

INDIA SPEAKS

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Bilateral Issues

a. Egypt

1. Foreign Minister of Egypt visits India, Cairo, 26 May 2011

H.E. Dr. Nabil El Arabi, Foreign Minister of Egypt will be visiting India from 28-30 May 2011 at the invitation of the External Affairs Minister of India H.E. Mr. S.M. Krishna. This will be the first Ministerial visit from Egypt to India after the Egyptian Revolution and signifies the importance both countries attach to strengthening bilateral relations. Since March 2011, there have been three ministerial-level visits from India to Egypt.

During the visit, H.E. Dr. Arabi will have meetings with H.E. Mr. S.M. Krishna and other top political leadership of India to review and further strengthen the bilateral relations between both the countries.

Source: Embassy of India, Cairo,

<http://www.indembcairo.com/Web%20Pages/Archives%20Eng%202011/May%2026.htm>

2. Opening Remarks by External Affairs Minister Mr. S.M. Krishna at the Joint Press Conference following talks with Foreign Minister of Egypt, New Delhi, 30 May 2011

We are delighted to host the Foreign Minister of Egypt; H.E Dr. Nabil El Araby on his first bilateral visit to Asia. Foreign Minister El Araby is not new to India and has distinguished himself as the Ambassador of Egypt in India 30 years ago. I am happy to inform you that our

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discussions today were marked by great warmth and cordiality which is reflective of our close ties and friendship.

Our discussions included the entire gamut of bilateral relations, including our economic engagement with Egypt. While our bilateral trade is around US\$ 3 billion, there are 45 Indian companies operating in Egypt with an investment of US\$ 2.5 billion. We have both agreed that there exists immense potential to enhance our economic relations and that we would jointly work towards it.

In the context of intensification of our ties with Africa and with the recent conclusion of the second edition of the India-Africa Forum Summit, we discussed issues related to cooperation in the field of information technology, satellite connectivity, tele-medicine, etc. I am optimistic about our continued cooperation in the future. Foreign Minister El Araby informed me of the changes that are taking place in the Arab world, including in Egypt and the next steps that his Government is planning to take. I reiterate that India is ready to extend all possible cooperation.

Our discussion also covered regional and international issues and, in particular, the Palestinian issue, the Middle-East Peace Process and the recent Fatah-Hamas reconciliation in which Egypt played a major role. We have agreed to continue our discussions utilising bilateral mechanisms such as the Foreign Office Consultations and the Joint Commission.

I conveyed our thanks and appreciation to Egypt for its assistance in evacuation of Indians from Libya. This assistance was vital for 'safe homecoming' of more than 16,000 Indians from Libya.

I also availed of the opportunity to discuss issues related to Arab League, as Foreign Minister El Araby would shortly be assuming the office of Secretary General of Arab League and those related to the NAM Ministerial meeting in Bali last week which was chaired by him.

Source: MEA, New Delhi, <http://www.mea.gov.in/mystart.php?id=530117690>

b. Iran

3. Foreign Secretary Mrs. Nirupama Rao's speech at the French Institute of International Relations (IFRI), Paris, 5 May 2011

..Let me also briefly speak on Iran. India, as indeed France is committed to diplomacy to resolve the Iranian nuclear issue and we have clearly stated the need for Iran to take constructive and immediate steps to meet its obligations to the IAEA and the UN Security Council. It bears repetition; let me say, that Iran is one of our most important neighbours with whom we share civilizational links. Iran is also a crucial partner for India's energy security. We have an immense stake in a peaceful resolution of the complicated issues surrounding Iran's nuclear question...

Source: MEA, New Delhi, <http://www.mea.gov.in/mystart.php?id=530117612>

4. Mr. D.P. Srivastava appointed as the next Ambassador of India to Iran, New Delhi, 16 May 2011

Mr. D.P. Srivastava, presently Ambassador of India to Czech Republic has been appointed as the next Ambassador of India to Iran. He is expected to take up his assignment shortly.

Source: MEA, New Delhi, <http://www.mea.gov.in/mystart.php?id=530217643>

5. India and Iran hold detailed and Constructive Discussions on the Various Options for Resolving the Issues relating to Settlement of Payments, New Delhi, 31 May 2011

India and Iran sides held detailed and constructive discussions for two days i.e. May 30-31, 2011 on the various options for resolving the issues relating to settlement of payments. Both the sides agreed to continue their engagement in the matter.

Earlier, a delegation from the Islamic Republic of Iran met with an inter-Ministerial delegation from India on May 30-31, 2011 to discuss issues relating to settlement of payments on account of bilateral trade between the two countries. The Indian delegation was led by Mr. R. Gopalan, Secretary, Department of Economic Affairs. The Iranian delegation was led by HE Dr. Hamid Borhani, Deputy Governor of Central Bank of Islamic Republic of Iran.

