

the United States. Khan is, however, Pakistan's most eminent foreign policy leader.

Despite the fact that her brothers were involved in Soviet-directed terrorism, Mrs. Bhutto has indicated that she has no intention of turning Pakistan into a Soviet puppet or asset. To the contrary, Mrs. Bhutto likely can be relied upon to keep Pakistan out of the orbit of anti-American Islamic fundamentalist states led by Iran.

In addition, it can be hoped that Mrs. Bhutto's coming to power will bring about an improvement in Pakistan's relations with India, which have suffered since the Pakistani military came to power in 1977, and became even worse with India's condoning of the Soviet invasion and occupation of Afghanistan. Indian Prime Minister Rajiv Gandhi sent warm congratulations to Mrs. Bhutto Dec. 8. His letter, which was released to the press, states in part: "You and I are both children of an era which followed the creation of Pakistan. . . . I would wish to work closely with you for removing the irritants which have vitiated relations between our countries. The news of your assumption of office . . . has been warmly greeted and widely welcomed throughout India," Gandhi said.

Gandhi is expected to meet Bhutto later this month when he travels to Islamabad for a summit of South Asian heads of government. Bhutto visited India with her father in 1972 when he signed an accord with then-Prime Minister Indira Gandhi paving the way for the return of more than 90,000 Pakistani soldiers captured during the 1971 war. "The . . . agreement signed by your father and my mother provides the basis for our building together a relationship of mutual trust and friendship. . . . We are confident that together we can make our shared subcontinent safe for us to work out our respective national destinies," Gandhi's letter said.

Mrs. Bhutto's coming to power opens a new window of opportunity for Pakistan. Although she did not win a majority of seats in the Nov. 16 parliamentary elections, the Pakistani People's Party took 92 out of an elected 207 seats, and has gained another 12 seats in the 20 reserved for the appointment of women to parliament.

The PPP's primary rival, the Islamic Democratic Alliance, took approximately 52 seats, and contended that Mrs. Bhutto should not be named prime minister because she had not achieved a majority. However, the way was cleared for Mrs. Bhutto, when Gen. Nawaz Sherif, leader of the IDA, decided to keep his post of governor of Punjab state, rather than continue to seek the country's top office.

Although her party rivals will control Punjab, the largest and wealthiest province and the stronghold of the military, Mrs. Bhutto has emerged from the elections with a clear mandate. If she and the military are able to maintain a consensus based on defense of Pakistan's national sovereignty and the rejuvenation of the economy, Mrs. Bhutto's coming to Islamabad could give besieged Pakistan a new lease on life.

New Soviet envoys in South Asia

by Ramtanu Maitra

Since late July, Moscow has replaced its envoys in five South Asian nations. While former Deputy Foreign Minister Yuli Vorontsov's arrival in Kabul as the new ambassador to Afghanistan drew the media attention, the posting of other envoys in the region went virtually unnoticed. Though the new appointments to Sri Lanka, Pakistan, Bangladesh, and India could be construed as simply installation of a Gorbachov team in South Asia, in all likelihood there is more to it.

The arrival in Kabul of Yuli Vorontsov, who had long been Moscow's envoy to New Delhi, is a move by the Kremlin to try to "fix" things their way in Afghanistan. Vorontsov's assignment in increasingly unstable Kabul included staving off the ruling party hardliners from ousting President Najibullah and thus enhancing chaos; tightening the screws on Pakistan for its continuing support to the mujahideen rebels; making clear that the Soviet troop withdrawal by Feb. 15, 1989 is not a foregone conclusion; and delivering sophisticated and lethal weapons, which can hurt the Pakistanis, to the Najibullah regime, in violation of the Geneva Accord.

The Kabul capers

Vorontsov's maneuvers are aimed at creating an atmosphere in which the Afghan mujahideen, out of despair, will agree to a Soviet-formulated broad-based coalition government in Kabul. Vorontsov's job is to see to it that such a government contains the ruling People's Democratic Party of Afghanistan (PDPA) and is recognized internationally prior to the Soviet troop withdrawal from Afghanistan. Once such a government is established, Najibullah can be sacrificed. It is not totally unlikely that Najibullah may even defect to the West, since 10 of his relatives have already chosen to do so. But for now, Vorontsov will shore up Najibullah as part of the "Fortress Kabul" image that he must cause to loom large before the mujahideen.

It would appear that Vorontsov's "tough stance" is paying dividends. The Soviets, helped by Pakistan and Saudi Arabia, will be meeting the Islamic Unity of Afghan Mujahideen (IUAM) leader Burhahuddin Rabbani sometime soon in Riyadh. The subject: ways to install a coalition government in Kabul and expedite the Soviet withdrawal.

A back-up in Islamabad

Viktor Yakunin, an old India hand, was named Soviet envoy to Pakistan in late July, about three weeks before half of the Soviet troops were withdrawn from Afghanistan and in the midst of the anti-Pakistan tirade that the Soviets had unleashed.

