

# **MEI FACTSHEET**

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No. 08

Wednesday, 29 June 2011

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## **India-Iran Documents, Part 1**

### **WikiLeaks**

**[Note:** Unlike other democracies, India does not adhere to the 30-year principle of declassifying official papers. More than six decades after independence, most of the foreign policy documents are not available to researchers. Seen in this context, the few US documents released by *WikiLeaks* are extremely valuable. Hence the MEI@ND will publish these documents periodically and thematically. There will be constant updates with links to documents earlier published.

However, as part of its editorial policy, the MEI@ND standardizes spelling to make the text uniformly accessible and stylistically consistent.

Portions *not relevant to India or the concerned theme* are marked by this notation {...}. Portions omitted in the original are marked by either by ..... or xxxx or <> as they appear in the original.]

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#### **1. Year 2010: NSA Menon Discusses Regional Security and Trade Issues with CODEL McCaskill**

Reference ID:	10NEWDELHI355
Created:	2010-02-25 12:56
Released:	2011-05-24 01:00
Classification:	CONFIDENTIAL
Origin:	Embassy New Delhi

Classified By: Ambassador Tim Roemer for Reasons 1.4 (B) and (D).

1. (C) SUMMARY. In a meeting with CODEL McCaskill February 17, National Security Advisor Shiv Shankar Menon touched on regional security issues including Pakistan, Afghanistan, and Iran, as well as several trade-related issues including defense acquisitions, India's Medium Multiple Role Fighter Aircraft (MMRCA) tender, export controls, civil nuclear cooperation, and genetically modified foods. Menon credited intelligence shared by the United States with helping to protect targets in the vicinity of the February 13 Pune bombing, leaving the terrorists no alternative but to go after a soft target instead. Terrorism would be "the primary issue" in the planned February 25 Foreign Secretary-level talks with Pakistan, but Menon allowed that the agenda could expand after the first round of talks depending on Pakistan's response. Menon cautioned that if the Pakistani establishment felt U.S. commitment was flagging in Afghanistan it would not do what was needed in the West. Menon was skeptical about the effect of new sanctions on the divided Iranian elite, but India would continue to implement any sanctions approved by the UN Security Council; Menon hoped they would be carefully targeted. He emphasized the importance for the U.S.-India relationship of "being seen to be sharing technology," and would encourage the Indian Embassy in Washington to explain India's proposed reforms on export controls directly to Senate staff. Menon confirmed the government would introduce civil nuclear liability legislation in the next Parliament. END SUMMARY.

{...}

8. (C) McCaskill agreed we had a chance to succeed because we had adjusted our strategy. McCaskill was confident the United States would continue to sustain the 300,000 strong Afghan National Security Forces even if we began to draw down troops in 2011. Menon observed that "the wonder of the U.S. system is how quickly you learn; that cannot be said of any other country in the world."

Iran: A Choice among "Unsatisfactory Strategies"

9. (C) Menon agreed with Senator Jeff Merkley's (D-OR) assertion that a nuclear Iran would be bad for everyone. Merkley had supported the Obama Administration's efforts to seek dialogue with Iran, but it was now clear the Islamic Republic was not open to dialogue. Menon replied that "the last thing we want is another nuclear power in our neighborhood." That was why India voted against Iran three times at the IAEA and implemented UN sanctions. Iran was "hopping mad" over India's IAEA votes and Iranian Foreign Minister Moutakki "blew up" at former National Security Advisor M.K. Narayanan during his last visit to Delhi. "It goes without saying," according to Menon, that India would continue to implement any sanctions against Iran approved by the Security Council.

10. (C) India had a more complex relationship with Iran and was convinced that it could work with Iran on some issues. For instance, Menon asserted that Iran was more worried about the Taliban today than ISAF, which was not the case a year ago. The trouble was that the Iranian elite was divided, so the normal rules of Iranian politics no longer seemed

to apply. Under these circumstances, Menon asked, “What effect will sanctions have?” “If you must impose sanctions, we will go along with it,” according to Menon, “but we should be aware that it could end up benefiting the regime.” He said any sanctions should be carefully targeted so they do not end up hurting the people rather than the elite. He concluded that the Iran situation was “very unsatisfactory from our point of view as well,” and that the United States had “a choice among unsatisfactory strategies.”

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**WikiLeaks Link:** <http://www.wikileaks.ch/cable/2010/02/10NEWDELHI355.html>

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## **2. Year 2009: U/S Tauscher Engages Fs Rao in Strategic Security Dialogue**

Reference ID:	09NEWDELHI2398
Created:	2009-11-27 12:59
Released:	2011-06-18 01:00
Classification:	CONFIDENTIAL
Origin:	Embassy New Delhi

1. (C) SUMMARY. Delegations led by Under Secretary for Arms Control and International Security Ellen Tauscher and Foreign Secretary Nirupama Rao exchanged views on the full spectrum of nonproliferation and disarmament issues in the first meeting of the Strategic Security Dialogue (SSD) November 12-13. While each side adhered to familiar positions, the chemistry between the principals was good and the dialogue was cordial and frank. The Indian delegation appreciated the message of full partnership on the President's nonproliferation and disarmament agenda and came away with a comprehensive brief on U.S. intentions for the coming year. In the discussion of civil nuclear cooperation, Rao stressed the political dimensions of the proposed ban on Enrichment and Reprocessing technology (ENR) in the Nuclear Suppliers Group (NSG). In a separate working-level meeting November 12, the delegations discussed the proposed establishment of a Nuclear Security Center of Excellence in India as a deliverable for the Nuclear Security Summit. The Indian delegation showed interest in cooperation on capacity building to protect nuclear material for the first time, but also sought to link the proposal to reducing risk, i.e. collaboration on research toward a proliferation-proof fuel cycle. The delegations tentatively agreed to hold the next SSD on the margins of the Nuclear Security Summit April 11-12 in Washington, and to follow up on the Center of Excellence proposal on the margins of the next Sous-sherpa meeting in Tokyo and the Civil Nuclear Energy Working Group (CNEWG) on January 11 in Mumbai. END SUMMARY.