Source: PIB, New Delhi, <http://pib.nic.in/newsite/PrintRelease.aspx?relid=72420>

c. Libya

6. Statement by Ambassador Hardeep Singh Puri at the UN Security Council Briefing on , Libya (ICC), New York, 4 May 2011

Thank you, Mr President.

I would like to thank the Prosecutor, Mr. Luis Moreno-Ocampo, for his briefing today. I have also taken note of his report to the Security Council submitted pursuant to paragraph 7 of Resolution 1970.

Mr President, India, as you know, is not a signatory to the Rome Statute, and not a member of the International Criminal Court (ICC) for reasons that are well known. In our Explanation of Vote on Resolution 1970 on 26th February, I had noted that of the 192 members of the United Nations, only 114 are members of the ICC. 5 of the 15 members of the Council, including 3 Permanent Members, are not parties to the Rome Statute. But we had voted in favour of Resolution 1970 because several members of the Council, including our colleagues from Africa and the Middle East, believed that referral of the situation in Libya to the ICC would have the effect of immediate cessation of violence and restoration of calm and stability.

Unfortunately, the situation in Libya has continued to deteriorate and widespread violence continues. We remain seriously concerned at the developments in Libya and condemn the use of force against civilians. We reiterate our call to all parties to immediately cease attacks on civilians and engage in political dialogue to resolve the crisis. The longer the conflict continues, the greater the harm caused to the Libyan people, their economy and society.

Mr President, we have noted that after his preliminary investigation, the Prosecutor, on the basis of available information, has decided that there are reasonable grounds to believe that crimes against humanity and war crimes have been committed and continue to be committed in Libya. We have also noted that the Office of the Prosecutor will submit its first application for an arrest warrant to Pre-Trial Chamber in the next weeks.

The Prosecutor should carry out a thorough and impartial investigation and not be influenced by non-judicial considerations. All those responsible for committing crimes, covered under the Rome Statute, should be held accountable, irrespective of which side to the conflict they may belong to and even if they have changed sides. Political considerations should not exonerate anybody from prosecution for the crimes committed. Any action by the ICC should fall strictly within the ambit of Resolution 1970, particularly paragraph 6 of the resolution that concerns the States which are not parties to the Rome Statute.

Thank you, Mr President.

Source: Permanent Mission of India to the United Nations,
<http://www.un.int/india/2011/ind1853.pdf>

7. Foreign Secretary Mrs. Nirupama Rao's speech at the French Institute of International Relations (IFRI), Paris, 5 May 2011

... We have been following with serious concern the developments in Libya which have led to a loss of numerous lives and injuries to many more. We have advocated a peaceful resolution, a political resolution of the differences that exist between the opposing groups in Libya. We are concerned about the civilian population and the welfare of that population, I am including also the foreigners who live in Libya. We have 2000 Indians who are still there, although we arranged for the evacuation of almost 17000 of our people out of Libya in March but we still have 2000 Indians who elected to stay back there, and therefore we are concerned about the situation surrounding the violence that we have seen in Libya. We abstained on UN Security Council Resolution 1973 of March 17, 2011 to establish a no-fly zone in Libya. As I said we are gravely concerned by the violence there and we want a peaceful resolution of differences because there is a deteriorating humanitarian situation in that country and there is need for a ceasefire, there is need to protect the civilian population and of course to address the legitimate demands of the Libyan people. ...

Source: MEA, New Delhi, <http://www.mea.gov.in/mystart.php?id=530117612>

d. Qatar and Saudi Arabia

8. Defence Minister Mr. A.K. Antony to Visit Saudi Arabia and Qatar, New Delhi, 4 May 2011

With a view to give a boost to bilateral defence cooperation between India and its important partners in the Gulf, the Defence Minister Mr. AK Antony will be leaving New Delhi on Saturday on a three day visit to Saudi Arabia and Qatar. This is going to be the first visit by an Indian Defence Minister to both the countries. Mr. Antony will be accompanied by the Defence Secretary Mr. Pradeep Kumar, the Vice Chief of Army Staff Lt Gen AS Lamba and other senior officials of MoD and the Armed Forces.

In the first leg of his visit to Riyadh, Mr. Antony will have meetings with the top Saudi leadership on issues of bilateral and regional importance. The visit aims at paving the way for enhanced defence interactions between the Armed Forces of the two countries, especially in areas of training and technical exchanges. India and Saudi Arabia have been having regular exchange of defence related visits and interactions. Indian and Saudi ships have also been visiting each other's ports from time to time.

