

Rajiv Gandhi and President Reagan set basis for U.S.-India relations

by Linda de Hoyos

With his five-day trip to the United States nearly completed at *EIR*'s deadline, the assessment is that Indian Prime Minister Rajiv Gandhi has accomplished his mission. The new Indian prime minister spent four days in Washington, and one day in Houston, in a visit to the United States that had originally been planned by his mother, Mrs. Indira Gandhi. No major deals between the United States and India, military or otherwise, are expected to emerge from the trip. But Mr. Gandhi and President Reagan let the world know that they had together built a firm friendship, opening new channels of cooperation that supersede the problematic bureaucracies of both countries. Given the intensifying world crisis, this accomplishment ranks far higher in importance with any deal that could have been struck.

Mr. Gandhi also appears to have largely accomplished the second task of his trip: to dispel the notion of India as a Soviet puppet state, and to communicate to Americans the real content of India's independent stance of non-alignment. In his interviews and speeches, Mr. Gandhi told Americans: India's non-alignment is "bringing democracy into the world arena. We believe that every nation should have the right to say what it thinks."

In his speech before the joint session of the U.S. Congress, Mr. Gandhi emphasized that India's struggle for independence from British rule, the creation of the Indian democratic republic, and its commitment to non-alignment and national sovereignty, are products of the republican principles of the American Revolution, and now these principles are to be the conscious basis for the improved future cooperation between the two countries.

In making this the overriding message of his visit to the United States, his first as Indian prime minister, Mr. Gandhi revealed himself as a statesman, equipped to take up the mantle of world leadership left vacant by the assassination in 1984 of Mrs. Indira Gandhi.

For his part, President Reagan, beginning with his welcoming remarks to Mr. Gandhi on June 12, has reassured the entire Indian nation of the United States' friendship. "You will also discover," Reagan told Gandhi at the arrival ceremony, "that the United States remains steadfastly dedicated to India's unity and that we firmly oppose those who would

undermine it." This statement was reported with banner headlines in India: "Reagan Affirms U.S. Commitment to India's Unity."

This was demonstrated further by the extraordinary security measures taken during the trip to protect Mr. Gandhi from known live assassination operations by the separatist Sikhs, whose terrorist apparatus is now fully integrated with Islamic fundamentalist terror, both Libyan and Iranian. On May 13, Attorney General Edwin Meese had forced through the order to arrest five Sikhs in New Orleans, then in the final stages of preparing to murder Mr. Gandhi during his trip here. The day before the prime minister's arrival, two other Sikhs with the same mission were arrested in Puerto Rico.

The political cover for these operations was provided by a Washington rally of 1,500 Sikhs—carted in from all over the U.S. and Canada—who made speeches calling Gandhi the "new Hitler." The separatist Sikhs operate in the United States with the support of the Anti-Defamation League, the Heritage Foundation, and the human-rights "mafia" of Georgetown University's Center for Strategic and International Studies. The Young Americans for Freedom and the Moonie front group, Causa International, also showed up at the Sikh demonstration, demanding that the United States cut off all funding to the "Soviet puppet regime of India." It does not seem to bother these "anti-communist" organizations, that the Indian government has launched an investigation of communist infiltration and takeover of the Sikh separatists.

On June 11, in an insult to the Indian government, the National Press Club invited Sikh separatist leader and terror-controller Ganga Singh Dhillon to address the Club, only three days before Mr. Gandhi would speak before the same podium. The political aid and comfort given to the Sikhs was but one indication that the commitments shared by Reagan and Gandhi will be attacked from all sides, and at an even more furious pace now.

Points of agreement and difference

Mr. Gandhi met privately with President Reagan, and then the two U.S. and Indian teams met together. Mr. Gandhi, who was accompanied by Defense Minister Narasimha Rao, also met separately with Defense Secretary Caspar

Weinberger, Agriculture Secretary John Block, Commerce Secretary Malcolm Baldrige, and Treasury Secretary James Baker. Here are the key points that emerged from the talks:

- **High technology transfers.** The United States and India extended by another three years, the science and technology agreement that had been initiated by Indira Gandhi and President Reagan in 1982. The United States and India also agreed to begin negotiations based on the Memorandum of Understanding, which opens up for the first time an entire array of new technologies for Indian import. In a highly unusual event, Mr. Gandhi and Defense Minister Rao met with leaders of high-technology corporations at the National Academy of Sciences, for a full briefing on new technologies coming on line.

