Moeen U. Ahmed visited India in February as guest of the Chief of Army Staff General Deepak Kapoor. After almost 37 years of the liberation of Bangladesh, Dhaka agreed, as a gesture of goodwill, henceforth to honour the memory of Indian soldiers who were martyred in the war for liberation of Bangladesh. The remembrance would be officially on March 25 each year, the day when the Pakistan Army began 'Operation Searchlight,' a brutal campaign of genocide and rape against the people of East Pakistan and the Awami League responded by declaring Independence. General Ahmed met with President Pratibha Patil, Prime Minister Manmohan Singh, External Affairs Minister Pranab Mukherjee, Defence Minister A.K. Antony and National Security Adviser M. K. Narayanan. It was expected that the visit would contribute to a greater commitment from the Bangladesh side to clamp down on anti-India militants perceived to be camping on the Bangladeshi territory. The need to reduce tensions on the Indo-Bangladesh border figured in the discussions as well as the question of illegal immigration.

75. In April, Maitri Express (Friendship Express) a train connecting Dhaka with Kolkata was inaugurated to facilitate people-to-people contacts.

76. The foreign secretaries and the Home Secretaries of the two countries met for their regular annual bilateral consultations. The two meetings "condemned terrorism in all its forms and manifestations, and reaffirmed ... commitment not to allow their territory to be used for any activity inimical to each other's interests.'

77. Despite multiple assurances, India remained skeptical of Dacca's cooperation. This sense of exasperation was evident from Home Minister P. Chidambaram's remarks in the Lok Sabha on December 15 while replying to the debate on terrorism in the backdrop of terrorists attack in Mumbai. He said: "We continue to be concerned that the territory of our neighbour, Bangladesh is being used by Indian Insurgent Groups to plan

and execute terrorist acts against India and the Indian people. The Government of Bangladesh has repeatedly assured that they would not allow their territory to be used by the Indian Insurgent Groups. However, the regrettable fact is that many leaders of the Indian Insurgent Groups continue to use Bangladesh as a safe haven. It is our expectation that Bangladesh will implement its commitments and assurances not to permit the use of its territory for such actions or allow sanctuary to such militant groups."

78. Before the sun set on 2008, Democracy returned to Bangladesh after a hiatus of two years. A vote on December 28 saw the return to power of Awami League led by Sheikh Hasina Wajid with a convincing haul of 230 out of 299 seats. Its allies won another 32 seats taking the total to 262 for the alliance. The other alliance led by another former Prime Minister Begum Khaleda Zia could get only 30 seats.

79. India welcomed the return of democracy in its neighbourhood in the hope that a stable political regime would be a shot in the arm for development. It would help the emergence of healthy and stable socio-economic order in the neighbouring country. Prime Minister Dr. Manmohan Singh in his congratulatory message to Sheikh Hasina felt confident to say that under her "leadership Bangladesh will attain even greater heights." He committed India to "further strengthening and deepening of relations with Bangladesh". India can take heart from Sheikh Hasina's assurance that she wanted "continued good relations with neighbours" particularly with India and that she would not allow Bangladesh territory to be used for terrorism against her neighbours. India can keep the fingers crossed.

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Maldives

80. A new and important milestone in the history of Maldives marking the ushering in of a new era in democracy and political reform occurred in October with the election of a new President Mohamed Nasheed replacing its long serving President Gayoom. India expressed its appreciation "at the free and fair nature of the elections wherein the people of Maldives turned up in large numbers and made their choice." India and Maldives have traditionally enjoyed excellent bonds of friendship and cooperation. "We are confident that the new democratically elected

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government will strengthen these links and build on the close and multi-faceted engagement between the two countries," Mr. Mukherjee said in his message.

81. Showing his regard for New Delhi and its leaders, the new President Mohamed Nasheed made his maiden visit abroad to India. He offered his country's assistance in "observing" the Indian Ocean following the rise in piracy and the use of the sea route from Karachi to Mumbai in carrying out the Mumbai terror strikes. He said Maldives being a country of the Indian Ocean, "understands the topography of the Indian Ocean; and ready to cooperate in observing the Indian Ocean."

82. Keen on education for his people and to avoid Maldivian students going to Pakistani Madrasas, he said he would request India "to open up as much as possible to the Maldivian students so that there is no need for them to go to madrasas to satisfy that demand. No parent in his right mind would send children to madrasas if India opens up its educational institutions. The Indian government has given assurances in this regard," he said.

83. India extended a \$100-million standby credit facility, increased the State Bank of India's lending ceiling to a higher level and assured the visiting President that the Exim Bank would make more facilities available for Indian traders for expanding trade with Maldives. He thanked India for being receptive to Maldives' requirements.

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Bhutan

84. The dawn of 2008 saw India congratulating and saluting the people and the Royal Government of Bhutan. An official statement from the Government of India congratulated "the Royal Government of Bhutan for the successful conduct of the first ever elections for National Council (Upper House) of Bhutan that were held on December 31, 2007 for 15 Dzongkhags." The Statement added "This is indeed a great moment in Bhutan's history and an important step in Bhutan's transition into a new system of governance. India is committed to extending full support in the establishment of institutions required for the consolidation of Democratic Constitutional Monarchy in Bhutan." In March the Kingdom completed the election process for the National Assembly (Lower Hosue).

85. On May 16 and 17, Prime Minister Dr. Manmohan Singh visited Bhutan. It was a special year for Bhutan as Foreign Secretary Shivshankar Menon pointed out in his press briefing before the Prime Minister's departure. He said: "This is a special year for India-Bhutan relations. For Bhutan itself it is the centenary of the Wangchuk dynasty. It is also the year of Coronation of the new King of Bhutan. It is the year when democracy has been ushered in; Parliament has been elected; and Bhutan is going through an internal transition; so also when Bhutan's Tenth Plan begins. For India and Bhutan it is also the fiftieth anniversary of Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru's visit to Bhutan in 1958, which in a sense laid the foundations of all that we have seen since in this relationship which is uniquely warm, close and friendly." His emphasis on travel on horse back by Pt. Nehru was to remind the journalists of the revolution in communications that the kingdom had undergone in the last five decades.

86. Speaking to the members of the National Assembly, Prime Minister paid a handsome tribute "to the enlightened leadership and statesmanship provided by His Majesty Jigme Singye Wangchuck that Bhutan has succeeded in reaching these milestones in an atmosphere of utmost peace and stability while steadily improving the welfare of its people. During His Majesty's reign, Bhutan has witnessed unprecedented social and economic development. He is the architect of Bhutan's constitution and polity. Today His Majesty's vision of vesting sovereignty in the people of Bhutan has borne fruit." He also assured Bhutan that it "can continue to count on India, as a friend and - may I say - an admirer of Bhutan. India will stand by you as a factor of stability and support in your quest for greater prosperity and happiness." It may be recalled that only last year India and Bhutan had revised their treaty of friendship to bring the relationship in tune with the changing realities obtaining today.

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West Asia

87. In the extended neighbourhood of India, West Asia occupies an important place where ties have remained substantial and vibrant. Oil revenues and prudent fiscal policies followed by the countries of the region have generated substantial surpluses which in the past had flowed to the West. In the last few years there is a discernable change. Most of the Arab countries are looking eastward for investment opportunities. India's political, economic and social stability have given vibrancy to democratic institutions, resulting in high growth and a modern industrial society. The financial

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institutions that are in place today are internationally credible and make India an investment destination. It is important here to note that despite the global economic meltdown and global financial crisis, the Indian financial institutions, by and large have shown vibrancy compared to that of many other countries. The leaders of the oil-rich countries of the region, shrewd as they are, did not fail to notice emerging India's promising opportunities.

