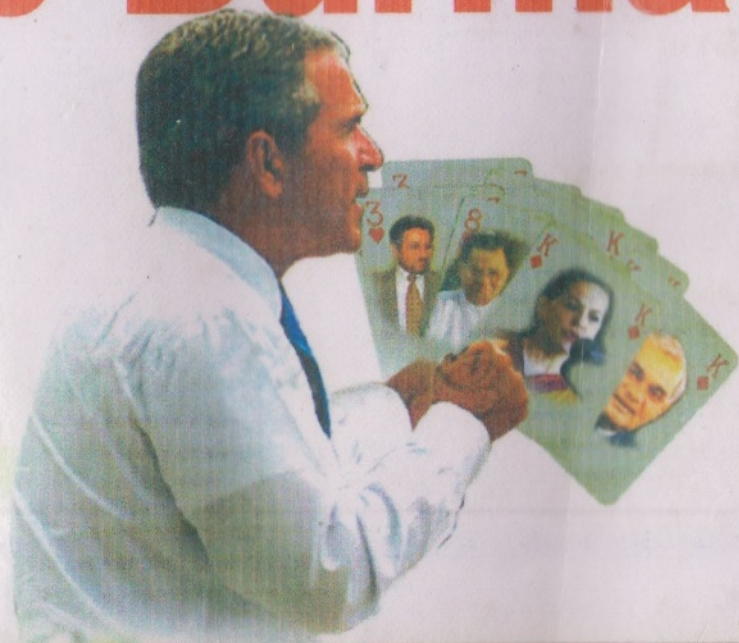


Pakistan to Burma



Re-Birth of India

Dr. Arvind Dayal

Pakistan to
Burma

The Re-birth of India

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Ph.: 23260783, 23265523:, 27131660 (R)

Fax: 011-23272766

E-mail: manaspublications@vsnl.com

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Prologue

My War Diary

Yangon (Rangoon), Myanmar (Burma), 6th June, 2015.

Today India, that is *Vishaal Bharat*, attains its historic destiny. The Indian tricolour was hoisted over Yangon.

To be sure it is hoisted everyday - at the Indian embassy, but today it flew not *in* Yangon, but proudly *over* it. And I was there to witness it.

The General commanding the Eastern Command of the Indian Army hoisted the tricolour. Present also were other senior Indian Army and Naval commanders who had specially flown in from Fortress Andaman and from Dhaka. An honour guard of Indian sailors presented arms while a battalion of battle weary soldiers ringed off the area around Government House where the ceremony was held. American, British and Russian diplomats witnessed the occasion.

India stretches now from the western borders of Thailand right up to the eastern borders of Iran and to the southern borders of Afghanistan. From the Indus to the Irrawaddy. Along with Myanmar, it includes a country crafted by the departing colonial British, called India and another country called Pakistan, the latter never having lived up to its name, the 'Land of the Pure'. Pakistan has ceased to exist for more than a decade now. The area it occupied consists today of the four new northwestern Indian states of Sindh, Baluchistan, Seemastan (formerly NWFP), and the reunited Punjab.

Despite the subcontinental penchant for *tamasha*, the ceremony itself was brief and carried live by Indian and international news channels to the whole world. First, a notice of unconditional surrender signed by the leader and senior members of the military junta, those secretive old generals, was read out by a dazzlingly bemedalled Myanmarese Brigadier. This was followed by a proclamation read out by the Indian commander announcing India's annexation of the country, formerly known as Burma. Finally, a message from India's Prime Minister – the MP representing Karachi in the Indian state of Sindh - addressed to the people of Myanmar assuring them of freedom from fear and bondage and of rapid economic betterment. An army band in Chennai far away across the waters of the Bay of Bengal then struck up India's national anthem, which, too, was showed live on giant screens at the venue and in the city center of Yangon.

Off the coast keeping a watchful eye on the proceedings stood a large Indian naval presence. The aircraft carrier *INS Jawaharlal*, India's first nuclear powered naval vessel, its support group, five stealth frigates, four troop carriers and a flotilla of lesser vessels waited off the mouths of the Irrawaddy. Carrier based 'Kavach' jets screamed overhead, while a trio of fully armed helicopter gunships in stately procession carried the fluttering tricolor over the site of the ceremony.

I had arrived early this morning from Singapore on the first civilian airliner to land at Yangon airport, now renamed U Nu International airport. The plane had carried mostly media persons. The airport was still manned by Myanmarese nationals but Indian soldiers were prominent everywhere. Customs had been a quick formality though the Indian officers at the Immigration counter checked each travel document thoroughly.

The military rulers of Myanmar had left quietly yesterday. Most appropriately, many thought, they were

headed for permanent exile in the Hermit Kingdom – North Korea, as no other country seemed to be willing to welcome them. The options the Indians had offered were bleak: either a summary trial followed by the firing squad, or just allowing the public to have their way with them and a certain lynching. Their armed forces had faced defeat after defeat at the hands of the massive Indian Army that poured through the funnel formed between Bengal and Mizoram.

The *united* Bengal that once had been divided into the country initially called East Pakistan and then Bangladesh, and the Indian state of West Bengal. A land vivisected by the departing British, and reunited by the Indian Army, without a shot being fired, all of ten years ago. The Myanmarese Army composed mainly of poorly disciplined and unprofessional conscripts had been dispirited. They were ill-equipped and spectacularly lacking in enthusiasm to fight. Most units simply dumped their weapons and uniforms and melted away into the jungle. Some had surrendered *en masse* to the advancing Indians. Others lined up eagerly to join the conquerors.

Pax Indica? Today India is perhaps the only power that can rival the US of A. Not that it needed to, and not in the way conventional thinking would put it, for the US and India share a close relationship. The Americans, when informed of India's intentions by AK Lalwani, the newly elected Indian PM, had helpfully looked away. India had decided to intervene, fed up of a non-stop trickle of refugees into the northeastern Indian border states which had swollen into a flood, all carrying stories of horrific repression and deprivation by the Myanmarese military rulers. The Americans were also content to let India sort out the Karen tribesmen and torch the Golden Triangle drug factories and fields of opium, which remained the last major source of illicit drugs in the world. A booming economy in India's northeastern states had attracted huge

amounts of drugs exported by these druglords to a market so conveniently close. Indian rulers had watched, but not for long as the cancer of illicit drug-use ate away at its young people.

This time there were no appeals to the perpetrators to desist, or to the Myanmar government to contain, or to the international community to intervene. No wringing of hands in Delhi as time and young lives slipped away. This time it was the hammer blow, to settle matters once and for all.

What a difference from the days when India had been just a struggling developing nation, catching a cold whenever the Great White Fathers sneezed! Crawling, when it had the strength to run. Unsure and uncertain of its identity and of its historic role in the affairs of the world: craving the approval of the west when it had the power to set its own agenda. Cataclysmic events over the span of six short months in the year 2006 changed the way India looked at itself and the way the world looked at India. Changed the world forever in such a way that confounded human imagination.

Jehadi terrorists backed unequivocally by Pakistan, seeking the merger of the Indian state of Jammu and Kashmir (J&K) with Pakistan, had stepped up their attacks, targeting civilians and army personnel not only in the state but in the rest of India. Attacks on Mumbai, Delhi and J&K had claimed over 285 lives in the short span of just six days. The Hindu shrine of Vaishno Devi, near Jammu, also was attacked, in which thirty-two civilians and army personnel lost their lives.

There was a huge public and international outrage. The domestic pressure on the Indian government to reply by force was intense. The US, fearing retaliatory attacks by India, had pressed India hard to refrain from a military solution. Fearing a nuclear flareup in the subcontinent,

American President George Bush advocated a Camp David meeting between Pakistani President Gen. Pervez Musharraf and the Indian Prime Minister, facilitated by the US, to hammer out a solution that would work.

India had agreed 'in principle'. General Musharraf had been 'summoned' to Washington in preparation for the talks. However, even as these consultations were on, the strident public demand for action, the fear of losing the support of its coalition allies and of its own backbenchers and the resultant collapse of the government forced the Congress-led Indian government to rethink its stand. And India made its move.

Contents

<i>Prologue</i>	5
1. Brass Tacks Unsheathed	13
2. Over the Border	17
3. The Kashmir Explosions	23
4. In the Mushroom Cloud	31
5. The Exodus	39
6. Following the Cutting Edge	47
7. The Rattling of the Sword	49
8. Tightening the Hangman's Knot	55
9. Shadowy Solutions	59
10. Who dun it?	69
11. Destination India	75
12. A President comes Calling	79
13. Trojan Horse	83
14. A Government Enchained	87
15. The Occupation	95
16. Strange Happenings	101

17. Nepal: The King and the Communists	105
18. Revenge of the Nerds	111
19. Unravelling Threads	119
20. The Battle Rejoined	123
21. The Bowshot	131
22. Peccavi! Karachi falls	135
23. Reunion!	143
24. Changing of the Guard	147
25. Star Warriors	157
26. The Restructuring	169
27. Hammer and Anvil	181
28. Bengal and the Begums of Dhaka	189
29. Nepal—The New Republic	201
30. The Secular Raj	207
<i>Epilogue</i>	221
<i>Index</i>	231

1

Brass Tacks Unsheathed

May 2006

Indian Army rolls across Pakistan border!

Abandons Brass Tacks III exercises

Full scale attack launched!

New Delhi, May 16. (AF-P)

In a pre-dawn move, an unspecified number of armoured and mechanized infantry divisions of the Indian Army in full battle array began rolling over the international border with Pakistan in thirteen different sectors. The Army abandoned its biennial desert exercises in the Indian state of Rajasthan and attacked opposing Pakistani forces also on their annual defensive deployment exercises. Simultaneously, Indian forces based in the Akhnoor sector of Jammu crossed the border into Pakistan in more than divisional strength. Pakistani Army units facing the border are counter-attacking and fierce fighting is reported to be raging at many places along the border till late this evening. Indian Air Force fighter aircraft and ground attack helicopters are closely supporting the Army.

Highly placed defence sources said that the Indian Navy was closing in on Karachi port. Carrier-based air patrols

were warning all maritime shipping in the Arabian Sea region to keep clear.

There was no immediate comment from the Indian government but the Cabinet is reported to be in an emergency session at the time of writing.

It's War! Round 5 - India vs. Pakistan!

New Delhi, May 16 (PTI)

Early this morning, the Indian Army crossed the international border in Rajasthan and the Line of Control at several places in Jammu Division of Jammu & Kashmir state. Heavy fighting was going on between the Army and Pakistani forces. Announcing this the Indian Defence Ministry spokesman, Brigadier KS Kahlon, stated that the Indian government had ordered the armed forces to 'permanently eradicate all terrorist bases and support centres across the border, no matter how deep they were in Pakistani territory'.

The Indian Air Force is simultaneously conducting strikes against Pakistan military formations, terrorist camps and staging areas in PoK in support of ground units, and is also attacking Pakistani air and missile bases, Brig. Kahlon said.

Speaking at a jam-packed media briefing at 4 PM today, just hours after news channels began carrying stories of India's invasion of Pakistan, the spokesman stated that the action was in response to the orgy of violence at different places in Jammu & Kashmir and Mumbai, where last month over a period of just six days, militants trained and funded by Pakistan's ISI, massacred more than two hundred and eightyfive civilians and Indian servicemen. Indian forces have been ordered to completely eradicate all support installations of the ISI, and the Pakistani Army in addition to terrorist camps. The action would end only when all

objectives had been achieved. In an obvious reference to the United States, the spokesman said that India is exercising its right of self-defence against fundamentalist terrorists and their supporters, just as several other nations had done in recent times.

2

Over the Border

My War Diary

I had been a staff reporter in Delhi at the time, working with the *New Delhi Express*. Having flunked out of the National Defence Academy (NDA) at Pune on medical grounds in my fifth term, when a horse had thrown me resulting in a spinal fracture, I was automatically considered qualified to be the military correspondent. Usually this grand term meant nothing more than attending endless Army Day parades and covering the award of the President's Colours to a favoured regiment, and briefings of the Ministry of Defence, such as those held on the "Kargil War" in addition to my usual beat. And so as soon as war broke out I begged my editor to allow me to cover the 'western front'. He assigned a cameraman to me, Chokalingam, an enthusiastic Tamil of twenty something.

We rushed off to Jammu to follow the Army as it entered into Punjab Province. I remember Choks, as we called him, wondering whether he'd have any trouble as he had omitted to bring along his Passport! Seriously!

Musharraf Rushes Home

Bush calls for immediate cease-fire

Washington, May 16. (AP)

Pakistani President Pervez Musharraf, who is visiting Washington for consultations with US President Bush, has cut

short his visit to return immediately to Pakistan following reports of large-scale invasion by Indian armed forces.

President Bush has asked both India and Pakistan to cease hostilities immediately and to honour their commitment to resume talks. He said that the outbreak of hostilities in the subcontinent was diverting the attention of the international community from the unfinished tasks of restoring peace and democracy in Iraq and Afghanistan. White House sources state that President Bush spoke to the Indian Prime Minister earlier in the day. It is believed that he 'strongly advised' the Indian leader to withdraw Indian forces and to resume talks for a peaceful negotiated settlement.

President Bush has been advocating a Camp David conference between the two nations. It was in connection with this that General Musharraf had been visiting Washington. The Indian side has already agreed to participate in the proposed Camp David meetings with the US president acting as a 'facilitator'. However with the current developing situation the possibility of any such talks taking place in the near future seems extremely unlikely.

IAF pounds five Pakistani bases.

**Three jets down. Pak Government declares Emergency
Russia denies sending military aid to India**

New Delhi, Washington, Moscow. May 17, (TNN with Agencies)

Indian Air Force planes continued their offensive in Pakistan by carrying out strikes on five Pakistani air bases early this morning, local time. Approximately 80 aircraft were used by India. Reports indicate that ground-based missiles were launched simultaneously from the northern states of Haryana and Rajasthan targeting military bases (called cantonments in the subcontinent) and missile bases deep in Pakistan's Punjab and Sindh provinces.

Unconfirmed reports say that India has lost three fighter aircraft, including one British-made Jaguar fighter-bomber and two MiGs, which failed to return to their bases in Punjab. The Indian Air Force has denied these reports.

Meanwhile, agencies report that the Pakistani government has declared a state of emergency in the country. All international and domestic civilian airports have been shut down in the country due to large-scale damage caused to runways and installations by Indian aircraft and missile attacks. Most Pakistan Air Force bases have also been reported to have suffered extensive damage to runways and installations in the first 24 hours of fighting.

In Moscow, Russian Defence Ministry sources today denied that the IL 76 military transport planes taking off from various military bases around Moscow were carrying military hardware to India. A spokesman dubbed the flights as 'routine' and said these were bound for various destinations within Russia or the CIS.

Musharraf unable to land in Pakistan - diverts to Bahrain
Islamabad, May 17. (*Reuters*)

A civilian airliner belonging to the national Pakistani carrier, PIA, with President Musharraf aboard, returning from a visit to the United States, was unable to obtain clearance to land in Islamabad or Rawalpindi late this evening. Sources say that the plane, which was accompanied by US Navy fighter jets, was advised by ground control not to attempt a landing anywhere in Pakistan due to the extensive damage to runways wreaked by Indian air attacks in the last twenty-four hours. There was also the possibility that Indian fighter jets would target the President's plane. The PIA Boeing returned and landed safely in Bahrain under US Navy escort.

Lahore encircled! IAF controls Pak skies

New Delhi, May 17. (PTI)

Armoured columns accompanied by mechanized infantry units had succeeded in throwing a ring around Lahore by 5 PM IST today, according to reports filed by media persons accompanying the Indian armed forces. The reports said that the advance units were working their way south towards a possible link up with Indian forces out of the western Indian state of Rajasthan, which are believed to be heading for the port city of Karachi, the biggest city and the commercial hub of Pakistan. There has been little resistance by the Pakistani Air Force today in contrast to the fierce fighting that occurred yesterday. This may be due to the virtual air control achieved by the Indian Air Force over Pakistan as a result of the pre-emptive strikes that focused more on denying the use of runways and airport installations than on destroying aircraft parked in underground pens.

Earlier today, helicopter gunships of the Indian Army supported by IAF jets had engaged Pakistani tanks in a fierce battle in the Hussainiwalla sector as they had attempted an advance towards the border cantonment of Ferozepur.

Pakistani missiles target Ludhiana, Ambala military bases - 28 dead,**Extensive damage to property, installations**

New Delhi, May 18. (TNM)

In retaliatory moves, Pakistan missiles targeted military and government installations in Punjab and Haryana late last night. There was extensive damage to military bases in Ferozepur, Ludhiana and Ambala. The missiles were presumed to have been ground-launched from bases in Pakistan's Punjab province.

Indian fighter planes and missile batteries guided by Phalcon AWACS engaged the incoming missiles even as air raid sirens sounded for the first time in decades over Delhi, Chandigarh and Ludhiana. There were no official estimates available of the military or civilian damage sustained, till late last night, but sources at the CMC Hospital report that there were about 28 civilian casualties and over 90 seriously injured in Ludhiana alone, the industrial capital of Punjab. Military casualties were not known.

3

The Kashmir Explosions

My War Diary

We hired a Jeep and followed in the wake of the Army. Driving across the Wagah border between Amritsar and Lahore with its wide open gates was an experience in itself. I had covered several times the lowering of the flags ceremony at sunset, a daily theatrical ritual thoroughly choreographed by India's Border Security Force and the Pakistan Rangers. On that day there were no Pakistani flags nor were there any Pakistanis to be seen. Even our driver, an ex-serviceman named Nachittar Singh, if I remember his name correctly, seemed awed by the silence.

My editor had grudgingly given us a satphone to file our reports. Guard it with your life, it costs the earth, he had told us. And don't use it to call your girl friends, it's too expensive, he had admonished.

As we approached Lahore we could see, or rather hear the sounds of battle ahead. Smoke, dust filled the horizon. We crept up among the rear support units of the infantry division we had been following. And then, there among the empty fields a loud 'twang' as a bullet ricocheted off the front bumper. We dived out of the Jeep into the ditches beside the road.

I had crossed the line: from military to war correspondent!

As we followed the storm and fury of battle in Punjab, and the army invested Lahore, events were moving fast in Delhi and around the world.

Union "War" Cabinet reviews situation warns other countries to stay out

BJP, Sangh for no less than 'final solution'

New Delhi, May 18. (*HT* Correspondent)

The Union Cabinet Committee on Security (CCS) today met in an urgent session at 5PM at an undisclosed site to review developments over the past twenty-four hours, said PMO spokesperson NK Dhulia. For the first time, the leader of the opposition Mr. L. R. Wadhvani was also invited to the meeting. The meeting discussed reports of the Defence Ministry and of the COAS who was also present. Later a statement was issued warning the United States and China to keep out of the current developments in the subcontinent. While not actually declaring that a state of war existed between India and Pakistan, the spokesperson said, 'The Government of India in exercising the right of pre-emptive strike when national security is threatened by external elements, has ordered the armed forces into Pakistan to destroy bases both terrorist and military that have been the source of training and support of terrorist groups sent to operate within India. The government and people of India have always desired peaceful relationships with their neighbours especially Pakistan, towards which initiatives have been taken by the Indian government on innumerable occasions, regrettably with no positive outcome. The intervention in Pakistan will be brief, focused and limited. Other countries are warned to keep away from the ongoing operations and any attempts at intervention or 'mediation' would be viewed seriously."

Indian government officials and ministers were unavailable for comment. However, officials of the Indian

National Congress (INC) the senior member of the ruling coalition, denied any rifts within the coalition partners and stated that all Indians everywhere stood firmly with the government to end Pakistani interference in Kashmir "once and for all". Replying to questions put to her by reporters, the INC president Smt. Gandhi stated that, the party would not be satisfied by anything less than the complete destruction of the Pakistani state as the "permanent and only solution to this permanent problem".

Bush calls for immediate halt to subcontinent hostilities

NSC reviews situation

The White House, Washington, DC, May 19. (AF-P)

US President George W. Bush in a hard-hitting speech called upon both India and Pakistan to end hostilities immediately. Addressing a hurriedly called media briefing at the White House at 2200 EST today, he singled out the Indian leadership and asked it to withdraw its troops from within Pakistan immediately.

'We look upon Southern Asia as a zone of peace and stability and ask both governments to desist from creating another dangerous flashpoint at a time when the international community is seriously engaged in stabilizing the Iraqi situation and the emerging situation in Afghanistan,' he said.

He further stated that all countries needed to focus not on resolving bilateral disputes with violence but on the primary task of peoples everywhere to fight the international scourge of terrorism that was the source of all violence today.

The media briefing was called shortly after the NSC meeting ended at the White House.

Multiple Explosions in Kashmir

May 19, Breaking News, CNN, 9:30 PM IST (Telecast monitored in New Delhi)

Multiple explosions of a massive nature were detected in the northern Indian state of Jammu & Kashmir at 5PM IST (1130 GMT/UT), the UN International Atomic Energy Agency based in Geneva announced a short while back. The agency spokesperson stated that it was unable to confirm the exact number of the explosions or whether they had been nuclear in content. However, the situation would be clearer in a few hours once the data available with the Agency was fully analysed, she said.

Nuclear Strikes in Kashmir!

Bush orders US Forces to 'seize' all nuclear weapons in South Asia

Washington DC, May 19 (AP)

President George W. Bush announced that there had been multiple nuclear strikes in the north Indian state of Jammu & Kashmir. He was addressing the American nation at 0800 EST, in a rare double bill live telecast just a few hours after his late night telecast. President Bush stated that American defence monitoring agencies and the NSA had informed him that there had been multiple nuclear strikes in the northern Indian state of Jammu & Kashmir a few hours back.

"It is my sad duty to confirm to the people of America and indeed of the world, that nuclear weapons were detonated in the northern Indian state of Jammu & Kashmir even as I addressed the media just a few hours ago. This is the first time that nuclear weapons have been used since the Second World War. We do not know who launched these weapons, despite our appeals for restraint to both the Indian and Pakistani leaderships. We are seeking contact

with the Indian Prime Minister, as are our friends in Europe and Britain. President Musharraf, who was here a few days ago, is unable to return to Pakistan and it is our belief that Pakistan today is in the control of a renegade section of the military.”

He called on both India and Pakistan to hand over all nuclear weapons to “international authorities” immediately failing which he would recommend swift action by the United Nations to disarm both the states. Continuing on a sombre note, he announced that he had ordered US Armed Forces based in the Indian Ocean and Gulf region to prepare to ‘secure’ all nuclear assets in the region. There were no media persons present at the address, which was telecast live from the Oval Office.

Nuclear attacks on J&K

Singh: India shall prevail, asks people to prepare for dark days ahead

New Delhi, May 19. (TNM)

The Prime Minister Mr. Brij Mohan Singh, today informed the country that Pakistan had attacked Jammu & Kashmir state with nuclear weapons despite the existence of bilateral and international treaties and agreements banning the use of nuclear weapons. Addressing the nation in a live telecast carried by all Indian channels, first in Hindi and then in English, he stated that India reserved the right to reply in a form, time and place of its own choosing.

He reminded the nation of the recent attacks on civilians and military personnel in Jammu & Kashmir and Mumbai that had been the latest handiwork of Pakistan-backed terrorists, which had resulted in enormous loss of lives of Indian citizens. He said that it was the responsibility of any government to protect its borders and citizens. His government, as many before, having tried unsuccessfully to

resolve the Kashmir issue with Pakistan by peaceful means, had ordered the Indian army to destroy cross-border camps and staging areas of terrorists and the Pakistani military, who were actively supporting them.

He cautioned the nation saying, "There are dark days ahead but we must hold the flame of freedom and democracy high and be prepared to make any sacrifice to ensure peace and security of citizens everywhere in the subcontinent."

He appealed to the public, and to all government officials to continue to perform their duties with heightened vigilance and devotion at this time of crisis and to maintain peace and normalcy.

"Our peace-loving one billion strong population is our strength and a small non-nation like Pakistan will never be able to stop the roll of this juggernaut."

Continuing he stated that India had always and would always stand for peace and development, but if any nation stood in its way it would be crushed. Civilian and military officials, he stated, had been tasked with providing all possible succour and relief to the citizens of Jammu & Kashmir.

Five nuclear bombs hit Kashmir: IAEA

Origin unclear

Geneva, May 19, (AF-P)

International Atomic Energy Regulatory Agency authorities issued a detailed statement indicating that three explosions of a nuclear nature had occurred in the Kashmir valley between 1915 GMT and 1934 GMT and two explosions in Pakistan Occupied Kashmir (PoK) between 1934 GMT and 1945 GMT on the 18th of May. Satellite imagery data, which was being analyzed, and

atmospheric and ground-based sensors in the region had confirmed this.

Each explosion had been in the range of ten to twenty kilotons in intensity. The statement gave no indication as to the possible sources of the nuclear weapons or their mode of delivery.

4

In the Mushroom Cloud

My War Diary

May 19th is a day I am not likely to ever forget. The infantry and armoured units that we had been following had completed their investment of Lahore and as more troops had come in from across the Indian border, the bulk of the force had veered off penetrating deeper into Punjab. We predicted a move southwards to link up with the Indian forces out of Rajasthan. This was in itself an unprecedented move as never had Indian forces penetrated so rapidly and so deep into Pakistan. Another column of the Indian army was already moving northwest towards Islamabad. The betting among the small group of us war correspondents including by now a significant contingent of TV crews was that this time round, a final solution was on the cards.

The explosions in Kashmir, shocked not only us but also the army troops and the officers we were accompanying. No one had ever imagined that nuclear weapons would be deployed in the subcontinent.

The first question in people's minds was: who did it? The army officers we spoke to refused to allow that India had set off the bombs.

CIA predicts 2 to 3 million deaths in Kashmir

Thousands more to come later

Washington DC, May 19, (AP)

CIA Director Jerry Hanson today stated that up to two to three million deaths could be expected from the nuclear explosions in Kashmir. He was briefing an extraordinary joint sitting of members of the House and the Senate. He stated that the yield of each of the five bombs had been in the nature of 10 to 20 kilotons. He reported that experts estimated that the intensity of the combined explosions was sufficient to decimate the entire population of the Kashmir valley as well as most of the Pakistani part of Kashmir.

The mood of members was sombre and many appeared to be shocked while the Director was making his statement. He explained that many more deaths would occur due to the radiation fallout in the weeks and months ahead, which would cover the northern parts of Pakistan's Punjab province also. This could raise the final toll to five to six million deaths over a period of time.

Replying to questions, he stated that CIA analysts believed that most of Kashmir would be uninhabitable for the next fifty to seventy years at the very least. He said that it was not possible to say with certainty at present as to who had set off these explosions and how.

A monster unchained

London, May 19. Editorial (excerpted) *The Times of London*

The world wakes up today to a new horror with the early morning news of nuclear explosions in Kashmir last night. The massive loss of life is unimaginable. An entire people have been wiped out and their land rendered sterile for the best part of the coming century. How many have survived the initial blasts is not known, but what is

known is that those who have survived and have suffered exposure to the radiation will die horrible deaths in the weeks and months ahead.

A chained monster has been unleashed upon the face of the earth, a monster whose enemy is mankind.

Every effort should be made by peoples and governments everywhere on the globe to provide succour and assistance to the survivors of this holocaust. And those whose handiwork this is, whether they be terrorists, dictators or democratically elected politicians, must be apprehended at any cost and punished for this unparalleled crime against humanity.

Nuclear weapons must go and all those who espouse any doctrine based on their possession or use in any manner must go too.

There is no peaceful atom.

Massive anti-nuclear protests jam streets in Europe

Paris, May 19. (AF-P)

Hundreds of thousands of demonstrators jammed the streets of most European capitals and major cities uniting in shock and horror at the nuclear attacks in Kashmir. The demonstrations, which appeared to be spontaneous, were silent and peaceful in most places.

Police stood by as candle-holding demonstrators gathered in vigil outside EU Headquarters in Brussels this evening as heads of governments of EU member-states went into deliberations that were continuing till late night. Protestors carried banners and placards calling for the dismantling of nuclear weapon stockpiles by all countries. Normal life in Brussels, London, Prague, Paris, Amsterdam, Rome, Berlin and Madrid appeared to have been suspended as demonstrators, many in mourning black, took over the streets for most of the day.

India strongly denies N-weapon use

Jihadis in control of Pak, US responsible for situation: PM
New Delhi, May 20 (UNN)

India strongly denied the allegations that India had used nuclear weapons in Kashmir. Apparently stung by media reports suggesting that the Indian government had authorized nuclear retaliation within minutes of Pakistan's first use of nuclear weapons, Defence Ministry spokesman Brig. KS Kahlon stated that India had always stood for nuclear non-proliferation and had voluntarily eschewed the use of nuclear weapons.

"We have conventional military assets that are adequate to meet any attack from Pakistan, conventional or nuclear", he stated at a media briefing in New Delhi. Referring to the Indian Prime Minister's statement of yesterday in which he had laid the blame for the nuclear blasts on Pakistan, the spokesperson said that the Government of Pakistan was now fully under the control of 'jehadi' elements of the military and of the ISI. He stated that President Musharraf had been misguided by these elements about there being no intact runways available in Pakistan to land his aircraft. The Indian Air Force had not attacked all the Pakistan airfields so there was no possibility that such a situation could exist.

He expressed regret that in the recent past the United States had persisted in ignoring India's repeated warnings of such a situation developing in Pakistan.

"If any country is responsible it is the USA," he stated.

When asked to respond to President Bush's directive to US armed forces to seize all nuclear assets in the subcontinent he stated that America was welcome to try. India was not Iraq or Afghanistan and would not allow any violation of its sovereignty or of its right of self-determination.

Putin warns USA, China to keep out of South Asia

Moscow, May 21, *(AF-P/Reuters)*

Russian President Putin today warned US President George W. Bush to desist from undertaking any military misadventure in India. He stated that the historic ties between Russia and India had stood the test of time and that Russia would continue to stand by India today and in the future.

He also warned China to keep out of events occurring in the subcontinent and warned that the same missiles that had destroyed Kashmir could do similar damage to China.

'China and other countries would do well to stay away from the subcontinent and allow Indian authorities to bring the people and organizations responsible for the nuclear holocaust to book.

'We have full confidence that India is capable of apprehending those responsible for the nuclear blasts whether terrorists or military, in Pakistan or elsewhere.' President Putin was addressing a subcommittee of the Duma attached to Russia's Foreign Ministry.

Israel denies any involvement in Kashmir N-blasts

Jerusalem, May 21 *(AF-P)*

Israeli Defence Minister General Rudy Yakov today ridiculed the allegation that Israel was involved in the May 18th blasts in Kashmir. Replying to reporters' queries whether Israel had launched the nuclear missiles that destroyed PoK, the minister stated that the close proximity of the two sets of blasts in the Kashmir valley and in PoK demonstrated that both sets of explosions were premeditated and were probably the work of the same 'Jehadi' or terrorist groups. He further opined that the explosions were in all probability crude improvised devices

as no missile launches had been detected over the subcontinent by any of the international agencies monitoring such events.

Israel, it may be noted, has never accepted or denied its possession of a nuclear weapon.