### Participants

2. (SBU) U.S. Delegation: Under Secretary for Arms Control and International Security Ellen Tauscher National Security Council Director Joyce Connery Senior Advisor Maureen Tucker Deputy Assistant Secretary (ISN) Eliot Kang Foreign Affairs Officer (ISN) Katherine Croft Nuclear Regulatory Commission Dr. Karen Henderson Deputy

Assistant Secretary of Defense Rebecca Hersman National Nuclear Security Administration John Gerrard Embassy New Delhi Political Counselor Uzra Zeya Embassy New Delhi Political Officer David Holmes (note-taker) Embassy New Delhi Political Officer Clarissa Adamson (note-taker)

3. (SBU) Indian Government Delegation: Foreign Secretary Nirupama Rao Department of Atomic Energy Director Dr. R.B. Grover MEA Joint Secretary for Disarmament and International Security Affairs (DISA) Gaddam Dharmendra Department of Atomic Energy Joint Secretary for External Relations Gitesh Sarma MEA DISA Director Amandeep Singh Gill MEA Technology Unit Director Sandeep Arya MEA Americas Division Director Vani Rao MEA DISA Deputy Secretary Vipul Department of Space Policy Analyst and Scientist V. Gopalakrishnan Defense Research and Development Organization (DRDO) Distinguished Scientist D. Banerjee DRDO Representative Gopal Bhushan

Global and Regional Strategic Issues: WMD Terrorism, Pakistan, Iran, Syria, DPRK, CBMs

4. (C) In her opening remarks, Rao stressed terrorism as the primary challenge faced by both countries, and that India's goal remained to bring the perpetrators of the 26/11 Mumbai attacks to justice. India is a force for stability and security in a volatile region, yet its security is "in flux" due to the threats emanating from Afghanistan and Pakistan. Its rise added to the complexity of the Asian power equation, but the nuclear balance was unlikely to change much assuming the DPRK and Iran did not break out. Rao stressed the need to strengthen platforms for dialogue, and noted maritime security as an opportunity for cooperation. She would be guided by a Chinese maxim, "making efforts to increase common ground while reserving differences." Tauscher stressed the United States viewed India as a "full partner" and "major player" in efforts to bring about a world without nuclear weapons. She reviewed nonproliferation challenges posed by Iran, DPRK, and Syria, and noted that we cannot allow the world-wide nuclear renaissance to lead to proliferation or weapons of mass destruction terrorism. Working toward a Fissile Material Cutoff Treaty (FMCT) and bringing into force the Comprehensive Test Ban Treaty (CTBT) are important steps toward disarmament. Tauscher outlined efforts to conclude a follow-on Strategic Arms Reduction Treaty (START) and said she would welcome India's views on getting to zero.

5. (C) Kang reviewed the U.S. assessment of the challenge to the nonproliferation regime presented by Iran, Syria, and the DPRK. India was among Iran's largest energy export markets, according to Rao. Rao said India believed Iran must adhere faithfully to its obligations and called for dialogue and peaceful resolution, stressing that the IAEA was the best forum in which to address the issue. India had noted U.S. efforts to increase "diplomatic space" for engagement; any other approach was "unthinkable." Rao said she hoped Iran would respond to the IAEA Director General reports, which also point to clandestine networks in which India is most concerned. On Syria, Rao noted that the IAEA Director General's investigations were inconclusive, but she hoped Syria would cooperate to permit the completion of the investigations. She agreed that the DPRK's

nuclear tests were contrary to its obligations, and that it had responded to international engagement efforts with "shift and drift." She expressed hope that the DPRK would rejoin the Six Party Talks.

{...}

9. (C) Rao observed that India had consistently supported FMCT negotiations in the CD and regretted that the work plan had been held up by Pakistan with the quiet support of China and Iran. She listed the key issues as exclusion of existing stocks (calling on the U.S. to take the lead here and for India to "protect nuclear weapons states' interests"), making allowances for legitimate national security requirements, and the need for effective verification. She was disappointed the CD did not also launch disarmament talks. Kang replied that the United States shared India's hope for a more constructive approach from Pakistan and that procedural blocks were not the answer. Tauscher said she would like to remain in touch with Rao on FMCT negotiations and expressed the hope that the U.S. and India could hold separate discussions on the issue. Rao was optimistic that "we can get down to work early next year."

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**WikiLeaks Link:** <http://www.wikileaks.ch/cable/2009/11/09NEWDELHI2398.html>

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### **3. Year 2009: Demarche Urging GOA not to Sign Iran Agreements**

Reference ID	09STATE116029
Created	2009-11-10 19:12
Released	2011-05-31 00:00
Classification	CONFIDENTIAL
Origin	Secretary of State

Classified By: Acting Assistant Secretary Stuart Jones for reasons 1.4 (b) and (d).

1. (C) Department requests that Embassy Tirana demarche appropriate GOA officials on an urgent basis, urging the Albanian Government to reject overtures by the Iranian Government to sign free trade and cultural exchange agreements with Iran and establish an Iranian airline hub in Albania. Please see paragraph 4 for talking points.

{...}

4. (C) Department shares Post's view that the Iranian Government's overtures are motivated less by economic reasons and more by Tehran's desire to build political ties with Albania. Post is requested to draw on the following points in its demarche:

{...}

Just this year, three prohibited Iranian exports of arms or related materiel on board commercial maritime vessels of non-Iranian states ) the Cyprus-flagged M/V MONCHEGORSK, the German-flagged M/V HANSA INDIA, and the Antigua-flagged M/V FRANCOPI ) have been halted thanks to the vigilance of states alert to Iran's deceptive transportation practices.

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**WikiLeaks Link:** <http://www.wikileaks.ch/cable/2009/11/09STATE116029.html>

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#### **4. Year 2009: Scene-setter for Secretary Of State Clinton's Visit to India**

Reference ID:	09NEWDELHI1464
Created:	2009-07-15 12:39
Released:	2011-03-28 01:00
Classification:	SECRET//NOFORN
Origin:	Embassy New Delhi

Classified By: Charge d'Affaires, a.i., Peter Burleigh for Reasons 1.4 (B, D)

1. (SBU) Madame Secretary: Mission India warmly welcomes you to India. This is an opportune moment in the relationship between the world's largest democracies. The Congress Party's strong showing in the April elections allowed formation of a new and strong Indian government--freed from the constraints of anti-American coalition partners or a precarious political position---with a commitment to elevate the bilateral relationship.

{...}

A Burgeoning Power in a Tough Neighborhood

12. (C) Elsewhere in the region, the U.S. and India generally share similar goals for stability and democratic governance in Nepal, Bangladesh, and Sri Lanka, and have coordinated better than in the past. Policies toward Burma and Iran remain exceptions, largely because India's proximity, historical ties, and strategic and economic interests leave it with a policy perspective that more often than not differs from ours. The good news for the United States is that the same leaders who have a vision for India's ascendancy generally recognize that healthy relations with the U.S. are essential for India to get to where it wants to be.