88. In January, the External Affairs Minister Pranab Mukherjee visited Oman. Among other things, he discussed enhanced cooperation with the six-nation Gulf Cooperation Council. The GCC is India's single most important source of energy. Trade between India and the countries comprising West Asia and North Africa has risen to \$34 billion.

89. In April, External Affairs Minister inaugurated the India-Arab Conclave organized by the Federation of Indian Chamber of Commerce and Industry (FICCI). The Conclave was aimed at businesspersons and potential investors, keen on establishing or expanding existing projects through enhanced financial, technical and managerial participation in India and in the Arab countries. It was also reflective of the desire of Indian industry to engage and increase its involvement in its extended neighbourhood. Mr. Mukherjee alluded to India's need for investible surplus funds from the rich Arab countries and India's capacity to absorb those in its massive infrastructure projects. The Conclave identified projects worth around \$200 billion in the energy and infrastructure sectors to be taken up in the near future.

90. The visit to New Delhi of Secretary General of the Arab League, Amre Moussa towards the end of the year was an important event. He jointly inaugurating with the External Affairs Minister, the India-Arab League Forum and held discussions with the Indian leadership. He also signed a Memorandum of Understanding to establish an India-Arab Cooperation Forum, as a framework for dialogue and cooperation for strengthening the foundations of the India-Arab relations and diversifying cooperation in such diverse fields as sustainable development, economic, commercial, educational, scientific, energy, Information Technology, culture, etc.

91. Earlier in April, External Affairs Minister had a successful visit to Saudi Arabia. In his meeting with his Saudi counterpart an agreement was reached on establishing a Saudi-India investment fund to help kick-start investments in major infrastructure projects in India. Mr. Mukherjee confirmed to journalists

that while calling on the Saudi King he reiterated India's requirement of an investment of around \$500-600 billion to build its infrastructure projects. To facilitate business contacts both the countries agreed to issue long-term visas to businessmen. On April 20th the Bilateral Investment Promotion and Protection Agreement was ratified by the two countries to remove a major legal impediment to closer business ties. This placement of a legal regime set the stage for the economic relationship to take-off. Acknowledging India's efforts to acquire energy security, Saudi Foreign Minister Prince Saud invited Indian companies to identify specific projects in Saudi Arabia, following an interaction with Saudi oil majors including the State-run Aramco.

92. To cap these efforts, Prime Minister made a successful visit to Oman and Muscat in November. With Muscat a Defence and Security Agreement was signed paving the way for joint maritime security, sharing of intelligence on threats posed by terrorism and cooperation in tackling trans-national crime. "We discussed the modality of Qatar investing about \$5 billion in India. In the next two to three months, we will work out the modalities to identify projects in the areas of energy, power, fertilizer and other related activities to enable the government of Qatar take firm decisions about the areas these investments could be directed," Prime Minister Manmohan Singh told the journalists while returning to New Delhi. India already has an agreement with Qatar for the supply of 7.5 million tons of LNG annually.

93. In Oman the Prime Minister discussed measures to intensify cooperation in the defence field by undertaking more high level exchanges of personnel and ships. India's largest joint venture project, Oman-India fertilizer Company is located in Oman. The MoU for the joint investment fund was signed between the State Bank of India and the State General Reserve Fund of the Sultanate of Oman. It would focus on infrastructure, tourism, health, telecom and urban infrastructure. The two countries also signed a MoU aimed at improving the working conditions of the Indians in Oman, especially in case of a dispute between the employee and employers. More important, the MoU stated that the two sides shall take measures to facilitate recruitment of Indian manpower and exchange of visits between officials for consultations in job creation and generation of employment opportunities. A landmark proposal discussed was to set up a joint investment fund whose seed money could go up to \$1.5 billion to finance infrastructure projects.

94. India has traditionally maintained very close contacts with the Palestinian people. Despite close relations with Israel, India's commitment

to the Palestinian cause remained steadfast. This point was stressed by Prime Minister Dr. Manmohan Singh in his speech at the Foundation stone laying ceremony of the Chancery building of the Palestinian State in New Delhi during the visit of Chairman Mohammed Abbas in October. "India and Palestine have been steadfast partners over decades. It is only fitting that India's commitment to Palestine and its future should find one of its embodiments in the building which stands before us. I have no doubt that it will serve as a symbol of our friendship and solidarity in the future," said Prime Minister Dr. Manmohan Singh. The construction of the building is being entirely funded by the Government of India as a gesture of Indian goodwill and friendship for the people of Palestine. Besides the Chancery building in New Delhi, India also signed an MOU to finance the construction of a school in Palestinian territory to be named after the first Prime Minister of India Jawaharlal Nehru. India announced a grant of US \$ 10 million as a budgetary support to the Palestinian National Authority to help meet its immediate requirements and an additional ten million dollars as assistance for development projects.

95. Towards the close of the year, as the 6-month old cease-fire agreement between Israeli and Hamas expired, there were some rocket attacks from the Gaza side on some Israeli civilian targets. In a disproportionate use of force, Israel chose to resort to aerial bombardments of Gaza followed by ground operations. The Government of India called for "an immediate end to the use of force against Palestinian civilians in the Gaza Strip that resulted in large numbers of casualties." With no end in sight to the fighting, on December 29, India again expressed its disappointment at the "disproportionate force" being used and called the Israeli action "unwarranted and condemnable".

96. On January 2, 2009 to somewhat alleviate the suffering of the Palestinians, New Delhi, in response to the Flash Appeal made by United Nations Refugee Welfare Agency (UNRWA), extended an assistance of US\$ 1 million for use by the Agency to provide shelters, cash assistance, essential household items etc., to affected families in Gaza.

97. In April India formally joined in the Turkmenistan-Afghanistan-Pakistan-India Gas Pipeline Project. While doing so, India had sought to dispel the impression that it had little interest left in the Iran-Pakistan-India gas pipeline project. The Minister for Petroleum and Natural Gas Murli Deora on April 23 said: "For us, both are equally important. As far as India is concerned, we want to settle and activate both because the energy demand in India is so

much and the oil prices are shooting up." The Iranians were also assured of the Indian interest in the Iran-Pakistan-India pipeline when India participated in the ministerial tripartite talks in Islamabad in April and again the same month when the Iranian President visited New Delhi. But the developments in India - Pakistan relations following the terrorist attack on Mumbai in November originating from Pakistani soil, threaten to cast ominous shadow on the security aspect of the pipeline passing through Pakistan. Gas price and cost of delivery too remain unsettled.

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China

98. Prime Minister Dr. Manmohans Singh's visit to China in January set the tone for the relations between the two countries. They had in their earlier meetings shared the view that there was enough space for India and China to grow together and their simultaneous rise would contribute to both peace and prosperity in Asia and beyond. Given the past history of relations, there was no doubt both India and China understood the need to manage their relations prudently as one of the highest priorities for both of them. There was recognition that their management of relations was going to have an impact on their own interests beyond Asia and the world as a whole. Flowing from this recognition was the tradition now fully established for frequent and regular engagements between the two at different levels. Indian and Chinese leaders have met regularly not only in their own capitals but also at regional and international fora. Senior officials too have been holding regular consultations on a range of regional and international issues in the annual Strategic Dialogue which commenced in 2005. There was a security dialogue focusing on counter-terrorism and a defence dialogue between their defence establishments. Exchange of visits by naval vessels and, more recently, friendly exercises between naval and land forces, provided valuable opportunities for confidence building. Both sides are committed to expanding such exchanges.