Unimaginable devastation in Kashmir—nothing lives Indian Army surveys Valley

Himachal, Punjab and Jammu residents flee

New Delhi, May 22, (*CNN* transcript)

Reports of unimaginable devastation in Jammu & Kashmir have begun filtering down to the Indian capital. Preliminary surveys carried out by specially equipped NBCW teams of the Indian Army reveal that there are probably no survivors in the Kashmir valley. The famous Dal Lake has been vaporized and resembles a large mud pit. There were no traces of the houseboats, which were the favourite destinations for tourists. The downtown area of Srinagar has also been completely destroyed.

The entire valley was covered with smouldering ash and debris even seventy-two hours after the blasts. Cloud and haze covered the entire sky and the sun was not visible. No animals or birds were found living.

"It is as if the whole valley has been put through an enormous meat grinder. Nothing is left," reported a young army captain on his radio.

Surrounding residents flee

Widespread fears of radioactive fallout are reported from the neighbouring Ladakh region and from adjoining parts of Himachal Pradesh and Punjab (India) states. People are moving in endless streams towards Delhi, Haryana and Uttar Pradesh. Highways are jammed with lines of vehicles carrying the fleeing inhabitants, many of them with their

possessions. Motorcycles, buses, cars, jeeps, tractors and trailers as well as trucks have been pressed into service.

Monsoon winds to save India

Meanwhile officials of the India's Meteorological Department reaffirmed that their prediction of a timely monsoon over the subcontinent holds. Defence analysts predict that if this is so (Indian meteorologists have been severely criticized for their less than accurate predictions of the monsoon in the past), then radioactive rain-bearing winds and clouds would blow into Pakistan very soon, thus relieving most Indian territory from the hovering shadow of death. Run-off from melting snows next spring would send contaminated water into the various rivers and irrigation canals that provide most of the water to the agriculturally rich plains of Punjab Province of Pakistan. This would render much of the land unusable and also seriously threaten populations in the area.

5

The Exodus

My War Diary

The Indian advance continued into Pakistan at what may be called breakneck speed. Some of the officers we were accompanying claimed that it was faster than the American roll to Baghdad during Iraq II. Mechanised infantry battalions and armoured columns were moving night and day. Following in our Jeep we could see how in many places the hot tar roads had been chewed up by the tank treads. And all the while over our heads screamed the jet fighters, some so high we could barely see them. Initially we had scrambled into roadside ditches whenever we heard the planes but gradually we gained confidence, as we heard that the Indian Air Force had gained dominance of the skies.

The advance was going well. We were following the old Grand Trunk Road that led ultimately to Peshawar, skirting Islamabad on the way. And the massive military cantonment of Rawalpindi, Pindi, as it was popularly called. What was unnerving both to us and to the army officers and soldiers around us was the relatively light fighting that was going on ahead of us. Too easy, was the general feeling.

Apart from the first three days there was hardly any resistance. Where was the fabled Pakistani military? It was like walking on eggshells without having them break. Were

they planning some new strategy? Theatre nuclear weapons, like artillery shells, or chem/bio weapons? For which they did not want their own soldiers to be in the 'line of fire'? Such were the theories floating around.

The small towns we were driving through were much as those in Indian Punjab. Except that all signage was in Urdu. They were mostly agricultural. The few people we encountered on the roadside did not seem overtly hostile, and a few shops were actually open: Punjabi enterprise! We drove into a deserted petrol station on the GT road, 30 km west of Lahore. At the time we were almost alone on the highway being about two kilometers behind an armoured column, and a kilometer ahead of a mechanized infantry unit, with their APCs and trucks. For a few minutes there was no activity and then a bearded face looked around the corner of the building. We were able to take on a full tank of diesel and even fill up our spare jerry cans! Nachittar Singh, who handled the entire transaction in Punjabi, got back into the Jeep and declared that we had won the war. This grandiose statement mystified us. Had the gas station attendant known something we didn't? We asked Nachittar how he knew the outcome of a war that had barely begun. The reply: the gas station guy had accepted payment in Indian rupees!

We never made it to Pindi. The column we were following bypassed it and went directly to Islamabad. The first Indian Army units ever to have come so close to Pakistan's heart, the dream of every Indian commander.

Uneasy calm in Islamabad as city empties

Islamabad, May 23, 1300 IST (CNN, monitored in New Delhi) (Voice over)

"An eerie silence pervades the Pakistani capital today. The streets are deserted generally and apart from the

wailing of raid sirens there seem to be no signs of life at all."

(Camera pans over shuttered stores and deserted streets)

"The Indian army is rumoured to be close to surrounding Islamabad. The military cantonment town of Rawalpindi, which is not too far away, has already been surrounded and is under intense attack by the Indian Army and Air Force.

(Muffled sounds of explosions in the distance in a long shot of the horizon)

"Very few people remain in Islamabad as most citizens have fled at the very outset of hostilities for fear of aerial attacks by the Indian Air Force. Government offices remain locked and even the Pakistani PTV station appears deserted.

(Cut to a close up showing closed gates of an establishment with PTV signboard and logo on the walls)

"There seem to be more media people than citizens here and in the only hotel that is still functioning, those remaining say that the people's desertion of the capital describes their opinion of the Pakistani Army's capabilities, despite the decades old rhetoric of the military rulers. Chanceries and embassies are largely vacant with skeleton local staff performing guard duties. The last group of diplomats and supporting staff had left two days ago, by road apparently heading toward the Khyber Pass and Afghanistan.

"I spoke to Abdul Majid who runs a travel agency and has decided not to flee from Islamabad.

(Cut to close up of CNN reporter A. Gibbs standing in front of a shuttered shop with bearded middle-aged man in western clothes)

Gibbs: Why have you not left Islamabad with the other people?

Majid: I am an old man and have sent my sons, their wives and children to stay with relatives in Sindh province. I know the Indians, as I migrated from (the Indian State of) Bihar at the time of Independence. This whole experiment of Pakistan has been an utter failure, though during the early days of the Qaid-e-Azam (Mohd Ali Jinnah) we were idealists and hopeful of a better future in an Islamic state. For too many years now there has been no rule of law. Too many people have died: Muslims dying by the hands of Muslims everyday, here in Pakistan. Jihad never seems to end! What did we gain? It is good that this experiment is ended soon and once again we should join with India, where at least Muslims are safer than here."

Close up of CNN reporter Gibbs

Gibbs: Mr Majid says that he speaks for the majority of the people who migrated from India in 1947 after the partition of India. If he is right he seems to be echoing what some Indian political leaders have been saying for many years....

Meanwhile in Islamabad there seemed to be no one in charge of Pakistan's government. Military leaders who had appeared on PTV on May 18th and 19th were nowhere to be seen and all government offices appear bare and deserted.

Anti-India, anti-Musharraf Demonstrations

Riots in NWFP as Jihadis vow revenge

Islamabad, May 23. (AP)

Demonstrations by thousands of people took place which lasted all day today in the cities of Quetta and Multan. They were led by religious leaders who addressed the slogan chanting crowds of mostly young men who

exhorted the people to fight India to their last drop of blood. They ridiculed the Pakistani army and criticized the military leadership including General Musharraf for their failure to curtail the Indian advance. They called upon 'jehadi' groups to attack India and lay waste its cities. Later in the day mobs took to arson and looting, burning several shops in Quetta. There were no signs of any police or soldiers to control the mobs.

'India responsible for N-blasts'

Pakistan will use 'all means' of defence: Gen. Hamid

Karachi, May 23. (*Reuters*)

Pakistan Army V Corps Commander Lt.Gen. M. Hamid today warned India to withdraw its Army to within its borders or else Pakistan would use whatever weapons and means that it had in its defence. He was addressing a press conference, at a military base near Karachi. He stated that Pakistan Army was inflicting heavy blows on the invaders.

Responding to questions posed by reporters, he denied the allegation that Pakistan had anything to do with the nuclear explosions in Kashmir. He stated that the Hindu government of India had deliberately bombed the people of Kashmir, as part of a terrible final solution strategy as they had been unable to win the hearts and minds of the majority Muslim population there. "They are willing to go to any length to legitimize their illegal occupation of the Kashmir valley as we can see," he said.

The general stated as patently untrue the reports that X Corps at Rawalpindi, XI Corps at Peshawar and IV Corps at Lahore had refused to obey the new Military Commander of Pakistan. He claimed that these were disinformation ploys of the Indians. He also denied reports that Islamabad had fallen.

Monsoon winds push radioactive clouds into PoK

Washington, May 27 (*Reuters*)

Satellite pictures of Kashmir released by the National Security Agency show a huge cloud of smoke and dust that extends for scores of square miles. It extends deep into neighboring parts of northern Pakistan.

Serial photographs show a gradual movement of the cloud toward the north and west; under the influence of the prevailing easterly winds that herald the monsoon in the subcontinent. NSA sources estimate that a large part of northern Punjab province (Pakistan) as well as the lower reaches of the tribal agencies to its west will be affected by radioactive fallout in the next few days. This would result in a huge increase in the toll of human lives unless rapid evacuation was carried out without delay.

Civilian Migration from North India

New Delhi, May 27, *India News TV* (Transcript of 2:00 PM News)

Close up of reporter standing beside a road with heavy traffic in background, sounds of revving engines and horns blaring.

Reporter: "Large-scale migration of the population of northern (Indian) Punjab state and Himachal appears to be going on. I am standing beside the Grand Trunk Road of Sher Shah Suri also called National Highway 2, 250 kms north of New Delhi. Traffic on this and other highways is jammed for miles due to the large numbers of cars, trucks and buses filled beyond capacity with people and their household goods. Official pleas by the Himachal Pradesh state government to residents not to flee as the radiation cloud was expected to move west into Pakistan and not towards the state seem to have gone unheeded as the urban areas of the state are rapidly emptying out. In Punjab Ludhiana, Amritsar and Jalandhar are the scenes of

massive traffic jams as people flee to more southern parts of the state into Haryana, Delhi, and adjacent parts of UP. Military authorities have had to take control of the traffic in many places as the movement of military convoys was being affected.

The situation of many of these people appears to be doubly poignant as they are refugees twice – once having migrated to India from across the newly created country - Pakistan, and now this.

Also trapped are holidaymakers from all parts of the country who were visiting Shimla, Kulu and Manali. The only people who seem to be unperturbed are the Buddhist monks in monasteries around Dharmshala, who are reported to have refused to evacuate the area.

“The Chandigarh Government has ordered all schools and colleges closed until normalcy returns. Government offices, however, remain open. All policemen on leave have been recalled, and recruits under training at Police Training Schools have been pressed into emergency duties in both Haryana and Punjab. The UP government has been asked to send paramilitary forces to help control any breakdown in law and order. There are fears that arson and looting that may occur as residents leave behind vacant homes and properties as they flee to safer areas.

Many of the fleeing people are farmers who say they have left their wheat harvest piled up on threshing floors, having been unable to store or sell the grain. In some cases one family member has stayed behind to look after farm animals.

“It seems unlikely that these people will heed any pleas made by the governments. Also unlikely is that these people would return until the war is over. That India will prevail is not doubted by any of the refugees I have spoken to. All feel that it is just a matter of when...”

6

Following the Cutting Edge

My War Diary

By now, travelling in northern Pakistan we got a measure of the panic in the civilian population. Roads that had been initially deserted were now crowded with fleeing people. They were not worried about the Indian Army, for there had been no attacks on civilians or even restrictions on their movements. They were more worried about the possibility of radiation fallout.

The roads were chockablock with civilian vehicles. Buses, trucks, vans, cars, two wheelers, animal-drawn carts in many cases, but most of all the tractors and their trolleys.

The people were fleeing, many with their belongings, leaving the farms and towns, all heading south or west. As far as they could get from the northern areas of Pakistan. Even though it was highly unlikely that radiation clouds would ever reach the area we had been in then.

This massive migration had almost derailed the Indian Army's movements. We learnt that the Army had not seriously factored in this possibility and everywhere there were massive traffic snarls. Some Army units had to be detailed to take on traffic cop duties just to let the Army convoys through. Luckily the flatlands of Punjab allowed the Army to bulldoze 'roads' in the fields at the sides of the highways and, at many places we could see Army engineers

using armoured 'dozers, looking very much like tanks with earthmoving blades attached, gouging out tracks for the civilian traffic to use. The Army itself stuck to the paved roads.

We had been filing our reports by satphone two or three times a day. Footage taken by my cameraman, Choks, was also uploaded. A TV crew from Delhi accompanied us part of the way in a Tata Sumo. Their vehicle, like ours also had Ludhiana number plates (how very odd it seemed to see Indian civilian car registration numbers in Pakistan). They regularly set up their antenna dishes to uplink. We also could see what was happening in the rest of the world and CNN was a favoured channel. The war was being fought not only around us but also in the chanceries of the world.

7

The Rattling of the Sword

Bush demands immediate cease-fire

Will ask Security Council meet tonight to intervene

Washington DC, May 28. (AP)

President George W. Bush has asked both India and Pakistan to order their armies to immediately cease firing. Speaking after a meeting of the NSC held at the White House, President Bush asked both countries to surrender all nuclear weapons held by them to international custody. He also said that the US would be taking the matter up tonight at the UN Security Council. In case the two countries did not comply he would not hesitate in recommending the use of force to seize all nuclear 'assets' on the subcontinent.

"We cannot allow the future of all nations on this planet to be jeopardized by two nations fighting over something that can be resolved through talks. Sense must prevail and no nation should even think of nuclear war as an option," he said.

Later the Indian and Pakistani ambassadors in Washington were summoned to the State Department where it is believed they were given formal messages for New Delhi and Islamabad. It is not known if the message to Islamabad would be deliverable, as there have been no announcements by any senior government official or even the 'Military Commander' since the initial declaration.

US seeks forcible disarmament of India & Pakistan: Powell

United Nations, May 28, (AF-P)

The US Secretary of State Powell tonight urged the international community to take steps to seize and disarm all nuclear weapons held by India and Pakistan. Speaking late last night at the emergency session of the UN Security Council, he conveyed US President George W. Bush's message that civil society could no longer sit back and allow irresponsible nations or groups, terrorist or otherwise, to jeopardize the future of the entire planet.

"Irresponsible and heartless acts have to be dealt with decisively by those entrusted with the responsibility of the safety of populations worldwide..."

The discussion was continuing till late night. Observers say that it is likely the Security Council would support the proposal to disarm India and Pakistan even though there was the possibility of long-term Indian ally Russia vetoing the proposal.

No Indian hand in Kashmir blasts**India reserves right to use ultimate weapons**

New Delhi, May 29. (PTI/Agencies)

The Indian Prime Minister said last night that India would not cave in to American threats, direct or through the UN, nor would it surrender any means of defending itself. He denied India's involvement in the Kashmir blasts and said no elected government could ever contemplate such a course of action.

"No democratic government could go to the extent of killing its own people to settle a dispute. It is a perversity to even think so".

The PM said that India has voluntarily eschewed the first use of nuclear weapons and had always respected

international conventions on the development and use of nuclear weapons. But, he went on to say, at a time of national crisis no responsible government could surrender its means of ultimate retaliation.

He was addressing party workers at the conclusion of a five-day training camp held near New Delhi.

Islamic Bomb not negotiable

Musharraf responsible for present situation

First statement by new Pak strongman

Karachi, May 29. (*Reuters*)

In his first statement after seizing power Pakistani "Military Commander" Lt. Gen. Farooqui (formerly commanding general of XXXI Corps) affirmed in a press note that Pakistan would never surrender the "Islamic Bomb", as he referred to Pakistan's nuclear bomb, into the hands of the US or anyone else. He stated that the devious policies of (former Pakistani President) General Musharraf were responsible for the present state of affairs, saying, "millions of Pakistani citizens lay dead because this man had taken Pakistan off the right path and had reduced us to the status of an American stooge."

He declared that the people of Pakistan would celebrate the 'shahadat' (martyrdom) of their countrymen who had sacrificed themselves in Kashmir and that Pakistan would remain true to the original dreams of its founders.

The Indian forces were being routed by the Army and they would soon be thrown back to within their own borders, he added.

Gen. Farooqui asked the US not to attempt any "cowboy stunts" by trying to capture Pakistan's nuclear arsenal. They would be met with "enthusiastic force" if they tried. He further claimed that Pakistan had the support

of all Islamic nations and that the US and anyone helping it should be prepared to face the consequences of their actions "anywhere".

The note was released to the media in Karachi by the Foreign Ministry at midday today.

US Naval Armada gathering off Indian Coast

Action imminent?

Bahrain, May 30. (AP)

US naval ships began moving towards the Arabian Sea shortly after yesterday's NSA meeting in Washington. It is believed that the deployment is to prepare US forces for action in the subcontinent in case India and Pakistan fail to meet the US-imposed deadline for the dismantling of their nuclear weapons.

Three carrier groups have begun moving with a fourth reported to be moving in from its Red Sea station.

Meanwhile the rotation of US troops from Iraq to home bases in the US has been stopped for the time being.

Russia comes down strongly against Pakistan

'Allow India to disarm Pakistani terrorists for UN' Threatens veto

United Nations, May 30. (AF-P)

Russia warned in the continuing marathon debate in the UN Security Council that no country should take it upon itself to unilaterally intervene in the Indian subcontinent.

In an obvious reference to the United States, Russia's ambassador to the UN stated that Pakistan would have never been able to develop nuclear weapons had the US not mounted repeated diplomatic and economic pressure on India whenever it attempted a direct intervention over the

last decade or so. He recalled the feeling in many capitals around the world that Pakistan's nuclear programme had had no proper safeguards and that in fact there always had been grave doubts whether civilian governments of Pakistan had any real control over its nuclear weapons arsenal.

"There has always been a real danger that nuclear weapons developed by Pakistan could easily fall into the hands of Islamic terrorist groups, such as Al Qaeda. Some countries also may have benefited from this programme, in weapons-for-missiles deals."

He further stated Russia's position that as Indian forces were already deep in Pakistan, they were well placed to carry out the task of disarming Pakistan on behalf of the UN. He said that Russia had been closely associated with India for decades and was certain that India could never launch an attack such as seen in Kashmir, no matter what the political inclination of the party in power, or the provocation. The Ambassador said that all evidences indicated that the explosions were the handiwork of Islamic terrorists who had obtained the IEDs from the renegade Pakistani nuclear establishment. Pakistan, he stated, was a 'failed' state, and constant unrest, internecine war, violence and terrorism that the people of the region had suffered and exported since Pakistan's birth was adequate indication for the international community to consider alternate and permanent solutions to this problem. Therefore, he warned, Russia was prepared to exercise its right to veto any move to disarm India but would support any move to disarm Pakistan permanently.

8

Tightening the Hangman's Knot

My War Diary

Our journey through Pakistan along with the Indian Army was notable for the amount of dust we swallowed. That was because invariably we followed closely in the wake of the frontline Army units that were quite literally the cutting edge. The Indian Army had not yet reached even those levels of liberty, fraternity and equality that American forces had endowed upon the media in Iraq. Media men, and yes, a few media women, were not allowed anywhere near the thick of the fighting 'For your own safety', of course. This had affected the quality of our dispatches, naturally. But except at a very few places there was very little really heavy fighting between Indian and Pakistani forces.

We passed Pakistani military camps around Islamabad that were ringed by Indian tanks and soldiers. We were surprised by the strange reluctance of the Pakistan Army to fight, until reports reached us of the state of virtual revolt within it. Of the standoff between commanders loyal to the new and the old dispensations. The results were there before us to see.

Had war planners in Delhi or even Washington ever gamed such a scenario?

Key Pak Army units in revolt against new 'commander' Indian rout of Pakistani forces almost complete

New Delhi, May 30. (UN/Reuters)

Several major formations of the Pakistan Army headed and staffed by loyalists handpicked by Pakistan's (former) President, Gen. Musharraf, himself a former Chief of Army Staff, have refused to mobilize on orders of the new "Military Commander", whom they refused to recognise. They are demanding the return of General Musharraf before taking up arms. Units include both infantry and armoured units and some of the Air Force. Further reports are awaited.

Gen. Musharraf had handpicked most of the Pakistan Army corps commanders after taking over the government of Pakistan in a coup he led against the civilian government of Prime Minister Nawaz Sharif. He had reassigned many commanders who had been appointed during Sharif's time or even before, particularly trying to rid the army of the mullah types who had been inducted in great numbers during the regime of Gen. Zia-ul-Haq, another infamous military dictator of Pakistan, known for his strict Islamist views.

Meanwhile taking advantage of the conflict situation that has arisen within the Pakistan Army, Indian forces are continuing their thrust into Pakistan after encircling and bypassing the northern city of Lahore. Missile attacks continue on bases around Islamabad, Rawalpindi and Peshawar. Defence analysts say that fear of possible nuclear contamination by imminent rains would mean that the Indians would not like to enter those areas of Pakistan-occupied Kashmir (PoK) and the northernmost reaches of Punjab province, and would allow nature to do its work.

Reports continue to flow in of massive southward migration of people from areas of northern Pakistan that are

contiguous to the Kashmir valley and PoK, and northern Punjab Province.

Battlefield reports monitored in New Delhi indicate minor and stray resistance from the Pakistan Army. In the central sector Indian missile batteries and warplanes are now pounding Multan which is the headquarters of Pakistani II Corps, inflicting heavy military and civilian damage. Indian defence analysts said this seemed to indicate a doctrinal change from the oft-stated Indian position that only military installations would be targeted. It may be recalled that India had protested to the US about the heavy "collateral damage" its 'shock and awe' tactics had caused in the second Iraq war.

Bahawalpur was reportedly under Indian control, after XXXI Corps had been subjected to continuous missile and aerial strikes for over three days. This victory had special significance as the new dictator of Pakistan had commanded XXXI Corps. Additional Indian forces were being moved into Pakistan from cantonments all over India.

Western military analysts state that the refusal of virtually half of Pakistan frontline fighting units to mobilize has more or less decided the war in favour of India, already, which would have otherwise been hard pressed to prevail against the Pakistanis, given the pre-war state of readiness of the Indian Army. Cruise missiles said to be of very recent Russian origin are also being used by the Indians in their round-the-clock bombardment of critical military targets. Super Patriot missile batteries believed to have been secretly supplied and installed by Israel under the control of Israeli supplied (and many believe staffed) Phalcon AWACS, are now fully deployed in the forward areas of north India. This has greatly increased the kill rate of incoming Pak missiles, analysts say.

The surrender of Pakistan is now just a matter of days away. The question now is, what next?

Karachi port bottled up

Indian Navy dominates sea approaches

IAF achieves full air control

Karachi, May 30. (AF-P)

Commercial shipping traffic at Karachi port was at a standstill for the fourth day today. There was no movement in or out of the harbour, port sources reported. A few Chinese-built Pakistani naval frigates were seen patrolling the harbour approaches. It is reported that the fear of Indian submarines prowling the waters outside the harbor had led to all maritime and much of naval ship movements being curtailed.

Indian naval ships have reported to be fully deployed in the Arabian Sea, and Indian naval jets off the Indian Navy's aircraft carrier *Viraat* have been patrolling Pakistan's coastal waters. Pakistani airbases have been pounded by Indian attacks from land and sea based military aircraft and missiles almost daily and most rendered unserviceable although damage to Pakistani aircraft has been low so far.

9

Shadowy Solutions

My War Diary

While the war in Pakistan went on, things were hotting up in other areas. My colleague, Prashantham, from the same paper, was reporting on developments from western India sea ports. I would occasionally talk to him on the satphone or read his dispatches in the online news sites that were being accessed by everyone including media and officers of the Army. The Navy was fully on board the war and reports of cat and mouse games in the Arabian Sea with the US Navy were rife. Threats, if any, of the Pakistani naval action, though present, were remote.

The chief concern was the US build-up in the Arabian Sea. What could the Americans be planning? Speculation was mainly centred around direct US intervention on the ground in Pakistan. Many senior officers disagreed with this assessment citing the bogging down of US forces in Afghanistan and Iraq. But the build-up indicated a need for concern.

This translated into speeding up of the Indian offensive. Capture as much of Pakistan as possible before the US paratroopers arrived, was the new mantra.

As a consequence we found ourselves abruptly southbound, reinforced by fresh units from Rajasthan. Destination: Karachi.

Indian subs slip out

Stalking US armada?

Mumbai and Goa, May 30. (PTI)

Informed sources here disclosed that a number of submarines including the two Russian nuclear subs leased to India have left their Goa base for undisclosed destinations. Senior naval officers declined to comment on the movement of the boats.

It appears likely that the subs will be on long range patrols in the Indian Ocean area particularly as American naval presence is rapidly building up. Although no official statement has been issued it is believed that the submarines are fully armed. There are unconfirmed reports that Pakistan Navy submarines have been detected around Indian oil production platforms in the Arabian Sea, in the Bombay High cluster.

India warns US fleet to keep away

Indian Navy to retaliate if obstructed

New Delhi, May 31. (UN)

The Indian government today issued a warning to the US asking it to ensure its navy did not interfere with the movement of Indian naval vessels. Indian government sources revealed that a US naval armada was building up in the Arabian Sea off the Saurashtra coast. US naval reconnaissance aircraft have also been detected in the vicinity.

Indian Naval sources revealed that a US carrier-based task force with support vessels was now located three hundred nautical miles off the Gulf of Kutchch. The presence of a number of US troop transports was also noted. A second task force was located four hundred miles off Mumbai in the Arabian Sea.

Naval sources stated that India had warned the US that it was at a state of war and all its armed forces were at full deployment. Any engagements on the high seas or within Indian maritime boundaries would be met with force. An undisclosed number of fully armed Indian submarines were active in the area, the sources further stated, including the two Russian-made nuclear submarines delivered to India last year.

India asks Russia to speed up sub refit

Tokyo, June 1. (*Reuters*)

It is understood that India has requested Russia to turn around seven Russian-built Indian submarines as early as possible. The Indian subs had been sent for routine refits to the Russia's Vladivostok submarine base. It is reported that the yards are working round the clock to complete the fitting.

Among the upgrade features that include advanced diesel powered engines, Russia is also stated to be equipping the subs with the new sea-launched versions of its latest cruise missiles tested last year. These missiles are nuclear capable and have a 500-800 km range.

Analysts believe that air and ground-launched versions of the cruise missiles have already been deployed and are in use by Indian forces in north India.

My War Diary

We had been driving behind the advancing Army columns when we were witness to another aspect of military ops that we normally heard little of. Pakistan Army units that had been captured or who had surrendered were being screened for jihadi elements. One night at a roadside staging area near Bahawalpur as we were picking up rations from the Army mess—actually the back of a

truck—we ran into a group of Army officers, who we had not encountered so far in our dash across Pakistan. They wore different flashes on their uniforms. Military intelligence and JAG, murmured the Madras serviceman doling out the rations to fellow Tamil, Choks.

A casual investigation revealed that these officers had been tasked to weed out the 'jehadis in the captured Pakistani units. I spoke to a young officer who said that their task was easy in many units as the Musharraf loyalists were using the opportunity to purge their commands of these elements whom they generally considered non-professional and subversive. The Indian Army was happy to oblige. What they did with these officers and soldiers and where they were taken away in trucks is anybody's guess. Needless to say we were forbidden to report on these matters on pain of instant banishment to India.

On the political front we read reports of similar weeding out being conducted in India, among the political classes of Kashmir in Jammu, the Vale of Kashmir being "inaccessible".

Kashmir separatists hunted down

Washington DC, June 1. Editorial – *The Washington Post*

Indian security forces are reported to be actively hunting down members of organisations that have been seeking union of Kashmir with Pakistan or independence from India. Information obtained by the *Post* reveals that in the last two weeks at least 200 persons belonging to various groups such as the AHPC, Kashmir Peoples' Party, JKLF, Kashmir Islamic Front and other lesser known groups have been shot dead in 'encounters' with Indian security forces and state police. Most of these groups have been suspected for many years to be funded by Pakistan's Inter Services Intelligence agency (ISI) – the dirty tricks department of the

Pakistan military, not considered to be under the purview of any civilian authority (and incidentally heavily funded by the US). The Indian government is believed to have issued secret instructions to security forces to take no prisoners.

Sources deep within the Indian Government indicate that New Delhi is making full use of the war with Pakistan to capture and 'terminate' Kashmiri politicians and leaders of all persuasions who have at any time advocated any settlement favouring Pakistan, separation of the Kashmir valley from the Indian state or have protested against what they had been calling the Indian 'occupation' of Kashmir. Apparently New Delhi is determined to see that no political opposition to India within the state of Jammu & Kashmir survives the war.

In more peaceful times India had arrested many of the top leaders of groups with strong links to fundamentalist 'jehadi' groups across the border. Many of these top leaders languishing in jails for years under India's sluggish legal system had to be released by Indian authorities in various terrorist-for-hostage deals like that which followed the hijacking of an Indian Airlines Airbus to Kandahar. This had left the government in a very poor light and it had faced intense public and political criticism for its handling of the case.

This time around New Delhi is taking no chances.

Last diplomats to leave Islamabad arrive in Kabul

Kabul/Bahrain, June 1. (AF-P)

Most foreign missions have evacuated Islamabad. Returning staffers and diplomats arriving in Bahrain report that complete lawlessness prevailed in most Pakistani cities. Loot, arson and internecine gun battles between Kalashnikov-toting groups often wearing Arab style head-gears were on in Islamabad, Quetta and Peshawar, even as

massive movement of people out of northern cities and towns towards southern areas of Pakistan continued.

Norwegian diplomats who were perhaps the last to leave Islamabad reported having had a harrowing journey to the Khyber Pass into Afghanistan from where they were escorted by US and Afghan Army troops to Kabul. Sixteen diplomats and staffers of the mission were reported to have arrived safely in Kabul in four vehicles.

Speaking to media persons en route to Kabul, the Norwegian First Secretary reported having seen no government presence on the streets and highways in the countryside during their 28-hour journey.

‘We saw no police or soldiers during our journey across NWFP (North West Frontier Province) to Afghanistan. Gas stations had no fuel and we had to buy fuel at exorbitant prices wherever it was available in the black market. We did see planes high up in the sky frequently, but could not identify them as Pakistani or Indian. Several times we had to abandon our vehicles and scatter among the rocks for cover as some planes swooped over us, perhaps to investigate but they did us no harm perhaps as our vehicles all were flying the biggest Norwegian flags we could find at the Embassy.’

The embassy staffers would be flying to Bahrain later today en route to their country. Non-essential expatriate staff and families at most western embassies had already been evacuated from Islamabad at the commencement of hostilities between India and Pakistan.

Bush calls for surrender of all N-weapons

Threatens Action if no response

Washington DC, June 1. (*Reuters*)

US President George W Bush today again warned Pakistan and India of serious consequences if they did not

allow weapons specialists to enter and disarm all nuclear weapons. He said that the United States would not stand by and allow the two countries to endanger the security of the world and the lives of millions because they could not sit down and work out a lasting solution between themselves. The US had offered several times to facilitate dialogue between the two countries. Referring to the statements issued on May 29th by the Indian Prime Minister and by Pakistan the US President said that America was not keen on intervening but if both governments did not stand down it would have no choice in the matter. He called upon both nations to voluntarily suspend the war and submit all nuclear stockpiles to international control for disarmament. Speaking at a news conference at the White House, President Bush recalled that the US had acted with restraint after 9/11 despite the government having been under intense pressure to retaliate.