{...}

**WikiLeaks Link:** <http://www.wikileaks.ch/cable/2009/07/09NEWDELHI1464.html>

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**5. Year 2009: Indian Graphite Supplier Again Doing Business with Intermediary for Iranian Missile Program (S)**

Reference ID: 09STATE53356  
Created: 2009-05-26 14:23  
Released: 2011-06-09 00:00  
Classification: SECRET  
Origin: Secretary of State

Classified By: ISN/MTR DIRECTOR PAM DURHAM FOR REASON 1.4 (B), (D).

1. (U) This is an action request. Please see paragraph 5.
2. (S) Background: In October 2007, we shared with the government of India information related to the supply by the Indian firm XXXXXXXXXXXXX of high-density MTCR-controlled graphite to Iran's Ward Company (Refs A & B). We later advised the GOI that the intended end-user of the graphite was the Sahand Aluminum Parts Industrial Company (SAPICO), a cover company for the Shahid Hemmat Industrial Group (SHIG), Iran's primary developer of liquid-fueled ballistic missiles (Ref I). In response to a follow-on U.S. demarche in November 2007 concerning additional consignments of graphite being readied by XXXXXXXXXXXXX for shipment to Ward, Indian officials advised us that they had prevented the onward shipment of one such consignment, and that they were investigating the matter (Refs C - E). We approached New Delhi again in December 2007 with information indicating that four to five tons of graphite awaiting shipment to Ward had been removed from XXXXXXXXXXXXX's warehouse (Ref F). The GOI informed us that they had not cleared the graphite shipment for export, that nothing had gone to the final destination, and that they had taken unspecified action on the case (Refs G & H). In April 2008, the Times of India (TOI) reported that in October 2007, Indian Customs in Mumbai prevented XXXXXXXXXXXXX from shipping 1,150 kg of graphite to Ward, and that a second consignment of XXXXXXXXXXXXX graphite bound for Dubai was subsequently stopped (Ref K). We requested additional information from India on the status of this graphite, but have not yet received an response (Ref K).
3. (S) Objectives: We want to reiterate our appreciation to Indian officials for the effective action they took in this case, and to remind them that we remain interested in any additional information they can share with us related to the final disposition of the graphite, as well as the results of their investigations or any legal proceedings that resulted from this activity.
4. (S) Objectives (continued): We also want to advise the GOI of information indicating that as of mid-April 2009, Ward and XXXXXXXXXXXXX were again engaged in business-related discussions. We are concerned that this recent contact could involve additional efforts to supply graphite to Iranian entities, and want to urge Indian authorities to investigate and take all appropriate measures to prevent XXXXXXXXXXXXX from acting as a supplier of sensitive materials to Iran.

5. (U) Action Request: Department requests Embassy New Delhi approach appropriate host government officials to deliver the talking points in Paragraph 6 and report response. Talking points may be left as a non-paper.

6. (S) Begin talking points/non-paper:

(SECRET REL INDIA)

-- We would like to raise with you a matter of proliferation concern and request your government's assistance in investigating this activity.

-- In October 2007, we shared information with you indicating that in July 2007, the Indian company XXXXXXXXXXXXX offered to provide 255 blocks of MTCR-controlled, high density graphite to Iran's Ward Commercial Company.

-- We later advised you that the intended end-user of the graphite was the Sahand Aluminum Parts Industrial Company (SAPICO), a cover name for the Shahid Hemmat Industrial Group (SHIG). SHIG is Iran's primary developer of liquid propelled ballistic missiles and is an entity designated under United Nations Security Council Resolution 1737.

-- In late November 2007, we expressed our concerns that XXXXXXXXXXXXX was working to ship additional consignments of graphite to Ward, and that we were aware that Indian officials were holding a shipment of potentially nuclear-grade graphite in the Mumbai Air Cargo Complex near the international terminal.

-- We were subsequently pleased to hear that your government prevented the onward shipment to Iran of the graphite being held at the Mumbai Air Cargo Complex, and that you were investigating this matter.

-- In December 2007, we informed you that four to five tons of graphite being readied for shipment to Ward had been removed from XXXXXXXXXXXXX's warehouse.

-- You responded that your government had not cleared the graphite shipment for export because your investigation was not yet complete, and that the graphite had likely been moved to a location where it could be stored for a longer period of time.

-- You later advised us that nothing had gone to the final destination, and that your government had taken unspecified action on the case.

-- In April 2008, the Times of India (TOI) reported that in October 2007, Indian Customs in Mumbai prevented XXXXXXXXXXXXX from shipping 1,150 kg of graphite to Ward, and that a second consignment of XXXXXXXXXXXXX graphite bound for Dubai was subsequently stopped.

-- We commend Indian authorities for stopping these shipments, and remain interested in any additional information you could share with us related to the final disposition of this graphite. We also would appreciate knowing the results of your investigations or any legal proceedings that resulted from this activity.

-- In addition, we want to advise you of information indicating that as of mid-April 2009, representatives of Ward and XXXXXXXXXXXXX were again engaged in business-related discussions.



-- We are concerned that this recent contact between Ward and XXXXXXXXXXXXXXX could be related to additional efforts to supply graphite to Iranian entities of proliferation concern.

-- Given Ward's history of acting as an intermediary for Iran's ballistic missile program, we urge you to investigate this information and take whatever measures are necessary to prevent the supply Xby XXXXXXXXXXXXXXX of sensitive materials to Iran.

-- We appreciate India's cooperation on nonproliferation issues and look forward to hearing of any actions your government takes in response to this information.

End talking points/non-paper.

7. (XXXXXXXXXXXXXXXX)

8. (U) A word version of this document will be posted at [www.state.gov/demarche](http://www.state.gov/demarche).  
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**WikiLeaks Link:** <http://www.wikileaks.ch/cable/2009/05/09STATE53356.html>

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## **6. Year 2009: Indo-Iranian Relationship: Former Ambassadors to Iran Share Their Views**

Reference ID:	09NEWDELHI594
Created:	2009-03-27 11:17
Released:	2011-03-15 00:00
Classification:	CONFIDENTIAL//NOFORN
Origin:	Embassy New Delhi

Classified By: Acting CDA White Reasons 1.4 (B, D)

1. (C) Summary: Five former Ambassadors to Iran now in Delhi recently shared with us their views on the current Indo-Iranian relationship. The Ambassadors were unanimous that the Indo-Iranian relationship is important to India primarily for energy security, but lacks depth. Bilateral ties - described as shallow but stable, at best, and distrustful at times ) are unlikely to change. The Ambassadors also shared their views on the ability of Iranian Supreme Leader Khamenei to pursue consistent policies. They agreed that U.S., Indian and Iranian interests intersect in support of Afghan reconstruction. End Summary.

