

this nation's national security needs from the standpoint of the need to cut the budget. Paul Volcker, George Shultz, and George Bush are the principal actors disseminating this policy within the administration. Swiss influences within the administration such as C. Fred Iklé's and others' played a contributing role.

It is these gentlemen's influence which determined that the principal objective of Bush's trip to Europe would be to secretly conclude a hasty arms control deal with the Soviet Union. This deal, if concluded, will occur in the context of an imminent cut in U.S. spending on sophisticated weapons systems development, especially space-based defensive high-energy beam weapons. Moscow cannot fail to notice either this, or the general orgy of defense budget cutting now dominating the U.S. Congress.

No breakthrough will necessarily be announced when the Vice-President returns to Washington. It may be announced some time in March, or at some appropriate point of the congressional calendar at the height of the budget fight. In announcing the arms control deal, the administration may then proceed to triumphantly announce cuts in the defense budget according to Robert McNamara's formula. Moscow, with both its nuclear and conventional powder dry, will rejoice in seeing the United States committing itself to a career of a conventionally-only credible military power, content to deploy its troops for the sole purpose of collecting Third World debt on behalf of the European financial oligarchy.

### **A chaos scenario for the United States**

Senator Alan Cranston's announcement for the Democratic presidential race for 1984 is significant in its implications for the strategic maneuvers of 1983. In his Feb. 2 opening campaign speech, Cranston defined his policy as "ensuring economic recovery by means of an arms control deal with the Soviet Union. . . . The only way to recovery," the Senator from California intoned, "goes through an arms control deal with Moscow." It was intended as a signal to Mr. Andropov while Bush is in Europe.

A second Democratic presidential hopeful, Sen. Gary Hart, representing the Aspen Institute, flanked Cranston's signal with his own statement: "Defense Secretary Weinberger is courting world economic depression with his insistence on high defense spending." As the Democratic National Committee gathered on Feb. 3 for a four-day strategy meeting on how to mobilize the population against the Reagan budget, the signal to Mr. Andropov is clear: We are prepared to orchestrate a riot situation worse than 1968 in order to get the kinds of defense cuts required to persuade you, sir, to join us in a serious arms control deal.

Yuri V. Andropov is watching all this with a quiet smile. His motionless poise reminds one of a royal cobra before it strikes. Is the victim, Vice-President Bush, hypnotized? We shall know when the West German election returns come in on the evening of March 6, 1983. If Hans-Jochen Vogel is the winner, the cobra will have struck.

## **Indira Gandhi shuffles and tackles problems in**

by Paul Zykofsky in New Delhi

In the aftermath of the ruling Congress Party's losses in the two recent state elections, India's Prime Minister Indira Gandhi has begun the most comprehensive political clean-up operation at the national, state, and party levels since she took office three years ago. The first phase started Jan. 25 with the abrupt resignation of one of the government's ministers active in party affairs. This was quickly followed by the appointment of a veteran leader, Kamalapati Tripathi, to run the day-to-day affairs of the Congress Party, and the resignation of the party's five general secretaries. On the same day, all 60 members of the Cabinet submitted letters of resignation to Prime Minister Gandhi.

In the ensuing reshuffle, Mrs. Gandhi forced out some corrupt and inefficient ministers and appointed three new Cabinet ministers and nine ministers of state—who are generally known to be honest and able administrators. Further changes, however, are expected in the days ahead.

In the background of the shake-up, observers here point out, is Prime Minister Gandhi's determination to fight back against the systematic destabilization of her government on the eve of the Non-Aligned Heads of State summit scheduled to take place in New Delhi for March 7-11. The summit—which will bring together over 70 heads of state and of government of developing sector nations—is expected to take concrete initiatives to reverse the present rapid decline of the world economy.

While Mrs. Gandhi has remained silent, her views were conveyed in a letter she wrote to an "admirer," which was mysteriously released to the press on Jan. 27. In it she warned that "there are forces abroad which would like the Indian government to be more pliable. They encourage or mislead certain elements from within the country to take steps which could weaken us."

