

# Dangerous games are afoot in the Indian subcontinent

by Linda de Hoyos

Not since the events of 1984 leading up to the assassination of Indian Prime Minister Indira Gandhi have the pressures on both India and Pakistan been as intense as over the last two months. In 1984, one Pakistani journalist referred to the tugs and pulls coming from the Soviet Union and the West as a "superpower nutcracker" aimed at both India and Pakistan. But in the recent period, no one on either side of the Indo-Pakistani border has been capable of standing back to review the original source of the pressures on either government.

The April 10 resignation of Indian Defense Minister V.P. Singh (see article, opposite) marks a turning point in the weakening of India's political capabilities, at the hands of Moscow's "Soviet lobby" and its corrupt partners in the Congress-I Party. No matter what the immediate pretext of Singh's accepted resignation, the long-term effect is to nullify the potentials of a Rajiv Gandhi-V.P. Singh team that could have consolidated India as an independent economic and strategic power.

## The Abdul Qadar Khan caper

The signal that major operations are afoot in the subcontinent was the interview published March 1 in the London *Observer* with Dr. Abdul Qadar Khan, the man considered the "father of the Pakistan bomb." In the interview, Khan, who is in a position to know, stated unequivocally that Pakistan had "built the bomb." In statements apparently directed as warnings to India, Khan said: "The Indians took 12 years to make the bomb. We have managed to do it in only seven years. . . . Nobody can take us for granted. Let it be clear that we shall use the bomb if our existence is threatened. . . . India knows what price it will have to pay if it attacks [the Pakistani nuclear facility at] Kahuta."

The interview had been delivered at the point that Pakistani and Indian military forces were eyeballing each other across the border, as a result of a series of escalations and counter-escalations from both sides. The next day, however, Khan denied that he had ever made such statements, calling the interview "mischievous, false, and concocted, and an attempt to malign Pakistan."

The interview was later "clarified" by Pakistan's Armed Forces Chief of Staff and President Zia ul-Haq. "You can virtually write today that Pakistan can build a bomb whenever

it wishes," Zia told the press. "What's the difficulty about a bomb? Once you have acquired the technology which Pakistan has, you can do whatever you like. . . . Pakistan has the capability to build the bomb."

The circumstances surrounding the Khan interview indicate that there were other motives at work, besides Zia ul-Haq's desire to sound a warning to India. Khan gave the interview to Indian journalist Kuldip Nayar, who is generally considered in Delhi to be pro-Pakistani. A close associate of Nayar is Kushwant Singh—the two co-authored a book on the Punjab crisis in 1984. Singh, a Sikh, is the chairman of the Indo-Israeli Friendship Society, with ties to the Israeli Mossad.

The Israelis have long had an interest in riling up Pakistani-bomb phobia in India. In February, it was revealed by the *Jerusalem Post* that Israel's American spy, Jonathan Pollard, had supplied Israel with detailed satellite photos of the Kahuta nuclear facility, and that the Israelis had, on three separate occasions, proposed to India that it "take out" the Kahuta plan, as Israel had done to the Iraqi facility in June 1981. In return, the Israelis had offered cooperation on military intelligence and anti-terrorist operations in India. The idea of India's taking out Kahuta had first surfaced in July of 1984 in the *Jerusalem Post*, signaling a major operation in place that successively led to the assassination of Mrs. Gandhi in October of that year.

Nayar's contact to Khan was Mushahid Hussain Sayed, the editor of Islamabad's only English daily, the *Muslim*. It was Hussain who arranged the meeting in which Khan gave his statements to Nayar. While Khan was busily attempting to deny the interview, Hussain issued an editorial in the *Muslim* praising the interview's message, and unequivocally stated that no such interview could have occurred without a green light from the top. Shortly thereafter, Hussain was forced to resign in the uproar.

By no means an oppositionist to the Islamabad regime, Hussain is a strong advocate of the Islamic bomb, and an anti-Indian crusader in the Pakistani press. Hussain is close to Zia; the Pakistani President traveled to Lahore to attend Hussain's wedding. Hussain has earned a reputation for anti-Americanism and his articles attack the United States for turning Pakistan into what he considers a "client state." U.S.

embassy personnel reportedly threw a champagne party the day Hussain resigned from the *Muslim* editorship.

According to the Indian weekly, the *Sunday Observer*, of March 15, Hussain "is in favor of Pakistan coming to an understanding with the Kabul regime to resolve the problem of Afghanistan refugees in his country. He himself has visited Kabul several times, twice in the last six months, and interviewed most of the top Afghan leaders. Hussain has also been invited to the Soviet Union, where he is obviously regarded as one of the few powerful friends of Moscow in Pakistan."