India-Iran Relations: Stable but Shallow

2. (C) On 13 March, the Charge d'Affaires hosted a lunch for four ambassadors in Delhi who served as ambassadors to Iran to discuss the Indo-Iranian relationship.

- The Swiss Ambassador to India, Philippe Welti, served in Iran 2003-2008 (Switzerland acts as the protecting power for the U.S. in Iran); - The Italian Ambassador to India, Roberto Toscano, served in Iran 2003-2008; - The Japanese Ambassador to India, Hideaki Domichi, served in Iran 2004-2007; - The Hungarian Ambassador to India, Geza Palmai, served in Iran 1991-1995.

Additionally, on March 23 Acting PolCouns met with Ambassador K.C. Singh, a retired high-level Indian diplomat who served as India's Ambassador to Iran from 2003 to 2005.

3. (C) The consensus among the five ambassadors was that barring an unforeseen change in policy after elections in Iran and India in the coming months, the Indo-Iranian relationship is unlikely to grow in the near future. The Ambassadors predicted continued public overtures by the two nations -- which have in the past tended to exaggerate the extent of Indo-Iranian ties -- but agreed there is little reason to believe the relationship will change.

4. (C) There is a misconception in the West that India has a close relationship with Iran, according to Ambassador Singh, who during his tenure in Tehran became known for advocating the expansion of Indian strategic and energy cooperation with Iran. Singh explained that the Indo-Iranian relationship has not been managed well in the last decade. He characterized India's inability to deal with both the U.S. and Iran simultaneously, without ""upsetting"" one or the other, as a failure of Indian diplomacy. The Swiss Ambassador described ties between the two countries as ""very weak"" and said that apart from energy cooperation ) which he claimed included Indian investments in Iran worth USD 10 billion - there was no depth to the relationship.

5. (C) India's leverage with Iran has significantly decreased, according to Singh, who expressed uncertainty at how much India would be able to accomplish with regard to Iran. Singh attributed this in large part to India's vote against Iran at the IAEA in 2005. Despite the common strategic interest shared by Iran and India in countering the Taliban in Afghanistan, there is minimal trust between the two states. The Government of Iran is suspicious of India's ruling Congress Party for its perceived pro-U.S. leanings and considers India's voting at the IAEA in past years as a betrayal, according to Singh.

#### India Opposed to another Regional Nuclear Power

6. (C) A nuclear Iran looms large in any discussion of Indo-Iranian ties, particularly given India's own nuclear program. India is not interested in seeing Iran develop nuclear weapons and clearly opposes Iran's nuclear ambitions while they are weapons-centered. The Hungarian Ambassador explained that India does not want another state in the region to become a nuclear power. Although India, with its independent foreign policy, is not opposed to Iran, or any other country, developing a peaceful nuclear energy program, the Government of India has clearly stated its opposition to Iran's nuclear weapons development.

7. (C) Iran, on the other hand, does not want to abandon its pursuit of a nuclear weapon because the government and Iranian citizens see this issue as a matter of sovereignty, and the regime considers it a necessary tool to have as a ""backup"" in the case of a major threat, according to the Italian Ambassador. Toscano was pessimistic about Iran compromising to halt its program. (Comment: Ambassadors Palmi and Toscano were echoing official India's view that India will continue to oppose Iran's nuclear ambitions whenever Iran's program extends beyond the energy dimension. End Comment.)

### Dealing with the Iranian Regime

8. (C) Ambassador Welti shared his view that Iran's top decision makers can never be reliable because the power distribution is too wide and constantly shifting. Referring to the Supreme Leader, Welti explained that Khamenei's decision-making ability depended heavily on balancing forces within the Council of Guardians, which was often divided on issues. This in turn makes it very difficult for the Supreme Leader to execute a consistent policy. Ambassador Palmai opined that the most important question was whether the nature of the regime would change in the near future - he did not think it would. But the Italian and Swiss Ambassadors challenged this assumption, explaining that the Iranian regime was already in the process of changing and that power struggles were more evident with generational changes. They identified President Ahmadinejad as a "perfect representation" of a younger generation that is committed to recapturing the Islamic and revolutionary principles that spurred the 1979 Revolution and that had been lost as clergy and officials had become comfortable and more interested in status.

### Indo-Iranian Cooperation on Afghanistan

9. (C) In discussing Iran's shared interests with India, the Ambassadors focused on reconstruction in Afghanistan and how to deal with the Taliban. According to Palmai, Iran and India could cooperate on Afghanistan. He identified intelligence collection in Afghanistan, specifically on the movements of the Taliban, as an area where the U.S. might also share a common interest with both countries.

10. (C) Some of the Ambassadors also believed Iran and India could aid Afghan reconstruction by working together on infrastructure projects. An Indian-financed highway already helped connect the Afghan road system to the Iranian port of Chah Bahar. Work could also be done on a rail connection to Herat.

### Thin Business Ties

11. (C) The Ambassadors agreed that energy cooperation is the top bilateral issue between India and Iran, but most noted that other than trade in crude oil and refined products cooperation had been limited due to the stalled Iran-Pakistan-India (IPI) pipeline. The proposed pipeline has been indefinitely placed on the backburner by the Government of India, which has been unable to obtain the guarantee that Iran would provide an uninterrupted supply of gas at a reasonable price. India's Parliament would oppose India's financing of a pipeline that runs through Pakistan, explained Ambassador Welti. "It does not make economic sense," according to Singh, who was skeptical about the benefits to India of the proposed pipeline under Iran's current demands. (Comment: Iran has broken its past agreements on oil and gas deals and has little credibility within the Indian Government as a long term partner on large, expensive, long-term oil and gas deals. In addition, India's concerns about the security of the IPI pipeline route through Pakistan have been strongly reinforced by the November 2008

Mumbai terrorist attacks, making the likelihood this project will come to fruition anytime soon very low. End Comment.)

12. (C) Ultimately, what is really stopping Indians from engaging in more business ventures with Iran, explained Singh, is 1) the difficulty of doing business with Iran, and 2) the stigma associated with doing business with Iran. India has adopted a more risk-averse attitude toward Iran, balancing the desire to keep the relationship steady while avoiding getting on the "wrong side" of the international community. Singh added that given decreasing commodity (especially steel) prices and the renewal of sanctions, there is no rush for India to engage Iran.