99. Apart from his annual summit meeting in Beijing with President Hu Jintao, Dr. Manmohan Singh met with him again in Hokkaido in July on the sidelines of the G-8 Summit. Prime Minister met the Chinese Premier Wen Jiabao in New York on the sidelines of the UNGA session. External Affairs Minister Pranab Mukherjee visited Beijing in June. In October the Chinese Foreign Minister came to India. Foreign Secretary Shivshankar Menon too visited Beijing in April. The two countries also opened their Consulate

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generals in Kolkata and Guangzhou as agreed between them in November 2006 during the visit of Hu Jintao to New Delhi.

100. In May Wenchuan in Sichuan province was struck by an earthquake, India announced an humanitarian assistance of US \$ 5 million.

101. After a year-long hiatus, Indian and Chinese Representatives met in September for the only time during the year for talks on the boundary question, as against thrice in 2007. Premier Wen Jaibao and Prime Minister Dr. Manmohan Singh meeting in New York on September 24 on the sidelines of UNGA, expressed "satisfaction" at the progress made by their delegations. On the question of Arunachal Pradesh, however, China continued to express its reservation, albeit at a low key. India on its part reiterated its claim to Arunachal Pradesh and reminded the Chinese that it was an integral part of the country and its constitutionally elected representatives sit in the Parliament.

102. During the course of the year there were occasions when there were some hiccups, but it is a matter of satisfaction that the mist of temporary misunderstanding lifted fast enough. One such occasion was the demonstrations by the Tibetan at the Chinese Embassy in New Delhi against human rights violations in Tibet. On another occasion at the Nuclear Suppliers' Group meeting in September to consider a waiver on India's nuclear trade, China's temporarily dithering created some concern in New Delhi. Sure enough before any damage could be done, it thought it prudent to fall in line and lend its weight to the waiver. At the end of the day the relations remained unscathed.

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Japan

102. The Prime Ministers of India and Japan met in Tokyo for their annual Summit in October. They shared the view that "India and Japan, as major countries in Asia, sharing common values and interests, must advance bilateral cooperation as well as cooperation in regional and multilateral areas with the objective of promoting peace, stability and prosperity in Asia and the world. They reaffirmed the importance of the Strategic and Global Partnership established in 2006 for this purpose and for harnessing the full potential of India-Japan relations.

103. India-Japan economic relationship too received a big momentum when Japan committed 225 billion Japanese Yen (Rs. 8582 crores) to India for undertaking nine new infrastructure projects in various parts of the country. New projects approved with Japanese assistance included Kolkata Metro Project, Hyderabad Outer Ring Road Project, Hogennakal Water Supply Project, Tamil Nadu Urban Infrastructure Project, Haryana Transmission System Project and UP Forestry and Poverty Alleviation Project. In addition, Government of Japan also committed to fund Phase-II of Delhi Metro Project, which was seen as a shining example of India-Japan relationship. Earlier in the year, Government of Japan also committed to fund Goa Water Supply and Sewerage Project and Maharashtra Transmission System Project.

The actual disbursements on ongoing projects reached a new high of 95 billion Japanese Yen (Rs. 3500 crores approx.) during the year which was a hike of 70% over the previous year. Already the two Governments have started negotiations to undertake several key infrastructure projects like Dedicated Freight Corridor, Delhi Mumbai Industrial Corridor, Chennai Metro besides several other infrastructure and social sector projects in the year 2008-09. Both Governments are also negotiating to set up an IIT in the country with involvement of Government of Japan.

104. India and Japan have worked out several levels of mechanism for dialogue in various sectors. During the Prime Minister's visit another mechanism for security dialogue was added. There already exists the Annual Strategic Dialogue between the Foreign Ministers as well as the other policy dialogues at respective levels. About defence cooperation the Joint Statement said: "They also welcomed the steady upgradation of defence exchanges and cooperation and decided to encourage their Defence Ministries to enhance their dialogue and collaboration further based on the Joint Statement of May, 2006. They also welcomed the contribution of established bilateral dialogue mechanisms and urged them to continue their valuable work."

105. The two countries are already working on the Economic Partnership Agreement / Comprehensive Economic Partnership Agreement on which substantial progress has been achieved. As far as the bilateral trade is concerned it is expected to touch the US \$ 20 billion target by 2010.

106. Another major landmark development had been the agreement to have a Bilateral Currency Swap Agreement to meet any short term liquidity crisis. Both countries also set up two important forums namely, High Level Policy Dialogue on Economic Development and India-Japan Strategic

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Dialogue on Economic Issues to discuss all important economic issues. These two dialogues are to be held annually.

107. The visit of Deputy Chairman Planning Commission, Dr. Montek Singh Ahluwalia, to Japan in September offered an opportunity to work out future areas of cooperation between the two countries. The Japanese side while welcoming India's recent formulation of the "National Action Plan on Climate Change" worked out with India action plan for enhanced cooperation in the energy sector to ensure energy security. The two countries agreed that focusing on key energy consuming sectors could enhance the effectiveness of respective national energy efficiency policies. It was recognized that a cooperative approach for enhancing energy efficiency through sectoral approaches could be a useful method for improving energy efficiency, and agreed to work collectively with the other countries on their practical development.

108. To achieve the objectives of energy security it was decided to work towards (1) Cooperation in Energy Efficiency and Conservation Sector (2) Cooperation in the Power and Coal Sectors; (3) Cooperation in the Renewable Energy Sector; and (4) Cooperation in the Oil and Natural Gas Sectors. It was agreed to start work in these areas and their modalities were identified. Setting the agenda for the future it was emphasized that "bilateral cooperation based on the Japan-India Energy Dialogue will not be limited to what has been identified above and that they will continue to further deepen their bilateral cooperation."

109. Japan as a member of the NSG was part of the consensus decision of the Group to the waiver for India's nuclear trade. As noted in the preceding paragraph, Japan agreeing in various forms of energy cooperation, the nuclear energy sector was left to be discussed in the future. The joint statement issued at the end of Mr. Ahluwalia's visit said: "The two Ministers noted that the Nuclear Suppliers Group adopted by consensus the Statement on Civil Nuclear Cooperation with India. They confirmed that they will exchange views and information on their respective nuclear energy policy". Despite Tokyo strong views on nuclear non-proliferation, Japan did not rule out cooperation in this sensitive field.

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Myanmar

110. Myanmar with 1600 Kms. long common border with India is a close and friendly neighbour and a gateway to South East Asia for India's 'Look East Policy'. With the Kaladan Multi Modal Transit Project gradually taking shape after the

signing of the Rs. 5500 million Kaladan Multi-Modal Transit Transport Facility in April, Myanmar in coming years would become an important link for India's northeastern states. It involves developing an alternative trade route between India and Myanmar to provide access to India's North East region.

111. In June the two countries signed four important agreements which would help enhance the economic links between them. These were the (i) Bilateral Investment Promotion Agreement; (ii) The 64 million US dollars credit agreement with the Exim Bank to finance the 230 kv transmission lines; (iii) another US \$ 20 million credit agreement with Exim Bank for an aluminium conductor steel reinforced wire manufacturing facility and (iv) Banking arrangement for financing border trade.

112. In March the Home Secretaries of the two countries met in New Delhi for their regular consultations. At this meeting both agreed to work closely for enhanced cooperation and in this context, discussed various institutional mechanisms particularly to strengthen security cooperation

113. Senior General Maung Aye, Vice Chairman of the State Peace and Development Council, the number two man in the Myanmar ruling hierarchy visited India in April. During his stay in New Delhi, among other Indian leaders he met the Prime Minister who stressed to him the importance of pursuing various cross-border projects to promote greater connectivity and economic engagement between the two countries. They agreed that more needed to be done to enhance trade between them and, towards this end, agreed to take steps to open up the existing border points in the North East States for regular trade. Both leaders recognized the need to cooperate closely in the hydrocarbon sector. PM reiterated India's commitment to support Myanmar in the Telecommunication and the IT sectors.