"I call upon the Indian and Pakistani governments to suspend all hostilities at least till we have had a chance to sit down and talk, as agreed," he said referring to the previously scheduled summit at Camp David.

State department sources reveal that there seems to be no likelihood at all of the Camp David talks being held.

Indian Army unlikely to relent this time

London, June 2. (*BBC Radio Commentary on the World News, monitored in New Delhi/AP*)

A senior academic at the International School of Strategic Studies stated that it was unlikely that India would stand its army down before the Camp David negotiations. He expressed his doubt that there would be, in fact, any Camp David summit at all.

Dr Harvey E Johnstone, a specialist on South Asian affairs, was referring to the severe criticism of every Indian

Prime Minister who had prosecuted a war with Pakistan, including Jawaharlal Nehru, that they had taken too soft a line with Pakistan and had not allowed battlefield commanders and Indian Army HQ to make decisions on the ground. Lahore had been within easy reach several times but the army had never been allowed to take it. This had resulted in huge loss of leverage at the subsequent peace talks due to which India had never been able to fully exploit the advantages of having won all its wars against Pakistan, and may be have even gained a permanent peace.

“Lahore could have been used as a trade off for PoK had India decided to hang on to it,” said Geoffrey Mayor, a senior analyst at the Institute.

He went on to state that today’s Indian leadership seemed to be determined not to let that happen again and Indian troops were cutting off city after city in Pakistan. Preliminary reports from Quetta had reported Indian columns just ten to fifteen kilometers away from that city. It appeared that the Indian strategy was to bisect Pakistan. This could indicate that India’s game plan is to isolate and annex Sindh Province, which includes Pakistan’s largest city, commercial capital and port, Karachi.

“Karachi has a huge population of those Muslims who had migrated from India at the time of Partition. These Muslims, he stated, have a serious grievance against the Punjabi-dominated army and government, which allegedly discriminates against them and gives them a lower status, socially and politically. They also retain strong family ties with India. It was likely that India would find a sympathetic chord among these people, he added.

Mayor went on to explain that with the continuous aerial and missile bombardment of Pakistani army positions by India and the reported revolt of a large number of Pak

army commanders at the corps level and below, loyal to President Musharraf, a virtual rout was on the cards. A half-a-million strong army was of no use if its commanders were at loggerheads and a unified strategy was not adopted.

“The timing of the coup by XXXI Corp commander, Gen Farooqi was just terrible. Grabbing command of a nation’s war machine once hostilities had already broken out is just not done. Farooqi has not been able to obtain the full commitment of the military and no concerted plan of battle seems to exist. Theatre commanders are apparently making their own decisions independently, with no regard to the positions of commanders of other formations around them. The commitment of Air Force and Navy commanders too is doubtful. In fact the all-new China built Pak missile frigate *Shaheen* is still holed up in Muscat and seems to be in no hurry to venture out. All this is a surefire guarantee of disaster,” he said.

“Indian ground forces including armour have covered ground at a breathtaking speed, even faster than the Americans in Iraq II,² in the absence of any serious opposition and also because of the better road network available in Pakistan.

“Indian war planners and army commanders have gamed these moves so often that they could probably drive through most Pakistani cities blindfolded,” he said.

He opined that Operation Brass Tacks, that had been devised in the 90s by the then army chief General Sundarji had demonstrated the capability of Indian forces and especially of its armour to take on extreme climatic conditions even in the searing 50 degree C plus heat of summer in the Rajasthan desert, even though the costs to material had been high initially. India had retooled since then and defence planners had taken the lessons learned seriously as was obvious today, he said.

↳ The Pakistan Army, on the other hand, had lost much of its professionalism due to induction of bearded mullah types into the officer corps. These persons had entered initially during the reign of General Zia-ul-Haq, a 'born again' Muslim. They had largely their own agenda (similar to the political commissars in the erstwhile Red Army) and were probably more inclined to ragtag terrorist type attacks rather than fighting set piece battles. Their commitment to army discipline was also questionable being high on emotion and bluster than on cool-headed professionalism. The replacement of highly professional commanders trained at Sandhurst and in the US by these mullah types was contributing largely to the present confused situation, as the latter are strongly opposed to (US supported) General Pervez Musharraf, he concluded.

It is more or less accepted now by experts that despite massive American support for building up the Pakistan Army and the resultant superiority in hardware and logistics, Pakistan is on the verge of its biggest defeat ever, one that is likely to change the map of the subcontinent permanently.

10

Who dun it?

My War Diary

How does it feel to be reporting from the winning side? Viewing reports that were available on the internet and on TV – there was no dearth of access to both these media even while on the move, as we were now a motley gang of media persons with all sorts of gadgetry with the foreign TV crews BBC, CNN, and even with good old DDN. There were hardly any newsmen left with the Pakistan Army. In the absence of any real authority who could lay down policy for their handling of the media most unit commanders were framing their own. Basically it boiled down to “All news should be of defeats or setbacks for the Indians”.

There indeed were setbacks for the Indians in many places where Pak Army units had been well entrenched and had fought well, but the defeat of Pakistan was certain now. By this time most media persons had ‘switched sides’ and had moved to reporting from the Indian columns where there was hardly any censorship, even if we were not always in the thick of the fighting.

There was also a ‘something different’ feel about being part of a war that had not just one but five nuclear blasts at its back, regardless of who had set them off. I won’t call it Armageddon but the feeling was always there in the mind,

both for us reporting and for the soldiers involved. The disaster that had befallen PoK and upper Punjab province with the large scale fleeing of ordinary people had already panicked a large chunk of the Pak Army into believing that the war had already been lost. And despite the US build up in the Arabian Sea, interaction with captured Pakistani officers in the PoW camps indicated that most of them no longer believed that America would bail them out as in the past.

US beefing up forces in Arabian Sea

Prepares for action

Basra, June 2. (*Reuters*)

The rotation of US troops from the Gulf theatre to their home bases in the US has been stopped for the time being. It is believed that these troops are being sent to Indian Ocean locations on troop ships presumably for deployment in Pakistan. Units include those of the US Marines and the regular Army, leaving mostly National Guard inductees on the ground in Iraq. Reliable sources say that these units will now be strengthened and not replaced by troops coming in from the US. Basra is being developed as a major staging area. There are over 200,000 US troops in the Middle East region at present

Anti Blair-Bush protests rock London

Labour MPs threaten revolt

London, June 2. (*Reuters*)

Massive anti-US demonstrations took place in Central London yesterday. People began gathering from early morning, listening to anti-war speeches at London's famous Hyde Park. Speakers lambasted the US President and his "pet dog" (read UK PM Tony Blair) for their inability to provide a democratic government in Iraq as well as their unilateralism in dealing with the world's largest democracy,

India. They held that the US had always poured arms and money into dictatorships without establishing any safeguards. In Pakistan this had encouraged the development of 'jehadi' groups supported by the government (propped up by American arms and money), which had resulted in the massacre of thousands of innocent people in Kashmir, Afghanistan, Chechnya, New York, by these groups and their adherents.

Later the demonstration grew to include over one hundred thousand people who marched through the streets of Central London right up to the Houses of Parliament. London Metropolitan Police had a long and arduous day straightening out traffic snarls, which lasted till late evening. Most central London businesses did not open today.

Meanwhile in closed door meetings of the Labor Party leadership and MPs, speakers were reported to have come down heavily on British Prime Minister Tony Blair. They demanded that Britain does not side with any US-led intervention in India and Pakistan. They deplored the rifts being created within Britain's multiracial society by the perceived anti-Islamic stance of the UK Government's blind support to the US President George W Bush's 'wild west' foreign policy. Tempers reportedly ran high with several MPs crying 'shame, shame' when Mr. Blair addressed the members. No official statement was issued after the meeting. The meeting assumes increased significance in view of the results of this week's Gallup poll showing a spectacular 30% slide in Prime Minister Blair's approval ratings in just four weeks.

Blair blinks

Asks US to act only with UN mandate

London, June 3. (AP)

Beleaguered British PM Tony Blair today asked the United States to stand its forces down and to await the

outcomes of the ongoing UNSC discussion on the subcontinent situation. He said that Britain condemned the use of nuclear weapons and urged the United Nations to seek and bring to justice the perpetrators of the nuclear blasts in Kashmir.

Mr. Blair has been increasingly isolated in recent months within the Labour Party and has slipped up to 30 percentage points in recent polls since the US British 'victory' in Iraq over a year ago. British MPs have been demanding the recall of British troops from Basra even as the efforts to instal a new Iraqi government in Baghdad have failed repeatedly.

British and American troops in Iraq have come increasingly under Fedayeen attacks and there have been clashes with the slogan chanting crowds who have been demanding self-rule without outside interference. With no government in sight, Iraqi businessmen are hesitant to open shop again because they fear looting and violence. There are apprehensions that Shiite elements from across Iraq's border with Iran have been involved in some of these attacks and have been influencing the outcomes of the failed efforts to instal a civilian government in Baghdad.

Who dun it? Kashmir mystery still unsolved

London/Paris, June 2. (PTI/ Agencies)

Western capitals are agog with theories regarding the identity of the perpetrators of the Kashmir carnage. Even as diplomats in New York struggle to thrash out a workable strategy for South Asia under the threat of a Russian veto, several theories have surfaced.

The German Foreign Minister voiced the most prevalent theory in Europe stating in a televised Bundestag statement that in all probability it was the handiwork of an Islamic terrorist organisation based in Pakistan. Stung by a

notable lack of success in Afghanistan and frustrated by President Musharraf's attempts to keep the Americans happy, this group (or groups) had, in all probability, with the support of the infamous ISI of Pakistan, 'acquired' fissionable material and IEDs that were then carried into the Kashmir valley and also into PoK. He opined that these groups had adopted a scorched earth policy to frustrate any US-brokered peace initiatives. He did not rule out Al Qaeda involvement in the action. He added that reports of the resurgence of the Taliban have also been coming in from Afghanistan and from adjoining areas of Pakistan.

A rival theory favoured by a few British civilian strategic analysts is that the bombs were set off by India and Pakistan in tit-for-tat actions. Pakistani missiles carried the warheads into the valley while a swift Indian retaliation targeted PoK.

However, American military observers close to the National Security Agency rule out such governmental involvement. Apart from both countries being signatories to 'no first use' treaties, the timing of the entire exercise made it a foolhardy exercise for Pakistan. With the onset of the southeast monsoon so close, it was obvious to even the most ignorant war strategist that the flow of winds would drive radiation clouds into Pakistan rather than into India. This could even threaten Islamabad itself. Further, the contaminated surface water run-off would be carried far by the wide network of rivers and canals from PoK into Pakistan's Punjab province.

On the other hand, some claim, if India had to use nukes it would have gained far greater tactical and strategic advantage by nuking the Rawalpindi/Islamabad complex rather than attacking PoK, which it claims as its own.

“A third but fanciful theory making the rounds of Arab capitals is that all the explosions were engineered by Israel, acting alone or with US backing, in order to freeze the

situation in South Asia for the next fifty to sixty years, while the US uses the time gained to sort out the Middle East and Afghanistan, without any distractions. The fall of Pakistan would also deprive Islamic fundamentalist terrorist groups access to the so-called Islamic Bomb, which is high up on Israel's security agenda.

Israeli FM ridicules conspiracy theory

Jerusalem, June 3. (*Reuters*)

Israeli Foreign Minister dismissed as 'highly creative' allegations that Israel had any role in the Kashmir blasts. He said that Israel had 'no agenda' in South Asia and in fact had cordial relationship with India. He clarified that the close grouping of the two sets of explosions negated the tit-for-tat theory that implicated Indian and Pakistani armed forces. It appeared most likely that the explosions were the handiwork of Islamic terrorist organizations. Israel has consistently neither denied nor confirmed its possession of nuclear weapons, though conventional wisdom has it that Israel has possessed nuclear weapons for the last decade or so.

11

Destination India

My War Diary

Disaster! But not tragedy, thankfully. Choks stopped a bullet. In the calf and fortunately, no broken bones. The Army surgeons at the field hospital had patched him up well and soon he was allowed to be up on crutches. But the war was over for him and he was packed off back to India with a logistics column, carrying with him huge amounts of personal mail, reports, exposed rolls of film, dispatches and tapes for various organizations. A regular media Santa Claus he'd begun to resemble. There were incentives galore for him to deliver the goods and he carried with him no less than seven bottles of Scotch! How those journos had lugged all that booze across the war zone all those weeks was an enduring mystery to the Armywallahs in the column, and I could sense that a merry time was to be had by all on the arduous journey home.

Choks handed over a camera and rolls of film (for which there was a booming 'black market' among the media persons) to me and I doubled as a cameraman from then on, with scarce hope of a replacement for Choks making it here before the imminent end of the war, as the latest news indicated. For it was hardly likely that the American president would be visiting a country actively prosecuting a war.

Bush to visit India!

Humanitarian aid to Kashmir victims on agenda

Dates not announced

Washington DC, June 3. (AP)

In a startling disclosure White House sources stated that President George W Bush would be visiting India sooner than later. He would discuss the South Asian situation with the Indian leadership. It is believed that the President would impress upon the Indian leadership, the need for peace and stability in the region for which an Indian pull-back from Pakistan was essential. He is also slated to discuss humanitarian relief measures for the people of Kashmir.

It is not likely that the President would visit Pakistan, as the situation there remains extremely fluid. Further, the US still considers Gen. Pervez Musharraf to be the legitimate President of Pakistan. It is likely that the two would meet in Basra on the return leg of Bush's trip. Talks are on in Basra regarding the formation of a new civilian Iraqi government which are leading nowhere, much to the embarrassment of the coalition partners.

Singh welcomes Bush visit

New Delhi, June 4. (PTI)

The Indian Prime Minister, Mr. Brij Mohan Singh, announced today that he had extended a formal invitation to US President George W Bush to visit New Delhi. Stating that he had already had a telephonic talk with the US President in this regard, Prime Minister Singh noted that India had always stood for peace and stability in the region. He also welcomed any humanitarian assistance for the victims of the Kashmir holocaust. The dates of the visit were not announced.

Bush, Secretary of State to visit India 6 June

High security planned

Washington DC, June 4. (AA)

The State Department formally announced this morning that the US President would visit New Delhi on June 6. Secretary of State Colin Powell, and high-ranking officials of the State Department would accompany him. The President would hold talks with Indian Prime Minister Singh about security matters in South Asia and the human tragedy in Kashmir. Political observers attach great significance to the Bush visit as this is the first time that an American President would be visiting a foreign country that was formally in a state of war not involving the United States. It is expected that the visit would take place amidst unprecedented security arrangements.

12

A President comes Calling

**Bush arrives in New Delhi to unprecedented security
First ever US presidential visit to a warring country**

New Delhi, June 6. (PTI)

US President George Bush arrived in New Delhi this morning. The Prime Minister Mr. Brij Mohan Singh and senior cabinet ministers received him at the Palam Technical Area of the Indira Gandhi International Airport. After a brief welcome that precluded the usual inspection of the guard of honour, the heavily escorted presidential motorcade left for the Rashtrapati Bhawan where meetings with the Indian side will be taking place.

Mr. Bush is scheduled to leave this evening for Basra *en route* to Washington. It is believed that he will be meeting Pakistani President General Pervez Musharraf while in Basra.

Unprecedented security

Arriving amidst unprecedented security, Air Force One was escorted by a flight of F14 US Navy fighter jets that circled overhead as the Presidential plane touched down. Six Black Hawk helicopters carrying fully armed US Marines and Special Forces had landed just two hours earlier and the troops had thrown a security perimeter around the runways and the aircraft parking area.

Yesterday two C130 Hercules aircraft arrived from Bahrain carrying US Marines and Special Forces along with their equipment, which included Bradleys (APCs) and Jeeps. It is believed that these troops are working closely with Indian security forces to create a 'sterile' zone for the US leader's movements.

It is the first time in living memory that a US President had visited a foreign country that is actively conducting a war in which the US is not involved. It is learnt that US Navy fighter jets along with American AWACS will be patrolling Indian skies non-stop as long as the US President is on Indian soil. The Navy jets are believed to be based on aircraft carriers at station in the Arabian Sea.

US officials have been in hectic parley with Indian government officials after the Indian Prime Minister assured the fullest cooperation to ensure the President's security. It is believed that all Indian armed forces in and around Delhi will facilitate US military actions. No flights of Indian Air Force fighter jets would take place while the President remained in or over India. Civilian flights to and from IG International Airport in Delhi are also suspended for three days.

Gulf sources report that the US naval ships in the Arabian Sea are in a state of full alert and will remain so till the President exits the war zone.

Bush arrives to heavy security

New Delhi, June 6. *CNN* (transcript: 11 AM News)

Shot of IG International Airport, main entrance. Appears deserted. No crowds of passengers or their receivers. A few CISF (paramilitary) troops bearing automatic weapons man check posts.

Camera pans to show empty car parking lots. Sandbagged checkpoints at several points manned by CISF.

Cut to reporter, Clarissa Carter. Close up.

'US President George W Bush arrived just a few minutes ago at the Indira Gandhi International Airport, by Air Force One, which is at present parked behind this building (*gestures towards the airport terminal building*).

“Security is so tight that even accredited media persons cannot get beyond this point outside the main terminal building.”

'The Indian PM Mr. Brij Mohan Singh received Mr. Bush and the two drove straight to the President's residence – Rashtrapati Bhawan – in Central New Delhi.

There was no ceremonial Guard of Honour at the request of the visiting President's team.

Notable about this visit is the almost fanatical attention paid to details of the American President's security. US Navy jet fighters are circling overhead and US soldiers carried in by upto six US Black Hawk helicopters arrived to set up a security perimeter around critical parts of the airport before Air Force One touched down.

'The unprecedented security measures extend all the way to all the places that will be visited by the US President and include roadblocks by US Marines and Special Forces who arrived via this very airport yesterday, jointly manned with Delhi Police.

'Indian Government sources report that the presence of US military units including the presence of US Navy jets over certain parts of India have caused considerable heartburning among high officials of Indian defence establishment, especially as the country is in the midst of prosecuting a war against its traditional enemy Pakistan.

This is in itself an unprecedented moment when a US President is actually visiting a country at war and hostilities are still in full swing. However, it is believed that the Indian government has instructed the military to step down its

state of preparedness in and around the capital to accommodate all security requirements of the Americans. American AWACS will work in tandem with Indian Phalcon AWACS to cover the western border with Pakistan.

'This seems to indicate the importance the Indian government attaches to President Bush's visit and to the US offer of large-scale humanitarian assistance particularly for those who have survived last week's terrible nuclear attacks in Kashmir. It is believed that the two sides will also discuss India's presence in Pakistan and the American perception of the immediate and intermediate future vis a vis Pakistan.

Cut to area around Indian Parliament House—sandbagged checkpoints with US Marines in camouflage fatigues along with Delhi Police commandos. Two armoured personnel carriers—Bradleys—move slowly on the roads.

Cut to IGI airport: Clarissa Carter:

'We shall bring you more developments as we hear what happened in the bilateral talks ...'

Cut to CNN Newsroom

Bush departs after talks with Indian leaders

New Delhi June 6, *Aaj Tak*, 3PM News, (transcript, Hindi to English transl.)

Scene IG International Airport. Reporter Seema Singh

'The US President has just left New Delhi aboard Air Force One. No statement has been issued yet by either side nor were media persons allowed to enter any part of the "sanitized" area of New Delhi. Attempts to call senior officials of the government have elicited no success.

'It is expected that within a few hours this airport will be back in business as the American security apparatus laid out for the visit is reeled in. Civilian flights are likely to resume

13

Trojan Horse

US Airborne troops land in India!

Seize vital installations

London, June 7. (*Reuters*)

Large scale landing of American forces was reported in New Delhi, Mumbai, Hyderabad, Lucknow, Patna and several other Indian cities yesterday immediately after the departure of US President George Bush from New Delhi. The President visited New Delhi yesterday to discuss America's request to India to pull back from Pakistan and humanitarian assistance for the surviving victims of the Kashmir explosions. The disarmament of India's nuclear stockpile was also on the agenda.

Giant C-130 Hercules transport aircraft accompanied by helicopter gunships landed at New Delhi, Agra and Lucknow almost simultaneously around 1530 hours local time yesterday. American forces have taken over vital installations in Delhi and now surround the President's House, the Prime Minister's residence, Parliament and various key ministries such as Defence and Home. Arriving forces took up positions along with those US troops already deployed for the Bush visit yesterday, who contrary to expectations, stayed on after the US President left.

No statement was forthcoming from the Indian government till 9PM IST. US Navy fighters were reported

patrolling the skies of all the cities mentioned, while the Indian Air Force remained grounded. Indian Army sources stated that the army is yet to respond to the American invasion.

American troops to remain till India withdraws, surrenders nuclear arsenal - State Department

Washington DC. June 8. (AP)

The US State Department today issued a statement saying that US troops would remain in India until Indian troops withdrew from their "illegal" entry into Pakistan, and until US forces found and disarmed all Indian and Pakistani nuclear warheads.

The statement claimed that the international community had lost faith in the ability of both Indian and Pakistani leaderships to settle the Kashmir question bilaterally hence third party intervention was now mandatory. This could only happen in a nuclear weapons free atmosphere, hence the US intervention. The statement further warned that other countries with unresolved conflicts could find themselves subjected to the same treatment if they did not bilaterally settle their problems in an agreeable and just manner within a reasonable timeframe.

"Beware of Greeks bearing strange gifts..."

London, June 8. Excerpts from editorial, *The Times of London*

The international arena has never witnessed as strange an event as that which unfolded with US President Bush's visit to New Delhi yesterday, since the wooden horse was hauled into ancient Troy. The breathtaking audacity of US planners who have so far successfully orchestrated a virtual takeover of vital organs of the Indian government opens a new chapter in international duplicity and is unparalleled

for its ingenuity, execution and depravity, for unlike ancient Greece and Troy, no state of war exists between India and the US.

Democratically elected governments and civil society worldwide can but recoil with shock and horror at the depths to which American diplomacy has sunk under the present dispensation in Washington. To take a friendly government hostage under false colours is nothing but an act of international piracy and the basest criminality. Never again will any friend or foe trust America nor will Americans be welcomed anywhere until the blot on their historical record placed there by Mr. Bush and his advisors is removed.

It is just as well that Britain withdrew its military cooperation with Mr. Bush's government a few days ago for even British duplicity during the days of the Raj was nothing compared to yesterday's shame.

The American people today stand at a defining moment in their history as a nation. Will the Land of the Free, the Protectors of Democracy stand with Mr. Bush or with the founding fathers of their Constitution? The freedom bell of Philadelphia rings again, and it rings for you, America.

14

A Government Enchained

My War Diary

Shock! Disbelief! We had been unable to believe what we heard on the radio, but the pictures from Delhi on the international TV news channels were proof enough. US Marines in Connaught Place? Surely, that there was M Block, with a group of patrolling marines, and could that be an American battle-tank near the metro station works?

The Army reaction was very much the same, and for some hours the movement of our entire column that had been heading south towards Karachi skidded to a full stop. No doubt there had been signals flying between field commanders and Army HQ in New Delhi. And doubtlessly, too, instructions had been sent from Delhi, but we had not been privy to all that.

What we did know was that at 8PM that night the Army's kid gloves came off as far as war reporting was concerned. All communications equipment was confiscated: satphones, mobile phones, sat dishes, and the like were stowed away in a couple of trucks and, yes, carefully detailed receipts were signed and given to us. Now war correspondents are not a breed who would take such things lying down, and there were vociferous protests. But the frosty treatment of American journalists by the

Army officers was plain to see, despite their protests about having nothing to do with Bush or his government. European and third world journalists were treated sympathetically, but orders were orders.

The equipment imbroglio had hardly settled down when the column started revving up and thus began the wildest dash I have experienced in my war-reporting career.

The column moved through the night as though the very devil was at our heels. Sixty to seventy kilometers to the hour on those narrow broken roads was our progress. Trucks or other vehicles that broke down were simply stripped of equipment and abandoned at the roadside in the dark as the army dashed through the night. By daybreak, nine hours later we had covered around four hundred kilometers. The column was indeed strung out over perhaps a hundred kilometers of road but now the advance elements as well as the command vehicles were just sixty clicks from Karachi. We learned that other Indian Army units had been doing the same during that night.

The night of June 7, 2005, will always occupy a special place in the annals of military history, for the wildest and most brilliant dash by any army, in a single night. By noon of the next day we were to learn that by that crazy night move a steel ring had been put in place around Karachi. Fully one hundred thousand Indian soldiers now had Karachi by the... well, throat.

The next few days were spent in reinforcing, regrouping and recovering men, vehicles and equipment, while the advance units probed the Pakistani defences of the city, and UAVs droned in the skies.

As there had been complete news blackout at the time, there is hardly any archival evidence of what happened that night, except in Army reports, and those have never

been published by the Indians. But definitely to us on the spot, despite whatever the Americans would do now, India had strengthened its bargaining position overnight. One hundred thousand fully equipped, battle-hardened and highly motivated men on your doorstep carry a lot of diplomatic weight.

US demands free access to N-sites or face consequences

State Department justifies move in India

Washington DC, June 6. (AF-P)

The US State Department summoned the Indian and Pakistani Ambassadors separately today and handed them notes for their governments. A State Department spokesperson said in a media briefing that the United States had asked the governments of India and Pakistan to allow the free entry of nuclear weapons specialists to all weapon depots to disarm critical components of all nuclear weapons held by the two countries. He stated that the unprecedented acts of the US government in the subcontinent were necessary due to the unprecedented acts of nuclear violence to which no responsible government could be a party. Never before since the end of the Second World War had nuclear weapons been used in war. Every nation in the world had eschewed use of nuclear weapons and yet the events in Kashmir, which had cost millions of innocent people their lives. The US was holding the two governments fully responsible and accountable for this unprecedented 'crime against humanity'.

"The United States will take every step necessary to ensure that never again would such horrors be visited upon mankind. The very survival of the entire human race is at stake when irresponsible governments use such horrific

weapons freely. Towards preventing such acts, the United States reserves the right to take any steps felt necessary alone or in concert with other nations, now or in the future," he said.

Russia condemns American 'piracy'

Places armed forces on high alert Parleys on with China
Moscow, June 7. (*Reuters*)

The Russian government today condemned in the strongest possible terms the unprecedented acts of the US government in India.

"Russia is appalled by the nuclear catastrophe in Kashmir, but the acts of the US government are nothing but modern day piracy and duplicity. Taking hostage the government of a sovereign nation with whom cordial ties exist is an act of deceit and criminal breach of trust and is unacceptable in the modern world."

An official of the Russian Foreign Ministry read out the statement at a media briefing.

Russian has placed its armed forces at a higher state of alert since the US's acts in the subcontinent. Russian news reports say that the Russian foreign minister has already left for Beijing to confer with the Chinese leadership on developments in the subcontinent. It is understood that the Chinese government, which has kept a low profile so far, was seriously concerned about the increasing US presence in what is virtually its backyard.

Russian sources report that in the last forty-eight hours there has been a flurry of increased construction activity on the Tibetan Military Railway, which is known to be the repository of much of China's nuclear arsenal 'dedicated' to the Indian subcontinent.

India protests to US

Warns US to be prepared for any eventuality

New Delhi/ United Nations, June 7. (*Agencies*)

The Indian government today lodged a formal protest with the United States. The Indian Ambassador to Washington handed over a formal note to the US State Department. The note, which was also released to the media, stated that the US had violated every norm of international behaviour and diplomacy by using force to dictate terms to a friendly nation. India had never been at war with the US and as the world's largest democracy, had always exercised considerable restraint in its relations with its neighbors, despite grave provocation, due mainly to American requests. Pakistan on the other hand had repeatedly deceived India, the US and the world by its intransigence and support of cross-border terrorism, resulting in the deaths of millions of Indian citizens who were unfortunate enough to live in an area Pakistan claimed falsely as its own.

The Indian government had signed peace agreements and treaties with Pakistan eschewing the first use of nuclear weapons and had faithfully stuck to its commitments. The note further stated that India had no hand in the nuclear holocaust unleashed in Kashmir. It called upon the US to withdraw its forces from India immediately and also called upon the world community to bear pressure on the US to do so.

The people of India were essentially peace-loving and history was witness to the fact that it had never had any territorial ambitions.

The note stated further that India was not Iraq and that the US should be prepared to face any eventuality if its forces were not immediately withdrawn.

There was no comment from the State Department till late evening.

Indian fighter plane shot down as US forces consolidate hold

New Delhi/ Mumbai, June 7. (*Reuters*)

American Navy fighter jets shot down an Indian Sukhoi fighter-bomber, as it attempted to take off early yesterday morning from a Pune airbase. The airbase came under attack by US warplanes as Indian Sukhoi warplanes sought to scramble. Runways sustained extensive damage and a Sukhoi was destroyed as it was taxiing down the runway. There were no reports about the fate of the pilot of the destroyed plane.

US forces continued to pour into major Indian cities as the Marines established beachheads on the coast north of Mumbai (Bombay) and in the western Indian state of Gujarat. American forces have also taken over several oil refineries in Mumbai and in Gujarat. The American Navy also controls Mumbai port and no commercial shipping moved in or out of the harbour today. The bulk of the Indian Navy, however, was reported to be somewhere in the Arabian Sea where it had been conducting a supportive exercise parallel to army manoeuvres in Rajasthan.

US Navy jets were seen patrolling the skies over Mumbai all day.

US Troops enter Pakistan. Occupy N-sites

Bahrain, June 7. (*Reuters*)

US troops believed to be based in Iraq, Afghanistan and on ships in the Arabian Sea were dropped late last night into Pakistan targeting 'secret' nuclear bases of the Pakistani military. Paratroopers and heliborne SP4 troops were used

in the raids. Reports state that there was little or no resistance from Pakistani forces guarding these sites. US troops are believed to have taken over the Kahuta nuclear complex and the Khan Research Labs, which are said to be the main centres of Pakistan's nuclear programme. However, it is not clear whether any warheads were found at these facilities. Pakistan's Air Force has already been largely rendered inoperative due to extensive runway damage at all major airbases inflicted by recent Indian air and missile attacks.

15

The Occupation

Pakistan's bifurcation almost complete

Indian Army nears Karachi

Offensive slows as US tightens grip on Delhi

New Delhi, June 8. (AP)

Within a span of forty-eight hours, US forces have paralyzed government and armed forces HQs in New Delhi.

Reports from Pakistan indicate that Indian field commanders, on instructions from Army HQs in New Delhi are slowing down or have stopped the offensive. They have also avoided engaging US forces who are now disarming nuclear weapons at various locations.

Despite this, latest reports indicate that the bifurcation of Pakistan along a roughly oblique southeast-northwest axis was more or less complete, with Indian forces occupying positions stretching from the Indian border right up to northwest of Quetta on the Afghanistan border. Other Indian forces had encircled major Pak Army cantonments at various places. Indian Army columns in the south were now barely 20 kilometers from the outskirts of Karachi, Pakistan's commercial capital and largest city.

Street demonstrations were reported in Karachi by various groups either welcoming or condemning India's action.