13. (C) Comment: The observations our experienced contacts shared with us demonstrate that India's limited yet stable relationship with Iran is likely to continue along the same path for the foreseeable future. We would not be surprised to see the public discourse which plays up Indo-Iranian ties to increase during the election season as candidates play to a large Muslim constituency which sees India's relationship with Iran as a litmus test for how well each political party treats Muslims. While the status quo for Indo-Iranian relations remains in place, our contacts stressed that India's policy toward Iran is based in the end on a hard-nosed calculation of its interests, not in public appeals to the historical and cultural ties between Tehran and New Delhi. The United States has the opportunity to work with India on Iran, but in order to do so, we must lay the groundwork to convince India of where our interests converge.

WHITE

**WikiLeaks Link:** <http://www.wikileaks.ch/cable/2009/03/09NEWDELHI594.html>

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## **7. Year 2009: Indian Views on Engaging Iran**

Reference ID:	09NEWDELHI451
Created:	2009-03-09 12:34
Released:	2011-03-15 00:00
Classification:	CONFIDENTIAL//NOFORN
Origin:	Embassy New Delhi

Classified By: Acting POLCOUNS Lesslie Viguerie for Reasons 1.4 (B, D)

1. (C) Summary: Indian experts on the Indo-Iranian relationship describe it as stable but somewhat shallow. It is nurtured by both sides simply to maintain a friendly partner in the region. Our contacts encouraged the U.S. to engage Iran bilaterally rather than use India or any other third party as an intermediary. Despite optimism by some on the potential political/security benefits of the Iran-Pakistan-India natural gas pipeline, an element of friction in our relationship. Post maintains its long-standing assessment that this is a project unlikely to come to fruition. End Summary.

2. (C) Comment: Much of India's Iran policy is designed for public consumption by the domestic Muslim and Non-Aligned Movement audience. We can expect that India will

continue an active dialogue with Iran through high-level visits and working groups, at times in ways that are likely to appear to us as too much ""business as usual."" Still, it is indeed because U.S. and Indian interests in Iran are drawing closer than before -- from issues ranging from nuclear weapons to regional stability to the Israel factor -- that we can look to Delhi as a factor in our strategies on Iran. Post contacts seemed unanimous in asserting that India's Iran policy runs independently of its U.S. policy; however, they point out that when common interests converge, we can expect India to be supportive. The key, therefore, is to proactively work with India to highlight these interests.  
End Comment.

#### India-Iran Relations: Longstanding, Wide-Ranging

3. (C) The foundation of the Indo-Iranian relationship lies in the two countries' historical ties which, in a region that places so much importance on the past, have paved the way for the existing broad bilateral relationship. The two states share few, but important foreign policy goals. The key factors driving India's interest in maintaining a positive relationship with Iran are twofold: its energy needs, and its desire to play well with others in the region, especially at times when India's relationship with Pakistan ) which Iran also shares a border with ) is increasingly contentious.

4. (C) High level Indian and Iranian government officials meet regularly to discuss their countries' energy ties, naval agreements, international terrorism, and cooperation in technology, pharmacology, and defense, among other issues. In the last fourteen years, three Iranian presidents have made official visits to India; Ahmadinejad came to India in April 2008. ""Positive dealings with Iran are an enormously popular idea in India"" says Ambassador M.K. Bhadrakumar, a retired Indian diplomat who had ambassadorial assignments throughout Central Asia, explaining that many in the present government see it as a ""sentimental journey"".

5. (C) However, despite official proclamations in Tehran and Delhi that the Indo-Iranian relationship is longstanding, stable and substantial, some experts here question the depth of the relationship. Bhadrakumar says the relationship has ""atrophied"", and Jawaharlal Nehru University (JNU) professor of Middle East studies, Dr. P.R. Kumaraswamy, refers to such high-level visits as nothing more than ""goodwill visits,"" explaining that there is no real substance beyond their symbolic nature.

#### U.S. Should Engage Iran Bilaterally, Say Indian Experts

6. (C) In the last decade, India's desire to cultivate its relationship with the U.S. has factored into its foreign policy toward Iran. But India's ability to influence Iran on behalf of the U.S. is limited, say experts. It would be a mistake, explains Bhadrakumar, for the U.S. to think of using India as an intermediary to engage Iran for two reasons: because India does not have a substantial enough relationship with Iran to have leverage over it, and because the Iranians would prefer to deal with the U.S. directly.

7. (C) A third reason why Indians would prefer to stay out of U.S.-Iran relations is because India wants a stable relationship with Iran, and any perception Delhi is carrying out a foreign policy influenced by the U.S. might risk upsetting the status quo. "India wants to keep a healthy bilateral relationship and not get involved in a multilateral problem," says Kumaraswamy, which also explains why Delhi tends to leave issues with Pakistan out of its portfolio with Iran.

#### India Opposes Iran's Nuclear Weapon's Ambitions, for its Own Reasons

8. (C) Several of Post's contacts, both in and out of government, all of whom have served for extended periods in Iran, agree that Iran's nuclear weapons program has advanced to a stage that is not likely to be reversed, regardless of whether conservatives or moderates run the Iranian government. Categorizing as futile any efforts to try and stop Iran from developing its nuclear weapons program, they offer that the U.S. should focus its efforts on gaining an inside track into Iran's program. Bringing Iran into the international community, contacts maintain, would force it to adhere to international standards of transparency. The only way Tehran would turn back from its nuclear weapons pursuit, according to S.K. Arora, former Indian Ambassador to Iran, would be if there were a complete global dismantlement of nuclear weapons effort. For Iran, the program has now become a matter of national pride, he explained, and therefore, Iran would not give it up.

9. (C) When asked if the U.S. could continue to count on India opposing Iran's nuclear weapons development in fora such as the IAEA, Arora answered it would depend on what India's interests are at the time. Citing as a major worry that more states in the region were joining the nuclear club, Arora told PolOff that India is the least interested state in seeing Iran develop a nuclear weapon.

10. (C) However, India would not oppose Iran simply to enhance its relationship with the U.S. or to improve relations with Europe, he explained, despite the fact that "for the past 6 years India has been extremely anxious to have a good relationship with the U.S." India's relationship with Iran is based strictly on India's domestic political interests at the time, said Arora, making reference to India's large Muslim population, its political weight, and how any government must be cautious in the steps it takes to avoid inciting this segment of society.

#### Using India's Leverage to Engage Iran, Israel

11. (C) Despite the belief held by many here that using India as an intermediary for dealing with Iran is not plausible, a few Indo-Iran watchers see some opportunities for the U.S.-Indian strategic partnership to be leveraged to encourage a less aggressive dialogue between Israel and Iran.

