

India and Pakistan balk on signing NPT

by Susan Maitra and Ramtanu Maitra

U.S. Undersecretary of State for Internal Security Reginald Bartholomew's Nov. 19-25 visit to the Indian subcontinent, which aimed to persuade India and Pakistan to sign the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT), met with mixed responses. While Pakistan reasserted the necessity for establishing a nuclear-free zone in South Asia, India rejected Bartholomew's request, but agreed to study the U.S. suggestion.

The buildup to the Bartholomew trip was quite disproportionate to the outcome. In India, particularly, hackles were raised over a number of events recently. In one way or the other, these events involved the United States and were a preview of what the State Department official would be demanding.

Nuclear-free zones in the 'new world order'

The first salvo was fired in mid-November, when the United Nations General Assembly voted overwhelmingly in favor of the Pakistani proposal for a South Asian nuclear-free zone, despite India's spirited opposition. The proposal is Pakistan's chosen card in this game, with which it hopes to protect its own nuclear options and keep both India and the superpowers on the defensive. The Soviet Union of Leonid Brezhnev had for many years helped India to block such proposals from a vote at the United Nations. But, not so this time. Both the Soviet Union and the United States backed the proposal, isolating India in the process.

To many Indians, the Soviet vote was cruel, a kick in the teeth; others expected it. It is evident that the Soviets voted against India, not only because Moscow now believes that it is not necessary to hand out special favors to New Delhi, but also because it wants to be consistent with its traditional policy of backing nuclear-free zones.

According to one analyst, it is the U.S. vote that sent a message. Washington, which has cut off all military and economic aid and made public its displeasure over Pakistan's covert efforts to develop nuclear weapons, had no qualms about supporting the proposal, whose core theme has been violated by the proposer itself. In addition, the United States threw consistency to the winds, opposing the creation of nuclear-free zones in Europe, the Korean peninsula, South-

east Asia, and the South Pacific, while endorsing the proposal for South Asia. The message, as understood in New Delhi, is the Bush administration's determination to make the non-proliferation issue one of the centerpieces of the "new world order."

Deal with Iran opposed

A few days later, the stakes were raised further, when the *Washington Post* puffed a leak from a Bombay paper on India's plans to sell a 10 megawatt research reactor to Iran, the arch-enemy of the United States in West Asia (notwithstanding the Iran-Contra arms deal, which also involved Israel and Pakistan). Never mind the fact that the United States itself had supplied Iran with a 5 megawatt research reactor which is still operating. The record was set straight by India's Atomic Energy Commission chairman, Dr. P.K. Iyengar.

The *Washington Post* article triggered off the usual tough rhetoric from the U.S. State Department. When the dust settled somewhat, a few facts came to light. First, while Washington questions Iran's integrity, although Iran is a signatory of the NPT, it is simultaneously pointing an accusing finger at India for engaging in "horizontal proliferation." Second, India has made it clear that if and when a reactor is sold, a tripartite arrangement involving Iran, India, and the International Atomic Energy Agency will be made, ensuring full safeguards, as required by a nuclear weapon state.

Pressure on Pakistan

In such an environment, Bartholomew went on to pressure Islamabad to sign the NPT. Since it was obvious to Washington that no political leader in Pakistan can sign the NPT, and thus give away the country's own security, Gen. Joseph Moar, commander-in-chief of the U.S. Central Command, was also sent to Pakistan to dangle a few carrots before the most organized and powerful of all Pakistani institutions, the Army. These carrots, as reported in the media, included acceptance of Pakistan in the yet-to-be-finalized Persian Gulf security arrangements and resumption of military hardware to Pakistan, if the latter signs the NPT. There was also speculation that General Hoar might have proposed the possibility of setting up a revived version of the old SEATO pact, which would include Pakistan. This speculation gained ground when General Hoar's trip was quickly followed by two high-level military delegations from Italy and Great Britain—both members of NATO.

But despite such elaborate efforts, available reports indicate that Bartholomew's trip failed to generate much enthusiasm in Pakistan. Prime Minister Nawaz Sharif, who is besieged with domestic political problems, has simply reiterated the Pakistani proposal that sailed through the U.N. General Assembly, and effectively left the next move up to Washington. Bartholomew reportedly told Indian officials

that he has a card to play and that he had cautioned Pakistan to restrain itself from aiding and abetting terrorism inside India. But Secretary Bartholomew never identified just what stick the United States proposes to use if Pakistan throws caution to the winds, and, as a result, few in New Delhi believe that Islamabad's response to the warning will be meaningful.