Karachi is home to the largest number of Muslim immigrants from India who crossed over at the time of Partition. These 'Mohajirs' have long standing grievances about the second-class status given to them by the original Pathan and Punjabi inhabitants of Pakistan, who generally dominate the government and the Army.

Indian Army refuses to fight US troops in the cities Indian Government orders Army to 'remove' US invading forces

New Delhi, June 9. (UN/)

The Indian Army has refused to engage US forces within Indian cities, Army HQ has reported to the Defence Ministry. It is learnt that the Indian government had finally ordered the Army to use whatever means necessary to 'remove' US forces occupying various locations in India.

Field commanders have reportedly stated that while officers and troops had expressed their willingness to fight in Pakistan they were unwilling to fight against US forces occupying Indian cities fearing this would result in extensive loss of life of non-combatants and the destruction of property. Ministry officials faced by this virtual revolt are believed to have informed the Prime Minister that the Army favors an early negotiated political settlement with the US on the nuclear issue, in order to exploit fully its gains in Pakistan. Despite the presence of US forces in India, the morale of the Indian jawans remains high, and it is believed that Army HQ is under pressure from field commanders to allow them to take Karachi, the last remaining bastion of Pakistan.

US N-specialists allowed to enter N-weapon sites

New Delhi throws in towel

New Delhi, June 10. (AA)

The Indian Government today allowed US nuclear weapons specialists to enter Indian nuclear weapons depots. Faced by the refusal of the Indian Army to fight against occupying American forces in the cities, Prime Minister Singh had virtually no choice in the matter. US weapons specialists backed by US Marines moved into several undisclosed locations all over the country to disarm India's nuclear weapons after the Indian Government ordered the Army to allow them unhindered entry.

In Washington, US President Bush hailed the decision of the Indian government as being 'wise' and 'in the interest of world peace'.

Similar exercises are being carried out in Pakistan, where the Indian Army had been instructed to allow safe passage of American weapons specialists.

India: Fourth Day of Occupation - Business as usual

New Delhi, June 10. (AF-A)

The Amritsar-bound Golden Temple Mail from Mumbai, known to British colonials as the crack Frontier Mail, arrived only ten minutes late today at New Delhi railway station. In fact, most trains on the Indian railways, one of the world's biggest and busiest rail networks, ran on time. As did bus services in almost all states of India.

The sheer weight of the one billion plus population and its inertia ensured that most public services whether provided by the Central, State or local governments continued to function normally. The private sector too continued with business by and large as before. For most offices and factories in and around the metros—Mumbai,

Kolkata, Chennai, Hyderabad, Bangalore, with some exceptions in the national capital region (NCR)—it was more or less business as usual.

In the early morning, milkmen with cans hanging from their bicycles or motorcycles were seen on their usual rounds. Mumbai's fabled lunch carrier service functioned as ever, post offices opened and mailmen too delivered mail. If anything, the electricity supply position improved marginally with better power generation reported yesterday from almost all units of national and state government-run power corporations, especially in northern India. Civilian flights continued with all private and domestic airlines continuing their services as usual, though under the watchful eyes of US military air controllers and patrolling US fighter jets.

Newspapers continued to be printed and delivered as usual. Events in Kashmir and New Delhi seem far away with Doordarshan (state-run) TV blanking out any news of happenings in New Delhi and only reporting military advances in Pakistan and international news.

In the north Indian state of Uttar Pradesh, home to one-seventh of humanity, a state government minister proceeded with a marathon ceremony in the state capital Lucknow, during which he laid the dedication stones for 1001 (rpt one thousand and one) development projects (many with American assistance) for various places in the state. He promptly fainted after the effort in the searing summer heat, but was reportedly recovering after first aid.

Apart from crowds at TV shop windows watching BBC and CNN newscasts, it was difficult to believe that India was a country under occupation and was also in fact prosecuting a war against Pakistan. TV watching crowds were actually less than those normally seen during international matches involving the Indian cricket team.

Demonstrations were reported in many of the smaller cities of northern India as crowds protested the invasion of Indian cities by the United States. Police monitored the situation and no loss of life was reported from any place. Effigies of (US President) George W Bush, and the American flag were burnt at several places.

16

Strange Happenings

My War Diary

It was with a sense of great disappointment and frustration that the news of Delhi's capitulation was received by us. So near yet so far, was the general feeling. Yet in the absence of orders from Delhi, there was nothing to do but to wait for developments. So while the Army spent the time gained by re-tooling and refurbishing, I decided that it was time for me to head back to India, where the action seemed to have shifted.

Recovering my equipment I joined a band of correspondents and their teams as we together journeyed back. Nachittar Singh had long since returned to Ludhiana and we had to make do with piling into the back of an Army truck part of a convoy heading for Sriganganagar, in Rajasthan, which was now much closer than Wagah.

We reached on the third day. The countryside we had passed through in Sindh had been quiet and Indian Army patrols were all over the place. In one small village in the middle of the desert we found an Indian Army water tanker surrounded by people who were filling up all manner of containers. Some soldiers, weapons dumped in the sand, were engaged with the children in a game of cricket on the sand dunes. The temperature must have been around 46 degrees centigrade!

Our arrival in Sriganaganagar was heralded by the first shower of the monsoon and we spent a good hour frolicking in the rain. By the next afternoon I was at my desk in New Delhi. A strange, new, Delhi.

Anti US demonstrations in London, Paris, USA Protestors demand US withdrawal from India

Paris/London, June 11. (AP and agencies)

Large-scale demonstrations protesting against the Bush administration's holding of the Indian government to ransom took place in various cities in Europe and the US today. Marching protesters in Washington DC held placards and chanted slogans condemning the nuclear explosions in Kashmir and the unilateral action of the United States against India. There were a few posters in support of Pakistan. In London, the demonstrators were mainly persons of Asian origin.

In Paris, a noisy demonstration took place in which about 50,000 people took part. They were protesting the US action in India. Speakers addressing the crowds demanded UN intervention to get the American troops out of India. Nearly 100 men and women demonstrated in the nude until local police and firemen using hoses forced them to cover up.

What on earth are we doing in India?

Washington DC, June 10. Editorial- *Newsweek International*

The last few days have been bewildering to those who follow US foreign policy. The land of freedom and liberty has invaded and held hostage a friendly, democratically elected government ostensibly to disarm its nuclear stockpile. What the US could not achieve with Saddam, North Korea or even Pakistan; which now increasingly appears to be a 'failed state', it did with a nation with

which it always had friendly ties and never had any serious bilateral problems. So since we were unable to defang our enemies we defang our friends!

With friends like us, who needs enemies? What is worse is the underhand way that it was engineered, using the cover of an official Presidential visit to slip in the knife. We can safely assume that Mr Bush is not going to be invited anyplace in a hurry, especially by our 'friends'.

India's behaviour too was perplexing. A handful of US Marines and SP4s stood off the huge modern war machine that India possesses with nary a shot being fired? Believable? Or is there more here than meets the eye? Subterfuge at high levels of the US and Indian governments?

The scenario this far:

I *pretend* to attack you.

You *pretend* to be terrified, refuse to fight back despite being armed to the teeth, all in the middle of full mobilization of your forces, who are among the world's best trained.

I *disarm* your nuclear stockpiles and those of your enemy: fair and square.

What a coincidence that the 'mad mullahs' who control the Pakistani nukes were already beleaguered and happened to be under attack by the Indians!

But why this elaborate game?

The image through the retrospectoscope is beginning to clear up now. Could it all be part of an elaborate game plan to delete Pakistan and, most importantly, its suspect nuclear weapons programme, permanently from the world map?

There could be many advantages in such a move for both India and the US (and many would add, for most of the world).

The terrorist bases, support systems for Al Qaeda, the Kashmiri militant groups, the danger of loose nukes, all emanating from the Pakistani government's backdoor would vanish. The unending Kashmir problem is solved to everyone's satisfaction, especially the Indians. And hey presto! There's no Bomb left!

End result: The Islamic Bomb is history; Business as usual in the West, and India breathes easy with Kashmir solved permanently.

Mission accomplished. Exit stage left.

Everything is now hunky dory - except for the small matter of four million missing Kashmiris.

Indian forces have been moving fast in Pakistan. The amount of territory in their control exceeds their accomplishment in all the four wars against Pakistan. From the strategic point of view the elimination of Gen. Musharraf from the scene was a masterstroke and the resulting 'revolt' of many Pakistani Army units all played into Indian hands. Could it be possible that the good General did not try hard enough to land his plane in Pakistan?

Will the Indians resume their roll now that their nukes have been decommissioned by the US? The pause forced by the US while its disarmament specialists are in Pakistan can have only helped Indian forces in strengthening their logistics.

All political and military indications are, therefore, that Pakistan's days as an independent country are numbered. The two-nation experiment forced upon the subcontinent by the British has failed, and India and the US appear to be cozy partners in this venture.

Way to go, guys! Except, again; for that small matter of four million missing Kashmiris..

17

Nepal

The King and the Communists

**Russian planes land material, 'advisers' in Kathmandu
Government restricts Pak diplomats, Maoists Parley with
PWG in Terai**

Kathmandu, June 14. (AA)

Russian military IL-76 planes have been landing at the Tribhuvan International Airport in Kathmandu. Two to three planes have landed daily over the last two days. Local sources state that the planes are carrying military hardware in addition to Russian 'technical specialists'.

Kathmandu has long been reputed to be the hotbed of Indian and Pakistani intelligence and counterintelligence outfits. People with knowledge of this shadowy underworld state that the Indian intelligence agency Research and Analysis Wing (RAW) has established links with Maoist insurgent leaders in Nepal. Reports emanating from Eastern Nepal suggest that the two groups have been parleying at various places.

Meanwhile the Nepal government has asked Pakistani diplomats to remain confined to their residences and embassy. The Inspector General of Police responsible for the safety of diplomatic missions explained that the restrictions on movement were only for their 'safety'.

Official sources declined to comment about the destination of the Russian equipment and manpower that is landing.

My War Diary

New Delhi was going nowhere fast and after the hectic time I'd had in Pakistan, I was stir crazy. The grapevine was buzzing with reports of the shadowy goings on in political circles in Kathmandu. I had begged Krishnan, my chief, to be assigned there. After much hemming and hawing, he had relented and soon I was on my way.

I had worked my way by the Lucknow Mail to Lucknow and then by a bone-breaking bus-ride to Sonauli, a town on the Indo-Nepal border. As an Australian reporter friend had put it, Sonauli was one of those small towns where the streetlights went dim when you plug your shaver in. I had tarried there a couple of days with friends picking up news and bazaar gossip before moving on to the Kathmandu valley.

The rumour mills were working three shifts. In those days Kathmandu had a reputation as a place for intrigue and was acknowledged as the spy capital of the subcontinent. It appeared that operatives of India's RAW had come to an understanding with Maoist groups. These groups had only recently come overground after the intervention of King Gyanendra. The game plan appeared to be to train and equip Maoist cadres to wage a low intensity harassment of the US forces garrisoning the major cities of north India. In this three-way deal weapons and explosives were being provided by Russia, which would also provide 'advisors' to train the insurgents in their use. Russian IL-76 planes had already been landing at Kathmandu airport for several days, by the time I reached there.

I ensconced myself in a 'lodge' in Thamel, there being no better place to keep a finger on the goings on in KTM.

Talking to fellow correspondents and a few local wheeler-dealers I learnt that things were not going too well for HRH.

Initially the King and the Nepali communists had worked together. Then Communist Party cadres along with operatives of the Peoples' War Group (PWG) in India had launched several successful attacks against the US servicemen in Lucknow and Patna, but they had been mere pinpricks.

However, as the number and efficacy of the attacks improved, King Gyanendra developed cold feet, worried that the US would act against Nepal. The Palace ordered that Russian planes be not allowed to land at Tribhuvan Airport. But despite this, Maoist sympathisers within the government ensured that the flights continued. At this the King protested vehemently and had threatened to use the Nepali army to seal the borders with India (a fanciful idea never achieved even with India's fullest support in the past) as well as to ensure that Kathmandu airport was denied to the Russians.

I discovered I had come just in time and within two short weeks of my arrival dramatic events took place in KTM. Noisy street demonstrations filled the squares of the city practically everyday for a week. Then university and college students joined the Maoist cadres and their sympathizers in the streets. Government ministers also tacitly supported them. It was also rumoured that the old Rana families of Nepal (hereditary prime ministers in previous regimes), and traditional rivals to the reigning Shah dynasty, were supporting the demonstrators from behind the scene with muscle and money. Violence erupted in the streets of Kathmandu and in a few other major cities in the Terai – plains bordering India. Speakers at rallies exhorted the crowds to rise up against the King and his crown prince, dredging up the mysterious deaths of their predecessor King Birendra and his family, who were,

they alleged, done away with at the instance of his brother and successor, the present King.

Within six weeks of New Delhi's occupation by American forces there was a 'regime change' in Nepal. The King fled the country to avoid being captured by the Maoist-incited crowds who by now were baying for his royal blood. The other members of the royal family also slipped away through China to parts unknown. The Royal Nepal Army stood by in dignified silence.

A constitutional assembly was called and a new republican constitution proposed. The country opted for Indian style democracy with a President as Head of State and a Prime Minister as head of government. The constitutional assembly appointed an interim PM. This time the Ranas did not get the PM's post, which went to a moderate Maoist leader - Madhav 'Nepal'. The former Ambassador to Russia was elected first President of the new Republic.

The raids into India were stepped up, targeting US soldiers and installations as far afield as Kolkata and New Delhi. By the middle of July, 16 American soldiers had been killed, along with scores of insurgents—cadres of the Maoists of Nepal and the India-based PWG who were by now operating jointly.

Russia became the first country to recognize the new government in Nepal while China maintained a studied silence. The Indian government issued a cautiously worded statement welcoming the people's verdict as an exercise of 'grassroots' (read street) democracy.

With these developments the political situation in Nepal cooled off except for the raids into India. A fortnight after the interim government had been sworn in, China formally recognized it and assured its support and assistance as in the past. China obviously welcomed the creation of a

'Maoist' buffer state between its southern flank and American dominated India.

The harassment of US armed forces, however, remained at best a minor irritant to the increasing US military build-up in India. Though US troops were everywhere they did not involve themselves in running any aspect of the civil government, which they strictly left alone. Citizens trying to complain to them against civic or government officials were turned away and asked to approach the regular authorities or the courts, which functioned as usual.

The real backlash was yet to come and when it did, it came from quarters so unexpected that no one, for quite some time, could recognize it for what it was. By this time I was back in Delhi trying to keep tabs on the disarmament progress of American nuclear specialists.

18

Revenge of the Nerds

US Army communications systems crash repeatedly

New York/Washington, July 20. (AP)

US Army communications specialists are having problems keeping communications networks up and running in India. In the US, sources report that Pentagon communications systems are also facing serious problems since yesterday.

The Army's own Internet based communications system linking field commanders and their HQs keep crashing several times a day. In India, this has resulted in units within Delhi resorting to handwritten messages being used for communication with US dispatch riders using 'liberated' Indian Army motorcycles.

US Army technicians are worried that the battering their equipment took in the hot deserts of Iraq was further compromised by the hot and damp conditions of India's wettest monsoon in twenty years.

'We are taking steps to give a new meaning to the term 'tropicalized', stated a communications colonel attached to the Pentagon when asked about the glitches. The Pentagon was reportedly in touch with equipment manufacturers in the US, Japan and Taiwan to adapt equipment to Indian conditions.

Motorola's fully owned Indian subsidiary has expressed its inability to help as most of their work force, including IT specialists and engineers were not reporting for work. It is not known by when the networks would be up and running normally.

Indian hackers responsible for US Military communications systems failure: MCL

Toronto, July 22. (AP)

The increasing failure of communications systems being faced by the American military are part of well directed moves by persons or groups unknown, announced Mobile Comm Labs, Inc. in Toronto yesterday. MCL is a prime military contractor specializing in communications hardware and software applications. A working group, tasked by the Pentagon and headed by MCL, announced that the American command communications network had been hacked into and was being subjected to massive virus attacks, practically non-stop. The attacks extended up to and included the Pentagon. Indicators point to the attacks originating out of India.

When asked to elaborate, the group chairperson said, "Considering the organized nature of the attacks this group feels that it was probably backed by some infotech giant operating out of India but also attacking from around the world. This is not surprising as India has a superabundance of highly skilled infotech specialists".

Asked to name names he said that any Indian infotech giant like Infosys or the IITs could be the source of the attacks, although it was possible that hackers were using corporate computer networks and VSATs without their knowledge.

"The peculiarity of these attacks is that the viruses mutate faster than HIV and getting a fix is almost impossible

as they seem to be programmed to change their morphology practically every hour.”

There was no immediate solution in sight, he stated, though his and several other groups in the US and in the UK were working on ways to ‘immunize’ US military command systems.

US banking systems, back office operations collapse as internet links fail!

New York, July 25 (AP)

Three major American banks—the Bank Of America, Citicorp and American Express—and credit card giants MasterCard and Visa announced that all inter-bank and credit card transactions have been suspended since 3AM, EST today. These inter-bank operations are performed by companies in India who have been unable to deliver real-time updates of transactions as they have been suffering hackers’ attacks via the Internet over the past two days. This has led to the corruption of data banks and the crashing of their computer networks. Back office operations for international airline reservation systems, Amadeus, the US insurance companies and major retail chains have also been affected.

Thousands of irate passengers crowded airline reservation counters at airports all over North America as major airlines cancelled or delayed flights in order to cope with computer malfunctions. Confusion also reigned in Europe where passengers booked to fly on American airlines were also unable to confirm their flights. Airline industry observers feel that the current crisis beleaguering the air transport industry, still not recovered from 9/11 and Iraq II, could see the collapse of industry giant United Airlines, which had already undertaken massive layoffs to save the troubled company.

US government officials are unable to state when normalcy would be restored. Wall Street analysts say that the suspension of these operations could cost the American economy billions of dollars in lost billing and from loss of prospective business even if rapid fixes are carried out.

For Free Parking come to Carlton County!

Carlton, New Jersey, June 26. (AP)

If you want free parking then Carlton, NJ, is the place for you!

The Sheriff's Department announced today that it would be unable to collect fines from parking violators.

'We are not getting any data from the parking meters due to paralyzed computer systems', stated spokesperson Deputy Sheriff Hank Davis. "While this is not going to make the county go broke, it is a tidy little loss for us. Maybe we'll arrest more jaywalkers to make up", he said.

Residents of the town (pop. 8201), as can be expected, are making full use of the windfall free parking.

Meltdown in e-world. Billions lost.

Can it happen again?

London, June 28. Editorial- *The Times* of London (excerpts)

The past week has seen the best policed, the most secure and the most expensive communications network in the world collapse in total disarray. The US Armed Forces' own internet-based command systems that link army units in the field, naval ships and aircraft to various higher levels right up to the White House, toppled like dominoes as backup after backup failed against the onslaught of a weird menagerie of electronic microbes. Most indicators point to software hackers working around the world.

Layers of security firewalls were destroyed with holes big enough for trucks to drive through. Only frantic efforts to contain the attacks by physically isolating systems served to save some of them from permanent damage, though their de-linking from the network probably achieved the desired objective of rendering them ineffective. In other words, you could still play Nukem on your \$3 million mainframe but you could not communicate with anybody outside the office.

Consequently, US armed forces in Iraq, Afghanistan and especially in India are paralysed with no electronic means of communications between field units and head quarters or beyond.

Mobile phones and most of the Bell and AT&T landline services have also gone off line after computers used for routing and billing were hacked into and software damaged. It seems that most of America has been reduced to using smoke signals except those fortunate enough to be using satphones based on non-American systems. ATMs and credit card services have shut down hurting retail sales and therefore the American economy directly.

Indian phone networks are also down since yesterday, both mobile and landlines, as systems administrators shut down services to protect equipment from virus attacks. Banking systems were hit marginally as most transactions outside the 'metros' still rely on manual methods of accounting. Indian Railways' reservation system is down but clerks are making out tickets by hand to clear the rush.

Doomsayers have long held that over-dependence of industry, commerce and defence sectors on electronic systems with much hyped, but not seriously tested safeguards, would result in a massive meltdown someday soon. It appears that the people who created a large chunk of these programmes (weren't they mostly Indians

in the first place?) also knew exactly how to paralyse them. How this situation will be avoided in the future is anybody's guess. Microsoft and Sun Microsystems among other infotech giants prefer to remain silent but are doubtless in urgent conference to work ways out of the mess.

Anyway, to many in the US it has been a restful week without pagers and phones demanding their attention all the time, and no bills coming due to pay.

Complete TV & Telecom black out in USA!

Hundreds of communications satellites go offline

London, June 30. (AP)

In yet another no-longer-surprising development, most TV screens in the US and Canada went blank from primetime yesterday. Reports from the US state that all satellite-linked North American TV stations stopped receiving satellite signals from 2100 EST. The blackout of TV screens across the nation was simultaneous. FCC sources report that scores of American communications satellites have gone offline and are inoperable. This includes satellite nets used by the GPS system. Local TV stations based on terrestrial transmission are still functioning in their line-of-sight areas.

In London, communications and satellite specialists are assessing the widespread failures. Preliminary analyses indicate that such widespread satellite failures could be neither coincidence nor a 'happenstance'. No abnormal sun flares or sun storm activities have been expected or noted by astronomers. (These are known to affect satellite communications but for short durations and never on such a huge scale.) The current satcom failures could therefore only be the result of attacks well planned and executed by agencies unknown.

However, only a very few countries have the sophisticated satellite capabilities that could have carried out such an action. Terrorist organizations lack the capability to launch such attacks.

European Space Agency and NATO officials report no space booster launches over the last two weeks from anywhere on the planet. Unidentified highflying aircraft could also not have escaped undetected, they claim. The absence of any recent space launches and the incapacity of earth-based systems to wreak such havoc has added to the mystery, which makes it all more like "enemy action".

Is the damage temporary or permanent?

It is not known whether the scores of satellites affected have been temporarily disabled or destroyed. In either event industry sources say replacements would cost trillions of dollars with day and night production of satellites for at least the next ten years.

On the brighter side satellites not linked to North American networks are unaffected. Terrestrial TV networks in the US are also functioning, but cable TV channels linked to satellite receivers are down. International telephone circuits based on undersea transatlantic cables are functioning but are hopelessly overloaded. Companies operating these cables have resorted to manual handling of calls and waiting times for transatlantic calls at present can exceed four hours.

For most Americans the worst part of the present TV network shutdown was their being deprived of their daily fix of news, soaps and talk shows. At last Oprah Winfrey and Larry King can take that much-needed break.

Space Shuttle 'Kon Tiki' out of radio contact

No danger says NASA

Attempts on to establish alternate links

Houston, June 30 (*AP by EuroSatPhone*)

Mission control at Houston and other places are unable to contact the US Space Shuttle 'Kon Tiki' now on the seventh and last day of its orbital mission. NASA shuttle mission managers reported this morning that they had not been able to talk to the shuttle crew nor was normal telemetry data being received since 2100 EST yesterday. Replying to reporters' queries, NASA Deputy Administrator Rush Williams stated that the crew was safe to the best of their knowledge and that the shuttle was provisioned with enough food, oxygen and fuel for at least two weeks beyond the duration of its mission. Efforts were already on to contact the shuttle by using Russian and ESA communications systems.

The shuttle was to commence its descent tomorrow, but in the absence of data and voice links it was not clear if this schedule could be adhered to.

Observers are linking the communications blackout to the current TV and communications satellite failures affecting the US.

19

Unravelling Threads

My War Diary

Those were strange days. The underpinnings of modern civilization were just falling apart, one by one, bit by bit. I was back in Delhi writing up my reports from Pakistan and from Kathmandu. Background stuff to be archived and fished out whenever required. Strangely enough, the first inkling of the widespread nature of the Internet collapse came via the internet itself.

We knew that the Americans had been having problems with their communications systems in India, but the general assumption was that their equipment, battered recently in the heat of the Iraqi desert, was just worn out and unable to function in the damp and humid conditions afforded by one of the wettest monsoons in recent years. After all our mobile phones were all working, and the Indian Army did not seem to be having any problems.

As I said my first inkling of what lay ahead came over the net itself. I had been mining data through Google when pages just stopped loading. "This page is not available". Now for an internet user in India that in itself is not so strange an event, happens all the time due to our low speeds and restricted bandwidth. Even with an ISDN connection on a leased line, as all newspaper offices had. So, as always, when faced with peak load hour problems I connected through my Reliance CDMA

phone and found the same problem there. Strange. I went to all my favourite pages, even the portals would not load. Others in the office also were complaining. Finally Jo-jo, one of our sports scribes who was on the phone to a fellow reporter in Mumbai commented that they were having the same problems there as well. We checked: Chennai, Kolkata, Bangalore, Pune, Hyderabad. All down. Then one of our overseas correspondents called from London.

He filed his report over the phone as he couldn't mail it to us. The report?

Widespread collapse of the World Wide Web all over the US. All sites based on servers in the US were down.

We assumed it was just of those temporary things. Like the power blackout in the US in 2003. Things would be back to normal in a few hours. So we did nothing except twiddle our thumbs and wait. It was only much later that the real implications of what was afoot sank into our 'investigative' minds.

The following days were not particularly harrowing for those in India, except for those who needed their daily on-line fix. Even in the early years of the 21st century we were still relatively independent of Internet-based commerce, especially outside the metros. As sketchy reports were ferreted out by my colleagues, it became apparent that the situation was the result of a well planned and executed move by persons unknown. This was endorsed by our overseas colleagues. The sophisticated way it was executed, however, led us to preclude any ham-handed governmental involvement in the whole thing. The finger pointed to our IT (won't call them nerds now) friends around India and abroad.

America, the invincible, was gradually coming down on to its knees. The US forces in India became a ragtag of independent units. We joked about US commanders walking down to the nearest STD/ISD/PCO to get orders from HQ. This confusion had a design to it: it enabled the release of the Indian Army in Pakistan from its shackles, and Karachi once again tottered.

20

The Battle Rejoined

68 Pakistani tanks destroyed

India wins 'Battle for Karachi'

Set to enter city soon

New Delhi, July 1. (*Reuters*)

In the biggest armoured encounter of the current war, sixty-eight Pakistani and 23 Indian battle tanks were destroyed, with dozens suffering 'slight' to 'serious' damage. In a tank battle which lasted 38 hours and ended early yesterday morning, Indian and Pakistani units engaged in what is being called the Battle for Karachi, 70 kms north of the city in Sindh province. Neither side has disclosed the number of human casualties. Russian-built helicopter gunships of the Indian Air Force and Army closely supported the Indian armoured units.

With this, the Indian armed forces encountered no further serious opposition in Sindh. Since late afternoon today a major military base in the suburbs of the port city and commercial capital of Pakistan, Karachi, is in the hands of the Indian army.

It is expected that Indian forces will regroup and enter downtown Karachi within the next few days.

With this victory, the war with Pakistan is for all practical purposes ended. What remains is mopping up of areas where there are pockets of resistance. The question in peoples' minds is, what next?

Indian forces dominate north and central Pakistan

Citizens flee from Punjab province

New Delhi, July 2. (PTI)

Indian Air Force fighter jets pounded military targets in northern and central Pakistan. With communications foul ups paralysing US forces in the region, the IAF once again dominated the skies over Pakistan providing unhindered close support to ground forces. Several missile attacks were launched against Pakistan army formations around Multan. No reports were available about the extent of damage caused.

Reports from Indian Army sources in Pakistan's Punjab province stated that the massive civilian exodus continues. Large numbers of people are fleeing from upper parts of the province with their belongings fearing radiation fallout now that the monsoon rains have broken out. Fears of contamination of water carried by canals out of rivers in Pakistan-occupied Kashmir is also contributing to the massive movement of people out of this area.

Indian Army having achieved practically full control has reduced its presence north of Lahore although a few army formations including NBCW units are still present in the area. Despite foul ups in US Army communications in the theatre, Indian Army communication networks are functioning normally, according to military sources.

40 N-warheads disarmed in India

Washington DC/Geneva, July 7. (AF-P)

US nuclear disarmament specialists continue to work at various sites in India under US military protection, despite communications break-downs that make reports sketchy and few.

Some forty nuclear warheads have been located at two sites and work on disarming them was going on. It is believed that the design of these weapons makes the work both dangerous and time-consuming and that specialists are taking abundant precaution to avoid accidents.

IAEC sources stated in Geneva that no word has been received on how long the process would take or whether there were any other warheads yet to be located.

Analysts say that India should have close to 100 nuclear warheads.

US Mission 'accomplished' in India, Pakistan**US forces to pull out**

Washington DC, July 10. (AP)

US Secretary of Defence Donald Rumsfeld announced that nuclear disarmament specialists in India and Pakistan had completed their tasks and that US forces were in the process of pulling out. Speaking at a media briefing at the Pentagon, Secretary Rumsfeld stated that as their mission of supporting the disarmament specialists had been completed, US forces would be withdrawing in a phased manner. He said that 40 nuclear warheads had been disarmed at various sites in India, and six in Pakistan. He praised India's Prime Minister and government for their cooperation. US armed forces would now continue to focus on the situation in Afghanistan and would be better able to assist the civilian government in Iraq.

The statement was carried by the few TV stations on the eastern seaboard, which had been able to establish terrestrial networks.

Indian forces resume offensive in Pakistan

US troops exit

Bahrain, July 11. (AF-P)

Indian forces resumed their march on Karachi yesterday. Emboldened by the departure of US specialists who have reportedly completed their task of capturing Pakistani nuclear stockpiles, armoured and infantry columns surrounded Karachi and set up roadblocks on all roads leading to the city. At a few places there were firefights with Pakistani troops. The city was generally quiet today and most businesses stayed closed. Government offices have long ceased to function. Schools and colleges are closed. Most petrol stations have run dry. Bungalows in the upscale Clifton district owned mainly by the Pakistani elite (read senior military officers) appeared to be deserted as most occupants are reported to have fled to Dubai and Kuwait to sit out the war.

Skirmishes and street fights were reported today between some Mohajir groups supporting India and groups supporting jihadi elements in Lalukhet within Karachi. Several shops were set afire at these places, with no sight of fire fighters anywhere. Power supply in Karachi remains suspended for the tenth day with the populace sweating it out in the sweltering heat.

It is not apparent if and when Indian forces will enter the city but expectations are rife that it can happen any time now. Pakistani army cantonments wear a deserted look with little or no sign of fighting troops. At some places locals took advantage of this and looted barracks and stores.

Karachi is now a city in waiting.

Its Cyber War!

Indian nerds work to protect IT channels

Pakistani hackers attack Indian web sites

(Bangalore, July 11. *PTI*)

NASSCOM has announced that it is offering the services of hundreds of volunteer IT specialists to the Government of India and to the Indian armed forces to protect communications networks against attacks from hackers. Though not acknowledged in official circles, IT industry sources in India believe that the widespread glitches in US-based communications networks are the result of coordinated attacks by Indian IT specialists based in India and abroad.

'I hacked America', 'I hacked Bush', 'Bushwhacker' T-shirts are making cautious appearances in the coffee clubs of high-tech IT companies as well as in cyber cafes, corner teashops, call centers and academic campuses, such as the IIT in Delhi, and institutes in Bangalore and Hyderabad and Mumbai. The mood in IT circles is generally upbeat as informal groups gathering at these places hotly debate ways and means of disabling computer networks or protecting them from counter-attacks.