114. Noting the positive steps being taken by the Myanmar Government towards national reconciliation and political reforms, including the announcement of elections in 2010, Prime Minister Dr. Manmohan Singh underlined the need for Myanmar to expedite the process and make it broad-based to include all sections of society, including Daw Aung San Suu Kyi and the various ethnic groups in Myanmar.

115. It may be recalled that in February at the Foreign Secretary level Consultations, Mr. Shivshankar Menon had pointed out to his Myanmar counterpart the need for broad-based political reforms. In a departure from the position taken by the West, India opposed sanctions against Myanmar as it believed they would hit most the marginal and the destitute. India felt

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the desire for sanctions was directly proportionate to the distance from Myanmar of the country demanding it. New Delhi's stand operated within the parameters defined by External Affairs Minister Pranab Mukherjee: "We want political reforms and the process of reconciliation to start immediately and it has to be inclusive. As far as possible, important political prisoners should be released."

116. New Delhi was deeply distressed when in May Myanmar was hit by hurricane Nargis causing heavy damage to life and property. Over 100,000 persons were reported dead and many thousands missing. In a spontaneous response two Indian Navy ships - INS Rana and INS Kirpan - carrying immediate relief and medical supplies, and five Indian aircraft carrying tents, medicine, roofing material and other relief items were rushed to Myanmar. External Affairs Minister Mr. Mukherjee reiterated India's "readiness to assist Myanmar in whatever way we can in both the relief and rehabilitation efforts." He also urged Myanmar to accept international relief supplies to supplement India's efforts. India also contributed US \$ 200,000 for the repairs to the sacred Shwedagon Pagoda in Yangon heavily damaged during the cyclone.

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Vietnam and Indonesia

117. The President paid state visits to Vietnam and Indonesia in December. The visits were of great "significance from the point of view of India's 'Look East' policy with two members of ASEAN, Vietnam at its northern periphery and Indonesia at its southern rim." This was a great opportunity to establish contacts at the highest level of the leadership of the two countries and a cross section of their societies in the field of economic, commercial and social spheres. The leaders of the two countries expressed the desire to work closely with India to strengthen the Strategic Partnership. While condemning the terrorist attacks in Mumbai they expressed full support to India.

118. In her discussions with the leadership and in the official interaction at the delegations' level, great emphasis was laid on increased contacts through tourism, trade and commerce, assisted by air links. In Vietnam a MoU was concluded between the Chambers of Commerce and Industry of the two countries. India also decided to open a cultural centre in Hanoi.

119. In Indonesia the President in her talks with President Sushilo Yudhoyono, covered bilateral and other subjects of regional and international importance. It was agreed on the "need to give substance and content to the Joint Declaration on the Establishment of a Strategic Partnership between the two countries." The President and her counterparts expressed satisfaction at the growth of institutional linkages between India and the two countries visited by her. The rapid expansion in bilateral trade and investment and the development of closer linkages in science & technology and culture was particularly noted.

120. The President expressed her satisfaction at the feeling of genuine friendship that exists in both countries. In her statement at the end of the two visits she said "I am, therefore, satisfied that the objective of further deepening and strengthening relations with these countries have been achieved. My visit was a step in the 21st century, which offers us many opportunities and yet equally complex challenges. I am confident that with the experience, maturity and wisdom that all countries possess, we can work towards a bright future."

121. While still abroad, the President was grieved to receive the news of the death of former Prime Minister V. P. Singh and the terrorists attack in Mumbai. She cancelled her ceremonial engagements and after completing her official engagements in Indonesia, hastened back home to be with the people. In response to the expression of sympathy and support which she received she conveyed India's determination to face the challenges squarely and root out terrorism completely.

Brunei Darussalam

122. The visit of the Sultan of Brunei in May underlined the mutually beneficial cooperation and partnership existing between India and Brunei Darussalam. It offered an opportunity for discussion "on a wide range of subjects covering economic, trade and investment, defence, information and communication technology, space, shipping & ports, health, culture, arts & sports, and consular areas." The visit provided an opportunity to the two countries to sign five agreements: a) Agreement on Reciprocal Promotion and Protection of Investments; b) MOU of Cooperation in Information and Communication Technology; c) MOU on Cooperation in the fields of Culture, Arts and Sports; d) MOU on the Establishment of Joint Trade Committee and e) MOU on

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Cooperation in the Operation of the Telemetry Tracking and Telecomm and Station for Satellite and Launch Vehicles and for Cooperation in the field of Space Research Science and Applications.

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Australia

123. It may be recalled that Australian Government under John Howard, despite committed to the policy of not supplying uranium to a country that did not sign the NPT, had in 2007 decided to make an exception in the case of India. The new regime in Canberra under Mr. Kevin Rudd staying committed to the policy of making no exception was yet keen not to lose the goodwill of India. Foreign Minister Stephen Smith gave indication of this when he said in June that his country was "determined" to elevate its ties with India to "a new economic and strategic level" by shaping "practical initiatives" and by going "far beyond" the sensitive issue of Canberra's uranium export norms. Praising India's "strong record on non-proliferation," he appeared apologetic when he said, on the eve of Mr. Mukherjee's visit to Canberra in June, that the Kevin Rudd government's policy "is long standing and well known". The important point, he emphasized was that "Australia's relationship with India goes far beyond this single issue." He spoke of Australia's proposal of forming "a new Asia-Pacific Community" for "greater strategic stability in our rapidly-developing part of the world," which he said he proposed to discuss with Mr. Mukherjee. He desired New Delhi to become a member of the existing Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation (APEC) forum when its "membership moratorium ends in 2010." Hailing India as a "positive force in Asia's future," Mr. Smith said Canberra "strongly believes" that New Delhi "should have a permanent seat on a reformed United Nations Security Council".

124. The visit of Mr. Mukherjee to Canberra was the occasion to hold the Second Foreign Ministers' Framework Dialogue. The Australian Foreign Minister made a return visit to India in September and reassured New Delhi of its support for membership of the UN Security Council. Despite its strong commitment to non-proliferation and reluctance to supply uranium, Australia was supportive of waiver for India when it came up for discussion at Vienna at the NSG meeting in September.

125. Indo-Australian trade which has been growing at 30 per cent a year currently was around more than ten billion US dollars. Australia is India's 10th largest trading partner while India is Australia's 9th largest partner. The Joint Statement issued at the end of Mr. Smith's visit spoke of "increasing

dynamism of the economic partnership, and noted in particular the growing diversification of trade and investment linkages." India and Australia are working towards a free trade agreement, which would determine the future growth of bilateral economic relations between the two countries.

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France

126. France and India have traditionally enjoyed closer relations between them. The binding force that holds the two countries together is democracy, which bestows on them common values of freedom, human rights, secularism, and rule of law, tolerance and belief in multilateralism in the international political and financial architecture as the means to tackle global challenges effectively. These human values are at the core of their enhanced cooperation and strategic partnership.