The *Sunday Observer* further notes that the owner of the *Muslim*, Afha Murtaza Pooya, is a Shi'ite Muslim and is the liaison between Zia ul-Haq and Khomeini. The *Muslim* is at once anti-American and pro-Iran.

The immediate beneficiaries of the Khan interview therefore were: a) the Israelis, who would use it to strengthen their leverage in New Delhi; and b) Moscow who would use it to similar advantage.

### Enter Project Democracy

The interview also played right into the hands of the Project Democracy nexus in Washington, which has been looking for ways to extricate the United States from its relationship with Pakistan as part of the New Yalta package to hand over the subcontinent to Moscow's hegemony. Leading that faction in the subcontinent itself is U.S. ambassador to Islamabad, Deane Hinton.

Hinton came to Pakistan after having conducted Project Democracy provocation policies in Central America as U.S. ambassador to El Salvador. In February, he gave a speech before the Pakistan Institute of Strategic Studies, in which he accused Pakistan of proceeding to build the bomb. Hinton's declaration fueled the debate then taking place in the Senate around the issue of U.S. aid to Pakistan. If the administration cannot guarantee that Pakistan's nuclear program is for peaceful purposes only, under the Percy-Glenn amendment, the United States would have to sever Pakistan from all U.S. aid. Hinton underlined the point by charging that Pakistan was "hooked" on U.S. aid, as if it were heroin. The State Department Policy Planning Unit, a nest of the Project Democracy crowd, informed *India Today* magazine that Hinton's speech had been written directly by the State Department.

At the same time, Leonard Spector of the Carnegie Endowment for Peace, whose colleague Selig Harrison has openly called for the United States to dump Pakistan, released a report, which he said came from administration sources, claiming that Pakistan definitely had the components of a nuclear bomb. Spector further added that Washington would stand by if either Israel, India, or the Soviet Union were to destroy the Kahuta plant.

A March editorial in the *New York Times* demanded that Washington force both India and Pakistan to sign the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty, indicating that this was an agreed-

upon joint effort by Moscow and Washington, then engaged in discussions for a "settlement" in Afghanistan. Bluntly titled "Stop Pakistan's Nuclear Bomb," the *Times* decried Pakistan's use of the Afghan war as a blackmail chip to guarantee U.S. aid. "Yet Pakistan has powerful reasons not to offend the United States. . . . Pakistan, meanwhile, harbors its own fears of the Soviet Union, and its aversion to a Soviet puppet state next door should not be ignored. There also would be obvious advantages in a peace that permits the millions of Afghani refugees in Pakistan to go home." This is a peace, the *Times* implies, that only the United States can negotiate.

### And in Delhi

Islamabad, however, is not the only capital to feel the heat. Unlike the Soviet client state of North Korea, which penned the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty last summer as part of a Soviet deal for delivery of a nuclear power plant, India has steadfastly refused to sign the treaty, seeing it as an infringement of national sovereignty. This policy of non-alignment and independence flies in the face of the "Gorbachov Doctrine" for the Pacific, as enunciated by the Soviet secretary general in Vladivostok in July. The Soviets have been on a non-stop crusade throughout the region, demanding the creation of "nuclear-free zones"—i.e., zones of Soviet influence.

In Delhi in early April, former Soviet Deputy Foreign Minister Mikhail Kapitsa, now director of the Oriental Studies Institute, came to deliver the demand—one of a constant stream of Soviet diplomats to hit Delhi since Gorbachov's own visit in November. Speaking before India's "foreign policy crowd" at the International Center, Kapitsa hailed the creation of a South Pacific "nuclear free zone" spearheaded by Australia and New Zealand, and claimed that soon the ASEAN countries would follow. But Kapitsa's proposal was not greeted with enthusiasm. Asked one Member of Parliament present: "What difference does it make if these countries do not develop the bomb? How does that prevent them from being decimated in a nuclear war that is started by the superpowers?" To this Kapitsa had no answer.

Indian distrust of Moscow has also been heightened by the U.S.S.R.-China rapprochement, with articles appearing in the Indian press recalling the days of 1962 when Moscow backed its "brother China" against its "friend India."

But despite India's refusal to acquiesce to Moscow's formal demands, all that the Soviet Union now requires is the weakening of India's ability to act independently. In the last months, Moscow has called into action all its assets in India—from the powerful Soviet lobby members in the Congress Party, to its control over the Communist Party-Marxist and other insurgent operations—to paralyze the Center, and especially the prime minister. One of the quickest routes to this paralysis is to stir up charges and countercharges—aided by witting partners in Washington—between India and Pakistan.