

Annual Report 1979-1980 Supplement

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SUPPLEMENT TO THE REPORT OF THE MINISTRY OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS 1979-80

The three months since the Report of the Ministry of External Affairs went to the press at the end of March, 1980, were a period of intense diplomatic activity in which India played a patient and energetic role. The two momentous events of these three months were the independence of Zimbabwe (18th April) and the death of Marshal Tito of Yugoslavia (4th May). The Prime Minister was present at the ceremonies on both these occasions and had talks with several world leaders. Amongst these were: President Brezhnev of the USSR, President Kolisevski of Yugoslavia, President Zia of Pakistan, President Kaunda of Zambia, President Nyerere of Tanzania, President Gierek of Poland, President Ceausescu of Romania, President Saddam Hussain of Iraq, President Shahu Shagari of Nigeria, President Sekou Toure of Guinea, the Vice-President of Cuba, Chancellor Helmut Schmidt of the FRG, Prime Minister Djuranovic of Yugoslavia, Prime Minister Robert Mugabe of Zimbabwe, Prime Minister Burnham of Guyana, Prime Minister Mrs. Thatcher of Britain, Premier Ohira of Japan, Premier Hua Guo Feng of China, Secretary General Waldheim of U.N. and former Chancellor Willy Brandt of FRG. These meetings emphasised that there is expectation of greater contribution by India in healing the rifts between nations at a time of heightened peril to mankind.

The underlying causes of tension in our region continued to fester as evidenced by the situations in Afghanistan, Iran and West Asia becoming interlocked. The period also witnessed several important meetings of international leaders to resolve the differences arising over Afghanistan. These meetings vindicated the Indian position that there is no alternative to a political settlement.

India's concern and involvement and our continuing diplomatic activity have been reflected in visits abroad by Indian leaders and by our receiving foreign

dignitaries.

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The Foreign Minister, Shri Narasimha Rao visited Paris and Bonn in March; Sardar Swaran Singh visited Islamabad in April; the Foreign Secretary, Shri R. D. Sathe visited Kabul in May and the Foreign Minister visited Moscow from 3rd to 7th June, in the course of which he met President Brezhnev and other Soviet leaders. During the visit, matters of mutual interest were discussed, leading to a clear understanding of each other's points of view. The visit served to underline the importance that we and the Soviet Union attach to our mutual ties which are growing in strength and dimension.

We also received the Foreign Ministers of Cuba, Yugoslavia, Czechoslovakia, Bulgaria, Hungary and Romania during this period. Mr. Roy Jenkins, President of the Commission of the EEC, Dr. Ramphal, the Secretary of the Commonwealth Secretariat and Mr. Gisha Phillipov, Member of the Politburo of Bulgaria also visited India.

The meeting of the Prime Minister with President Zia-ul-Haq at Salisbury was a pointer to the prospects of friendly cooperation and mutual understanding. However, it was with regret and disappointment that India noted President Zia's uncalled for reference to Kashmir at the Islamic Foreign Ministers' Conferences in January and May, which we consider to be inconsistent with the spirit of the Simla Agreement.

Bangladesh has proposed a summit meeting of six South Asian countries to promote regional cooperation. India has welcomed this and emphasised the need for careful preparatory work that must be done before a summit meeting could prove fruitful.

The visit of Shri Eric Gonsalves, Secretary (East), to Rangoon in the first week of May for discussions with the Burmese Foreign Minister provided an opportunity to review cooperation and contacts with this neighbour.

Secretary (ER), Shri Romesh Bhandari, visited Iran in February and had discussions with President Bani Sadr and other Iranian leaders. The visit to New Delhi of Mr. Reza Sadr, Commerce Minister of the Islamic Republic

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of Iran, in June 1980, who was accompanied by a number of Deputy Ministers of different Ministries including the Deputy Foreign Minister, was symbolic of the close relations between India and Iran and the desire to establish a new economic relationship between the two countries.

Full diplomatic status to the PLO Mission in New Delhi was granted in March. Chairman Yasser Arafat visited India at the invitation of the Prime Minister. These two were significant developments in India's relations with the Arab world.

A PLO delegation visited India in May for the first meeting of the Joint Committee. The talks covered comprehensive cooperation between India and the PLO. Special envoys from Oman, Iraq, Tunisia, Algeria and Egypt visited India during this period. Secretary (ER), Shri Romesh Bhandari, visited Saudi Arabia, UAE, Kuwait and Qatar.

The Iraqi Oil Minister Mr. Tayeh Abdul Karim led Iraq's delegation to the sixth session of the Indo-Iraq Joint Commission in April.

President Carter issued an executive order in June authorising the supply of enriched uranium fuel for Tarapur. However, President Carter's executive order will lie in the Congress for sixty continuous days and will become effective unless overturned by both Houses of Congress.