While it is widely assumed that the wide-scale attacks have the covert blessings of the Indian government, it is not clear if the government is directly involved.

Counter-attacks by hackers believed to be of Pakistani origin are continuing on official Indian Government websites, and open-to-public sites of the Indian Army. Sites have been defaced and pages replaced by propaganda material condemning the Indian attacks on Pakistan and exhorting Islamic groups to carry out 'Jehadi' attacks on Indian installations around the globe such as diplomatic missions and company offices.

Civilian software engineers are reportedly already working with the Indian Army to engage and contain hackers to prevent damage to websites. Army communications, however, continue to be secure.

President Kalam evacuated to safety?

New Delhi, July 12. (*Reuters*)

The Indian capital is agog with rumours that the Indian President has been evacuated from Rashtrapati Bhavan—the official presidential residence—in New Delhi.

It is believed that President APJ Abdul Kalam, who has not been seen in public since President Bush's visit, has been moved to a safe place. Though never officially acknowledged it is widely believed that special secure shelters have been developed for India's top leaders to be used in the event of an NBC catastrophe or war.

The Prime Minister, Mr. Singh, however continues to receive visits from political leaders and officials and carry on the work of governance from his official residence all be it under the watchful eyes of American minders guarding the gates of his residence.

Computer glitches affect daily life

GM Electricity bill: \$00.00!

Media ad revenues crash

Detroit, July 12. (*AP*)

Local TV stations report that General Motors' Hamtramck assembly plant today received a monthly utility bill of \$00.00 from Detroit Edison, the local power supplier. Company officials are preparing to issue a check for the amount.

Meanwhile many homeowners in suburban areas are receiving power bills in five digits from the same company. It is likely that many such reports will keep coming in as Edison computers churn out more faulty bills due to lack of access to billing operations based in India, and the crashing of backup systems.

The TV broadcasting industry continues to be paralyzed for the third day. Only stations with terrestrial broadcasts were functioning, but these had limited line-of-sight range and carried mostly local programs as the major networks are still down.

Daily newspapers have lost considerable weight with 'wire' services and Internet-based news agencies in the US out of action. Stories generally are of human interest and are based on local reports. Advertisers are pulling out, a move that will cause severe damage to print media revenues if the current situation does not resolve soon.

Canadian phones, TV broadcasting also down

London/Toronto, July 12. (AF-P)

News reports carried by European satphone services to agencies in London confirm that Canadian broadcasting and communications systems also blacked out simultaneously with those in the US. Canadian broadcasting and communications systems are closely integrated with those of its neighbour.

21

The Bowshot

My War Diary

The month of July is traditionally one of great expectations. The annual monsoon breaks out all over the Indo-Gangetic plain of the subcontinent. Even in those days governments waited with baited breath to see if the rains were on time and plentiful. India's agriculture depended to a large extent on the adequacy of the monsoon rains. And so did the economy, as the purchasing power of fully seventy percent of India's population depended on whether the farmers had a good crop.

My friend from University days at Allahabad, Raj Kishore Jha was a scientist with the Meteorology Department based in Pune. Raj had told me how the very existence of the 'Met office', as it was called, depended on their call. If they predicted a good monsoon and the rains failed their necks were on the chopping block, as practically all governments, state and central depended on these forecasts to kick in drought relief measures in good time. Of late, he told me, they had started making two forecasts. One was the 'real' forecast that was sent to the government; the second was the one they fed to the networks, the one we saw on TV, so as not to cause panic among the public, he said. Over the years the distinction between the two had hardly seem to matter anymore, as

India's GDP gradually shifted from an agricultural base to services and manufacturing.

This year, surprisingly, despite the US troops 'capture' of the 'halls of power' in India, the bountiful monsoon and the imminent capture of Pakistan's financial capital, Karachi, along with the resounding string of defeats meted out to the much hyped Pak army, by a larger though technically 'inferior' Indian Army, had contributed to the 'feel good' factor which was palpable everywhere. The economy was booming and hot cakes were selling like cars.

American soldiers were generally welcomed everywhere and the shops on Janpath saw a surge in sales as the GIs picked up souvenirs to take home.

The icing on India's cake, however, splashed down thousands of miles away in the Caribbean.

India launches ICBM! Splashdown off Florida

Brussels / London, July 14. (*Reuters*)

India launched an ICBM early this morning. European Space Agency (ESA) monitors report the launch of a missile by India at 0545 Universal Time (GMT). The missile splashed down in the Caribbean about 375 nautical miles south-east of the American city of Tampa, Florida. There was no explosion indicating either the absence of an explosive warhead or a malfunction. It is believed that the missile was an ICBM of a class never acknowledged by India, but which the world community had long suspected it had been working on.

India has been known to be working on a space booster for its satellite programme though it was not expected that this would happen so soon. Space booster rockets can easily double role as ICBMs.

With this India joins a very select group of nations that have achieved this capability.

The splashing down of the missile in the Caribbean so close to United States continental shelf is seen as a demonstration of Indian missile technology capability and is interpreted by many as a 'warning shot' across the bows.

Even at the height of the cold war, no communist country had felt the need to risk such a provocative action. But these are different times.

ISRO announces successful 'test' of space launcher

New Delhi, July 14. (PTI/UNN)

The Indian Space Research Organisation (ISRO) today announced the 'test firing' of its first space booster rocket. Addressing a news briefing packed with media persons ISRO Chairman, Dr S.Ranganathan announced in Hyderabad that at 10:30AM IST, the space rocket was successfully test-launched from a missile range in South India. The missile was unarmed, and had fulfilled all the objectives of the test launch. This new class has been named 'Priyadarshin' in honour of Emperor Ashoka, India's greatest ever ruler.

Responding to reporters' questions, Dr Ranganathan denied any Russian involvement in the Priyadarshin project and stated that it had been developed and built entirely by Indian scientists and technicians. The engines also had been designed and built in India, thanks to the US embargo on cryogenic engine imports after the Pokhran II blast. 'The sanctions were a blessing in disguise for us as they forced us to be self-reliant,' he stated.

The space launch vehicle was capable of carrying any kind of payload including a nuclear warhead and also had the capacity to boost satellites weighing over a thousand

kilograms into near earth orbit. The multistage rocket using additional strap-on boosters could be also used as an ICBM if required.

Reporters also queried whether India's missing "missile man" President had anything to do with the launch. Dr Ranganathan declined to reply stating that he would not comment on the highest office of the state.

Red faces in DC

Defence, State bicker as sophisticated systems fail to pick up Indian ICBM launch

Washington DC, July 14. (AP)

Consternation reigned today in the corridors of power in Washington and alarm bells rang all over the US defence establishment as paralysed multi-zillion dollar satellite-based, early warning systems failed to pick up the Indian missile launch. It was only minutes after the Indian missile splashed down in the Caribbean that Russian intelligence agencies informed their US counterparts about the launch.

The US State Department issued a statement describing the Indian ICBM launch as 'deliberately provocative'. It stated that Indian authorities should be aware that such acts did nothing to enhance world peace and that they encouraged other irresponsible regimes to conduct dangerous 'experiments' of their own.

22

Peccavi! Karachi falls

My War Diary

The fact that I still had no family—no wife or dependents—continued to be the lever I had used to get my editor to let me follow the Indian Army into Karachi, where events seemed to be peaking. So back I had rushed from New Delhi, via the Rajasthan border. This time I had a camera team of two with me. We arrived at the Indian Army 'camp' outside Karachi on the night of the 13th, my journalist's sixth sense enabling me to get there just in time.

Double whammy! The news of India's successful ICBM (no one bothered to call it a 'space booster') launch early on the 14th had boosted the morale of the Indian jawans and the officers to an all-time high. I am sure it also knocked out any thought of further resistance from the minds of the Pakistani generals in the military base in Karachi, who had asked their Indian counterparts for a few hours to confer and confirm their decision to surrender. They announced their decision to surrender in just two hours.

In hindsight, I do believe they were just stalling for time to allow their 'military commander' to make a fast break.

The tricolour was formally hoisted over Karachi at 1800hrs (local time) on July 14, 2005, at the surrender ceremony. Today, ten years later, that is the only flagstaff in

the world where the Indian flag is not pulled down ever, but has the honour of flying night and day—by a special order of the then President of India and Commander-in-Chief of the Armed Forces.

Victory was late in coming. Too late, for the thousands who died in the past decades in terrorist attacks. Too late also for the millions who had died in the nuclear holocaust in Kashmir. It was too late for the hundreds, perhaps thousands, even millions who would die terribly as a result of the radiation they suffered in the fallout. It was also too late for the hundreds of babies who would be born deformed. The military rulers and mad mullahs of Pakistan had much to answer for. It was with a tentative feeling of satisfaction that we learnt of the tracking down and capture of many of these misguided people by our security forces.

It was also much too late for two of my dear friends and fellow reporters. They had been working for TV news channels covering the slaughter of over 250 civilians in Kashmir. Nuked out of existence. At least they went fast. One moment you are a live functioning organism and an eye blink later you're just a million atoms with no connection to each other. Poof or maybe splat, no more eye left to blink.

The surrender ceremony was held at a military base just outside of Karachi. The ceremony had been brief with the Pakistani V Corps commander Lt. Gen. AS Hamid handing over his sword and pistol on behalf of the Pakistan Army to the Western Sector commander of the Indian Army Lt. Gen. NL Malviya. Cameras clicked, videocams rolled as the Pakistan flag was ceremonially run down the pole and folded away, maybe for the last time ever. There were no civilian witnesses apart from the media and my colleagues of the TV news channels had broadcast the ceremony live.

In the daily news report that I (and in fact most of us correspondents) had filed on the occasion I had called it the passing of Pakistan into history. What had given the occasion the special touch of history-in-the-making was the gesture by General NL Malviya, the Indian Western Sector Commander, of taking the surrendered sword in his gloved hands and breaking it over his flexed knee. The end of the British experiment that had cost so many lives and so much human suffering in proving that it would not work.

The formal 'Notice of Reunification' was published just three days later in New Delhi. In the meantime, Gen Malviya, had announced, Indian troops would take up a peacekeeping role until specific instructions were issued by New Delhi.

Pakistan may have surrendered formally but violent skirmishes continued especially in the mullah-jehadi dominated areas of the northwest. It was only once things stabilized in the major cities that the Indian Army turned its full attention to settling these turbulent tribal areas.

Pak 'Military Commander' Farooqi dead

Fleeing Plane shot down by Indian Navy jet

New Delhi, July 15. (TNM)

An aircraft carrying Pakistan's 'Military Commander' General Farooqi, his close family members and aides was shot down today at 0445 hrs local time, by a Sea Harrier jet fighter of the Indian Navy after it ignored calls to land. The unarmed aircraft with PAF markings was shot down five minutes after it took off from a disused World War II airfield 125 kilometers west of Karachi. Indian carrier based Sea Harriers intercepted it and shot it down using a single air-to-air missile after it ignored repeated warnings and calls to land. The plane appeared to be heading west for Pakistan's border with Iran.

Indian Army ground forces searching the wreckage for survivors found huge amounts of cash in US dollars, and documents that identified the charred bodies to be those of General Farooqi, and his entourage, in addition to the air crew. There were no survivors.

Indian Forces enter Karachi

Prepare to take charge

Civil administration officials expected soon

New Delhi, July 15. (PTI)

Indian forces entered Karachi following yesterday's surrender ceremony to face a sullen but peaceful populace at 0500 hours local time this morning. The battle weary troops riding on tanks, APCs and military trucks took over the Provincial Assembly building and various other official buildings including the Governor's residence.

Crowds of local residents gathered at crossings as the troops took over major intersections. In some of the 'worst' parts of the city such as Lalukhet where large members of 'Mohajirs' (those who had migrated from India more than half a century ago) lived, a few Indian flags could be seen hanging from balconies and windows.

Indian troops also sealed Karachi port and it was expected that Indian naval ships would be docking soon. Pakistani naval ships have struck their colors and are awaiting orders from the Indian Navy.

Yesterday at 6:00 PM local time, Lt. Gen. AS Hamid, Pakistan Army V Corps Commander, signed an Instrument of Surrender at an army cantonment just outside Karachi. As the seniormost Pakistani Army officer available, he signed on behalf of Pakistan's Armed Forces.

With this, Karachi has fallen without a shot being fired. News of the shooting down of General Farooqi's plane and of his death took whatever heart was left out of any military or civilian diehards.

Civil administrators in the form of officers of the Indian Police Services (IPS) and the Indian Administrative Services (IAS) are expected to arrive shortly to advise and help Indian military authorities in their task of governing Karachi.

Indian troops in full battle gear are seen manning vital installations such as power supply and waterworks, radio and TV stations all over the city.

Till evening the city remained tense but calm and in many places in the huge metropolis shops and roadside markets were opening. Civilian road traffic was light and subject to checks by Indian troops backed by tanks and APCs at strategic road intersections.

Corporate heads decry Bush's policies

America hurting badly as Dollar dives

Unilateral actions condemned by Republican and Democrats

New York, July 16. (AA)

Corporate America today gave an emphatic thumbs-down to US President Bush's aggressive and 'irresponsible' foreign policy at a conference attended by a galaxy of industry leaders and head honchos that included GE, GM, IBM, Microsoft, Boeing and scores of Fortune 500 companies.

The meeting was organised by the Presidential Campaign Committee of Governor Ralph Nelson of New York who is up and running for the Democratic

nomination. Most speakers warned that the economy was heading dangerously towards meltdown. The attacks on computer-based financial transactions and communications had caused damage worth billions of dollars already. It would take months or years to recover data, and to replace damaged systems which certainly would have to undergo major metamorphoses to survive future recurrences of the currently continuing electronic attacks from around the world.

Speakers stated that the US was no longer in danger of being isolated, but was, in fact, already isolated. Major financial services markets and bourses all over Asia and Europe had hastily de-linked themselves from US markets. US stock markets had been shut down indefinitely for the first time in memory by the Fed leading to further erosion in investor confidence in the American economy. The dollar was in free fall with the Euro showing a steady rise.

Demonstrators outside the convention centre held up placards and chanted slogans demanding the US President's resignation and impeachment, as the meeting was being held. They also called for the dismissal of Defence Secretary Rumsfeld and Secretary of State Colin Powell.

In separate statements made in Washington DC, both Democratic and Republican Party leaders including the House Foreign Relations Committee chairperson stated that the US President needed to pull out of all unilateral actions around the world and should work only through the UN system. President Bush's "smoke 'em out" style had isolated the nation and hurt its international interests more than any administration had in the history of the American republic.

Putin hails India's achievement

Pledges continued support but counsels restraint

Moscow, July 17. (AP)

President Putin tonight praised India's scientific achievements. Referring to the Indian missile launch three days after the event, he also urged restraint on the Indian government. Addressing a session of Russia's parliament, the Duma, the Russian President, stated that India should put its immense scientific capability and technology to use for peaceful purposes.

He said that the current aggression on India by the United States would be the last event of a uni-polar world. India would emerge stronger for the ordeal, and the humiliation it had suffered at American hands would only serve to restore international affairs to a more balanced level. Russia would continue to stand by the Indian people and would strengthen its friendly historic ties with India.

Most political observers in Europe believe that the Russians had advance knowledge of the Indian ICBM 'test'.

Russian state and private television networks carried the address live.

China condemns capture of Karachi

Will speed up building of Tibetan Railway

Beijing, July 17. (Reuters)

The Secretary General of China's Communist Party today strongly condemned India's 'aggressive' acts on the subcontinent. The statement read out this morning on national television said that India's aggression on Pakistan was uncalled for in the absence of any evidence that Pakistan had been involved in the nuclear devastation of Kashmir. The statement urged the international community

to counsel restraint to India's government and for restoration of the territorial integrity of Pakistan.

He stated that the Communist Party would strongly support the ongoing work on the Tibetan Military Railway as it had become imperative for China to strengthen its defences in view of India's increased aggressiveness. It may be recalled that the Chinese government has been constructing the Tibetan Military Railway, which is to serve as the repository of China's nuclear missile launch capacity, particularly with reference to the subcontinent and Indian Ocean. China's nuclear missiles are largely rail-mounted which allows for rapid mobility.

Meanwhile, agencies report that the bronze plaque laid by India's Defence Minister George Fernandes at the International Friendship Park in Beijing, during an official visit in April 2003, had been uprooted and shattered by unknown miscreants.

The plaque commemorated the visit of Chinese traveler Huen Tseng to India 2500 years ago and had been part of a cultural package aiming to strengthen relations between the world's two most populous nations. The Chinese Minister for Culture had laid a similar plaque in New Delhi last year.

23

Reunion

PM introduces historic Reunification Bill

New Delhi, July 23. (PTI)

Prime Minister Brij Mohan Singh today during a specially called sitting of the Lok Sabha (lower house) of Parliament introduced to thundering applause a historic bill seeking 'reunification of India with its dismembered provinces as existed before 14th August, 1947, in the northwest region'. The motion stated that the Union of India now consists of those states that exist today along with the new states of Sindh, Baluchistan, North West Frontier Province (NWFP), renamed Seemastan, and the reunited Punjab state in the west and reunited Kashmir.

A prolonged standing ovation was given to the Prime Minister for his successful conduct of the war. Before taking up the motion, the Speaker called upon all members to stand silently for two minutes as a mark of respect for those who had lost their lives in Kashmir, and for the brave Indian soldiers who had laid down their lives for the country in the operations against Pakistan.

Later, the Home Minister highlighted the details of the reorganization of the new states. The bill was unanimously adopted without any discussion. A number of sections dealt with the extension of various administrative acts and ordinances to the new states.

The mood in Parliament throughout the day's sittings was festive and old foes were even seen hugging each other on the historic occasion.

'Mission Accomplished!' Whose?

London, July 26. Editorial – *The Guardian*

The spectacle of the world's only 'hyper power' being grounded Gulliver-like by a multitude of pinpricks brings into question the very doctrine that a single nation can ever dominate the world. The inability to re-establish command and control systems of a nature dependable and rugged enough to withstand the rough and tumble of ever-changing conflict situations questions the very labeling of the United States as a hyper power.

Further, the downward slide of the US economy as a result of a few well-aimed electronic 'missiles' by persons or agencies unknown also marks the arrival of a new form of warfare. One that does not range across the soldier's battleground but one that occupies the rarefied atmosphere of high finance and economics. The resultant weakening of the 'victor's' economy (which history tells us has always grown stronger after wars) indicates the need for a shift in the strategy of future wars. One may state with some certainty that had Saddam Hussein invested more of his oil revenues on computers and Information Technology rather than on WMD (if he did that at all), he may well have been still sitting in one of his palaces along the Tigris today.

America may claim that it has 'disciplined' India and has succeeded in its subcontinental mission of eradicating the nuclear threat but the facts show that India's armed forces have also succeeded in their mission of 'eradicating' Pakistan. The missile that brought down an aircraft reportedly carrying the 'Military Commander' of Pakistan in

a bid to escape from a small airfield outside Karachi last week was probably the last to be fired in the battle for the reunion of India and the final solution to the vexing 'Kashmir problem'.

Indeed the cost has been horrendous – two to four million dead, but by whose hand, will probably be never known. Most operatives of Pakistan's infamous dirty tricks department, the ISI, were either vaporized in the Kashmir blasts or its fleeing officials captured and killed during Indian operations which employed a 'take no prisoners' policy with reference to ISI members and jihadis. Terrorists who may have set off the 'jehadi' bombs also were presumably killed instantly. Pakistan is relegated to the ranks of such failed states as East Germany that appear for a little while on the world stage and then disappear forever. The historic blunder by couldn't-care-less departing British colonials has been corrected. RIP.

India's government, even if involved, will never admit it had annihilated millions of its own people to help achieve this. At such a horrendous cost, and from a remote corner of the globe a new world order emerges. The US retreats into its corner licking at its economic wounds; Pakistan, which turned out to be anything but 'Pak' has been wiped out permanently.

The announcement by Indian Prime Minister to a jubilant Parliament in New Delhi, of India's formal declaration of 'reunion' with its dismembered northwestern provinces had no mention of the word 'Pakistan'. Neither was there any mention of the role of the departing Brits in the dismemberment of India. This in itself is an indicator of the growth in the stature of the Indian leadership even in the aftermath of an historic victory.

And what of Bangladesh? Currently unfolding events indicate that its fate is more or less sealed and the formality of reunion should be completed in a few weeks, if good sense prevails in Dhaka. It is unlikely that major or violent military intervention will be required. This ensures its practically peaceful reintegration with India.

Geography will finally be set right in the subcontinent and a historic mission finally accomplished.

24

Changing of the Guard

My War Diary

It felt good to be an Indian in those heady days. Like an infant who's just learning to walk, or like a child riding a bicycle without someone holding the seat and running alongside for the first time. That's how it felt in those days.

I had just returned from Karachi, by Indian Airlines, no less, direct to New Delhi, no customs or green channel, landing at the *domestic* terminal at the IG International Airport! Weird feeling, that.

Karachi had been a strange experience as well. My colleagues at *The Dawn* had welcomed me warmly, and scotch had flown liberally. But under their bonhomie, I could detect a faint undercurrent of uneasiness. The talk veered invariably towards the future. What lay in store ahead? The INC led alliance had been victorious in war. How would their peace be?

I told them when pressed that I could not give them a frank opinion on that. In India we had been so busy celebrating our coming of age that the concerns of 'the conquered' was nowhere on our agenda of festivities. But early events in India's post-Pakistan phase demonstrated that someone had been doing some serious thinking.

Singh announces resignation

To retire from politics

New Delhi, July 28. (PTI/UNI)

Prime Minister Brij Mohan Singh, in a stunning move today, announced his resignation as Prime Minister as well as his retirement from active politics. Addressing a news conference at his 7 Race Course Road residence, after a two-hour meeting attended by top cabinet colleagues, coalition partners, party office bearers, and the specially invited leader of the opposition Mr. L.R. Wadhvani, the visibly tired Prime Minister announced that he had done his duty to the nation and it was time for a younger generation to take the nation forward through a period of consolidation to achieve peace and prosperity for all Indians.

"The task ahead is vast and I am an old man. I should be spending my time with my grandchildren," he said.

"India needs younger leadership to unite a nation fully under one flag and constitution. It needs a lot of hard work, traveling and meeting people which I cannot sustain for long".

He thanked the INC party leadership and its UPA allies for their faith in him as well as their support. He also thanked the opposition leader, who was also present at the news conference, for his unstinted cooperation and support during the crisis.

Mr. Singh made a special mention of those who had perished and suffered in Kashmir during the many decades of violence, and in the nuclear explosions. He also lauded the Indian Armed Forces for their discipline and loyalty and said that the nation would always look upon them with pride.

In the second part of his prepared statement, Mr. Singh said that in view of the great task of nation building that lay ahead and the overarching need for national unity, he was forwarding the resignation of his entire government, to the President. He said that he was recommending to the President that a National Government be formed that would include all political parties. He said that this was a critical point in India's history and that it was the need of the hour that all differences were buried and that all parties worked together for the benefit of the nation.

There was a flurry of questions from the assembled media persons, which the Prime Minister declined to answer. He indicated that they should direct their queries to the next Prime Minister.

Observers were quick to note that no mention had been made of the Sangh Parivar in his 'vote of thanks'.

A statesman is born

New Delhi, July 28. Editorial - *The Times of India*

The announcement by Prime Minister Singh has come like a bombshell. The joyous nation, which was just beginning to celebrate India's victory and its emergence as a major power, nay, a superpower on the international stage, under his tutelage and guidance was stunned and stopped in its tracks.

Predictably and regrettably, there were street demonstrations protesting Singh's resignation that turned ugly, in many towns and cities, especially in the 'Hindi Belt' where he enjoys the greatest popularity. Politicians of every stripe have also discovered a new virtue they never knew they possessed – speechlessness. All this will however pass and it will be business as usual before long with groups and

alliances jockeying for positions in the proposed national government.

However, the object of this editorial is to put under the microscope Brij Mohan Singh's decision to retire gracefully from public service at the peak of his unprecedented popularity, as leader of a nation victorious in war.

Why did he do it, and why now? Singh's public persona has metamorphosed through many stages in his over fifty years in politics. The young ideologue, the eloquent speaker, editor, poet (of sorts), the soft peddler, the wishy-washy leader, the backtracker, the reluctant warrior, and today, finally, the Statesman.

Many leaders around the world have attained the status of statesman, and have followed different routes to that point of their public lives. Some have achieved it on the brink of leaving public life - Nelson Mandela is one such. Some had to have their career ended for them by abject failure at the polls, Sir Winston comes to mind immediately. Some have had to be dragged screaming and kicking off the international stage. Few, if ever, have achieved it, as Singh has, while still under the lights.

Perhaps Singh realized that the best exit lines come to you when you are at centre-stage. Better to leave when the people are demanding more, rather than wanting you out.

Perhaps it is in the natural order of things. Something of this seems to have been in Singh's mind when he indicated that the task ahead needed younger and more active, mobile people. The restructuring of political and administrative structures suited to the new order would probably require many adjustments and compromises, which could go against the public image of a victorious war leader and erode the place in history he now occupies as one of India's greatest leaders.

Or it may have been much less calculated – a simple desire to shed the heavy burdens of office and to let younger leaders carry them on the long road that lies ahead.

Centuries ago another great man led his people for decades after getting them freed from slavery. He faced every kind of situation as a leader: doubt, disaster, war, adulation, adoration, dissent, criticism, revolt, condemnation, but he carried out his task up to the end. Moses saw, but did not enter the Promised Land. The younger generation of his people did. But that was the will of God. Singh's reasons will be best known to him alone.

And so let it be with Brij Mohan Singh, loyal son of Mother India.

Well done, Mr. Singh

Jerusalem, July 29. Editorial- *The Jerusalem Post*

Prime Minister Singh's dramatic withdrawal from the political scene forces us to pause to consider the coming of age of a new force in world politics. India is now within the circle of a few nations in the history of mankind, which can be called superpowers. Mr. Singh's announcement has demonstrated that Indian politics has reached the level of maturity that is the prerequisite of superpower status. Mr. Singh, has long been at the forefront of the secularists in Indian polity and has always worked against the concept of India as a theocratic state. He has maintained that theocracy cannot be the basis of National Greatness and can result only in the situation of which Pakistan is the latest casualty. Though it is not clear what his next step will be, it is more than likely that what he decides will hold good. But whatever it may be it must take into consideration the hopes and aspirations of the large minority of Muslims, recently stripped of a nation, who now call India their

home. Undoubtedly they would feel secure only under the rule of a secular government in New Delhi. It would be of no great surprise, therefore, if Mr Singh's avowedly secular party came into power in the newly unified states or western India, through the votes of a people who have been misruled, misled and made to suffer under religious fundamentalists in erstwhile Pakistan. Peace, Security and the rule of law for all Indians is a must if India is to indeed become a mighty nation. Mr. Singh has taken his step knowing all this. It is time Israel's politicians learnt from him.

A new chapter opens in India

Washington DC, July 29. Editorial - *The Washington Post*

India's Prime Minister has resigned paving the way, he said, for a younger generation of leaders. It is presumed that this generation would be of those born after India's Independence from Britain: midnight's children? The world will watch with interest and concern to see how quick and how successful the new dispensation in New Delhi will be in establishing popular governments in the new states that have been reunited.

The reunification of erstwhile Bangladesh, which is inevitable, seems not to present much of a problem. Strongly united by links of language, culture, family and landholdings with the Indian state of West Bengal, the artificial divide inflicted by the departing British was doomed from the very start. Its 'liberation' from Pakistan in 1971, will have reached its logical conclusion with its reunification with West Bengal.

The situation in the northwest is, however, different, especially in the rugged tribal areas bordering on Afghanistan. This area has never really been under the control of any government in Islamabad or elsewhere.

Highly geocritical, this region holds the keys of a permanent peace not only in the northwest but in India itself, and in neighbouring Afghanistan. It is to be seen how the new leadership in New Delhi deals with this area.

Upper Punjab province and the former PoK (and the Kashmir valley) have ceased to exist as geopolitical entities. The devastating nuclear explosions have rendered the area uninhabitable for at least the next fifty years or more. Tragic and condemnable as it may be, it is a blessing of sorts for the new Indian leadership, as it is assumed that the 'Jehadi' groups and their handlers, most of whom are presumed to have been present in the area at the time, were taken unawares.

A conflict has indeed ended. But at what a cost! An estimated four to six million people have lost their lives. There must have been a better way to resolve the 'Kashmir problem'.

The US leadership, its agencies and particularly the hawks who supported Pakistan and its shadowy agencies must bear a heavy portion of the blame. For at least thirty years, Pakistan's leaders had rebuffed India's peace overtures. This could only have been due to their comfort with the level of succour and support—financial, material and political—rendered to it by the US government, if not the people of America. These hawks blinded by their Soviet-centric mindset always downplayed India's warnings of the implosion of the Pakistani state.

America's foreign affairs policy framers have suffered their worst setback since Vietnam. The immense loss of life cannot sit easy on the minds of those who constantly added fuel to the fire safe in the knowledge that they lived and worked thousands of miles away from ground zero.

Should it not by now be abundantly clear that state policy of any democratic and free nation can never support

religious fundamental oligarchies or dictatorships of any stripe? They do nothing to improve the lot of their people but through machinations and misrepresentations hoodwink naive do-gooders around the world into providing them moral and material support even as they exploit their own populations.

The US needs to use this very 'scope when it looks at the Palestine situation again. Resolve by dialogue, not by slaughter. Before we have another Kashmir on our hands and conscience.

US Satellite systems still dead

Finger points at India

Houston, July 30. (AP)

Scientists and technicians at NASA have not yet been able to pin down the cause of the massive satellite blackout that persists till today. Satellite systems used to track weather, surveillance, remote sensing, television broadcasts and telecommunications continue to fail to respond to commands from earth. While no official word is out yet from NASA, space industry contractors such as Hughes and Lockheed maintain that the redundancy built into their satellites would not permit such a widespread systems failure.

Speculation is rife about the source and nature of the attack, if any, on the US satellites. This speculation is tinged by the fact that satellites belonging to European and other countries have not suffered any malfunction.

Sources at the National Security Agency indicate that though there is no official position as yet on the subject there is an increasing body of evidence that attacks may have been launched by India or Indians, as in the case of the internet glitches. Terrorist groups or Al Qaeda affiliates

simply did not have the resources to launch such an attack, and only an agency with advanced space know-how could be responsible. How it was done is still not clear.

Meanwhile there is scramble to resurrect 'obsolete' technologies while scientists and technicians go back to their drawing boards this time to hopefully design 'safe' systems, if there are such things at all.

25

Star Warriors

My War Diary

The accolades continued to pour in. India was indeed on a roll. The transition from the INC led government to a national government went off smoothly due largely to Singh's personal stature and his sponsorship of the proposal. No Coalition leader had the faintest chance of opposing him. Neither, increasingly, was the Indian public in the mood to listen to them any more.

For once Singh had played his cards right. But doubts lingered, and in the afterglow of victory the nitpickers were back at their job.

Had it been really Singh and his men who planned and executed everything, or had they had help, significant help, from abroad?