India is unenthusiastic

In India the situation was slightly different. The United States is aware that India has the capability to make nuclear weapons, if it so chooses, at the drop of a hat. It is also understood that India is not at all willing to give up its fully developed nuclear option, no matter how much assurance Washington pours into India's ears about U.S. control over Beijing and Islamabad. It is obvious, then, that a dialogue is called for and a comprehensive arrangement which satisfies both parties is necessary.

Bartholomew did not come with any deal worked out. Politely acknowledging the "good intentions" of the United States, India continued to express its reservations about a nuclear-free zone in South Asia when its immediate neighbor, China, is sitting pretty with a formidable nuclear stockpile. Indian leaders told the U.S. official that while India is not rejecting out of hand the proposal that the United States, former Soviet Union, China, Pakistan, and India hold a conference to work out the nuclear-free zone, it would nonetheless like a direct arrangement with Pakistan without involving the United States, the Soviet Union, and China.

Bartholomew made it known to the Indians that the United States would be happy to see real improvement in Sino-Indian relations, and insisted that any suspicion in India about China's intention to harm India in any way is unjustified. He also repeatedly assured the Indian side that China will sign the NPT, and when it does, it will be bound by the protocols of the NPT, which will prevent it from exporting nuclear material to non-signatory countries.

But since India's main concern is China, with its nuclear arsenal, any pressure exerted on New Delhi to sign the NPT and give up its own nuclear options, will be fruitless. Under the terms of the NPT, only those signatories that exploded a nuclear device before 1968 can be classified "nuclear weapons states" and allowed to keep their nuclear weapons capability intact. The thought that China will become the only Asian nation with a nuclear stockpile that can threaten the neighboring nations will hardly inspire New Delhi to compromise or be more accommodating on the NPT issue.

Under the circumstances, it would be easier for New Delhi to sign the NPT if India were given the status of a nuclear weapons state. If Washington wants to make the non-proliferation issue part of its new world order, it is becoming increasingly clear that it would have to make some difficult deals in South Asia, where the nuclear threshold has been crossed.

U.S. threats against North Korea escalate

by Michael Billington

The United States further escalated a campaign against North Korea in late November, attempting to coerce other Asian nations to participate in joint actions aimed at forcing North Korean compliance with the dictates of the "new world order." Defense Secretary Richard Cheney and Joint Chiefs of Staff Chairman Gen. Colin Powell visited South Korea on the heels of Secretary of State James Baker III, whose trip was a generally acknowledged failure, and issued new demands.

Baker had been rebuked by both China and South Korea for demanding that a coalition of Japan, the Soviet Union, China, and the United States be given joint power (with the two Koreas) in determining the direction of policy on the peninsula. China rejected the plan as an attempt to "gang up" against the sovereignty of their ally, and South Korea then refused to submit to such supranational control, insisting that the issues between the divided Koreans must be settled between themselves.

Secretary Cheney downplayed the "coalition" part of the proposal, but reiterated the demand that the North open up its nuclear research and development projects to international inspection. He hinted (through unnamed "high government officials") that nothing less than shutting down the nuclear waste-reprocessing facility now under construction in North Korea would satisfy the United States.

Target: peaceful uses of nuclear energy

North Korea has become a "target of convenience" to extend the anti-nuclear policies developed since the Iraq war. Using the hysteria generated around the war to justify the blatant destruction of the notion of national sovereignty, the U.N.'s International Atomic Energy Agency is being transformed into a policeman against even peaceful uses of nuclear energy, under the excuse that some of the technologies could potentially contribute to weapons production.

South Korean officials are anxious to prevent the development of nuclear weapons in the North, but they want to preserve their national sovereignty, while moving toward eventual reunification. Besides rejecting Baker's call for foreign control over the issues between North and South, the South Korean Defense Ministry Nov. 18 also accused the U.S. of refusing to transfer the technology necessary to make the South Koreans capable of self-defense. Reuters quoted the ministry: The U.S. "wall for protecting its technology has been thick, and in particular, it is almost impossible for us to cooperate in high-technology transfers." They indicated that