127. Two summit level visits in one year marked the warmth of relations between India and France. The French President came in January and Prime Minister Dr. Manmohan Singh visited Paris in September. President Sarkozy was the Guest of Honour at the Republic Day celebrations in New Delhi. The two countries have strategic partnership and have made substantial progress in expanding and deepening cooperation in diverse areas including political, defence, trade, economic, science and technology, culture and education. Bilateral trade has more than doubled in the last three years. It currently stands at US \$ 6.23 billion. France is the eighth largest investor in India with total investment commitments of US \$ 1.76 billion during the period 1991 to 2007. Major sectors for French investment and technology transfer have been fuels, chemicals, cement, gypsum products, glass, food-processing industries, electric equipment, industrial machinery and the transportation industry. Particular areas in science and technology which both countries are working on, include water technology - that includes ground water research - pharmacology, nanotechnology, neurosciences and so on. Cooperation in medical research is also an important aspect of the bilateral relationship. This is taking place through collaborated arrangements of ICMR in India and INSERM, which is the French medical research body.

128. In the political arena France has been one of the strongest supporters of India. It supports forcefully India's membership of the UN Security Council. It put all its weight behind the proposal to grant India a waiver for nuclear trade at the NSG meeting in Vienna in September. It wants G-8 to be expanded to include India. France in recognition of India's need for clean

sources of energy and promotion of stable sustainable development was the first country after the NSG waiver to offer its cooperation in the development of nuclear energy in India and sign the bilateral agreement for civil nuclear energy cooperation, which will form the basis of wide-ranging bilateral collaboration in energy and research. Both have strong partnership in defence cooperation by increasing the range, level and frequency of their military joint-operations and cooperation.

129. Convinced that strong economic ties can be further built in a spirit of social and environmental responsibility, India and France have been eager to maintain the fast rising trend of their trade and the smart pace of their business to business relations. They are now working towards achieving an ambitious target of reaching 12 billion euro bilateral trade by 2012 and significantly stepping up investments.

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United Kingdom

130. At the start of the year 2008, British Prime Minister Gordon Brown came to New Delhi for the Fourth India-UK Summit. The first Summit between the two countries was held in September 2004 with the visit to London of Prime Minister Dr. Manmohan Singh. It was then decided to launch a Comprehensive Strategic Partnership between them. This has since developed in a multifaceted and substantive Comprehensive Strategic Partnership built on trade and investment, education, science and technology, and so on. Now it is aimed at further expansion of economic linkages, R&D collaboration, cooperation in higher education and academic exchanges, as well as cooperation in counter-terrorism.

131. Besides the frequent high-level interactions, there are several bilateral dialogue mechanisms which are in place including the Joint Economic and Trade Committee for trade and investment and the Science and Innovation Council for S&T cooperation. In terms of trade, the UK is India's fourth largest global trading partner and accounts for 3.56 per cent of Indian trade, second largest in the EU. The annual two-way figure of trade stands at Euro 8.5 billion. UK continues to be the largest cumulative investor in India with a figure of 3.4 billion pound sterling; and the third largest investor post-1991 with 3.6 billion US dollars. India has emerged as the second largest investor in the UK in terms of number of projects. Over a billion pounds have been invested in the UK and 50 Indian companies are actively trading on the

London Stock Exchange. In the field of higher education there is the UK-India Education and Research Initiative launched in April 2006.

132. At the 2008-Summit the two countries once again reiterated their commitment to the Strategic Partnership built between them based on their shared conviction in the values of democracy, fundamental freedoms, pluralism, rule of law, respect for human rights and multilateralism in the international political and financial architecture as the means to tackle global challenges effectively. Recognizing that nuclear energy is a safe, sustainable and non-polluting source of energy, which could make a significant contribution to meeting the global challenge of achieving energy security, sustainable development and economic growth, United Kingdom was a strong supporter of India-US civil nuclear co-operation initiative and supported New Delhi all the way to obtain the waiver from the NSG. London also agreed to work expeditiously towards a bilateral agreement for bilateral cooperation in this sector, in line with the strong commitment to non-proliferation. On the question of control of emissions, the United Kingdom agrees with New Delhi on the adaptation strategies in a manner that supports further economic and social development in particular of developing countries on the basis of per capita emission rates, as an important and equitable principle.

133. Great Britain agrees with India that terrorism is a global threat requiring a global response, needing joint international efforts in countering it, since terrorism could not be justified under any circumstances. It was in keeping with this recognition of its wide ranging ramification that when Mumbai was hit by terrorist in November, the British Prime Minister rushed to New Delhi to convey his sympathies. He described the Mumbai attacks as "horrific" and "a human tragedy on a terrible scale." He wanted the world community to ensure that there were "no safe havens for terrorists" and "no safe place for those who finance terrorist activities." He had no doubt about the origin of the attacks and said "We also know that the group responsible is LeT and they [Pakistan] have a great deal to answer for." He suggested that the world community must focus on choking the funding of non-state actors who have resorted to repeated acts of violence on unarmed civilians. The world must also "continue to expose the perverse and unacceptable messages that are sent out by extreme terrorist groups who are perversionists and misuse religion," he added.

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134. The British Prime Minister, more than underlined his own concerns and that of New Delhi in delivering a blunt message in Islamabad the next day (December 15). He asked Pakistan to clean out terrorists operating from its territory in order to make the world a more secure and safer place. "The time has come for action, not words," Mr. Brown said at a joint press conference with Pakistan President Asif Ali Zardari. Zardari squirmed when he asserted that a majority of terror plots investigated by the British intelligence had a Pakistani link. I have told President Zardari that three-quarters of the most serious terror plots investigated by British authorities have links to Al-Qaeda in Pakistan" said Mr. Brown.

135. Unfortunately, British Foreign Secretary David Miliband when in New Delhi in January 2009 muddied the waters of Indo-British understanding. He tried to link Pakistani terrorism with Kashmir. His utterances were negation of the so far articulated British views on terrorism, held not only by the present Prime Minister but also by the previous Prime Minister Tony Blair. One would like Miliband to read the India - British Joint Statement issued, on January 6, 2002, soon after the terrorist attack on the Indian Parliament in December 2001, which described terrorism as "an attack on the human rights and civil liberties of the citizens of the world", and condemned "all acts of terrorism whatever the motivation". Tony Blair gave went to his outrage unequivocally and most emphatically when he agreeing with New Delhi, said "We condemn all those who support terrorism, those that finance, train or provide support to terrorists share their guilt".

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United States

136. The high point of the India - US relations was the signing of the Civil Nuclear Energy Cooperation Agreement. Once New Delhi was ready to sign the agreement, after receiving parliamentary support, through the Motion of Confidence in the Government from its Parliament but not before there was realignment of domestic political forces, Bush Administration put its weight behind the deal all along, at the IAEA, NSG, and the Congress. The Agreement was finally signed on October 10 in Washington by External Affairs Minister Pranab Mukherjee and US Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice.

137. External Affairs Minister described the Indo - American relationship as "based on the bedrock of long-term commitments and a shared vision." Mr. Mukherjee spelled it out rather graphically to the Carnegie Foundation on March 24. He said: "Emblematic of this new relationship was the

willingness of both countries to shed the baggage of the last 30 years to launch a new era of cooperation in civil nuclear power to address India's burgeoning energy requirements." It is a matter of satisfaction that the civil nuclear energy initiative has reached its logical conclusion. Now, he said "we intend to press ahead on all these and other initiatives." Speaking of the economic linkages in the relationship, the External Affairs Minister said: "Economic cooperation looks particularly promising. Whether it is meeting the need for better infrastructure or addressing energy deficiency, improving telecommunications, or modernizing the manufacturing sector, the opportunities for US business and industry in India are huge. India has become the fastest growing export destination for US products, having registered a growth rate of 75% last year. The US is one of the largest foreign direct investors in India, while US-bound investment from India has grown dramatically in recent years, particularly in 2007. India's transparent economic policies, regulatory framework and judicial system are a source of reassurance to our foreign partners. I am confident that this economic synergy between India and United States is bound to continue in the coming years and decades." On the eve of his departure for New York in September, the Prime Minister speaking profusely of the new relationship said: "In recent years our relations have expanded significantly in areas of interest to us such as education, trade, business, technology, energy and agriculture. The engagement between the two countries has strengthened and we are pursuing the multi-faceted cooperation to our mutual benefit."