The newsroom echoed with debate night and day as various scenarios were hashed and rehashed. Once we were able to put all the events of the last couple of months into a timeline we tried to fit all the parts of the puzzle together. Still there were huge chunks missing.

Why the dog didn't bark, or, The New World Order

London, July 28. Editorial - *The Times of London*

Over the past month or more the international community has witnessed a spectacle in the Indian

subcontinent that can only be termed intriguing. A highly unusual series of events have unfolded which have raised more questions than they have answered.

The world's only hyper power 'invaded' a friendly nation, 'defanged' it and walked away with nary a shot being fired by the world's second largest standing professional army. The US enters with guile and in force, 'disarms' Indian (and Pakistani) nuclear weapons and exits stage left. The Indian Army stands by idly, picking its teeth, and life goes on while the Indian government is virtually held hostage.

Why didn't the dog bark? Conan Doyle's words echo around the globe. Armies are raised by nations to obey orders. To fight to protect the state. If armies refuse to fight then why raise, train, equip and pay them? And especially when a highly professional army such as India's does so, there seems to be much more here than meets the eye. Were they just following orders to 'refuse' to fight? Curiouser and curiouser.

Or could it be that India and the US had a secret pact and that the whole sordid drama was staged to hoodwink the world, especially the 'Islamic street'?

But what of the counter-attacks? The communications glitches, the TV blackouts in the US and the like, who did these and why? Was this purely 'private enterprise' or was this orchestrated covertly by elements within the Indian establishment who had a message for the world - "Don't tread on me"? Did Singh know about this or did he not?

These questions may or may never be answered in the days, months or even years to come, but most observers are already convinced that the whole affair was jointly conceived and managed by the Indian and American governments at the highest echelons, and this, some would even go as far as to say, includes even the horrific nuclear

explosions in Kashmir. If this is true, then, as the world has always feared, the nuclear option has become a tool of state policy. "If they don't listen to you, nuk'em." And never mind the price.

The objective? To set the stage for the permanent elimination of the 'failed' state called Pakistan, by merging it with India.

The final outcome for the US? No more Pakistan, that is no more jihadis, no more Al Qaeda/Taliban shelters, no more interference in Afghanistan, and most importantly, no more loose 'Islamic' nukes. For India: no more Kashmir problem. Ergo: Peace on Earth.

An important fallout of these curious events is the clear signal sent by India that even post-modern hyperpowers like the US could be brought to their knees by selective targeting of their communications systems. You just have to know how and where. These and the TV glitches were real, and the US economy has suffered major setbacks because of them. The best army in the world was brought to a standstill as technicians struggled to establish alternate systems to communicate with battlefield commanders. India (or at least some people in India) demonstrated, much to the chagrin of the Pentagon's techno-warriors that the answer to high tech war is equally high tech retaliation.

Doubtless the Pentagon will cry for more billions to develop newer and more secure systems but India with its amazing penchant for 'jugaad', combining native ingenuity with its scientific and technological prowess, is likely to keep pace with such developments at a fraction of what it costs to devise them.

Along with China and Russia, the rest of the world must be watching developments in the subcontinent carefully and with new, even if carefully concealed, respect as India demonstrates that battles of the future may not always be

won on the battlefields, or even on the playing fields of Eton, but in the cafeterias of software nerds.

As things stand now and as analysts project, what we can expect at the end of the day would be a re-worked globe, with Pakistan missing. Bangladesh can be assumed to be living on life support for it is just a matter of not if but when Indian decides to pull the plug. Will Nepal or Bhutan follow? Sri Lanka? India seems to be on a high roll and despite whatever, the US seems happy to let it do the job of 'containing' fundamentalist terror groups and their supporters in its region, at the same time providing a solid counterbalance to the old enigma, China.

Europe lies in tatters, having no influence of any significance on world affairs. Britain sits on the sidelines, glum and forlorn as no matter who wins, it loses.

Is all this anything less than a new world order?

Kon Tiki Home Again Lands After Record Making Mission

Kennedy Space Center, Florida, July 21. (AP)

The US Space Shuttle 'Kon Tiki' made a successful manually controlled re-entry and earth landing here today at 1021 EST after a forced record-breaking 19-day stint in space. Over the latter half of this period the shuttle was out of contact with earth controllers due to communications failure. It was only after it re-entered Earth's atmosphere that crew was able to talk to NASA controllers who were caught unawares when their radios sputtered into life.

This is the first instance of a shuttle landing with ground support more or less at the level of that accorded to an average transatlantic flight and NASA scientists are analyzing the successful event for possible applications to future shuttle trips. The crew is reported to be in excellent

health and in high spirits after their unique double achievement.

India's New Star Gazers – the Star Warriors

London, August 29. *Jane's Defense Weekly*

The retaliatory attacks by 'unknown' Indian technicians/hackers/scientists on US military and civilian communications systems have revealed the Achilles' heel of all high tech strategies. A successful outcome in war usually falls to those armies who have the best communications. In today's context as ever, such systems must deliver the right information, at the right time, in the right form, to the right recipient, all with a superabundance of non-breachability or incorruptibility.

The American military communications systems that had been refined and tested during Iraq II had managed to achieve all required objectives, but recently in India, countered by a committed and skilled opposition, had failed pathetically on the last two counts.

The Enigma episode during WW II was arguably a turning point for the Allies who could then decipher German coded messages. It is widely acknowledged that the Allied roll to VE started with this. The Indian onslaught on the US systems was reportedly not just limited to merely cracking but also to taking over complete battlefield systems and substituting genuine traffic with synthetic messages that led to such confusion among field commanders that the US was forced to withdraw from India much earlier than was planned. The multi-centric nature of the Indian attacks also demonstrated the virtual impossibility of actively seeking out and neutralizing the enemy. Where do you look?

Firewalls of all kinds have proved to be hackable, so perhaps a totally new approach will have to be devised which will enable armies to stay a jump ahead, for

doubtless the hacking community will always catch up with whatever passive defences one may throw up. Systems designers are already talking of depending on attack rather than on passive defence to preserve the integrity of their systems.

How was it done?

The collapse of civilian TV channels raises most pertinently the question: how was it done? North American TV stations have had to resort to resurrecting terrestrial networks long laid to rest with the advent of commercial satellite broadcasting. This retrograde switchover has come at a huge cost and is still incomplete.

Defence and communications specialists feel that the only way multiple communications satellites could be compromised would be from space itself and not by using earth-based means. The latter would require huge infrastructure and their signals would easily be picked up. Could this then indicate the presence of 'killer' satellites in space? Such technology is highly secret, complex, expensive and, above all, prohibited by international conventions.

Killer satellites were proposed as a part of the Star Wars package during President Reagan's administration. With the collapse of the Soviet Union, interest and budgetary allocations both declined and development stagnated.

In the intervening years since then space communications technology has advanced greatly. The Reagan plans proposed beams of high-energy pulses from killer satellites. These, however, required huge amounts of energy. One option that was proposed was to have high power compact nuclear reactors that could be boosted into orbit as part of a satellite. The cost and complexities of such a portable nuclear power source delayed the development of such a reactor. Also the international community was

seriously concerned about the possible hazard if such a satellite were to fall back into the atmosphere of the planet. It is most unlikely that India could have secretly developed and boosted such a killer satellite.

Which forces us to look at other ways of disabling satellites. What better agent to disable electronic signals than electronic signals themselves?

It has long been known and demonstrated that any coherent carrier wave based signal can be jammed, across a wide range of frequencies. However the nature of the electronic 'noise' that these jammers produce renders them liable to easy detection. The failure of any monitoring agencies to detect such 'noise' during the recent events leads to the conclusion that such jammers were not used. This naturally gives credence to the belief that a different approach was used.

Analysts theorize that coherent electronic signals (which we call messages), carrying alternate instructions, were beamed to the target satellites. These ersatz signals inserted themselves into satellite receivers masquerading as routine messages by a process found widespread in nature, which cell scientists call competitive inhibition. However, once inside, these signals took over all functioning of the original programmes, just as a virus attacks a living cell and commandeers its functioning. These fake messages were designed to closely mimic normal instructions from Earth in order to get in through the front door. But they also contained cleverly hidden messages that actually shut down the payload packages. Thus on-board satellite monitoring systems registered no abnormality and therefore raised no alarm as the satellites continued functioning 'normally' while actually they remained dead. These fake commands were untraceable from earth. Controllers detected no unusual signals. In other words the signals were delivered

to the selected targets by highly focused and narrow beams either on radio frequency or laser carriers.

The next question to be asked is where did they come from? If not from Earth, then they obviously originated from sources in space itself. No country or agency reported or detected a space launch during the crisis, leading to the conclusion that the killer satellites, if any, were already in position. Waiting to be activated, while carrying out their otherwise humdrum jobs of housekeeping or transmitting telemetry data, communications, weather pictures and the like. Sleeper satellites or satellites with sleeper packages built into them.

Very few countries have the wherewithal to build space satellites. India is one of the early entrants into this business. India has been building its own satellites for decades and is now preparing to launch them using indigenously developed boosters without having to depend on the launch capabilities of other countries, such as the ESA, Russia or even the US space shuttle. Indian satellites while well designed and successful at their jobs have sometimes drawn amused smiles from other satellite manufacturing countries for their bulk. They were also noted for their short life span when compared to satellites built by companies in the west such as Hughes.

A retrospective perusal, specially conducted for this paper, of 'all up' weights of Indian satellites launched over the last decade or so reveals that almost all Indian satellites were 'obese' when compared with the task they were designed to do and also when compared with similarly tasked satellites built in the west. Further, supposedly 70 percent of those ever launched had already 'expired', having completed their designated life span. Poor design? Uneconomical? Or were they simply concealing some secret packages for use later?

Today satellite specialists have begun to understand what it probably was all about. The bulky Indian satellites presumably carried secret packages that could be activated at will from earth. These could well be the sources of, or relay stations for, the space-borne electronic viruses that crippled so many communications satellites. Even if the actual 'viruses' were uploaded by earth stations to the killer satellites, the focusing, tracking and transmission by radio waves or laser beams probably originated from the satellites already in space. Dormant power packs could also have been activated to maneuver 'dead' satellites into pirate parking slots bringing them into range of the targeted satellites.

All this demands a high level of sophisticated planning and technology, both of which are not in short supply within the closely-knit Indian military-science-space complex. Though no western scientist is willing to go on record with the above scenario, almost all privately believe that India (and some of the other techno-giants) is fully capable of developing and using the technology required to achieve all this.

The consensus now seems to be that Reagan's Star Wars agenda although conceived in the US was first deployed by India. Strategic planners will now be forced to factor in this new battlefield in space if conflicts on Earth are to be won. And Indian astrologers will have to make room in space for their new brethren, the Star Warriors.

The image of an India of naked fakirs and their rope tricks has had a makeover. The fakirs are now nattily dressed, down to white socks and chinos, and their ropes, wireless. Their tricks, however, remain audacious and breathtaking as ever. As the political classes began their task of restructuring the republic to accommodate the massive influx of new citizens, the IT industry struts proud as a

peacock, though no one actually owned up to who was responsible for the American communications collapse.

The Army was engaged in screening the huge Pakistani army that had fallen into its lap. Many units were slated for disbandment. Some were to be assimilated into Indian units and were to undergo re-training. There was always the worry, a habit really, that jihadi elements would be overlooked. But, as people pointed out, what would they ask for now? A radioactive Kashmir?

No life forms found in Kashmir

Radioactivity levels still lethal

NBCW teams continue survey

New Delhi, July 30. (PTI)

Specially equipped NBCW teams of the Indian Army report no traces of life, human or otherwise, in the nuclear holocaust affected areas of Kashmir. The teams are supported by Russian and Israeli specialists.

Despite monsoon rains having washed away much of the atmospheric dust and smoke, the ground remains badly contaminated. Mountain peaks that are usually white and pristine at this time of the year are a dirty gray with reduced snow cover. Trees and shrubs in the Kashmir valley and the surrounding slopes have been cindered and only charred stumps remain of the famed Chinar trees. Rivers and canals in the Valley and in the Muzaffarabad run-off areas were found to contain highly radioactive water. All aquatic life has perished.

Ground Zero not yet identified

NBCW teams have not yet been able to identify ground zero, nor is it possible at the moment to state with certainty whether there was more than one 'ground zero'. The teams

are being rotated frequently as the task of working in the valley is tedious and hazardous with high radiation levels in many places. Commercial over-flights are not permitted yet and many roads have disappeared under massive land or mudslides.

The teams are using robotic drones and UAVs, mostly Israeli in origin, in the areas with the highest radiation levels. Radio-controlled mini crawlers will be left behind to monitor and transmit radioactivity data.

The Indian government is also considering offers of assistance by France, Britain and Japan. US offers have been politely rebuffed.

26

The Restructuring

My War Diary

The end of war with Pakistan heralded the beginning of the restructuring of Indian polity. There was the huge economic burden of the new northwestern states whose economy had been ground into the dust by generations of military rulers who had diverted a huge chunk of the GNP to military use. The disappearance of the chronic Pakistan problem and its sponsorship of terrorism in India was certain to lead to the loss of the *raison d'être* of many of the right wing political groupings. The addition of a huge new population of Muslims also led to a demographic shift that gave a new meaning to the term minority within the Indian context.

India had now a nearly 40 percent Muslim minority population. It was obvious that the anti-minority stance of some of the extreme right parties had to go, if there was to be peace and tranquility within the nation.

No one understood this fact better than Mr. Brij Mohan Singh. Though we had expected major changes with the departure of Mr. Singh from the political scene, his nomination of Mr. L.R. Wadhvani was quite unexpected. But, as analysts concluded, it had been a

master stroke and was the single act that elevated Mr. Singh from a great leader to a statesman. It saddled the right wing parties with the burden of responsible participation in the job of rebuilding the nation and demonstrated to the newly added population, and to the world, the fact that India acknowledged that its future lay in secularism.

The backlash, if there had been any, was muted as the New India that the President talked of was inclined to be forward rather than backward looking.

Singh meets President

Hands over resignation

New Delhi, July 30. (PTI)

Prime Minister Brij Mohan Singh late this evening called upon the President, Mr. APJ Abdul Kalam, at Rashtrapati Bhavan. It is believed that the Prime Minister handed over his resignation to the President. The meeting lasted over an hour. No communiqué was issued by Rashtrapati Bhavan till late at night.

President accepts Singh's resignation

July 31, New Delhi (8:30 AM DD News broadcast transcript)

Newsreader: "The President Mr. APJ Abdul Kalam has accepted the resignation of Prime Minister Brij Mohan Singh. Rashtrapati Bhavan issued a communiqué announcing this today. Mr. Singh has been asked by the President to continue in office until alternate arrangements are made and a new Prime Minister was elected. The communiqué also stated that the President would address the nation on live countrywide television hookup later this evening."

Kalam expresses sorrow at Kashmir deaths**Declares national day of mourning****Praises role of Armed Forces and software specialists**

New Delhi, July 31. (UN)

President APJ Abdul Kalam addressed the nation in a televised speech delivered from the Rashtrapati Bhavan at 6:00PM this evening. He expressed his deep sorrow at the deaths of millions of people in the nuclear holocaust of Kashmir. He urged the nation to extend all possible help to the survivors, medical, social and economic. He also announced a day of commemoration to be observed for the innocent who had died, on the 19th of May each year.

He commended the Indian armed forces and said that despite the heavy losses and the subsequent conflict situation that arose with the Americans, the Armed Forces had carried out their duties with valour and utmost professionalism in the operations against the sponsors of terrorism in erstwhile Pakistan.

He called on the people of the sub-continent especially of the northwestern states to lay behind them their differences, which he stated, had been created and nurtured by a well-organized oligarchy of political and military leaders of the erstwhile Pakistan, in order to keep themselves in positions of power and privilege, at the cost of the common people.

He then went on to acknowledge publicly, for the first time, the work of Indian software specialists and engineers (who it is believed, had paralyzed American control and command systems) and stated that continuous development in the fields of computer science and information and technology could only make India stronger and greater.

In the latter part of his one hour and ten minutes long speech, the President complimented Mr. Singh and his cabinet colleagues for their successful conduct of the war. He singled out Mr. Singh for special praise and appreciation stating that he had earned a place in the history of India as one of its greatest leaders. He informed the nation that on Mr. Singh's request he had reluctantly accepted his resignation. He had also accepted the Union Cabinet's recommendation for the formation of a National Government. Towards this he had asked Mr. Singh to call Parliament and have the House elect a new leader.

Elaborating on his vision for the future, President Kalam stated that he had devoted his entire career to ensuring that India could take its rightful place in history.

"We are a great nation and civilization. Our culture, philosophy and religions are second to none," he declared. But, he went on to say, our greatest weakness has been our centredness on self, rather than on nation, which has all too frequently led to military defeat during our long history. Foreigners with small armies had been able to dominate and subjugate our nation easily. Thus was born the myth that India, though civilizationally a great nation, was also a weak one.

"We have no expansionist desires, but when pushed beyond our tolerance we know how and when to fight back, both by conventional and unconventional means," he said.

"Our performance in the recent conflict where our armed forces have brought justice to the terrorists and to their supporters and freedom to the oppressed, coupled with the invaluable support of India's best scientific brains has displayed just a fraction of what we can achieve unitedly not just in the battle against enemies of the nation but also in our war against poverty and backwardness".

The President called upon the new government when installed and the people of what he called 'New India' to bear this in mind.

He called upon the peoples of the reintegrated areas to enjoy the taste of freedom and to live without fear as equal citizens of the world's greatest democracy.

For the first time, the President's address was simultaneously broadcast in four languages—English, Hindi, Urdu and Bangla. Normally the English version was broadcast with Hindi subtitles. Doordarshan had made arrangements for simultaneous voice-over in Hindi, Urdu and Bangla so that viewers could hear the President in the language of their choice. Former PTV channels in the western states carried the Doordarshan feed. These television networks have been assimilated by Doordarshan.

Wadhvani elected Prime Minister

Singh asks nation to battle religious fundamentalism, communalism

Standing ovation by MPs

New Delhi, August 2 (*UNA*)

Mr. L.R. Wadhvani was today unanimously elected Leader of the House by the Lok Sabha. His name was proposed by the outgoing PM Mr. Brij Mohan Singh.

The lower house of India's Parliament, the Lok Sabha, voted today at a special session called to elect a new leader and a new national government. The diplomatic and visitors galleries were packed to standing room capacity. Prime Minister Singh making what would probably be his last appearance was greeted with prolonged applause by all sections of the House as he entered the chamber and walked slowly

to his seat, greeting old friends and colleagues with the traditional namaste.

Asked by the Lok Sabha Speaker to address the house, the outgoing Prime Minister appealed to all political parties to join hands to complete the job started by his government, to make India a nation worthy of the respect of peoples all over the world. Unless India adopted a truly secular approach, he said, this would never happen. He cautioned the nation about the implications of the pursuit of superpower status. That superpower status, he pointed out, should not be seen to mean the mere projection of India's military might overseas, but such a status also carried with it the responsibility to ensure that universal prosperity, the opportunity for growth and development and the opportunity to enjoy good health and happiness, was accorded to every citizen of the new India and to its' friends and neighbours outside the borders as well.

Politicians who played divisive games using the religious card should be dealt with severely. But, at the risk of being thought of as the cat that, in a common folk saying, decided to go on a pilgrimage of penance after devouring a hundred mice, he advised the incoming government to consider, in the interest of the nation, the banning of religion-based or communal political parties permanently, as one of its top priorities.

"This is the only way we can unite India. Let us differ on economics, defence, science and technology or on agriculture or education but let us be fully united to ensure that religion does not intrude into the body politic", he said.

He advised the people's representatives to work to move religion from the streets into people's hearts. Only then would India be able to earn its true place in the world community, he said.

Mr. Singh's speech was greeted by a standing ovation that lasted several minutes. The Speaker then allowed a brief debate on the proposition tabled by the Deputy Prime Minister to elect a government of national unity. Following brief speeches by the leaders of all major political parties, the Speaker called for nominations to the position of leader of the House.

Mr. Singh then rose and proposed the name of Mr Wadhvani, stating his hope that all parties would forget the past and work to ensuring the future.

There was a stunned silence after Mr. Singh spoke. Then as he walked to the opposition front bench and requested Mr. Wadhvani to stand, the members began to applaud and thumped desks as he asked him to turn around to face the House. There was prolonged applause in which the Speaker's voice could not be heard as he called for any other nominations. No other names were proposed and as the applause reached a crescendo, he pronounced him elected by universal acclaim. Mr. Singh then led Mr. Wadhvani to the seat he had just vacated and seated him there. Ruling coalition members then vacated the treasury benches as they sought seats elsewhere in the House.

Following this and to yet another standing ovation, Mr. Singh smiling, and with folded hands slowly withdrew from the House for probably the last time.

Kalam swears in Mr. Wadhvani as PM

New Cabinet in a few days

New Delhi, August 3. (PTI)

The President APJ Abdul Kalam, at a simple and austere ceremony held in the Ashoka Hall of the Rashtrapati Bhavan today administered the oath of office to Mr. L.R.

Wadhvani as Prime Minister of India. Leaders of all parties, MPs and diplomats from various countries witnessed the brief ceremony. The outgoing Prime Minister Mr. Singh was the first to congratulate Mr. Wadhvani after the President.

Following the ceremony, Mr. Wadhvani drove straight to the Prime Minister's office. It is learnt that a meeting of all party leaders has been called this evening by the Prime Minister to consider the composition of the new government.

Civil Administration restructuring starts

Schools reopen in 'Northwest India'

Karachi, August 3. (UN/)

Civil administrators resumed functioning in this port city today. Airports and harbours have already begun functioning under the Indian military. Shops and educational institutions opened, though school attendance was thin.

Police officials from Maharashtra, Delhi and Gujarat states are moving into position in Sindh and Baluchistan. Punjab police officials from the Indian part of the state have already been functioning in Lahore and all parts of erstwhile Punjab province.

In NWFP (Seemastan) no disturbances were reported from the major cities though the army actions against warlords continued.

The Indian Army is maintaining a large presence with over three divisions being slated for permanent stationing in the new states. Defence sources stated that soldiers of the Pakistan Army who had surrendered were being screened for terrorist and fundamentalist links. It is believed that soldiers found fit and willing would be absorbed in different units of the Indian Army. A similar exercise to root

out 'Jehadi' and fundamentalist elements among the officer corps and enlisted men of the former PAF and Navy was also on.

Government sources state that the German experience is being studied closely to work out a way to integrate the armed forces and civilian administration. Senior staff officers have already gone to Berlin and are conferring with their counterparts there.

Indian officials work 24/7 to restore services

Karachi, August 5. (*Reuters*)

Dismantling a country is not an easy task as Indian officials are discovering. They are a hurried lot today both in New Delhi and in the newly annexed states of erstwhile Pakistan. The most harried are the legal eagles of the Indian government, as they figure out ways to integrate the old system with the new.

The Pakistan Supreme Court has been dissolved, and the lower judiciary is being revamped. The Sharia law in force in the NWFP (now renamed 'Seemastan') and Baluchistan, has been repealed. Interim civilian governors are being appointed for the new states, mostly from among former members of the Indian Administrative Service (IAS). Police chiefs for each district have been sent on deputation from other states of India.

Screening out Jehadi elements from the police, judiciary and the bureaucracy is the biggest and the most crucial task and one that may take months to complete. Sources report that both the FBI and the CIA are assisting Indian authorities in this work. In the meanwhile most lower level civilian employees of the former national, state and city government departments are being retained for the time being so that services continue to function smoothly.

It is believed that the Central government plans to hold elections in the new states by the end of the year or earlier if conditions permit. Political parties have already established offices in all the 'new' states and are believed to be testing the waters. The new Prime Minister is expected to visit these states sometime next month.

The Election Commission of India has already opened offices in the four new states.

The 'Tribal Agencies', a vaguely defined rugged and mountainous area bordering with Afghanistan is proving to be the biggest headache for the new administrators. These areas have never been subjugated by any government authority in the past. The Indian Army is actively engaged in running down the elusive tribesmen and 'warlords' who specialize in hit and run attacks only to melt into the rugged terrain. Smuggling across the border, of contraband drugs, humans, cattle, is the specialty of these fiercely independent people. It is likely that the Army will be at it for quite a while yet.

Wadhvani unfurls tricolour over Red Fort

India celebrates Independence Day

Calls for unity for progress

New Delhi/ Karachi, August 15. (*Reuters*)

Prime Minister, L.R. Wadhvani led the countrywide celebrations as he hoisted the national flag at the Moghul built Red Fort in Old Delhi. Later he addressed the vast crowd of invitees including diplomats, school children and ordinary citizens. Television hookup carried the speech live to the entire country. Colourful ceremonies where the Indian tricolour was hoisted, parades and processions of school children were held all over the country as India celebrated its 59th Independence Day today.

Mr. Wadhvani called upon the people of India to make full use of this historic opportunity to bury the past and come together to eradicate poverty and disease from the subcontinent.

"India had always had the know-how but we have not been able to rise above our internal divisions throughout our recorded history," he said. Echoing Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru's famous 'Tryst with Destiny' speech, he exhorted all Indians to "'wake up and rise' to show the world how a nation could learn from its history and work unitedly to alleviate poverty and unhappiness, which were often of our own creation."

The Red Fort ceremony was attended by almost all of the newly inducted members of the national cabinet.

At a similar ceremony in Karachi, the Defence Minister unfurled the national flag. He inspected a military guard of honor afterwards. A cultural programme staged by school children from the city followed this.

Despite fears of disruption of the ceremonies conducted at various places in erstwhile Pakistan the day was largely peaceful and most markets, though closed to celebrate the national holiday, wore a festive look, with tricoloured buntings decorating the streets.

Pakistan had celebrated 14th August as its Independence Day (from the British) and echoes of this were seen in the display of a few green and white Pakistani flags in some areas. Police and Army patrols guarding the streets against possible terrorist attacks made no effort to remove these flags. Minor incidents of violence were reported in Sindh state.

27

Hammer and Anvil

My War Diary

One war was over and another began. The frontier tribes that the Mughals, the British, the Russians and the Pakistanis had never been able to bring to heel had resumed their activities on and across the Afghanistan border.

By this time I had quit my old paper and was now gainfully employed by Reuters. Naturally when word filtered down of the Indian Army's new war, I wasted no time in getting there. This time my new employers had spared no expense and I was fully wired. Satphones, fax, videophone all lay within languid reach.

I flew to Quetta and hired a Toyota SUV (air-conditioned this time) and had myself chauffeur-driven to war.

Indian Army on all-out offensive against frontier warlords

US forces in Afghanistan join operations

Lahore / Kabul, 18 August. *(PTI & Reuters)*

Fierce fighting continues in Seemastan where Indian forces are engaging the 'armies' of local tribal warlords. The Indian Army has reportedly moved two entire infantry

divisions into the area. The forces include the erstwhile Baluch Scouts, soldiers who know the landscape well. IAF jets using the high altitude bombing strategy successfully employed in the Kargil war in 1999, and helicopter gunships are giving close ground support in the rugged mountainous terrain bordering Afghanistan. Phalcon AWACS of the Indian Air Force are patrolling the skies to warn of any incoming missile attacks and to direct air strikes.

Local warlords in this mountainous and poorly accessible area have historically been fiercely independent and are close kin of similar tribal groups in southern Afghanistan. No government has ever been able to assert its authority fully over these areas.

It is believed that American forces in Afghanistan are cooperating with the Indian Army. These warlords operate with impunity on both sides of the border and have been frequently skirmishing with the US troops and with the regular Afghan Army of the Karzai government in Kabul.

Some of the fiercest fighters in the Indian Army, among them the Biharis, Gorkhas and Sikhs, are in the forefront of the fighting while special ops teams of Para Commandos are reported to be operating deep in the mountains. Army sources state that many Taliban fighters are sheltering in this area after having been driven out of Afghanistan. These groups have also been using the NWFP as a staging area for cross-border attacks into Afghanistan.

It is expected that closer cooperation including joint operations between Indian and US forces will take place after the forthcoming visit of the new US Defence Secretary.

US-India resume defence links

Joint operations mooted for Frontier

New Delhi, 20 August. (*UN*)

The three-day visit of the new US Secretary of Defence, Mr Robert Cochrane, concluded today in New Delhi with the signing of a defence pact between India and the United States.

The two countries agreed to join forces in the international war against terrorism. The cooperation would range from the exchange of intelligence to joint operations between the armed forces of the two nations. A joint military command (JoMiCo) has been envisaged to coordinate operations along the northwest border areas of India.

Defence Minister Jaswant Singh signed the agreement on behalf of India.

The agreement indicated the official re-establishment of normal relations between the two countries after the setback following American actions to 'disarm' Indian nuclear weapons and the consequent Indian reactions.

Political observers both in India and Europe are surprised at the rapid pace of normalization of Indo-US relations following the recent events in the subcontinent. Commentators in the Arab world are saying that the Kashmir tragedy and the Indo-US confrontation less than two months ago was nothing but a farce staged to destroy Pakistan.

Indian IT firms contracted to restore communications networks in US

New York, 22 August, (*NYT*)

Several Indian IT and software companies are actively engaged in helping American companies re-establish communications and information systems networks after the recent meltdown. Industry sources state that about 70-

80 percent of 'normalcy' has been established using alternate terrestrial modes as a temporary measure. The restoration of satellite links and commercial satellite broadcasting will take some time as replacements need to be built and launched. India has offered to help in this area as well.

Bangalore-based ComSysTech Corp has announced the landing of a \$235 million contract to help Times AOL Warner restore their communications network. It is believed that the Bangalore company is developing alternate strategies that will prevent such large-scale collapses in the future.

Indo-US joint action against border lords

Six 'terrorist' groups wiped out during conclave

Lahore/Washington, August 25. (*Reuters*)

In a series of what are being called 'hammer and anvil' operations, Indian and American forces have attacked and smashed several camps and strongholds of frontier warlords along the Indo-Afghanistan border, ranging from Quetta to Peshawar and points north. US trained Afghan Army units were also deployed in the operations.

In the latest nighttime raid conducted jointly, Delta Force and Indian Para commandos have eliminated scores of militants along with top commanders of six groups including Taliban leaders gathered in conclave at a campsite deep in the Hindukush mountains.

A brief press note issued by the Indian Northwestern Command Headquarters at Peshawar stated that intense high altitude 'softening up' bombardment of various encampments and villages is being carried out by US aircraft based in Kabul by day, and Indian Air Force planes by night. The Americans have used 'daisy cutter' type

bombs extensively in these attacks. India has also been using Russian built cruise missiles.

Human rights groups protest

Human rights groups in Europe and the US are protesting against the attacks stating that these amounted to genocide. An Amnesty International spokesman in London stated that the actions in Baluchistan and Seemastan against the warlords and their armies were also taking a massive toll of innocent people including women and children. A spokesman for Human Rights Watch stated in London that the indiscriminate bombing was a heinous crime against humanity and demanded that the attacks be stopped. Human rights groups are preparing to petition the International Court of Justice and other human rights tribunals to get the 'genocide' stopped.

US and Indian commanders at Joint Military Command (JoMiCo) headquarters at Peshawar refused to comment on the reports except to state that the raids would continue until the entire zone was 'sterilized'.