12. (C) Israeli cooperation with India has grown over the past decade. According to both Indian and Israeli press reports, Israel is overtaking Russia as the main defense supplier to India after breaking the \$1 billion mark in new contracts signed annually over the past two years, and the Indo-Israeli relationship, while still relatively young, might be ripe



enough to incorporate dimensions other than defense sales. According to Kumaraswamy, India more heavily values its relationship with Israel than it does its relationship with Iran.

#### IPI Pipeline, Railway Cited As Potential Growth Areas

13. (C) India's priority for the proposed Iran-Pakistan-India (IPI) natural gas pipeline project has been to obtain the guarantee that Iran would provide an uninterrupted supply at a reasonable price, and Iran has been unable to provide such an assurance. Similarly, Iran wanted assurance from India that it would purchase the gas at a certain price for a certain number of years. Many of our contacts remain skeptical about the potential of this project after so many failed negotiations, and some like Arora and Kumaraswamy see no chance of it actually materializing. Post maintains its long-standing negative assessment of GOI interest in and prospects for the proposed pipeline (refs B, C).

14. (C) However, given the dual Indian interests of energy security and regional stability, contacts such as Bhadrakumar believe bringing the Iran-Pakistan-India pipeline to fruition could bring political benefits, even if its commercial prospects remain dim. Bhadrakumar believes IPI could serve as a vehicle for building trust and sees a realistic opportunity for the pipeline to be completed, maintaining that there is a possibility negotiations could resume with a new Indian government in summer 2009. He added U.S. companies could benefit indirectly through downstream commercial projects. The payoff of the developing pipeline project could be immense, not only in a business aspect, but from a regional security standpoint as well, explains Bhadrakumar. Bhadrakumar also said he saw a similar promise for India to play a role in building Iran's regional integration through the completion of the Chabahar port railway project, linking Iran's coast to Central Asia and beyond.

WHITE

**WikiLeaks Link:** [Http://Www.Wikileaks.Ch/Cable/2009/03/09NEWDELHI451.Html](http://Www.Wikileaks.Ch/Cable/2009/03/09NEWDELHI451.Html)

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### **8. Year 2009: Indian Foreign Secretary: "Huge Stake" in Special Representative Holbrooke's Success**

Reference ID:	09NEWDELHI288
Created:	2009-02-17 08:27
Released:	2010-11-30 21:30
Classification:	CONFIDENTIAL
Origin:	Embassy New Delhi

Classified By: AMB David C. Mulford for Reasons 1.4 (B, D)

1. (C) Summary. In a meeting between Indian Foreign Secretary Shivshankar Menon and Special Representative Richard Holbrooke on February 16, Menon:

-- stated that India "has a huge stake" in the Special Representative's success in his new role and promised to support Holbrooke's efforts publicly to alleviate negative media speculation about the Special Representative's mandate; -- gave his assessment that the intentions and capabilities of the Pakistan Army were the key determinants of Pakistan's internal situation and the cause of friction between India and Pakistan; -- said that India wishes to collaborate closely with the U.S. on Afghanistan, and offered support for U.S. views on the suitability of an August 20 election date; -- suggested that after consulting internally, he may travel to Washington to provide GOI input into the U.S. review of Afghanistan policy; and -- provided a brief on the GOI's initial reaction to Pakistan's response to the Mumbai terror attacks. End Summary.

{...}

10. (C) Menon asked if the U.S. was considering including Iran in a Core Group on Afghanistan. Holbrooke referred to his interview with Tolo TV where he emphasized the need for all of Afghanistan's neighbors to be part of the solution, but said no policy decisions had been made. Menon said he believed a contact group did not have to be formally set up yet, but rather if we "let it cook," it would form itself. Menon noted the interest China has had in such a group for the past two years, and added that Iran has been signaling to India for the last four months that it was interested.

{...}

**WikiLeaks Link:** <http://www.wikileaks.ch/cable/2009/02/09NEWDELHI288.html>

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## **9. Year 2008: King Hamad on Iran, Regional Integration, Russia, China and India**

Reference ID:	08MANAMA765
Created:	2008-11-12 13:49
Released:	2011-05-04 00:00
Classification:	SECRET
Origin:	Embassy Manama

Classified By: CDA Christopher Henzel for reasons 1.4 (b) and (d)

1. (S) Summary: King Hamad confirmed that Iran expressed concern to Bahrain about U.S. naval "weapons systems." Bahrain plans to continue pushing its proposal for a new regional organization that includes Israel. The King was suspicious of China, apologetic about his upcoming visit to Russia, and warm towards India. End summary.

{...}

Russia, China and India in the Gulf

7. (S) The King appeared eager to allay any concern the U.S. might have about his upcoming December 2 state visit to Russia. "This was agreed more than a year ago and I have to go, but we know our real friends are in the U.S." The King expressed concern at what he viewed as China's "aggressive" new efforts to strengthen its economic and diplomatic influence in the region. The Chinese Minister of Defense would soon be visiting Bahrain as part of a regional tour; "Thank God I will be out of the country that day." By contrast, the King viewed India's growing influence in the Gulf as a healthy development, and said he was happy to see U.S.-Indian ties improving.

{...}

**WikiLeaks Link:** <http://www.wikileaks.ch/cable/2008/11/08MANAMA765.html>

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### **10. Year 2008: U/S Rood Dialogue with Israel: Non-Proliferation**

Reference ID:	08TELAIVIV1693
Created:	2008-08-04 12:22
Released:	2011-05-04 00:00
Classification:	CONFIDENTIAL
Origin:	Embassy Tel Aviv

Classified By: Classified by Charge d'Affaires Luis Moreno for reason 1 .4 (b) and (d).

1. (U) On July 16, Acting Under Secretary John Rood held a Strategic Affairs Dialogue with members of the GOI, including MFA, Israeli Defense Intelligence (IDI), and the Israel Atomic Energy Commission (IAEC). This is the last of three cables covering the dialogue, focusing on non-proliferation and arms control. The previous cables (ref A and B) discussed Iran and Syria.

{...}

9. (C) The GOI explained that they support civilian nuclear programs, but have been raising their concerns over controls with other countries, including France, Canada, the Netherlands, India, Japan, Germany, South Korea, and the UK. Israel is most concerned about indigenous conversion and online refueling. Germany, notably, did not agree. Israel is also against additional research reactors in the region, which the IAEA seems to encourage, pointing out that there is enough research capacity. France and the UK both agreed.