138. The US President, George W. Bush, in his meeting with the Prime Minister on September 26 acknowledging the new relationship said, "You and I have worked hard to change the relationship between our countries. India is a great country with an incredibly bright future, and it's in the U.S. interest to have a good, strong strategic relationship with India. And we've worked hard to achieve that."

139. Both India and the United States have been cooperating in the fight against terrorism, by recognizing it as a menace against humanity. The Joint Working Group on Counter Terrorism meets periodically to consider ways and means to tackle this horrendous crime against civil society. India for some years has been the victim of cross-border terrorism and the United States has lately recognized the role of Pakistani elements, even if they were non-state actors in promoting terror groups. That these groups used the Pakistani soil for training and mounting attacks on neighbouring countries no one had any doubts. Pakistan, as a responsible State of comity of nations,

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could hardly wash its hands of its responsibility for sheltering these groups. During the recent attack on the Indian Embassy in Kabul in July and again the terrorist attack on Mumbai in November, the United States joined New Delhi to put pressure on Islamabad to act against elements responsible for the heinous attacks. The US intelligence agencies did not hesitate to confront Pakistan with the evidence collected by them of the involvement of Pakistani elements for which Washington, like New Delhi, held it responsible. The United States publicly reminded Pakistan of its responsibility to act against them and cooperate with India in investigating these atrocious crimes.

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Central and South America

140. The Latin American Region comprising a large number of countries accounts for a combined GDP of US\$ 3.44 trillion and a trade turnover of US\$ 1.65 trillion and a population of 562 million people. It also includes five of the world's most bio-diverse countries - Brazil, Colombia, Ecuador, Mexico, and Peru - as well as the single most biologically diverse area in the world - the eastern slope of the Andes. The countries of the region are almost at the same stage of economic development as India, they offer the unique opportunity for south-south cooperation. Despite the distance and problems of connectivity, India, in recent years, has endeavoured to develop close relations with this region. The region has a very substantive presence of the Indian diaspora. Indian cultural centers have been set up in Georgetown, Paramaribo and Port-au-Spain. Some distinguished persons of Indian origin from these countries have been given Pravasi Bharatiya Awards and other recognition.

141. The President's visit to Brazil, Mexico and Chile during 2008 was the high mark of India's relations with the countries of this region. Of the three countries Brazil is India's biggest trade partner and there is a strategic partnership between the two. The two countries together interact on other fora as well-- IBSA (India-Brazil-South Africa forum) and BRIC, enlarged from trilateral cooperation forum among Russia, India and China to include Brazil. Brazil and Mexico along with India are among the Outreach countries that are associated with the G-8.

142. In June 2007 Brazilian President had visited India and was the Chief Guest at India's Republic Day celebrations. New Delhi had the pleasure of hosting him again in October 2008 for the IBSA Summit. Prime Minister Manmohan Singh paid a bilateral visit to Brazil in September, 2006, besides

visiting Cuba for the NAM Summit. External Affairs Minister Mukherjee visited Brazil in February. Apart from discussing various matters of common interest to the two countries, he signed three MoUs on Infrastructure, Combating Hunger & Poverty Alleviation and Cooperation in Sports & Youth Affairs which in coming years impart added momentum to the multifaceted bilateral engagement of India and Brazil.

143. Mexico, the second largest country in Latin America, is also the largest trading country. Mexican President Calderon had paid a State Visit to India in September 2007. The visit provided an opportunity to sign the India-Mexico Extradition Treaty besides an Agreement on Mutual Legal Assistance in Criminal Matters.

144. Chile-India trade relations predate our independence. Today Chile is one of the most open and liberal economies in the region. Relations with Chile have developed particularly well since the milestone Indian visit of the Chilean President Ricardo Lagos in January, 2005. Both the countries have a preferential trade arrangement which has helped to strengthen economic cooperation between them.

145. India's bilateral trade with the region in April 2007- March 2008 period was to the tune of US\$ 11.63 billion [imports- 6.5 billion and exports- US\$ 5.13 billion]. With Brazil alone the trade last year was \$ 3.2 billion, with Mexico it was about \$ 2 billion and with Chile about \$ 2.4 billion. With Brazil there is a trade target of \$ 10 billion by 2010 and with Mexico \$ 5 billion by the same date. As far as Chile is concerned, there are a large number of Indian companies working there. Some of them are -- Essar Steel, Bajaj Auto, UP Hotels, Jindal Steel, SEWA, NIIT, etc. In Brazil also there is a very good spread of the IT companies.

146. Indian companies, excluding those owned by Non-Resident or Overseas Indians, have either already invested or committed to invest US \$ 9.73 billion in LAC countries. Given the economic strengths of these countries, there are excellent opportunities for enhancing this relationship. The process has already begun. Indian Business Conclaves are being held in Latin America by apex Indian chambers of commerce and industry. Trade missions are also being organized and increased participation in trade events is being encouraged. Government of India's FOCUS -- LAC programme, which commenced in 1998, has been extended. Trade and investment missions from these countries are also being organized. The trade agreements signed with the MERCOSUR group of countries and individually will promote such initiatives. Bilateral Investment Promotion

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and Protection Agreements and Avoidance of Double Taxation Agreements have been signed with some countries and are being processed with others.

147. Apart from Chile, there is a long list of Indian companies having their presence in other Latin American countries. These include TCS, The Cellofarm, Zidus Cadilla, Glenmarc, Torrent, BEML, Mahindras, IRCON, Vijay Pharmaceuticals, Vijay Electricals, Pidilite, Bajaj Hindustan, Rajshri, Renuka Sugars, Raj Industries. Videocon, Ranbaxy, Claris Life Sciences, Dr. Reddy's, NIIT, Sasken Communications, Infosys, Aditya Birla Group, Reliance. These industries have generated a lot of employment opportunities in Latin American countries.

148. The fundamental changes that have taken place in the pattern of governance in Latin American countries too contributed to the closer relationship between India and the countries of the region. On June 20th the External Affairs Minister Pranab Mukherjee while addressing the Consultative Committee of Parliament attached to the Ministry of External Affairs recounted the many commonalities that bind India to the region. These, he said are "the multiculturalism, multilingualism, and multi-ethnicity, as well as common objectives of achieving inclusive growth through democratic systems".

149. These complementarities have provided strength to Indian initiatives in fields as diverse as agriculture, S&T, hydrocarbons, mining, defence, space, ICT and infrastructure. Cooperation with these countries is being pursued through bilateral agreements and MoUs and through interaction between experts from both sides. With air and maritime connectivity improving gradually, linkages between centres of excellence and academic institutions will also strengthen thus leading to a varied and multi-sectoral dialogue between the citizens of both sides.

150. In June, New Delhi hosted the meeting of the Foreign Ministers of the Central American Association for Integration (SICA), which gave an opportunity for extensive discussions with them. The galaxy of VIPs on the list were the Foreign Minister of Costa Rica; the First Vice-Prime Minister and Foreign Minister of Panama; the Foreign Minister of Guatemala; the Foreign Minister of Nicaragua; Vice-Foreign Ministers of El Salvador, Honduras, and Dominican Republic; as well as a representative of the SICA Secretariat. External Affairs Minister Mr. Mukherjee had met the Foreign Ministers of SICA in New York in October 2007, when the idea of the New Delhi meeting was decided.