Diplomacy 201. 'Hammer and Anvil': A new approach to international affairs

Washington DC, August 29. Editorial - *The Washington Post*

The world's two greatest democracies have joined hands again. This time the clasp is firmer (and bloodier) than ever before. For the first time, US and Indian troops are involved in joint operations in a war zone. There have been, it may be recalled, numerous joint peacetime exercises between US and Indian troops in the Great Indian Desert, on icy Himalayan heights, in Alaska and so on in the past.

Even so it seems rather strange that two nations who were eyeball to eyeball just a few weeks back are so thick so soon.

The question that remains unanswered is – who set off the Kashmir bombs? India, the US, Pakistan or some ‘terrorist’ groups? Most surprisingly there are no leads, presumably all having vanished in the smoke over Kashmir or in the dismembering of Pakistan. What is even more striking is that no one seems to care or to be trying too hard to find out, even though millions of lives have been lost. It is rather convenient that the site of the crime is heavily radioactive and will remain so for the next 50 years. And also that the prime accused have been vaporized in the blasts: unwitting ‘suicide’ bombers?

And today, on the Indo-Afghanistan border, terrorists, tribals, warlords, whatever one may call them, find themselves smashed between the former antagonists. Along with their women and children. And again, despite protests from around the globe condemning this genocide, no one seems to care.

Will this be the basic mantra of international disputes in the future in the war against terror? Or is Bush happy to let India get him off the hook just when lawmakers across party lines in the US are vociferously questioning American involvement in Pakistan’s murky past?

Be that as it may, the international community, particularly that of the Middle East, has been put on notice – a powerful new alliance has emerged - the two largest democracies on earth – the US and India which have today found common cause and a new world order established, one that probably may not shy away from using even the nuclear option as a tool of diplomacy, especially where terrorism is concerned.

What next?

Bangladesh will certainly follow Pakistan into the Indian Union. Sri Lanka? Nepal?

The Indian dream is achieved – The end to decades of terrorism. 'Vishaal Bharat', Great India, the entire subcontinent, a superpower in its own right.

And for the US? Peace in Afghanistan. A counterweight to China and Russia in Asia; a dependable ally to ensure that Islamic terror is gradually compressed into an increasingly smaller area over the decades.

American hammer, Indian anvil, or *vice versa*.

Stand by for Diplomacy 301.

US-India joint operations to intensify

No rest till warlords exterminated - Watts

Kabul, August 30. (AP)

Indian and American forces are committed to removing the Indo-Afghan border warlords permanently to give a chance to the people in the region to live in peace, stated US Forces Commander in Afghanistan, General Tony 'Gatling' Watts, "And we will not fail," he added.

He was addressing a joint media briefing at the close of a two-day consultation between senior officers of the US Central Command covering Afghanistan and of the Indian Northwestern Command here today. The consultation was held to evaluate and coordinate the ongoing combined military operations on the Indo-Afghan border.

A joint communiqué released at the conclusion of the deliberations stated that the operations would continue until all 'private' armies operating in the region were wiped out.

Addressing the media General Watts said, 'These people have had adequate opportunity to become law-abiding, peaceful citizens. They have been uncontrollable by both Pakistani and Afghan government forces in the past. Nor had the British colonial armies been able to tame them. They fight among themselves, kill and maim people on both sides of the border with impunity, and respect no person or law. These feudal warlords have carried out all kinds of medieval atrocities on their own people and on those belonging to other ethnicities. They have no law or religion apart from that of the gun..'

Asked by a reporter if a few nuclear weapons detonated in the area would not do the job quicker, the cigar-chomping General replied, 'Now there's a thought.'

General R Krishnan, the newly appointed chief of India's Northwestern Command, replying to questions posed by the international media, said that India had no problem working with US forces, as they had common objectives. The recent operations had demonstrated the additional advantages to both sides of using American hardware and logistics support and Indian troops who were used to the rigours of fighting in the desert and in the mountains. The hammer and anvil strategy was working fine and it was just a matter of time before the whole area would be permanently sanitized, he said.

When queried who was the hammer and who the anvil, he stated that there were no fixed roles as such and that they varied according to the situation on the ground.

The two commanders and their staff would be meeting at regular intervals to heighten coordination, though their forces would remain under their respective commands.

28

Bengal and the Begums of Dhaka

My War Diary

Seemastan was an off-limits operation from day one. The Americans and the Indian forces did not allow any media presence. Those of us who did reach the area were packed off after a perfunctory "media briefing". I was delighted to find there one of my old course mates from NDA days, now a major in the para commandos. He was sympathetic but not forthcoming with any information at all. All he would say was that the operations would continue until the entire area had been 'sanitized'. When I asked him what the term meant, he just stared into his drink.

And so, three days after I had caught up with the army I was headed back, via Peshawar this time, to catch a bus to Islamabad and a plane to Delhi. We didn't always get chauffeured around.

Back in Delhi, I found things in Dhaka were hotting up. The 'Bangladesh operation' was shaping up and it seemed everyone's prediction was just about to come true. Unfortunately for the Bangladeshis (or maybe it was really fortunate for them), not a single country came forward to their support. It appeared that the entire world was just about fed up of their chronic poverty and their snail-like economic growth. But most of all western

diplomats I met in Delhi were fed up of the endless saga of the two "Begums of Dhaka". Clearly it was time for them to go, and I was determined to be there when they left.

Dhaka under curfew as rioting breaks out—4 killed, 36 injured

Sheikh Hasina demands union with India

Dhaka, September 10. (*Reuters*)

Four persons were killed and thirty-six injured as violence broke out in central Dhaka today. Rioting occurred as anti-government demonstrators clashed with supporters of President Begum Zia's political party, the Bangladesh Peoples' Party (BPP). The demonstration was organized by former President Sheikh Hasina's Awami League (AL) Party, which is demanding the union of Bangladesh with India.

Police opened fire to control rioting mobs after slogan shouting demonstrators retaliated with swords and guns when a group of men allegedly belonging to Begum Zia's BPP attacked them with firebombs and automatic weapons. It is not certain whether those killed or injured fell to police bullets or to those exchanged between the two groups.

Earlier AL leader Sheikh Hasina, who has been attacking Zia's pro-Pakistan stand, had addressed the rally. She said in her speech to a crowd of over twenty-five thousand supporters that Bangladesh's social and economic conditions had shown a steady decline ever since it had been separated from India. Under Pakistan the Bengali speaking population had even lost their political freedom, despite an overwhelming victory at the polls. The independence of Bangladesh from Pakistan in 1971, had not improved matters and the people

continued to live lives of poverty despite massive intervention by UN agencies and other international donors. The situation had worsened even more rapidly under pro-Pakistan Begum Zia's corrupt rule. She alleged that Government ministers and bureaucrats were hand in glove in slashing away huge amounts of donor dollars in banks abroad. Though there were a few examples of development, these were the exception rather than the rule and, for obvious reasons, Begum Zia's government had spared no effort to tout these exceptions in a bid to attract even more international funding. It was in the interest of all that Bangladeshis heeded the call of their Bengali brethren across the border and reunited with India, as this was their only hope for a secure and better future, she added.

Begum Zia's BPP has been known to harbour within it strong pro-Pakistan elements and has shielded many former Pakistan Army officers and bureaucrats who were a part of the brutal suppression of people running up to and during the War of Independence from Pakistan.

A 24-hour curfew has been ordered in most parts of Dhaka to prevent any further clashes, though these were continuing till late at night today. Curfew has also been ordered as a preventive measure in some other cities, Chittagong, Mymensingh among these.

Fighting continues in Dhaka, Army called out

Dhaka, September 12. (AF-A)

Fighting between armed groups broke out again late last night in the heavily populated inner city areas of Dhaka. The groups used automatic weapons and grenades against each other and several shops and vehicles in the crowded bazaar area have been torched. Though curfew had been imposed earlier as a precautionary measure it was largely

ignored by violators who paid no heed to loudspeaker announcements by roving police jeeps.

State television carried government announcements that army troops had been called out to assist the civil administration in maintaining law and order. The troops had been ordered to shoot at sight any persons violating the curfew.

Police and paramilitary forces are guarding important government buildings and installations as well as foreign missions and aid agency offices in Dhaka.

Reports from Chittagong indicate that tension prevails in the area as army and police heightened their vigil in the curfew bound city.

Violence continues in Dhaka

Spreads to other cities - Army takes up positions

Dhaka, September 13. (AF-P)

Sporadic fighting continues for the third day between supporters of Sheikh Hasina's Awami League and Begum Zia's BPP. Army units were called in to maintain the peace in Dhaka, Chittagong, Mymensingh and Sylhet. Looting and arson continued in some localities in Dhaka where normal life was punctuated by bomb blasts and the sounds of automatic weapons firing.

Diplomats of western nations have begun moving out as fears of escalation of disturbance increase. India and Nepal have suspended flights of their civilian airlines to Dhaka until peace is restored.

Government officials were unable or unwilling to give details of casualties in the street battles between political groups and also in police or army firing to quell the fighting groups. A round of hospitals in Dhaka revealed

that about 42 persons including women and children were undergoing treatment for bomb blast and gun shot injuries, unofficial sources place the death toll at around 26 by noon today, though many deaths are believed to be unreported.

Civil War like situation in Bangladesh

No Government authority as law and order breaks down

Dhaka, September 15. (AF-P)

Violence continued for the fifth day between supporters of Sheikh Hasina and Begum Zia's BPP. Army units were out patrolling to maintain peace in Dhaka, Chittagong, Mymensingh and Sylhet. Looting and arson continued in Dhaka where there appeared to be a complete breakdown of law and order apparatus. For the fifth day the city reverberated with the sounds of bombs exploding and automatic gunfire.

All this was despite the heavy monsoon rains that have otherwise almost paralysed life in the country. Low lying areas in Dhaka and the countryside are already waterlogged. Rivers and drains are already brimming over and chances of the annual floods are quite high.

Sheikh Hasina yesterday alleged in a note circulated to the international media and diplomats that Begum Zia was using the Bangladesh Army as an instrument of repression in order to retain political power at any cost. Begum Zia, the note said, was refusing to heed to the call of the Awami League to call a referendum to decide whether Bangladesh should reunite with India.

With the events in former Pakistan still fresh in public memory, diplomats of western nations have begun moving out of Bangladesh. Most have shifted to Kolkata or Singapore. Diplomats privately aver that Bangladesh

would go the way of Pakistan. It would be better if the process were peaceful with the minimal loss of life, was the general opinion. Most feel that neither India nor the United States would allow Bangladesh to exist anymore as an independent entity, for various reasons. Anti-India terrorist groups evicted from former Pakistan would seek refuge in Bangladesh and could expect succour from political parties like the BPP. Most foreign countries were experiencing donor fatigue and were reluctant to sink more money into a system which showed such poor results. It was expected that under India's economic tutelage Bangladesh would stand a better chance of recovery.

Indian and Nepali airlines today announced the suspension of all flights into Dhaka. Most international airlines have already stopped flying into Dhaka for over a week.

Government officials, who are increasingly difficult to locate these days, are unable or unwilling to give details of casualties arising from the daily street battles. A survey of government hospitals in Dhaka revealed that about 142 persons including women and children were undergoing treatment of various injuries. Unofficial sources place the death toll at over 150 so far.

Sources in the Bangladesh Home Ministry were unable to confirm whether India had any role in the ongoing clashes but people on the street generally believe that India is supporting the Awami League with manpower and material and 'political' support. The speculation is rife on the street that most low and middle level government officials including police officers have already fled their posts fearing an imminent takeover by India. The finding that almost no police officers are visible on the streets of Dhaka supports this presumption.

Flood of Bangla refugees to India unabated**India asks Bangla government to restore peace**

Siliguri / Agartala, September 20. (PTI)

The Indian Border Security Force (BSF) is having a tough time turning away the masses of people fleeing from the violence that has engulfed many areas of Bangladesh following the complete breakdown of law and order in that country. Along with the pouring rains the dislocation of these refugees from their meager shelters has reduced them to a pitiable condition as numbers continue to swell at borders with India. Bangladesh Rifles (BDR) troops who man the border on the opposite side have all but given up trying to control the surging crowds. Sources claim that some BDR border posts near the Jalpaiguri border with India were ransacked and forcibly occupied by refugees. BDR troops have so far been reluctant to use force on their own civilians.

The Indian government has asked the Bangladesh government to tighten security on the international border failing which India would be forced to take steps.

Sheikh Hasina under house arrest**No let up in violence****Donors freeze aid**

Dhaka, September 22. (AP)

The Bangladesh government today placed Sheikh Hasina Mujib under house arrest. Sheikh Hasina is the president of the opposition Awami League party, and a former President of Bangladesh. The move came in a bid to control the increasing violence and civil war-like conditions in Bangladesh where pitched street battles are being fought daily between Awami League party

supporters and those of the present ruling party and the Army.

Life in the country has ground to a halt due to general strikes called by the Awami League, amidst continuing violence and the incessant downpour of a greater than average monsoon rainfall.

Palls of black oily smoke from torched neighborhoods rising through the rain and the sounds of bombs exploding along with the smouldering hulks of cars and trains make Dhaka resemble a surrealistic war zone.

The move to isolate Sheikh Hasina is seen by foreign observers as likely to inflame the situation further.

Meanwhile multilateral aid agencies and the US have frozen all assistance and pulled their staff out of the troubled country.

India warns of intervention if peace not restored

Demands Sheikh Hasina's immediate release for talks

New Delhi, September 23. (PTI)

The Indian government today demanded that Sheikh Hasina be released from forced detention and an atmosphere conducive to talks be created between the government and the opposition Awami League party as early as possible. The Indian Foreign Minister made the statement today while addressing a scheduled weekly media briefing at the Foreign Ministry.

He went on to say that the Government of India was 'deeply concerned' about the widespread violence in Bangladesh, and by what he termed the 'continuing massive exodus' of fleeing innocent Bangladesh nationals, mainly the poor, across the Indian border. He warned that if the Bangladesh government did not resume the political

process and work for peace between the warring groups India would have no option but to intervene before the violence spilled over the Indian border. Already there are reports of skirmishes between Indian border guards and Bangladesh Rifles.

Meanwhile defence sources report that all Indian Army units under the Eastern Command have been placed on full alert. Indian naval warships of the Eastern fleet were leaving their base at Vishakhapatnam and were heading up the Bay towards Bengal. Most political and defence analysts believe that the Foreign Minister's statement was a prelude to India's intervention in Bangladesh, which was now simply a matter of when and not if.

Pakistan first, Bangladesh now

London, September 26. Editorial- *The Times of London*

India's political leadership has always held that India has historically never been an expansionist power. That may have been in the past. Yesterday's entry of Indian armed forces into Bangladesh reveal its' present hegemonic ambitions. It may well be argued that it was just reclaiming what had always been its own.

But did India have a choice or did Bangladesh have any other option? A small nation cross-hatched with far too many rivers and streams, Bangladesh is geographically surrounded on three sides by India and has at its back on the fourth, the waters of the Bay of Bengal, often called the 'swimming pool' of the Indian Navy.

In 1947, the departing British detached a part of the India's province of Bengal and named it East Pakistan, as part of the pre-independence settlement granting Muslims a homeland in the east. From its inception the new hemi-country never had a chance. Separated from its cultural and economic capital, Calcutta, East Pakistan was high only on

population and politics. In 1971, when Sheikh Mujib-ur-Rahman's Awami League party won a majority in Pakistan's National Assembly, the West Pakistanis decided they had enough and refused to honour the verdict of the polls. The West Pakistan dominated army unleashed a brutal reign of repression and rapine in East Pakistan, which ended only when India stepped in and midwived the birth of an independent Bangladesh.

Even as an independent entity, Bangladesh continued to be mired more in political strife than in economic development. This was not helped by the annual toll exacted by the monsoon floods that devastate most of the country. Bangladesh became an international basket case and has been dependent mostly on the largesse of donors for its survival as a nation. India, once its saviour, was reviled as an interloper as fundamentalist Islamic groups under Begum Zia's BPP banner refined the art of India-bashing and moved closer to Bangladesh's former oppressors and co-religionists in (West) Pakistan.

Today its armed forces had no chance. A poorly equipped, miniscule Army, Navy and Air Force, an officer corps high on rhetoric and poor on leadership skills made the armed forces more ornamental than functional. And this arrayed against the second largest army in the world, fresh from its victory over Pakistan. India has, for all practical purposes, a walkover at its hands.

We can expect very soon the Indian government's declaration annexing Bangladesh reuniting it with India's West Bengal state along with which in pre-independence days it had been known jointly as 'Bengal'. It seems prescient now that this divided state was never re-named 'Bengal' within the Indian Union, but remained *West Bengal*.

It is difficult in this case to say whether for Bangladeshis, it is from the frying pan into the fire. But the willingness of hundreds of thousands of Bangladesh nationals to sneak into India by arduous and hazardous means for many years now indicates their feeling that a better future awaits them even in the shantytowns of New Delhi and Mumbai.

India's growth rate of over seven percent annually indicates a healthy economy, but will the 'drag' of two huge populations suddenly added to its own depress this growth? The German experience comes to mind and it is encouraging to see that the Indians are seriously studying the various aspects of that reunion—social, economic, political and military.

The United States appears to have decided to let India head its own posse (or lynch crowd?) and 'settle' matters in its neighborhood from the branch of the nearest tree, once and for all. Bush seems pleased to be let off the hook after both political parties had begun to ask hard questions about his (and to be fair, almost all previous administrations') 'engagement' of Pakistan. With India taking over Pakistan and the present close military cooperation between the two countries on the Afghan border, a solution to the festering Al Qaeda 'homeland' problem seems possible at last.

But what of the United Nations? Increasingly the UN seems to be restricted to the task of picking up the broken pieces after powerful nations, who ally themselves to shape the world to conform to what they believe it should look like, end their engineering of borders and populations. Will this new superpower axis bring a lasting peace as they claim? Ultimately, nothing seems to have changed since the days of Rome and Carthage, except maybe the players.

Russia seems to be content to let long time friend India grow into a superpower as it fits in with its strategy of

keeping the pressure on China. India also serves as a trustworthy bridge between Russia and the US. Therefore an informal alignment of these three major powers has come to exist as a counter-weight against both increased Islamic militancy and of course, China.

Europe remains a mute spectator as its deep internal divisions prevent it from playing any significant role in international affairs. France and Germany both continue to vie for primacy and most other European countries are either riven with internal conflicts or inwardly focused on their own economic woes. Britain, as perhaps befits the world's only truly multiracial society, is slowly emerging as an obligate neutralist state in the new world order. The Switzerland of the 21st century!

One can only hope that as the latest subjects of superpower experiments the citizens of former Bangladesh will emerge out of the gloom of a long dark night to a bright and fresh dawn.

29

Nepal—The New Republic

Wadhvani chief guest at Nepal PM's swearing in Arrives in Kathmandu

Kathmandu, November 1, 2006. (PTI)

Indian Prime Minister Mr. L.R. Wadhvani arrived today on an official 'goodwill' visit to Nepal. He will be the chief guest at the swearing in of the new Prime Minister of Nepal.

Mr. SB Thapa, the newly elected President of the Himalayan country, cast aside all protocol and received Mr. Wadhvani at the Tribhuvan International Airport. Notable members of the Indian delegation were the Indian Defence Minister, Mr. Jaswant Singh, and the Chief of the Army Staff, General M. Fernandez, who at one time had been the commanding officer of the Nepalese President when he was with the Gurkhas.

A ceremonial guard of honour was presented at the airport, which wore a festive look with Indian and Nepalese flags rippling in the strong cool morning breeze.

The Indian delegation is being housed in the Soaltee Hotel, which has been specially spruced up for the occasion. Indian Special Forces, including SPG commandos, supported by a ring of Nepal Army troops have taken over the area of the hotel for the last one week.

Mr. Wadhvani will leave shortly after the ceremony for an official visit to Bhutan, at the invitation of the King.

Madhav Nepal sworn in, assumes office

First prime minister under republican constitution

Kathmandu, November 2. (PTI)

Mr. Madhav 'Nepal', interim prime minister till yesterday, was sworn in as Prime Minister of the Republic of Nepal here today. The President of Nepal, Mr. SB Thapa administered the oath of office and secrecy to him. Mr. L.R. Wadhvani, the US Secretary of State, Ms Cynthia Waaler, other dignitaries and diplomats witnessed the event.

Mr Nepal's political grouping, the Nepal Communist Party, won handsomely in the general election concluded last week. It is believed to be a centrist party, between the avowedly monarchists at one extreme and the Maoists at the opposite. The NCF garnered 59 seats in a house of 118.

In a departure from tradition, the ceremony was held in the parliament building, the Singh Darbar, and not at the Royal Palace, which is now the Presidential Palace, and renamed Nepal Bhavan.

Mr. Madhav 'Nepal' is the first Prime Minister to be sworn in under the new republican constitution and hence the first also to be sworn in by a president. All former PMs had been sworn by in the King. Mr. Nepal heads the liberal faction of the Nepal Communist Party and enjoys the support of the Nepali National Congress.

Mr. Nepal, till yesterday, headed an interim government under the peace plan unofficially brokered by India, under which a new constitution had been proposed and the monarchy abolished. The elections had been held under

the watchful eyes of United Nations observers, though the newly re-constituted Election Commission of Nepal had supervised the entire exercise.

Festive Air

The city of Kathmandu wears a festive air with banners and bunting augmenting the decorations for Dussain (Dusshera), Nepal's most important festival. For a country riven by political turmoil and fighting among the ruling classes for over a century, this is indeed a time for celebration.

With this ceremony a long chapter in Nepal's history of monarchic rule comes to a close. The former ruler King Gyanendra and his family have already left Nepal for Scotland via China where they reside on the hunting estate they own. Though the monarchy is abolished and all royal properties taken over by the state, the former monarch retains extensive business interests in Nepal that are likely to continue. He is reported to have conferred with Mr. Wadhvani on a recent private visit to Delhi. The Government of Nepal has already declared him and the former crown prince *persona non grata*.

And miles to go...

Kathmandu, November 3. Editorial - *The Kantipur Times*

Long live the Republic! Nepal is finally liberated from its unfortunate history of being misruled by a long line of feuding clans. Whether Shahs or Ranas the ruling classes have always shared the spoils making themselves wealthy, the people impoverished, and Nepal a regular item on the list of the poorest countries of the world.

A new republic has been born and the sham democracy we had been saddled with is brought to an end. Under the

new constitution approved by the Constituent Assembly, the President will be Head of State, on the Indian pattern of government. A Law Commission will be set up to review all existing laws and suggest a new civil and penal code. Feudalism, which is an ingrained feature of Nepali society and Law, is likely to be addressed seriously.

For instance, with land reforms envisioned, the huge holdings of the former ruling clans are likely to go to the farmers who till the land. Immunity from legal action and similar privileges accorded to the ruling classes will be withdrawn.

The poor are cautiously hopeful as they expect the fruits of development to finally reach their remote mountain homesteads. International NGOs and funding agencies are to be asked to review their staffing pattern as well as the channels they use to send funds into Nepal. At present powerful members of the ruling class, relatives of the departed royals and politicians, who are believed to be more concerned with their own development than that of the country, head many of the NGOs used as channels.

An example: expensive high-end Land Rovers donated by international wildlife and ecology conservation agencies allegedly found their way into the personal garages of members of the erstwhile royal family instead of being sent to the wildlife sanctuaries they were intended for. These vehicles were until recently used for hunting of game rather than preserving it.

India is willing to help and has offered to depute officials and professionals specializing in rural development, health and education, especially those from the states of Sikkim and Meghalaya, to assist the new government. These states share many things common with Nepal such as terrain and weather and have been among the more successful states of India in recent years. The rural cellular

telecom organisation in East Bengal has offered to set up a similar telecom network with the low cost mobile services that had revolutionized telecom in rural areas of erstwhile Bangladesh. India's dairy cooperative movement, represented by Amul, has offered to help Nepali dairymen take advantage of their better weather conditions to make Nepal a major milk producer. Railway lines are planned for the flat terai region and in fact also right up to Kathmandu!

The future is indeed exciting and full of possibilities. For a while it seemed to be touch and go and many felt that Nepal would end up as a state within the Indian Union. Policy makers in New Delhi, for whatever reason, decided otherwise and Nepal remains an independent entity.

The royals have left with their plunder. The common man now has some say in shaping his future. The new republic rises but we have "miles to go and promises to keep".

30

The Secular Raj

Lok Sabha passes Secular India Bill

Caste names now illegal!

New Delhi, March 6, 2006. (PTI)

The Lok Sabha today passed the much-debated 'Secular State Bill'. Introduced earlier in the year by the National Government headed by Prime Minister Mr. L.R. Wadhvani, the newly passed Act lays down directives to strengthen secularism as state policy in the new India.

Among the noteworthy features of the Act, any person or persons wanting to establish a house of worship will have to build similar houses of worship for all the recognised religions notified by the state. Hence if a person wishes to build a temple he would also have to construct a mosque, a church, a gurdwara etc., alongside it within the same complex. A joint council having equal representation from all the communities would unitedly govern all these places of worship.

The construction of religious shrines is also banned. This includes even a shrine built on private property that is visible from outside. So while it is OK to have a *pujaghar* within your house you cannot build one in a corner of your compound, no domes, spires, etc. A further provision bans the use of caste or community names for any purpose.

There are many such provisions, which have been passed by the Lower House. Political and social scientists say that though this kind of major social engineering will face many problems along the way, India will benefit from shedding these age-old shackles that have served more to divide it than anything else.

Secularism Redux: Will it create a new India?

New Delhi, March 16, 2006. Editorial—*The Times of India*

The new Act signed into law by the President of India last week, known in brief as the Secular India Act is a remarkable piece of legislation. Remarkable for several reasons.

For a beginning it is unique in the world, as no country has defined secularism in such detail despite almost all western—and many other countries—being committed to the separation of Church and State. Secondly it describes in great detail the do's and don'ts for government, social groupings and individuals in the new India.

Taking a cue from former PM Singh's last speech in Parliament, former right wing hawk, L.R. Wadhvani's government has sent a strong signal to fundamentalists and extremists of the religious stripe that for India to not only thrive but to just survive religion must be sent from the streets into the homes and hearts of the people. That is from the public to the private domain.

Major features of the Act

- No public display of religion, or connected ceremonies. This means no religious processions: yatras, shobha yatras, etc., will be allowed. Loudspeakers cannot be used for broadcasting hymns, bhajans, gurbani, sermons, discourses, kathas, jagratas, kirtans and the like under any circumstances.

- Public holidays for religious festivals will be restricted.
- No religious or quasi-religious event shall be sponsored or paid for by any government department, corporation or conducted in any government owned premises. That is no pujas, hawans, shilanyas, etc.
- No government minister or official shall participate in any public religious event, or in an event sponsored or organized by a religious organisation.
- No new religious fairs or pilgrimage centers, gatherings, melas of a religious nature shall be allowed at any place, other than those defined and notified under this Act. These shall be restricted to those with traditional observance of over 500 years.
- Persons arriving at any centre for the purposes of pilgrimage shall pay user charges for government arrangements such as for law and order, shelter, food and water, roads and transport, emergency medical care, in the form of service tax and/or user fee.
- No government or agency thereof shall sponsor religious travel for any citizen of any nature, such as Haj, pilgrimages, yatras, etc.

Social Engineering

Addressing the need for social change the following provisions have been made:

- No organisation, society, trust, party or group may use a religious or caste name in its title. Any organisations using such names at present have six months to change the same.

- No political party, group, union, etc., may use religious symbols, slogans, nor may they have a religious agenda in their constitution or public utterances, literature, etc.
- The display of religious symbols or names. No party, group, corporate body or individual may on public or private premises display any religious symbols or names of gods or deities, or holy men etc., for any purpose whatsoever, except within officially approved places of worship.
- No caste or community names or titles or the names of gods, deities, holy men for purposes of public display or usage shall be permitted by any institution, schools, companies, government or non-governmental body, individual, as titles, advertisements, souvenirs, handouts, etc.
- The media shall not use caste names, images, and names of gods, deities, holy men in any form of reportage, advertisement or as 'artistic content'.
- No use of caste names, images and names of gods, deities, holy men in any form shall be permitted for use as trademarks, brands, titles or names of products, or in advertisements. Any such user shall have three months to change the same.
- No educational institutions shall hold any form of worship, or ceremony, or programme of a religious nature whether curricular or extracurricular.
- No display of the images, and names of gods, deities, and holy men, in any form shall be permitted in any public place, governmental building, public transport vehicle, private or public educational institution.

Other sections deal with the punishment for violating the above norms that range from imprisonment from six

months to ten years, fines, penalties, dismissal from government employment, loss of seat for elected persons, debarment from participating in elections and the like. All offences under this Act are cognizable and are to be treated as criminal offences.

There are many who feel that India has too much religion. So much so that in fact it often becomes difficult to figure out the borderline between religion and culture. Religion has been the strength as well as the greatest weakness of this country. It has united and yet prevented the fullest integration of post-Independence India.

With the expansion of the country and the consequent inclusion of people of a large number of ethnic groups, communities and religions, the Secular India Act is indeed a sorely needed piece of social engineering. Aggressive postures by religious extreme groups need to be curbed and in fact proscribed altogether. Religion needs to be indeed taken off the streets. This means that the government needs to act aggressively in displaying its seriousness about this Act. Or it will be some time before religion retreats to behind the walls of people's homes.

Govt. bans Sangh Parivar, others

New Delhi, March 10 (2006). *Pan India News Syndicate*

The Government of India today notified a list of officially banned organisations. These organisations are those that the government considers are working to spread disharmony within the country and promote hatred amongst various religions.

Prominent among the organisations banned are the Vishwa Hindu Parishad, RSS, HM, Shiv Sena, and the Bajrang Dal. The Students Islamic Movement, Jamaat-e-Islami, and several other fundamentalist Islamic organisations have also been banned with immediate

effect. The list of banned organisations covers over 200 organisations in all. Membership in these organisations is prohibited and would attract criminal prosecution under the Secular India Act.

A second list published simultaneously includes social organisations active within the country that must change their names and byelaws or constitutions to bring them out of the purview of the same Act, or face a ban. This list includes organisations such as the YMCA, YWCA, the Salvation Army, All India Hindu Students Union, All India Muslim Students Union and the like. These organisations have been given a period of three months to act. The ban will kick in automatically after 90 days if they do not file the required changes with the appropriate authority—the registrar of societies, companies, etc.

Organisations on the first list have no such options and are absolutely banned. The simultaneous Constitutional Amendment passed last month along with the Secular State Act (SSA) denies such organisations any recourse to the courts of law to avoid banning. Bank accounts, fixed and movable assets belonging to or even in the use of such organisations stand forfeited and automatically vest with the State with effect from the date of notification of the SSA.

Various state and central government enforcement agencies are conducting workshops for their staff to familiarize them with the provisions of the SSA.

New breeze blows in Quetta

First woman municipal chief takes office

Quetta, July 14, 2006. (PTI)

A new municipal committee took office today in this frontier town after a fiercely fought election battle. The newly elected mayor, Ms Nasreen Jahan Bano, an

independent candidate, all of 36 years of age, says that her main task would be to develop better civic amenities, including roads and water supply for the inhabitants of this rapidly growing city. Water recycling plants are among her priorities as almost 80 percent of domestically used water is trucked in from distances up to 200 km away.