Only a few days earlier, the New Delhi daily newspaper *Patriot* had published an exclusive report that the government had received "stunning proof" of a plan "to destabilize and balkanize India." The article went on to cite a report prepared by U.S. Ambassador to the United Nations Jeane Kirkpatrick, in which she outlined how India could be destabilized through "a noticeable growth of separatist movements," and that the result would be the destruction of India's "influence in the Third World and elsewhere."

# her cabinet, the Congress Party

There have also been some reports that Anglo-American intelligence supported and financed the opponents of the Congress Party in the recent state elections and that they have been providing increased support to the Hindu-chauvinist Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh (RSS) organizations.

In another part of the letter to her admirer, Mrs. Gandhi responded to the charge—widely aired in the U.S. and British press—that she had suffered an irreversible defeat in Andhra Pradesh and Karnataka in early January. The Prime Minister stated, “There has been no debacle.” She continued: “What I am worried about is not losing or winning elections, but the stability and unity of our country,” and concluded that “we now have an opportunity for self-improvement and renewal of our commitment to the people.”

It is this last point which appears to be central to the clean-up underway in the government and the party. In fact, while most attention has been focused on the Cabinet changes, seasoned political observers here note that the efforts to get the party organization into shape and to mobilize the popular base are probably of greater significance.

## New test of Congress

An early test of the popular response to the government reshuffle will be seen in results of elections on Feb. 5 for New Delhi Municipal Council and the assemblies of the northeastern states of Assam and Meghalaya.

In New Delhi the Congress Party faces powerful rivals in the RSS-linked Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) which, as a component of the ruling Janata Party, had been in power before the Municipal Corporation was dissolved when the Gandhi government returned to office in 1980. While the Congress is expected to get the votes of the poorer sections of the population—who continue to view Mrs. Gandhi as a champion of their rights—it remains to be seen how the large middle class in this capital city will vote. The opposition parties have made the destabilization of the government the central issue, with the slogan: “Mrs. Gandhi was defeated in the South; now it’s Delhi’s turn to turn her out.”

Assembly elections in Assam and Meghalaya will be less decisive. For the past few years Assam has been in turmoil due to a regionalist “sons of the soil” movement which has been demanding the expulsion of the “aliens”—primarily

Muslims who migrated there from Bangladesh over the years. The State Legislature was dissolved more than a year ago and the state has been under central government rule since then. The leaders of the anti-alien agitation in the state, backed by the RSS and BJP, have called for a boycott of the elections, which may lead to a low voter turnout.

The other northeastern state, Meghalaya, is one of India’s smallest states, with a population of just over one million (as compared to approximately 50 million in Assam and six million in Delhi).

## Revitalization of Congress

However, beyond the immediate period it is clear that the Congress Party will have to be revitalized for the national elections to be held before January 1985. The importance of the Congress Party for the stability of India can be seen in the fact that it is the only party that can claim an across-the-board national composition and base. This command over the Indian political scene is owed to the fact that it is the party that battled for and won India’s independence. It claims as its founding fathers many illustrious national figures, including Mahatma Gandhi and India’s first prime minister, Jawaharlal Nehru—Indira Gandhi’s father.

Further, at the local level over the years the Congress Party has developed a tremendous base of leaders representing different religions and social strata but owing their allegiance to the national leadership and the idea of building a strong nation. Hence, for post-independence India the idea of national stability and unity has been inextricably linked to the strengths and weaknesses of the party that won independence, and that with the exception of the 1977-80 period governed the country.

Throughout the 1950s, the heyday of the nation-building effort in India, Prime Minister Jawaharlal Nehru urged the party and nation to “think big,” tackling the numerous regional problems from the standpoint of India’s overall tasks. As he explained in one of his numerous educational speeches:

We have to utilize the experience we have gained, pool our resources and prevent waste. We cannot allow the nation’s resources to be wasted. Democracy has many virtues, but one of its concomitants is a wastage of time and energy. Nevertheless, for many reasons we prefer democracy to other methods of government. That does not mean that we cannot avoid waste. . . .