- **Space research.** The last day of Mr. Gandhi's trip will be spent in Houston, where he will visit the Johnson Space Center accompanied by Vice-President George Bush. An agreement on space research cooperation is expected to be announced in Houston.

- **Military.** No agreement on U.S. military sales was worked out during the visit. While the United States has made various offers toward India, the conditions of sale—including payment in hard cash up front and U.S. rights to abrogate delivery contracts—do not make for such an agreement soon. India still views the United States as unreliable in this area.

- **Strategic Defense Initiative.** Mr. Gandhi and his team were briefed on the SDI on June 12 and then again on June 14 were more thoroughly briefed by SDI chief Lt.-Gen. James Abrahamson. Indian misperceptions of the SDI are based on Soviet misinformation and India's own longstanding bias toward disarmament, given the burden an arms race places on developing-sector economies. While Mr. Gandhi said after the briefings that he still finds the SDI "dangerous," the Indian government is deeply interested to learn about the SDI and its civilian spin-off technologies.

- **Afghanistan-Pakistan.** Mr. Gandhi protested U.S. offensive arming of Pakistan, but also said that he views Soviet presence in Afghanistan as a major obstacle in stopping U.S. military transfers to Pakistan. Gandhi called for negotiations to restore a "non-aligned Afghanistan." Mr. Gandhi's remarks here lent credence to reports that his discussions in Moscow with Soviet leader Mikhail Gorbachov were so acrimonious on Afghanistan, that it almost prevented the issuance of a joint communiqué.

As Mr. Gandhi implied with his reference to the "mold of the eighteenth century," the most serious obstacle to U.S.-India relations is the U.S. backing for the eighteenth-century genocidal looting methods of the International Monetary Fund. In his speech to the National Press Club June 14, Mr. Gandhi attacked the "international financial institutions" for their starvation of the underdeveloped sector, and called for a new just, world economic order, based on the 1983 New Delhi call of the Non-Aligned nations, which rejects the IMF as a framework for negotiations. It is not known to what extent, Mr. Gandhi discussed this issue with President Reagan. But

India's prime minister has placed himself in an excellent position to take up world leadership on the urgent need for a new monetary system.

Excerpts from Prime Minister Rajiv Gandhi's speech before the Joint Session of Congress, June 13, 1985:

Thirty-six years ago, my grandfather, Jawaharlal Nehru, the first prime minister of free India, stood here, the highest forum of the great democracy of the United States of America, to convey the greetings of the people of India and to offer friendship and cooperation "in the pursuit of justice, liberty, and peace." This morning I have the honor to reaffirm that commitment.

Freedom for us meant the ending of colonial subjugation and working for equality among all nations.

Much of what we have done we have done ourselves. Ninety percent of the investment of our economy is financed from our own resources. But the economic and technological help received from our friends was extremely important. U.S. economic assistance was of great help to us, especially in the sixties. American scientific and technological assistance played a crucial role in helping to bring about the Green Revolution. To your scientists and technologies and to the American people, I should like to say that the people of India will always be grateful.

The peoples of India and the United States are not allies in security strategies, but they are friends in larger human causes—freedom, justice, and peace. Members of Congress, the American revolution asserted the rights of man. Liberty and equality were inscribed on the banner of history. These powerful concepts were to change the direction mankind was to take. But peace, which brings happiness, eludes us. Is it because we have frozen the world in the mold of the eighteenth century? Tagore, our great poet, spoke of the "idolatry of geography." Nationalism, untempered by the vision of human brotherhood, is an inadequate framework for peace. Should we not strive, each in one's imperfect manner, for new Commonwealth based on the revolutionary developments that have not ceased since your Republic was founded? Even though we are not economically or militarily powerful and you are, this is a task that beckons us all. This noble enterprise will in a profound sense be the fulfillment of your Revolution.

I have been elected prime minister of India at a time when our nation stands poised for a new surge of growth. Our leaders in the past 30 years have established firm foundations on which we have now to build. India is an old country, but a young nation; and like the young everywhere, we are impatient. I am young, and I have a dream. I dream of an India—strong, self-reliant, and in the front rank of the nations of the world in the service of mankind. I am committed to realizing that dream through dedication, hard work, and the collective determination of our people. We will welcome all the cooperation that we can get.