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**WikiLeaks Link:** <http://www.wikileaks.ch/cable/2008/08/08TELAIVIV1693.html>

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### **11. Year 2008: 08NEWDELHI1972**

Reference ID:	08NEWDELHI1972
Created:	2008-07-17 13:23

Released: 2011-03-27 01:00  
Classification: SECRET  
Origin: Embassy New Delhi

Classified By: Charge D'Affaires Steven White for Reasons 1.4 (B and D)

1. (C) SUMMARY. Foreign Secretary Shiv Shankar Menon and his delegation departed for Vienna on July 17 to brief the 35 Board members of the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) and another 19 members of the Nuclear Suppliers Group (NSG) on the U.S.-India Civil Nuclear Cooperation Initiative. In Delhi, government officials responded positively to suggestions about how to address concerns emerging from Vienna, particularly the need to begin negotiating an IAEA Additional Protocol and for the IAEA to circulate India's (INFCIRC) already-public separation plan as an official IAEA document. Political horse-trading continued in anticipation of the special session of parliament to consider the confidence vote on July 21 followed by the vote itself on July 22. Prime Minister Manmohan Singh and opposition Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) leader L.K. Advani each plan to host a dinner for supporters on July 20; the parties will presumably have to choose one or the other. An estranged Congress Party MP and three Telangana Rashtra Samithi (TRS) MPs publicly stated their intention to vote against the UPA, leaving the government still clinging to a slim majority. Small parties representing collectively about 20 votes find themselves with generous suitors; one party chief has reportedly succeeded in having the Lucknow airport renamed after his father. The unrequited Left continued its anti-government rant, but showed signs of internal strain. Lok Sabha Speaker Somnath Chatterjee refused to resign despite pressure from within the Communist party to do so and has made it clear that he was not in favor of the Left voting with the opposition BJP against the government, a position that seems to have resonance among comrades disinclined to face early elections. END SUMMARY.

{...}

Disagreements Among Comrades: Left Shows Signs of Strain - - -

14. (SBU) The Left continued its rant against the government. The Community Party of India-Marxist (CPI-M) Polit Bureau grouched that the Prime Minister's Office set a "dangerous precedent" by meeting industrialist Mukesh Ambani on July 14, during which Ambani reportedly offered help in securing Shiv Sena support for the UPA government. The CPI-M said the government's rejection of the use of force against Iran by Israel was "timely," but that it would only be credible if the government were to cut military ties with Israel.

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**WikiLeaks Link:** <http://www.wikileaks.ch/cable/2008/07/08NEWDELHI1972.html>

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## 12. Year 2008: Indian Iran Retort Might Lay Groundwork for Nuclear Movement

Reference ID: 08NEWDELHI1134  
Created: 2008-04-24 12:12  
Released: 2011-03-26 01:00  
Classification: SECRET//NOFORN  
Origin: Embassy New Delhi

Classified By: Charge d'Affaires Steven White for Reasons 1.4 (B and D)

1. (C/NF) Summary: External Affairs Minister Pranab Mukherjee echoed April 23 the Ministry of External Affairs (MEA) spokesman's strong and unhelpful reaction to the U.S. statement on India's relationship with Iran. While the Communists expressed their approval for the MEA statement, Left leaders also demanded April 23 that the government summon the U.S. Ambassador to protest against the "unsolicited advice." Mukherjee also told reporters that the government would call for a "sense of the house" in Parliament on the nuclear issue prior to seeking U.S. ratification of the agreement. The intensified high-profile stance on Iran, Iran President Ahmadinejad's visit, and Mukherjee's promise to give Parliament a say in the nuclear initiative could possibly lay the groundwork for the Left to allow the UPA government to submit the safeguards agreement to the IAEA Board of Governors during the next UPA-Left committee meeting scheduled May 6. As usual, the Indian government is stroking its Left and Muslim constituencies with cheap rhetoric and empty gestures prior -- we hope -- to solid forward movement with the U.S. Embassy will continue to protect MEA's overreaction to Tom Casey's statement, and will arrange a briefing to Indian government leaders that may influence the message they deliver to President Ahmadinejad. End Summary.

### Mukherjee Elaborates on India's Iran Stance

2. (SBU) During an April 23 interaction with reporters, External Affairs Minister Pranab Mukherjee stated that Indian officials would discuss the nuclear issue with Iranian President Mahmoud Ahmadinejad when he visits Delhi April 29, but advised the U.S. to back off. "We are advising Iran that since it is a signatory of NPT, it has some obligation to international treaties," he stated. "We tell the U.S., do not take on yourself the responsibility whether Iran was manufacturing weapons or not. Leave it to the IAEA, the designated authority," Mukherjee continued. He elaborated that the IAEA must "convince themselves whether (Tehran's program) is peaceful." Asked to respond to spokesperson Tom Casey's April 21 remarks, Mukherjee referred the media to the Ministry of External Affairs (MEA) statement issued April 22, which he described as "correct."

3. (SBU) In response to Casey's statement, the MEA had declared April 22 that Iran and India "are perfectly capable of managing all aspects of their relationship with the appropriate degree of care and attention." The MEA dismissed the encouragement by the U.S. to urge Ahmadinejad to meet the requirements set by the UN Security Council.

""Neither country needs any guidance on the future conduct of bilateral relations as both believe that engagement and dialogue alone lead to peace,"" he said, and stressed that the two countries enjoy ties that date back to ancient civilizations.

#### MEA Statement Reveals MEA Split on U.S. and Iran

4. (C) PolCouns protested to MEA Joint Secretary (Americas) Gaitri Kumar April 22 MEA's sharp statement, especially after Kumar had earlier shared with PolCouns an anodyne draft statement that reiterated standard Indian talking points on Iran. Kumar related that India's growing relationship with the U.S. has split MEA into two camps, and a member of the group that opposes any progress in U.S.-India relations rewrote the MEA statement. She remarked that Foreign Secretary Shivshankar Menon was furious about the result when he returned from Beijing earlier that day. Although PolCouns pressed, Kumar would not reveal who approved the re-worked public statement.

5. (C) Charge met April 24 with Additional Secretary (International Organizations) Vivek Katju, and brought up the Iran issue. Katju had no substantive response.