We cannot afford waste because the basic thing is that we should go ahead. The devil is at our heels. I should like you to have this feeling, to hell with the man who cannot walk fast. It serves him right if he gets out of the ranks and falls down. We want no sluggards. We want no slow people who always complain about their service conditions and their transfers and so on. I am fed up with any such complaints, Service conditions and salary and status may be important, but I want work and work and work. I want

achievement. I want men who are going to fight for what they think is right and do not submit humbly to wrong. I want you to do big things. I want you to build up India. Can you conceive of a bigger thing than to build up this immense country of ours? That is the spirit in which you have to undertake the job. Let the weak and the slow and the lazy go to the wall. There should be no pity for them. If we think in a big way, we tend to become big ourselves, as individuals and as a nation.

### **The decay of the Congress**

This ability to "think big" and communicate a grand notion of building India—once the trademark of the Congress political organization—fell by the wayside in the 1960s and 1970s. Once the struggle for independence was over, and leaders of Nehru's generation passed away, the different factions which have been operating under the Congress umbrella began to break away and form new parties.

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*The clean-up at the national, state, and local party level reflect Mrs. Gandhi's determination to counter attacks on her government as the March summit of the Non-Aligned approaches. She has returned to the traditional method of party-building, and put state party leaders on notice not to except her to magically collect votes for them at election time. At the grass-roots, there remains an excellent base of party leadership.*

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This process has accelerated in recent years with the emergence of a political generation which did not participate in the independence movement—which wanted to get things done without building up the traditional constituency-based support on which the party had always been nurtured. Mrs. Gandhi's son, Sanjay, entered politics during the state of emergency rule in the 1975-77 period as the head of this new brand of politicians, and in the process many veteran party leaders were pushed aside.

As this shift took place in the Congress Party, inner-party factionalism became rampant and the party's image was tarnished. The low point was hit in 1977 when the Congress lost

national elections for the first time since independence to a coalition of different political parties and groups known as the Janata.

It is in the subsequent 1977-80 period, when the Congress was out of power, that serious damage was done to the political fabric of the country through government support for various types of regionalist, communal (religious), and separatist movements. In the northeast state of Assam, for example, the "sons of the soil" movement, backed by the RSS elements in the central government, paralyzed the working of the state and demanded the expulsion of all non-Assamese. This movement was also fueled by elements of the Anglican church, the strongest missionaries in northeast India, and by religious Hindu and Muslim chauvinist groups.

In 1980 Mrs. Gandhi made a stunning comeback, winning two-thirds majority in the general election despite the predictions of many who thought that her political career was finished. This verdict in her favor was clearly a mandate from the population demanding a halt to the growing regionalist tendencies and to the factional squabbling within the Janata.

In the last three years the party that returned to power primarily due to the strength of Mrs. Gandhi's image and vote-catching abilities has become complacent. The death of Sanjay Gandhi in an airplane accident in June 1980 left the younger, impatient breed of politician without their leader. Since then the older, constituency-based politicians have been gradually brought back into party and government affairs by Mrs. Gandhi. But the January election defeat in the two southern states of Karnataka and Andhra Pradesh, both erstwhile Congress strongholds, have shown the urgency of revitalizing the party and rebuilding its grass-roots support.

### **Reversing the trend**

By appointing a well-known veteran congressman like Tripathi as "working president," Mrs. Gandhi has put a halt to the trend of the 1970s. She has gone back to the traditional method of Congress Party building by strengthening the hand of those who want to work in the old style at the village, town, and city level in getting the principles and ideas of the party to the population.

The first test of this new approach occurred on Jan. 31 with the election of a new chief minister in the industrial state of Maharashtra—where the city of Bombay is located—while the previous ineffective and unpopular chief minister had been appointed by the central party leadership, the selection of his replacement was left to a secret ballot and a veteran and widely respected Congress leader with political support in the state was chosen.

This method will undoubtedly force the state party leaders to build the party apparatus and mobilize the popular support for the government's policies rather than to expect Mrs. Gandhi to magically collect votes at the time of the election. This no doubt will put other chief ministers on notice, and makes clear that the clean-up operations are likely to continue at different levels in the days and months to come.