The Prime Minister visited Salisbury for the Independence celebrations of Zimbabwe at the invitation of Prime Minister Robert Mugabe. The Indian delegation, which included the Foreign Minister, was treated with great friendship and warmth, being received and seen off by the President, Prime Minister and others in the new Government. During their talks, India's readiness to help the new country in the task of rehabilitation was conveyed. India's Liaison Mission in Salisbury was upgraded to a High Commission on 18 April. Zimbabwe's membership of the Commonwealth is also a welcome development. On their way

to Zimbabwe, the Prime Minister and the Foreign Minister paid an official visit to Tanzania on 16-17 April.

With the emergence of free Zimbabwe the focus of international attention in Africa must now shift to Namibia

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and South Africa itself. The Prime Minister met the SWAPO Leader, Mr. Sam Njoma, in Salisbury.

Three African Heads of State who visited Delhi during this period were President Mobutu Sese Seko of Zaire (31 March-2 April), President Kaunda of Zambia and President France Albert Rene of Seychelles. India is to open a resident mission in Mahe (Seychelles) in the near future.

The first Indo-ASEAN dialogue at the official level was held in Kuala Lumpur on May 15, 1980-16 May. The Indian delegation was led by Shri Eric Gonsalves, Secretary (East). It was the first such dialogue between ASEAN and a developing country. A broad joint programme of action in the areas of trade, industrial and scientific cooperation was agreed to. As a preparatory step to the Indo-ASEAN dialogue, the Indian delegation visited all the ASEAN capitals and had useful discussions.

India has tried to help relieve the food shortage in Kampuchea by sending rice and rice seeds, apart from medicines and baby food. The question of recognition of the Heng Samrin regime is under the active consideration of Government.

The Vietnamese Prime Minister, Mr. Pham Van Dong, paid a State visit to India from April 7 to 12. India agreed to extend a government to government, credit of Rs. 5 crores to Vietnam to buy rolling stock, and industrial spare parts.

The Prime Minister met the Chinese Foreign Minister, Mr. Huang Hua, in Salisbury and the Chinese Premier, Mr. Hua Guo Feng in Belgrade. The Chinese Foreign Minister is due to visit India later this year. Preliminary discussions were held in mid-June when Shri Gonsalves, Secretary (East), visited Beijing. India has made it clear that the quest for normalised relations with China is not at the

cost of our friendship with any other country.

Contacts with other countries in East Asia were maintained. Mr. S. Sonoda, a special emissary of Japanese Prime Minister visited India in March and Mr. Tong Jin Park, then Foreign Minister of the Republic of Korea, at

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the end of March. Shri Gonsalves visited Pyong Yang and Tokyo in June.

In view of the recent deterioration in international relations some non-aligned countries proposed an extra-ordinary Ministerial meeting in July 1980. There was lack of consensus with regard to the venue, agenda and timing of the proposed conference. The group of non-aligned countries meeting in New York on Jun 18, 1980, accepted India's compromise proposal that the regular Ministerial conference of non-aligned countries which was to be held in New Delhi in 1981 be advanced to the early weeks of 1981 to review the international political and economic situation.

India took an active part in ongoing negotiations for the formulation of the International Development Strategy for the Third Development Decade and in the preparation for the Global Round of negotiations. Ministers of the Group of 77 met in New York in March 1980 to finalise their approach to the G77 proposals for the Agenda, time-frame and procedures for the Global Round of negotiations. Shri P. V. Narasimha Rao, Minister of External Affairs, led the Indian delegation to this meeting.

India participated in the high level meeting on Technical Cooperation among Developing Countries held under the aegis of the UNDP from 26th May to 2nd June 1980. Indian initiatives on the enlargement of the scope of TCDC and of financial resources to strengthen TCDC activities were accepted and found a place in the documents of the meeting.

The Foreign Minister undertook a review of the External Publicity Division in March, including the Chanchal Sarkar Committee Report. The Ministry has come to the conclusion that not all the recommendations of the Chanchal Sarkar Committee can be implemented. The Ministry plans to increase the number of

Information Sections in our Missions abroad in the next three years. Twenty-five new Information Sections are expected to be opened subject to availability of resources. A proposal to organise an editorial and re-write desk along with more printing

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facilities at Headquarters is also being considered so as to produce publicity material in English, French, Spanish and German. Our Centres in Cairo and Moscow to produce material in Arabic and Russian will also be strengthened.

Since March, 1980, a series of instructions have been issued to all our missions abroad providing guidelines for treatment of Indian visitors going abroad, and for interpreting Indian developments in correct perspective. Liaison has also been established with the Ministry of Information and Broadcasting, All India Radio, Department of Tourism and academic and other institutions involving publicity efforts within the institutional framework. Action has also been initiated to improve the equipment and facilities available in our Missions abroad for all libraries, reading rooms and audiovisual publicity work. Special attention is being directed to make our external publicity effort effective, purposive and prompt, taking into account the criticism and assessment of our external publicity work over the last few years. XP(Press)/7/80