Two years ago this was a dusty town near the Afghanistan border. More Kalashnikovs were seen in the town than bicycles. Muslim jihadi groups ruled the roost. The Pakistan government had long given up any pretext of ruling the area and the only law was that of the AK 47.

Today the city has all the ingredients of a boomtown. New construction is visible everywhere. The roads are busy with heavily laden trucks plying on the lucrative cross-border trade between India and Afghanistan. They carry manufactured goods of all conceivable sorts including food, textiles, scooters, refrigerators, cars and return with fruits, dry and fresh including the fabled grapes of Chaman. Quetta has become the major jumping-off point for the trade between India and Afghanistan. Schools and colleges are mushrooming as citizens realize the benefits of modern education. Traditional schools (madaras) are less well attended than before and some have actually had to shut down for lack of students.

On the streets in increasing numbers are young people in clothes indistinguishable from what the young everywhere in India wear. Boys and increasingly now girls zoom around on motorbikes and scooters. Cyber cafes do a roaring business and are open from early morning to late at night. Satellite dishes and cable TV are everywhere. TVs in hotels restaurants are tuned to MTV more than any other channel. The WWII vintage airport is being upgraded and now at least three different Indian airlines ply daily flights to points in western India, New Delhi and beyond.

Oil Struck

But the biggest influence on the life of these border areas is by far due to the presence of oil exploration company hardhats. Exploratory wells are being sunk after ONGC surveys indicated the presence of abundant deposits of natural gas and oil below the harsh brown mountains. If deposits prove to fulfill the predictions then boomtime will actually have arrived for the entire region. A new refinery and pipelines are already being planned to transport petroleum products to the rest of the country and to Afghanistan. Local sources report that real estate prices in Quetta are climbing rapidly.

The former NWFP and Baluchistan were under Sharia rule under the former political dispensation. Today one would find it hard to believe that mullahs and their militant supporters called the shots not so very long ago.

Singh conferred Bharat Ratna

New Delhi, October 2, 2006. (TNN)

The nation saluted yet another illustrious son of India today on Gandhi Jayanti as the nation's highest award the Bharat Ratna was conferred on Brij Mohan Singh, by the President of India, Mr APJ Abdul Kalam. The ceremony was held in the splendid Ashoka Hall of the Rashtrapati Bhavan. The large group of invitees who witnessed the impressive ceremony included the Prime Minister and her cabinet colleagues, prominent political leaders, the service chiefs, captains of industry and diplomats. They gave a standing ovation to Mr. Singh who accepted the award seated in a wheelchair.

The citation read out acclaimed his vision and boldness in breaking away from conventional paradigms and laying the firm foundations of not only probity in political life but also of secularism, on which rested India's rapid progress to

a place in the ranks of the world's greatest nations. The world had watched with awe as India under Singh's tutelage had been unshackled from the cancer of religious fundamentalism of every stripe and had speedily succeeded in directing India's energy towards improving the lot of its citizens and to strengthening its economy. Today India was the world's second largest economy after the United States.

A visibly moved Mr. Singh spoke a few minutes with Prime Minister Wadhvani at the conclusion of the ceremony as another Bharat Ratan, President Kalam, gazed benignly on them.

My War Diary

Yangon, June 6th, 2015.

Bangladesh had been India's last major operation. In the intervening 11 years till the next military action the attention of the Indian government was directed fully at integrating the three countries (India, Pakistan and Bangladesh). The US helped materially and donors found that dollars went farther than before. Well, not all that much, but yes, farther than before.

A great many of the citizens of erstwhile Bangladesh had just picked up their meager belongings and caught the first bus or train into India. There were several other migrations or adjustments of populations around the country. Once the border with Pakistan had been dismantled a large number of mohajirs or their descendants moved back into Punjab and Haryana, Uttar Pradesh and Bihar, the places their grandfathers had left more than 50 years ago. Bihari farm workers already forming the major bulk of the workforce in Indian Punjab continued their westward trek. These workers and their families had already caused a demographic shift in Indian Punjab

gradually replacing a great number of Punjab's youth who had been steadily moving to the UK and Canada. They were skilled and hardworking and soon in great demand in the cotton fields of erstwhile Sindh and West Punjab.

Many Sindhis living on India's west coast for several generations, in Gujarat and Mumbai, moved back to Sindh state, which had Karachi as its capital. Malayalam and Tamil were heard spoken in the bazaars of the former NWFP, now renamed Seemastan. These movements of people with skills and business acumen boosted the economies of these regions, and therefore of India itself.

The L.R. Wadhvani-headed national government lasted its full term of five years. During this period the Congress Party basking in Mr. Brij Mohan Singh's aura found itself rejuvenated, without much conscious effort on its part. It found a new constituency in East Bengal and the new West Indian states. A new generation of leadership emerged which was young, dynamic and had a different worldview.

The BJP, despite Wadhvani's personal popularity, went into serious decline with the exit of his government, and could not come to power in even one state. The Communists in Bengal fell, their vote banks diluted by the sudden influx of new voters who found a better representative in 'Didi' Mamata Bannerjee. Sheikh Hasina found she had no role in East Bengal and retired from active politics. She kept herself busy with the affairs of the Banga Bandhu Memorial Trust, which in addition to keeping alive the memory of her father Sheikh Mujib-ur-Rahman also acted as a mother NGO, a major development-promoting agency, for the entire state of Bengal. Begum Zia was given a one-way ticket to London where she joined Ms Benazir Bhutto in permanent exile. Mian Nawaz Sharif was also politely informed by Wadhvani's government that he was not welcome in India and he

spend his time playing golf with one time archenemy Pervez Musharraf in Saudi Arabia.

In the 2010 general elections, the Indian National Congress came to power at the Centre on its own. The Congress MP who represented a part of Karachi, a Sindhi gentleman in his early fifties named AK Lalvani, was elected parliamentary party leader of the INC and sworn in as India's Prime Minister. Another Sindhi gentleman who had represented the saffron brigade in the eighties and nineties never made it beyond the Dy Prime Minister's job, in the Wadhvani government. He gradually withered away politically as there were few takers now for his rath yatras and his special interest in reclaiming places of worship. People were just too busy doing more important things like making money.

The population of India was now better balanced with almost 40 percent Muslims. With no Pakistani bogey left to rant against, the saffron brigade lost support as the younger membership jumped ship scrambling to get a piece of the burgeoning economic pie that was the new India. A few old men in khaki shorts were left polishing their trishuls in the confines of their homes, leafing through yellowing news clippings of their days of glory.

The annexation of East Bengal had opened up the land routes to the northeastern states and travel became quicker now. Goods and services flowed easily in and out of the region and within the short span of five years from the reunion of East Bengal economic prosperity had driven the remnants of militancy and separatism over-ground into the political mainstream. Development and prosperity touched the lives of the people.

The North-East is now a must-see destination not only for domestic tourists but also for tourists from around the globe. Agricultural production is now at its highest level ever and during North India's harsh summer months the NE

supplies it with fruits, vegetables and flowers. This horticultural cornucopia also provisions the countries of the Arabian Gulf and Europe.

Imphal is now connected to Kolkata by railway through East Bengal. The Konkan Rail Corporation constructed the numerous rail bridges that were required for this. The Rajdhani Express from Imphal now takes just 22 hours to reach New Delhi.

Within a few short years India's growing economic prosperity began drawing a straggling line of illegal immigrants from across the Myanmar border to the northeastern states. Many of them were seeking a better life and economic benefits, but most were fleeing from the repression of the military junta. Along with them came people with well-established lines of communications with the drug dealers of the Golden Triangle in northern Myanmar. The northeastern states were always very sensitive to ethnic change, and before long a backlash by the local Meitei population of Manipur brought the matter to the attention of the central government. Alarmed by the developing situation and unwilling to let the NE experience go sour, the Government of India asked the Myanmarese government to take back its citizens and prevent further migration. This was ignored by the Myanmerese rulers which led to heightened tensions on the border.

What was to come next did not need an astrologer to foretell.

It was late by the time I returned to the hotel. I walked through dark but peaceful streets. Though there was the threat of rain, people were taking advantage of the cool night air sleeping on the sidewalks and even on the roads where there weren't any sidewalks.

There was no traffic at this time of the night, but then this was probably true even in normal times. I walked up the stairs to my functionally furnished first floor room. Stripping off my sweat-heavy clothes I took a tepid shower.

Pulling on a lungi I sat at the solitary desk and unscrewed the bottle of scotch I always carried in honour of my friends of the army camp near Karachi so many years ago (what was the name of that young cameraman of mine who'd got shot in the leg? Tamil chap?). It would never have made it through customs had the military still been in control of U Nu International. I poured myself a three finger shot.

I picked up my battered laptop and booted it up. Lighting a cigarette I sat staring at the blinking cursor for what seemed like hours. It had been a long journey. Lahore, Karachi, Quetta, Peshawar, Kathmandu, Dhaka and today Yangon. I chuckled quietly as I thought of one of my early editors: I never *did* find the time to get married - no wife or dependents! Still free and unattached and this war correspondent was rapidly running out of wars! Finally I typed out the dateline:

Yangon (Rangoon), Myanmar (Burma), 6th June 2015
(Reuters)

'Today India, that is *Vishaal Bharat*, attains its historic destiny ...'

Epilogue

2015: India Overtakes China

New Delhi, 13 December, 2015. Editorial (Excerpt) – *The South Asian Reporter*

Today the census bureau released its eagerly awaited official report. This is the first official census carried out in reunited India. Of course it was not the usual decadal census but a rapid head count.

So here it is:

Our total population is 1.6 billion.

A Malthusian nightmare? Today political leaders and economists have begun taking a different view of our population figures. The word seems to be going around that far from being a disaster, our huge population is our greatest asset. Watch this space for more details as they come out.

Who bombed Kashmir? The Enduring Mystery

Ashokpuram, 23 December, 2015. Editorial— *The South Asia Times* (incorporating *The Times of India*)

The mystery of who had bombed Kashmir remains till today.

Neither Pakistan, while it lasted, nor the Indian government of the day, ever owned up to it or provided

conclusive evidence of who did it. On the street, people indicted other 'villains' including the Israelis, the Americans, a few even thought it was the Russians. Most feel today that it had been terrorist groups, who had 'liberated' 'Islamic' bombs or IEDs from Pakistan's leaky nuclear arsenal and had detonated them.

But why on their own side of the border?

Debates continued and are resurrected every year on the anniversary of the horrible day where increasingly grey talking heads expose their ignorance on TV shows.

Some even suspected that the whole episode was stage managed by the Americans with the tacit approval of the Indian government. A final solution to a festering problem. Excision of a cancerous growth that also took away a lot of healthy tissue. "Collateral damage" was the diplomatic euphemism. Exponents of the theory maintained that this not only eliminated all the 'Jehadis' but also rendered their objective unattainable for at least the next fifty years.

Sounds plausible, but true? The debate continues and the only strange truth is that ten years on there is not the slightest leak about who did it and why.

The total count initially had been approximately two million dead, but as the monsoon swept radiation clouds deeper into the northern reaches of Pakistan, it went up to over three million. That's the size of the population of many countries. No one really knew how many had actually perished.

Some of the other hidden facts of the war have already surfaced. For example the Israeli Phalcons deployed early by India. India and Israel had already signed an agreement for India's purchase of the 76 mounted AWACS in 2003, but by the time hostilities broke out only one plane had been delivered by Israel. Acting urgently on an Indian

request, Sharon had deployed Phalcons from Israel's own armed forces, hastily re-painted in Indian Air Force colours, complete with Israeli technicians and aircrew. Not perhaps the first instance of "wet leasing" air force planes by a country to another; the Soviets had done it all the time in Eastern Europe.

Another subterfuge was the refitting of Indian submarines at Vladivostok. The submarines US satellites had shown being re-fitted actually had been Russian. The seven Indian submarines had already been refitted and were en route to India the day Indian tanks had rolled over the border with Pakistan. At the time the US armada was being assembled in the Arabian Sea, the seven were already deployed in the region although careful track was being kept of those in the sub yards in Vladivostock by western intelligence agencies and satellites.

The substitution came to light only when the specialists analyzing the satellite photographs noticed that the markings on the submarines were being changed every few days. One day they would be Indian colours and two days later the same vessels would bear Russian northern fleet markings, and three days later they would be Indian again. The perplexed Americans realised they had been had the day they had stared in disbelief at photographs that had the Russian subs marked with the numbers of US nuclear submarines of the Atlantic command. Unfortunately the photos did not show the Russian naval commanders doubled over in laughter at their American counterparts. Due to their huge intelligence failure the Americans would have never admitted it but a French newspaper joyfully revealed it to the world three years later, doubtless with some Russian assistance.

May 2025: *Vishaal Bharat* - Twenty Years On...

Ashokpuram, 15 May 2025. Excerpt from editorial - *The South Asian Reporter*, State of the Nation annual issue

The last two decades have seen the South Asian subcontinent emerge as one of the political and economic powerhouses of the world. The region, home to one-sixth of the world's population, is now responsible for 22 percent of the international trade in money terms and over 30 percent in volume. India ranks as the no.1 trading partner of the US and is also closely allied politically and militarily to it through the Indo-US JoMiCo (Joint Military Command), which polices over half the globe.

In recent years this alliance has midwived the birth of the United Republic of Korea, and has uprooted Islamic terrorists based in Indonesia and the Philippines. This followed its historic achievement in Afghanistan where for the first time in history a Kabul government has been able to achieve control over a large portion of the country. This was a result of the highly successful hammer and anvil strategy that used the (now standard) 'take no prisoners' policy when dealing with those declared to be terrorists and their supporters, or harbourers, wherever found worldwide. Thus JoMiCo has been able to permanently wipe out border warlords and private armies from India's 'Wild West' Frontier region and from Afghanistan. Human rights activists have cried themselves hoarse over what they term genocide but the Indo-US juggernaut has carried on regardless. Though the Taliban and their Al Qaeda friends have disappeared the country traditionally divided along tribal lines has been unable to throw up a really stable government, still a matter for concern.

Today the former 'Wild West' region is one of the most prosperous in India with booming oil revenues and

attendant spin-offs. Practically every Indian language spoken and many foreign languages too can be heard in the bazaars from Quetta to Peshawar. State of the art institutions of higher learning are seen cheek by jowl with modern factories and refineries. Petroleum products and power generated here are sent to all over the country and Afghanistan. Per capita income of the state of Seemastan is the second highest in India. All this was made possible after peace had been firmly established and policed on both sides of the border.

The mood in the northeastern states of India is similarly upbeat. Blessed with a mild and moist climate these states have emerged as the major suppliers of agricultural produce including vegetables, flowers, fruit and processed foods to the rest of India, Europe and the Middle East. Over 75 percent of the world's premium varieties of orchid are grown here and are exported all over the globe. The shorter land and air linkages with the rest of India enabled all this prosperity after the union of Bangladesh with India.

The union of Bangladesh with West Bengal has resulted in a slowing of emigration from erstwhile Bangladesh as goods, services and the benefits of India's massive economy began filtering down to this area. Kolkata which had been reviled as a 'dying city' once again showed signs of revival with increased economic activity. This was boosted by the establishment of New Kolkata on the other side of the former border connected to it by high-speed train and sea links. Today 'East Bengal' is the main 'mandi' (marketplace) for the produce of the NE states with dozens of international flights taking off daily from its three international airports, and also the starting point for international tourists visiting the northeastern states.

The status of Myanmar within *Vishaal Bharat* is unique. The country is part of the South Asian Federation, which comprises India, Myanmar and Nepal, with Sri Lanka and the Maldives waiting for admittance. Myanmar has its Provincial Assembly (PA) in which all the former states and territories are represented. The PA sends ten representatives to the SAF Assembly in Ashokpuram. The PA has control over all matters except education, currency, defence and foreign affairs. All Acts of the PA have to be ratified by the SAF assembly before implementation. Myanmar has the right to fly its own flag which is its original flag now incorporating the Ashoka Chakra on a field of white (the SAF emblem) in the upper left corner.

Newly developed roads link Myanmar with the rest of the country by way of the longest super expressway of the subcontinent. Called the Vajpayee Super Expressway – 'VSE' - it runs from Yangon to Peshawar, a distance of 4675 kms, via Dhaka, Kolkata, Ashokpuram, Delhi and Lahore. The VSE has resulted in the rapid movement of goods and people across the subcontinent. Additional highways link Myanmar to Tripura and Manipur and the other NE states.

A branch of the southern route of the Trans Asian Railway (TAR), recently completed and closely following the VSE, now makes it possible to travel or to ship freight from Yangon to Peshawar and even beyond, for instance, to Frankfurt by rail. The Ashoka Superfast Express takes only 26 hours from Yangon to Ashokpuram. A spur of TAR links up with the Indian rail network via Manipur and Nagaland at Guwahati. This hilly track was developed by a joint venture between the Swiss National Railway and IRCON.

Indian ships carry freight from Yangon to various ports such as Chittagong, Port Blair, Kolkata, Vizag, Chennai, Kochi, Mumbai, Kandla and Karachi.

An ambitious river waterway project is underway to link the mighty Brahmaputra with the Irrawaddy. This new linkage, in the northeast, will follow ancient channels that have silted up and are extinct but have been visualized by remote sensing. The hydroelectric potential of this river system is expected to make Myanmar an exporter of electric power to the eastern states of India.

Myanmar is developing new oil fields. 'Burmah Oil' is once again known throughout Vishaal Bharat. The timber industry is engaged in massive reforestation projects to replace those cut down during the military regime. Education has received a boost with private institutions of higher learning coming up all over the country. A new IIT was dedicated by the President of India at Mandalay, a few months ago.

All this intense economic activity and the better educational opportunities, which have resulted from them, have raised standards of living. A recent opinion poll commissioned, but subsequently played down by opposition parties revealed that 69 percent of the voters of Myanmar did not favour full independence but were satisfied with the present status of the country.

The South Asian Federation established in 2009 succeeded SAARC, which became meaningless after the monumental events earlier in the decade. The headquarters and secretariat were established in the newly founded city of Ashokpuram, near Allahabad in Purvanchal state (the eastern part of former Uttar Pradesh). Ashokpuram commemorates Emperor Ashok who unified a large chunk of the subcontinent. The size of his empire is rivaled only today by SAF.

The President of India is the *ex officio* president of SAF, and the Indian Prime Minister its Secretary General. The 25 members of the Governing Council represent persons

with expertise from all walks of life of the nation and do not represent any particular geographical region. Regional representation is to the General Assembly. The Indian Parliament in New Delhi constitutionally has the power to negate and nullify any decision of the SAF bodies, but this authority has never been exercised in the last fifteen years. SAF has no armed forces under its command.

Electoral Reforms

The electoral reforms enacted during L.R. Wadhvani's time (popularly known as the Seshan Act - after India's most outstanding Chief Election Commissioner in the twentieth century) have gradually changed the face of electoral democracy. Restrictions to election to Parliament's lower house - the Lok Sabha—to those with a graduate degree, and to those with two children or less together with the provision of the law that card carrying members of any political party were ineligible for ministerships has changed the composition of Parliament and the nature of its deliberations. Thus today more than half of the MPs are independents. Furthermore, those elected on party tickets are not allowed to formally join any other party lifelong. They could resign their party membership but would lose their parliamentary seats and would not be eligible to stand for future elections as independents.

The role of political parties has by this action been greatly devalued and elections are now fought on issues, local or national, rather than on political rhetoric.

No pensions are applicable to MPs. This has encouraged them to not regard politics as a full time vocation or as a means of livelihood. In the last five years fully 45 percent of the MPs completed their terms and did not seek re-election but returned to their former occupations. It has also resulted in a significant saving to the state exchequer as reported in the Finance Minister's speech this spring.

On the international front, American diplomats continue their dialogue with their Indian counterparts in Ashokpuram as they seek to enhance India's involvement in settling the Afghanistan problem. The chronic inability of any 'elected' leader to remain in office for more than a year, and the intransigence of Afghan warlords operating in west and north Afghanistan, and across the Uzbek border has been a source of immense frustration to the United States. Sources in Washington have been stating that as Afghanistan is a 'South Asian' country, India should assume more 'responsibility' in that country.

The Indian Government is taking its time to respond.

Kashmir should be declared a National Park: NGOs

Ashokpuram 25 May 2025, (SANS)

Over a thousand people today held a demonstration in front of the SAF secretariat building demanding that the Government abandon its proposal for the resettlement of Kashmir. They demanded that Kashmir be preserved as a natural biosphere as well as a memorial to the millions of innocent people who lost their lives there in the year 2005.

Several citizens' groups and NGOs, both South Asian and from countries abroad have been asking that the Kashmir valley be declared a National Park as of now, and that no human habitation be allowed in the future. While no plans have been finalized yet, as the area is said to be uninhabitable for at least thirty years more, the government has been asking for a discussion on the future of the state.

Index

- Abdul Kalam, APJ, President 128, 170, 175
- Afghanistan 41, 71
- Akhnoor 13
- Al Qaeda 53, 73, 104, 199, 224,
- All India Hindu Students Union 212
- Ambala military bases, Pakistani missiles target 20
- American diplomacy 85
- American Express 113
- Amnesty International 185
- APHC 62
- Arabian Sea, US build-up in the 59
- Ashoka, Emperor 133
- Awami League (AL) Party 190, 196
- Bahawalpur 57
- Bajrang Dal 211
- Baluchistan 5, 176
- Banga Bandhu Memorial Trust 216
- Bangladesh 146
- Peoples Party (BPP) 190
- Rifles (BDR) 195
- civil war like situation in 193
- reunification of erstwhile 152
- Bank of America 113
- Bannerjee, Mamata 216
- BBC 69
- Begums of Dhaka 190
- Beijing, International Friendship Park in 142
- Bengal, the *United* 7
- Bharat Ratna 214
- Bhutto, Ms. Benazir 216
- Black Hawk helicopters 79
- Blair, Tony, British Prime Minister 71
- Border Security Force (BSF) 23, 195
- Brij Mohan Singh, Indian PM 27, 76, 79, 143
- Brussels, EU Headquarters 33
- Bush, George, American President 9, 26, 64, 76, 83
- C 130 Hercules aircraft 79
- Cabinet Committee on Security (CCS) 24
- Camp David meeting 9, 65
- Ceasefire, Bush demands immediate 49
- Chechnya 71
- Chennai 6
- China 160
- China, India Overtakes 221

- CDMA Phone 119
 CIA 32
 Citicorp 113
 CNN 48, 69, 82
 reporter 41
 Cyber war 127

 Dal Lake 36
 Dhaka 5
 Violence continues in 192
 Disarmament of India & Pakistan
 50, 125
 Drug Factories 7
 Duma, Russia's Parliament 141

 East Germany, failed states as 145
 East Pakistan 7
 Election Commission of India 178
 Emergency, Pak Government
 declares 18
 EU Headquarters in Brussels 33
 Europe, anti-nuclear protests 33
 European Space Agency (ESA)
 132

 F14 US Navy fighter jets 79
 Farooqui, Lt. Gen., Pakistani
 "Military Commander", 51
 FBI 177
 Fernandes, George 142
 Fortress Andaman 5

 Gandhi Jayanti 214
 Gen., Zia-ul-Haq 56, 68
 German experience 199
 Golden Temple 218
 Mail 97
 Golden Triangle drug factories 7
 Grand Trunk Road 39, 44

 Gulf of Kutchch 60
 Gyanendra, King of Nepal 106

 Hackers, Indian 112
 Hamid, AS., Lt. Gen., 136
 Hamid, M., Lt. Gen. 43
 Hanson, Jerry, CIA Director 32
 Hijacking of an Indian Airlines
 Airbus at Kandhar 63
 Hindu government of India 43
 Hindukush mountains 184
 Huen Tsang, Chinese traveler 142
 Human Rights Watch 185
 Hussainiwala sector, fierce battle
 in 20
 Hussein, Saddam 144

 IAF Controls Pak skies 20
 ICBM, India launches 132
 IL-76 planes 105
 India & Pakistan, US seeks forcible
 disarmament of 50
 India, 40 N-warheads disarmed in
 125
 India, Bangla refugees to 195
 India, Mohajir groups supporting
 126
 India, UN intervention to get
 American troops out of 102
 Indian 'occupation' of Kashmir 63
 Indian Administrative Services
 (IAS) 139, 177
 Indian Air Force 39
 Indian authorities, FBI and the CIA
 are assisting 177
 Indian Coast, US Naval Armada
 gathering off 52
 Indian hackers 112
 Indian National Congress (INC) 25

- Indian Police Service (IPS) 139
Indian Prime Minister, Brij Mohan Singh 27, 76, 79, 143
L. R. Wadhvani 24, 148, 169, 173, 207
A K Lalwani 7, 217
Indian railways 97
Indian Space Research Organisation (ISRO) 133
Indian Sukhoi warplanes 92
Indian tricolour 5
Indian web sites, Pakistani hackers attacks 127
Indian Air Force 14, 18, 34, 84, 182
Indira Gandhi International Airport 79
Indo-US relations, normalization of 183
Indus to the Irrawaddy 5
INS Jawaharlal 6
Inter Services Intelligence (ISI) 62
International Atomic Energy Regulatory Agency 28
International Court of Justice 185
International Friendship Park in Beijing 142
Internet collapse 119
Iraq II, 39
Iraq, Civilian government in 125
Islamabad 56
uneasy calm in 40
Islamic Bomb 51, 74, 104
Israel 35
- Jaguar fighter-bomber, British-made 19
Johnstone, Dr. Harvey E., 65
Jamaat-e-Islami 211
Jammu & Kashmir 8
Jaswant Singh, Defence Minister, 183
Jehadi terrorists 8
Jehadis 34
Jha, Raj Kishore 131
JKLF 62
- Kahlon, KS, Brigadier 14, 34
Kahuta nuclear complex 93
Kalam, APJ Abdul 128, 170, 175
Karachi port 13
Karachi, Battle for 123
Karachi, China condemns capture of 141
Karachi, Pakistan's commercial capital 95
Karen tribesmen 7
Karzai government in Kabul 182
Kashmir holocaust 76
Kashmir Islamic Front 62
Kashmir People's Party 62
Kashmir Valley, no survivors in 36
Kashmir, no life forms found in 166
Kashmir, nuclear strikes in 26
Khyber Pass 41
King Gyanendra 106
Kon Tiki, US space shuttle 118, 160
Krishnan, R. General 188
- Lahore encircled, 20
Lalwani, A. K., Indian PM 7, 217
Larry, King 117
Lok Sabha 174
London, anti Blair-Bush protest rock 70
Ludhiana, Pakistani missiles target 20

- Malviya, NL, Lt. Gen., 136
Mandela, Nelson 150
Maoists of Nepal 107, 108
Mastercard and Visa, credit card
 giants 113
Microsoft 116
Mohajirs 96,126
Musharraf, Pervez 9, 76
Muslim minority 169
Myanmar (Burma) 5
 military rulers of 6
- NASA 118, 154
NASSCOM 127
National Defence Academy
 (NDA) 17
National government 173
Nepal 105, 201
 Communist Party 202
Nepali National Congress 202
New Delhi, US President George
 Bush arrived in 79
New Delhi's occupation by
 American forces 108
New York 71
North Korea
 +7, 102
N-weapon use, India strongly
 denies 34
N-weapons, Bush calls for
 surrender of all 63
NWFP (North West Frontier
 Province) 64
- ONGC 214
Operation Brass Tacks 67
- Pakistan** 5
 Occupied Kashmir (PoK) 28
- Rangers 23
 dismembering of 186
 India's invasion of 14
 Indian advance continued into
 39
 Indian forces in 53
 merger of the Indian state of
 Jammu & Kashmir 8
 Musharraf unable to land in 19
 no mention of the word 145
 the fall of 74
 US troops enter 92
- Pakistan's ISI 14
Pakistan's nuclear programme 53
Pakistan's Punjab and Sindh
 provinces 18
Pakistan's Punjab province 20
Pakistani Air Force 20
Pakistani nukes, 'mad mullahs'
 who control the 103
Pakistani PTV station 41
Palestine 154
Pentagon 111, 125
People's War Group (PWG) 107
Peshawar 39, 56, 225
Phalcon AWACS 57, 82, 182
PoK 14, 56
Powell, Colin 77, 140
Punjab, storm and fury of battle
 in 24
Punjab, the reunited 5
Punjabi-dominated army 66
Putin, Russian President 35
- Qaid-e-Azam (Mohd. Ali Jinnah)
 42
Quetta 225
- Radioactive fallout 36

- Rajasthan, Indian state of 13
 Rashtrapati Bhawan 79, 170
 Rawalpindi 56
 Reagan's Stars wars agenda 165
 Red Fort, Wadhvani unfurls
 tricolour over 178
 Refugees, Bangla 195
 Reliance CDMA phone 119
 Research and Analysis Wing
 (RAW) 105
 Reunification Bill, PM introduces
 historic 143
 Royal Nepal Army 108
 RSS 211
 Rumsfeld, Donald 125
 Russia, long-term Indian ally 50
 Russia's Vladivostok submarine
 base 61
 Russian President Putin 35
- SAARC 227
 Salvation Army, 212
 Sangh Parivar, Govt. bans 211
 Secular India bill, Lok Sabha passes
 207
 Secular State Act (SSA) 212
 Seemastan, North West Frontier
 Province (NWFP) renamed 5,
 143
Shaheen, China built Pak Missile
 frigate 67
 Sharia law 177
 Sharif, Nawaz 56
 Sheikh Hasina, Begum 195
 Sheikh Mujib-ur-Rehman 216
 Sher Shah Suri, Grand Trunk Road
 of 39, 44
 Shiv Sena 211
 Sindh 5
 Indian state of 6
- Soaltee Hotel 201
 South Asian Federation 227
 Srinagar 36
 Stars Wars package 162
 Students Islamic Movement
 211
 Sukhoi Warplanes, Indian 92
 Sun Microsystems 116
- Taliban 182, 224
 resurgence of the 73
 Thapa, SB 202
 Tibetan Military Railway 90,
 142
 Trans Asian Railway (TAR) 226
 Tribal warlords 181
 Tribhuvan International Airport,
 Kathmandu 105
- United Nations 27
 UN International Atomic Energy
 26
 UN Security Council 49
 U Nu International airport 6
 US and India, two largest
 democracies on earth 186
 US Marines 79, 87
 US mission 'accomplished' 125
 US nuclear disarmament specialists
 125
 US trained Afghan Army 184
 US, Indian protests to 91
 USA, complete TV and Telecom
 black out in 116
- Vaishno Devi, the Hindu shirne 8
Viraat, Indian Navy's aircraft
 carrier 58
Vishaal Bharat 5, 187
 Vishwa Hindu Parishad 211

Vladivostok, refitting of Indian submarines at 223	Winfrey Oprah 117 World Wide Web 120
Wadhvani, L. R., Indian PM 24, 148, 169	Yangon (Rangoon) 5 YMCA 212
Wagah border 23	
Water, Contamination of 124	Zial-ul-Haq, Gen., 56, 68
West Bengal, Indian state 7	
White House 76, 114	

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