151. The meeting discussed several proposals made by External Affairs Minister. India has already set up IT training centers in five SICA countries, namely, Panama, Guatemala, Nicaragua, El Salvador, and Honduras. Now there is a proposal to set up IT centers in Belize, Costa Rica and the Dominican Republic. In addition India had already offered lines of credit to the tune of 80 million dollars to all the SICA members with 10 million dollars for each country. Some of the countries have submitted concrete proposals. At this meeting Mr. Mukherjee requested the others to also send in their requirements and projects for infrastructure investment and capacity building. Investments in SICA countries from India in the automotive sector; pharmaceuticals, textiles and IT were discussed. Mr. Mukherjee held out the possibility of raising the number of scholarships for SICA countries from 68 to 100. He also offered to share expertise in agriculture, pharmaceuticals, small and medium industries, tourism, renewable energy, etc. The Exim Bank has agreed to extend a line of credit of 10 million dollars separately. Trade stands at 537 million dollars and it was felt that both sides should strive to double this figure in the coming three years. In addition, in their interventions, the SICA Foreign Ministers particularly focused on some areas of interest in which they wanted India to share expertise, particularly food security, and said that India's success in agriculture, etc., needed to be shared to build up food security in their countries. It was, therefore, decided to set up a Joint Technical Group with sufficient technical experts available to discuss this and other aspects of cooperation. They also signed agreements on diplomatic and official visas and Foreign Office Consultations. In discussing issues of international interest, there was a lot of commonality of views on UN Security Council reforms, Climate Change, Terrorism, Energy Security, Agriculture, Doha Round, nonproliferation, and nuclear disarmament. El Salvador, Guatemala and Honduras - have already committed their support to India's candidature for permanent seat on an expanded UN Security Council. With these initiatives, it is expected that India's ties with the countries of Latin America will gather momentum and grow from strength to strength.

152. The Minister of State in the Ministry of External Affairs Anand Sharma has visited these countries regularly. During 2008 he visited Venezuela, Guyana, and Suriname. With Venezuela India signed an important agreement for development and production of oil as a joint venture partner. The ONGC, Videsh (OVL) has chipped in with an investment of US \$ 356 million in the Venezuelan company Petroleos De Venezuele S.A to develop the San Cristobal Field in Junin, in the Orinoco Region of Venezuela to claim 40 percent of the production,

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from its present level of 20, 0000 barrels to 40, 000 barrels per day. India and Venezuela also signed an MOU in April to develop oil and gas exploration and production projects in that country. The Ecuadorian foreign Minister visited New Delhi in December 2008.

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Multilateral Cooperation

153. Occupation with bilateral diplomacy and domestic politics did not in any way diminish New Delhi's enthusiasm for regional and multilateral institutions. Prime Minister found time to travel to various destinations to fulfill his commitments to them. He traveled to Hokkaido (Japan) to participate in the G-8 Outreach Summit in July, to Colombo for the SAARC Summit in August, to Marseilles for the India - EU annual Summit in September, to New York for the UN General Assembly Session also in September, and to Beijing for the ASEM Summit in October. In between he chaired the BIMSTEC Summit in September and the IBSA Summit in October both at home. External Affairs Minister visited Yekaterinburg (Russia) for the Trilateral -- Russia-India- China Ministerial meeting in May and Tehran for the NAM Ministerial Council and the NAM Committee on Palestine meetings in July. In September he attended the Ministerial Meeting of the IBSA Dialogue Forum in New York. He chaired the BIMSTEC Foreign Ministers' meeting in New Delhi in August. He was represented by the Finance Minister for the Commonwealth Foreign Ministers meeting at New York in September. The Minister of State, Anand Sharma attended the Foreign Ministers' meeting of the East Asia Summit in Singapore in July, the CICA Ministerial meeting in August at Almaty and the 32nd Annual meeting of Ministers of Foreign Affairs of the G-77 in New York in September. The Commerce Minister attended the ASEAN Economic Minister's Consultations in Singapore in August. The Minister for Petroleum and Natural Gas Murli Deora attended the Shanghai Cooperation Organization Summit meeting as Observer for India in August at Dushanbe. Finance Minister attended the Madrid meeting of the SAARC Finance Ministers in May.

154. Towards the end of the year, the world was faced with a severe financial crisis, said to be the worst since the Great Depression of the thirties of the last century. US President George W. Bush took the initiative to invite the Heads of State/Government of the leading economies of the world for a conference in Washington in November to consider the way out of the financial impasse. The Prime Minister Dr. Manmohan Singh, responding to

President Bush's invitation attended the conference. In his speech at the meeting, Dr. Singh regretted that though the emerging economies "were not the cause of this crisis, they are amongst the worst affected victims." Pointing out its impact on India, he said "After growing at close to 9% for four years, our growth rate is expected to slow down to between 7 to 7.5% in the current financial year". He expressed his anguish that "slow down of growth in developing countries will push millions of people back into poverty, with adverse effects on nutrition, health, and education level." These he said, were not "transient impacts, but will impact a full generation." Describing the summit as timely, since the problem needed a global response, he said "the international community needs to consider special initiatives to counter the shrinkages of capital flows to developing countries". He suggested as a source of quick disbursing liquidity the establishment of short term swap arrangements, to reduce the burden on IMF, and add to confidence. He advocated new financial instruments for infrastructure financing, and provision of liquidity support to banking institutions. He, particularly underlined the need for "specific steps to support developing countries in this period of exceptional difficulty" and said their willingness to do so "will be a test of our collective leadership".

155. The G-20 summit adopted a Declaration which called for immediate, short term and long term "strong and significant actions ...to stimulate our economies, provide liquidity, strengthen the capital and financial institutions, protect savings and deposits, address regulatory deficiencies, unfreeze credit markets...." and hoped that "international financial institutions (IFIs) can provide critical support for the global economy."

156. Earlier at the ASEM Summit the Prime Minister called for needs to "analyse objectively how and why these failures (which caused global crisis) have occurred with such ferocity". On another occasion, he warned that "our preoccupation with the global financial crisis should not detract from pursuing the goal of fulfillment of Millennium Development Goals".

157. External Affairs Minister Mr. Mukherjee on November 8 speaking in Kolkata about the BIMSTEC admired how the Bay of Bengal initiative had evolved to bring in its fold more than 20 percent of the world population and provided a unique link between South and Southeast Asia. The Prime Minister called the BIMSTEC as the "bridge between South Asia and Southeast Asia" bound together by nature and geography." He, however cautioned about the "dangers posed by the sea" since much of the region is bound by the waters. Describing Asia as "the engine of the world economy", the Prime

Minister called BIMSTEC "an important part of the wider Asian Community", to the ideals and objectives of which "India is firmly committed".

158. The India-EU Marseilles Summit gave an opportunity for discussion on regional, global issues and bilateral relations. Among the global issues, the dominant concern was the recent meltdown in the global economy -- issues like food security and climate change etc. At the summit it was decided (i) to extend strategic partnership to new areas, (ii) to a joint work-programme on energy, clean development and climate change, (iii) to a horizontal civil aviation agreement and (iv) to launch a European Business and technology Centre in India, which shall support business-to-business and research cooperation between the EU and India.