In the second leg of his visit, Mr. Antony will be going to Doha. Expansion in bilateral exchanges and regional security issues will come up prominently during the discussions that Mr. Antony will hold the Qatari leadership. It may be recalled that India and Qatar had signed a bilateral agreement on defence cooperation during the visit of the Prime Minister Dr. Manmohan Singh to Doha in November 2008. The Indian and Qatari Armed Forces have also been exchanging visits and have participated as observers in each other's exercises from time to time.

During his sojourn in Riyadh and Doha, Mr. Antony will also be meeting representatives of the large Indian community in both the countries.

Source: Press Information Bureau (PIB), New Delhi,
<http://pib.nic.in/newsite/PrintRelease.aspx?relid=71939>

e. Yemen

9. Advisory to Indian Nationals in Yemen, New Delhi, 27 May 2011

Keeping in view the evolving situation and the increase in violent incidents in Yemen, all Indian nationals living in the country are advised to exit the country through whatever commercial means available. Till such time they are able to exit, Indian nationals are also advised not to venture out except under absolutely unavoidable circumstances.

The Embassy of India and our Ambassador in Yemen will continue to function in Sana'a and can be contacted for any assistance by Indian nationals till such time they are able to exit the country.

Source: MEA, New Delhi, <http://www.mea.gov.in/mystart.php?id=530217676>

Specific Issues

f. Palestinian Issue

10. India welcomes Fatah-Hamas Reconciliation, New Delhi, 6 May 2011

The Government of India welcomes the reconciliation agreement between Fatah and Hamas which ends the differences between the West Bank and Gaza and hopes that this would promote the realization of the aspirations of the Palestinian people, and leads to peace and stability in the region.

Source: MEA, New Delhi, <http://www.mea.gov.in/mystart.php?id=530217604>

11. Statement by Minister of State in the Ministry of External Affairs Mr. E. Ahamed at the NAM Ministerial Conference, Bali, 25 May 2011

NAM has always been in the forefront of efforts on the Palestinian issue and this time we have a special segment on the issue of Palestinian political prisoners. The situation in the Middle-East continues to be grim with no signs of peace talks and with potentially exacerbating situations developing in the region. It is, however, imperative that hopes raised for a Palestinian State during last two years reach fruition later this year itself. India has a long-standing tradition of solidarity with the Palestinian people. We welcome the reconciliation agreement between Fatah and Hamas and hope that this would promote the realization of the aspirations of the Palestinian people and lead to peace and stability in the region. We support the Palestinian people's struggle for a sovereign, independent, viable and united State of Palestine with East Jerusalem as its capital living within secure and recognized borders, side by side and at peace with Israel, as endorsed in the Arab Peace initiative, Quartet Roadmap and relevant UN Security Council Resolutions.

Source: MEA, New Delhi, <http://www.mea.gov.in/mystart.php?id=530117665>

Multilateral Issues/ Regional Issues

g. India and the Middle East/ West Asia

12. Foreign Secretary Mrs. Nirupama Rao's speech at the French Institute of International Relations (IFRI), Paris, 5 May 2011

...Our priorities include, and will include peace and stability in our near and extended neighbourhood, including Afghanistan, the Middle East and Africa; counter terrorism including

the prevention of the proliferation of the weapons of mass destruction to non-state actors and the strengthening of UN peace keeping...Let me also add that the West Asian region is of vital importance to India and we closely monitor developments there. We have about six million Indians who live in the Gulf region, and this region is also extremely important, crucially important for our energy security.

Source: MEA, New Delhi, <http://www.mea.gov.in/mystart.php?id=530117612>

13. Visit of Foreign Secretary of India to Paris, New Delhi, 7 May 2011

The two sides also discussed the evolving situation in North Africa and the Middle East, in particular Libya and Syria.

Source: MEA, New Delhi, <http://www.mea.gov.in/mystart.php?id=530217605>

14. Statement by Minister of State in the Ministry of External Affairs Mr. E. Ahamed at the NAM Ministerial Conference, Bali, 25 May 2011

Several countries in North and West Africa and the Middle-East are witnessing challenging developments. It is important that violence is abjured and the route of dialogue taken to meet the legitimate aspirations of the people. It is also important to ensure the sovereignty, unity and territorial integrity of States. The use of force should be avoided.

Source: MEA, New Delhi, <http://www.mea.gov.in/mystart.php?id=530117665>

15. Opening Statement by PM at Joint Media Interaction with Chancellor of Germany Dr. Angela Merkel, New Delhi, 31 May 2011

...Our discussions today covered views on the situation in West Asia and North Africa, including developments in Libya and how they impact on regional peace and stability...

Source: MEA, New Delhi, <http://www.mea.gov.in/mystart.php?id=530117692>

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