First, Soviet Foreign Minister Eduard Shevardnadze told the visiting Pakistan foreign minister on Aug. 4 that "the Soviet Union and Afghanistan will have to find ways to counter the growing interference in the internal affairs of the latter." On Aug. 16, one day before President Zia ul-Haq of Pakistan died in a fatal plane crash, suspected to have been an act of sabotage, the First Information Secretary of the U.S.S.R. embassy in New Delhi, Oleg Bondar, cautioned Pakistan at a press conference about its "obstructionist policies." Bondar served a terse warning, "The Soviet Union reserves for itself, in that case, the right to take measures that are necessitated by the situation."

Stationed in India from 1977 to 1984 as a high-ranking official in the Soviet embassy, Yakunin is at home with the issues which can create tensions between the two neighboring nations. He is knowledgeable, through the many contacts that a high-ranking Soviet official usually has in India, of the "sleaze factor" in Indian politics. He knows how the Indo-Pak game is played.

Cloak and dagger in Colombo

More indicative of the Soviet Union's reappraisal of the region is the appointment of Yuri Kotov as ambassador to Sri Lanka. Kotov was among the 47 KGB officers expelled from France in 1983 for spying. Kotov was posted as Counselor at the Soviet Mission to UNESCO at Paris. Kotov was brought back and put in the foreign ministry, and subsequently nominated as ambassador to Togo—a post he never took up, possibly because the authorities of Togo resented having a Soviet intelligence officer as ambassador. In sending Kotov to Sri Lanka, the Soviet Union did not even bother to change his name and prepare a new file, as is customary with detected KGB operatives.

Kotov's appointment raises interesting questions. The Sri Lankan situation has been in flux for awhile now, and it is generally thought that the ruling United National Party (UNP), so long as it stays in power, will back the Indo-Sri Lanka Accord. They exhibited unusual caution in hailing it as an instrument of peace. Some Indian commentators did not fail to notice that the joint communiqué of Nov. 20 issued by Indian Prime Minister Rajiv Gandhi and Soviet President Gorbachov, following the latter's three-day visit to India and nine and a half hours of face-to-face discussion, did not even mention the Indian initiative in Sri Lanka.

That the Soviets are gearing up for a future following the UNP and the Indo-Sri Lanka Accord, became apparent when Pieter Kenneman, the chairman of the Sri Lanka Communist Party, told the Soviet Union sometime last November that

the Indian Peace-Keeping Force (INPKF), stationed in Sri Lanka as part of the accord, is shoring up the ruling UNP. According to Kenneman, the opposition Sri Lanka Freedom Party (SLFP), led by former Prime Minister Sirimavo Bandaranaike and backed by the Sri Lankan left forces, would come to power if the elections were held. Kenneman blamed the presence of the IPKF for allowing the UNP to delay the elections. Before the accord was signed, Kenneman had gone to Moscow to express his reservations on the agreement. Some believe that it was due to Kenneman's briefing that the Soviets took almost four months before welcoming the accord.

In this context, it is also significant that Gorbachov, during his recent visit to India, brought along R. Nishanov, first secretary of the Uzbek Communist Party. Nishanov, who told the Press Trust of India in an interview that the Soviet Union welcomes good relations between India and the People's Republic of China, was himself Soviet ambassador to Sri Lanka between 1970-78—the period when Mrs. Sirimavo Bandaranaike was prime minister and was bringing Sri Lanka, to India's dismay, closer to China. It was also in this period that the ultra-leftist Janata Vimukti Peramuna (JVP), led by the Moscow-educated Rohan Wijeweera, made a splash in Sri Lanka. Wijeweera's underground terrorist gang tried an instant revolution in 1971, by seizing police stations and arms depots. Today, it is no mere coincidence that the JVP has emerged as the most domineering terrorist group in Sri Lanka, and is now in a position to dictate terms in southern and central Sri Lanka. Mrs. Bandaranaike, eager to get back to power, wanted the JVP endorsement for her presidential candidacy. But, the JVP is in no mood to give it.

Displeasure with Bangladesh

The last of the new Soviet envoys to arrive in the region was Vitali Smirnov. Within a month of presenting credentials to Bangladesh President H.M. Ershad, Smirnov announced his extreme displeasure at the Bangladesh press for spreading what he termed anti-Soviet propaganda. Smarting from this little country's disrespect toward the great northern superpower, Smirnov expressed "pain and concern" that, while his country's relations with the United States and the P.R.C. were improving, it was not so with Bangladesh. Implying that Bangladesh was a mere stooge of the United States and China, Smirnov said that Bangladesh, therefore, must make friends with the Soviet Union.

It is evident that Smirnov has his hands full. In 1983, fourteen "undesirable" Soviet diplomats were told to leave the country following their "non-diplomatic activities" within Bangladesh. Later, on March 1, 1984, President Ershad told an American daily that the Soviet Union was trying to bring down his government. The Soviets "want someone here, in my position, who toes the Soviet line," Ershad said. Smirnov is upset that almost five years later, Bangladesh still does not toe the Soviet line.