159. Annual G-8 grouping of developed countries has recognized the importance of new emerging economies and the need for their cooperation to tackle the global economic issues. This recognition has found expression in the annual invitation extended to the new emerging economies, Brazil, China, India, Mexico and South Africa. The consultations that take place between them on this occasion provide an important input in the decisions of the G-8. This institutionalized arrangement provides an additional opportunity to the Five to consult among themselves and issue their own independent declarations and find independent solutions to their own problems besides taking a coordinated position in discussions with the G-8. At the Hokkaido Conference in July The Five particularly underlined this fact and in their declaration said: "Our increasing interdependence demands an integrated and concerted response to these global challenges. We must ensure development and prosperity on a sustainable path, both within and across nations. That is the historical challenge of our generation. To achieve this fundamental goal, we must act in a coordinated manner to ensure equitable growth with care for the environment, taking appropriate account of cross-border interactions in fulfillment of our shared responsibility." To that extent they made it known that they were not supplicant at the G-8 interaction. They were "ready to consolidate bilateral relations, improve our cooperation level, and mechanisms and continue the dialogue and collaboration with the G-8 and the international community at large" only on the basis of "principles of equality, mutual respect and cooperation for the common good". If these conditionalities were met, they declared they would continue to contribute to multilaterally promote "action-oriented global partnership for equitable and sustainable development, including by making positive contributions in such critical areas as global governance, financial stability, and climate change as well as food and energy security".

160. The 15th SAARC Summit in August was a landmark development. As the Prime Minister said in his message it moved 'from a phase of declaration to a phase of implementation and action.' As part of this approach he recounted several initiatives that were taken, "notably the establishment of the SAARC Development Fund, the SAARC Food Bank, the proposal to establish a South Asian University, SAFTA and greater people-to-people contacts." New Delhi drew satisfaction from the fact that most of these initiatives were Indian. There are no two opinions now that SAARC has emerged as a successful instrument of regional development. It is now being taken note of. Afghanistan joined it as full member last year bringing its strength to eight.

Though SAARC has been in existence for more than two decades, it is only now that major countries have started taking note of it. While China, Iran, Japan, Korean Republic, Mauritius, the United States and the European Union have already obtained Observer status, Australia and Myanmar got it now, at 2008 Summit.

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Climate Change

161. For the past few years, environmental pollution and climate change have become a matter of major concern to governments round the world and hence a subject of international discourse at any international gathering or even in bilateral relations. India is as concerned about it as any other country and has made it a matter of national commitment. In 2006 India adopted the National Environment Policy synergizing environmental and economic policies and appropriate institutional mechanisms to support the integration of three pillars of sustainable development, economic development and environmental protection. India has recognized that the environmental management cannot be treated separately from other developmental concerns. It has brought about a new model of partnership between the government and the civil society.

162. On June 30, Prime Minister Dr. Manmohan Singh formally launching the National Action Plan on Climate Change, held it out as reflecting the importance India attached to mobilizing the nation's energies in meeting the challenge of climate change. He said "Without a careful long-term strategy, climate change may undermine our development efforts, with adverse consequences, across the board, on our people's livelihood, the environment in which they live and work and their personal health and welfare. It is also a challenge which

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encompasses the interests of both present and future generations." Therefore he said "We have the moral responsibility to bequeath to our children a world which is safe, clean and productive, a world which should continue to inspire the human imagination with the immensity of the blue ocean, the loftiness of snow-covered mountains, the green expanse of extensive forests and the silver streams of ancient rivers."

163. On April 21, looking the subject of environment in civilizational context, Prime Minister's Special Envoy on Climate Change Syam Saran described it "a powerful asset". Speaking of India's "civilizational legacy" which places high value on the preservation of the environment and the maintenance of ecological balance, he said "We look upon Nature, instinctively, as a source of nurture, not as a force to be subdued." Quoting Mahatma Gandhi dictum: 'The earth has enough to meet our needs, but will never have enough to satisfy our greed', Mr. Saran said making excessive demands on earth's resources could be injurious to the larger interests of preserving the environment for the good of humanity.

164. Speaking to Asia Society on September 30 on Climate Change and Energy Security, External Affairs Minister Pranab Mukherjee reminded the world of India's commitment to environment by recalling that Mrs. Indira Gandhi was the only head of Government apart from the host state, who attended the first international conference on environment protection held in Sweden in 1972. India was among the first few countries in the world to set up a separate Ministry of Environment. As early as 1987 the late Prime Minister Rajiv Gandhi spoke of the need to balance development and conservation in his address to the United Nations, Mr. Mukherjee reminded the conference. He said "these leaders were not only pioneers in the global environment movement, but projected India's age-old conviction and commitment to environment protection. "Their beliefs were deeply rooted in our civilizational legacy, which emphasized the need for harmony between Man and Nature, rather than Man triumphing over Nature. Indeed, from ancient times, Nature has been deeply revered as a source of Man's sustenance. The concept of sacred groves, sacred trees and sacred animals created a spiritual framework of conservation, which is still observed in many parts of our country," said the Minister. Mr. Mukherjee reminded the audience that "despite this excellent track record of responsibility, India has taken major steps to further enhance the sustainability of its growth. This is not because we are under pressure to reduce our emissions, but because we genuinely believe that it is in India's best interests to pursue environmentally sustainable growth."

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165. It was a fast paced scenario that the Ministry of External Affairs encountered during the year. The Indian missions abroad play a very significant role in helping the Ministry to meet the challenges it faces and achieve the objectives it sets for itself. What are the objectives of Indian foreign policy, when defined by its history, geography and international environment? Simply put, they are to secure peace for development and seek security to preserve and secure those gains. To that end it is not only necessary to secure friendlier relations with the countries around and in its extended neighbourhood, but also beyond, whose interests co-join with its own interests.

166. The diplomatic outposts around the world are not only the eyes and ears of the Ministry but the two together constitute an integral whole. The conclave of the heads of mission around the world organized by the Ministry of External Affairs towards the close of the year 2008 was not only timely but in fact long overdue. In normal course each mission looks at the international scenario from the prism of its limited vision. The conclave was intended to give them a first hand feel of the international situation as seen from the broader perspective of New Delhi and emerging challenges posed by a new globalized world. The External Affairs Minister Mr. Pranab Mukherjee observed in his opening remarks to the conference that since the structure of international system was "changing at a rapid pace", the challenges too were evolving rapidly and they have to be prepared to face them in their daily functioning. This had become particularly necessary now since time and space have been cut short by the emergence of electronic media. Instant communications give little time to ponder over issues for too long and consult with the headquarters. Hence the Minister's emphasis on the need for a change of traditional approach to problems and adopting "more forward looking approaches of cooperative solutions".

167. The External Affairs Minister, speaking earlier to the National Defence College on November 3 had posed a pertinent question on our traditional diplomacy; and asked whether it had met our needs and requirements in a globalised world adequately. Mr. Mukherjee spoke of the increasingly demanding role that India was being called upon to play globally. He said that the country's ability to respond to these challenges would "shape and influence the future direction of our country. The past can act as a guide; but it is the decisions we take in the present which shape our future." It was in this context that the Minister while speaking to the Indian diplomats spoke of the evolving geo-political and economic re-alignment that was taking place

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around India, and our interest necessarily and increasingly intersecting globally. His thesis that there was a shift in the center of gravity of the world economy and politics towards Asia and the Indian Ocean has come to have greater economic and strategic importance than ever before. It was valid and relevant. Existing and emerging threats in the form of piracy, drug trafficking, proliferation of weapons of mass destruction, pollution, accidents, closure of choke points, regional conflicts and other disputes have all become of vital concern internationally, observed Mr. Mukherjee. These are the new challenges for which Indian diplomacy and Indian diplomats have to prepare themselves.



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