#### Left Welcomes Tough MEA Statement but Wants More

6. (SBU) Communist Party of India (Marxist) (CPM) Politburo member Brinda Karat raised the ""unsolicited advice"" from the U.S. April 23 during the Question Hour in Parliament's Rajya Sabha (upper house). ""Though the External Affairs Ministry has denounced the U.S. statement, it was not enough. The U.S. Ambassador should be summoned and India should register its strong displeasure on the issue,"" she demanded. ""The U.S. has been telling India to cooperate with it on the Iranian nuclear issue. This clearly proves that the U.S. considers India its junior partner. The U.S. cannot guide us on our foreign policy matters,"" she argued. Karat's Left colleagues and members of parties associated with the United National Progressive Alliance (UNPA), the loose grouping of regional parties not associated with either the Congress or BJP, supported her denunciation. While CPM leader Sitaram Yechury said that he appreciated the MEA's rebuff, he also called in Parliament for the government to summon the U.S. Ambassador ""over the interference from the self-appointed world policeman.""

7. (SBU) Elements of the Congress Party also expressed their approval of Ahmadinejad's visit. Deputy Home Minister Shakeel Ahmed, known as a close associate of Congress Party President Sonia Gandhi's advisor Ahmed Patel, told The Telegraph April 23 that ""we think India and Iran are two mature states...and can discuss things among themselves.""

#### Mukherjee to Take the Nuclear Deal to Parliament

8. (SBU) Mukherjee also announced April 23 that the UPA government will seek a ""sense of the House"" before completing the nuclear initiative. ""Before we go for its ratification in the American Parliament, we will come to Parliament to take the sense of the House even though there is no provision in the Constitution that stands in our way,""



he told reporters. "If at that point of time, Parliament refuses to move the legislation, the international agreement will be of no use." Mukherjee outlined that the government would seek the Parliament vote after obtaining IAEA Board approval of the safeguards agreement and an exception from the Nuclear Suppliers Group, but before ratification by the U.S. Congress. One commentator surmised that the legislation might come in the form of amendments to India's Atomic Energy Act that allow for private participation in India's nuclear sector.

9. (C) An Australian political officer expressed his concern about Mukherjee's formulation to poloff April 24. He worried that "practical" countries with strong nonproliferation interests, like Australia, Japan and Germany, would be reluctant to expend political capital to support an NSG exception if India has not demonstrated its own commitment. Why should NSG countries make the tough political decisions if the Indian government cannot, he wondered. Although he cautioned that he had not received guidance from Canberra, he admitted that his Ambassador, who has supported the nuclear initiative despite the Rudd government's misgivings, has serious questions about India's new sequencing.

Comment: The UPA Lays the Groundwork for IAEA Submission

10. (C) The visit by Ahmadinejad, sharp retorts to the anodyne U.S. statement, and the pledge to take the nuclear deal to Parliament could give the Left sufficient political cover to allow the UPA government to submit the safeguards agreement to the IAEA Board of Governors when they meet May 6 for the next UPA-Left committee meeting. Ahmadinejad's transit through Delhi will provide reassurance to the America-haters that India's foreign policy remains "independent" of the U.S. -- a message reinforced by the truculent MEA statement. Meanwhile, the promise of a "sense of the House" gives the Left the opportunity to veto the initiative further down the road, potentially allowing the UPA government to advance the deal one more inch forward. The UPA may have calculated that the later vote in Parliament will help pressure NSG countries to draft a clean, non-controversial exception for India. If achieved, such simple NSG language would then put pressure on the Left to voice support in Parliament because China, among other NSG members, would have supported by consensus. The risk remains, however, that the Left may use domestic legislation to single out and ban nuclear cooperation with the U.S. specifically, but because such a move would irrevocably harm U.S.-India relations, we think that even the weak-willed Congress Party would resist such a move.

11. (C) While the MEA and Left remarks on Iran are egregious, they are likely mere tactics in the UPA's domestic political machinations. A sharp, public response by the U.S. will only inflame matters. The reality remains that India and Iran have a flimsy relationship, which the Congress Party has attempted to spin for the benefit of its Left allies and Muslim voters, who continue to deride India's two votes in the IAEA against Iran. If the Left finally allows the nuclear initiative to move forward May 6, the sound and fury over Iran might have a useful dimension.

12. (S/NF) Meanwhile, Embassy will register its protest of the MEA's offensive statement on Iran. We have offered a briefing to senior Indian officials on Iran's nuclear program, energy picture, domestic politics and relations with its neighbors that may shape their interaction with the visiting Iranian leader. That briefing is scheduled for April 27, two days before Ahmadinejad arrives in Delhi, and provides an opportunity to influence New Delhi's message to Tehran.

WHITE

**WikiLeaks Link:** <http://www.wikileaks.ch/cable/2008/04/08NEWDELHI1134.html>

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### **13. Year 2008: Iran's Ahmadinejad to Visit India April 29**

Reference ID:	08NEWDELHI1065
Created:	2008-04-15 11:31
Released:	2011-03-21 01:00
Classification:	SECRET//NOFORN
Origin:	Embassy New Delhi

Classified By: Charge d'Affaires, a.i., Steven White for Reasons 1.4 (B, D)

1. (SBU) This is an action request for SCA and NEA. Please see paragraph six.
2. (S/NF) A senior Ministry of External Affairs (MEA) official notified PolCouns on April 15 that Iranian President Ahmadinejad will visit India on April 29. The official said she was providing the Embassy with this information prior to the MEA informing even other agencies within the Indian government, and before the information was to become public. She noted that Prime Minister Singh had rejected previous requests either to visit Tehran or for Ahmadinejad to visit India, but has now finally accepted a visit from the Iranian leader.
3. (S/NF) Comment. Our interlocutor did not explain why the Indian government is accepting Ahmadinejad at this time, but, in giving us the forewarning, was clearly aware of U.S. sensitivities over such a visit. As Post has reported, India's policy on Iran has been to maintain seemingly healthy but low-key relations, while conforming with UN Security Council Resolutions pertaining to Iran's nuclear development program. By accepting Ahmadinejad, the "low-key" part of the relationship is removed.
4. (S/NF) Comment continued. In Post's estimation, the reason for agreeing to an Ahmadinejad visit at this time is to appease the UPA government's domestic Left and Muslim constituencies, i.e., asserting the independence of India's foreign policy, as well as its healthy relations with Muslim neighbors, at a time when the Communists are scoring points with the electorate by criticizing the government for becoming too close to America (and Israel) at the expense of Indian sovereignty.

5. (S/NF) Comment continued. It is conceivable that this could be part of a broader GOI plan, in typical Indian give-and-take fashion of governance, to make a gesture to Left and Muslim constituents before going ever so slightly forward with the civil-nuclear agreement. Post notes that one theory for when the government would move forward on operationalizing the civ-nuke deal is after the current parliament budget session ends May 9, and that meeting with Ahmadinejad would provide a level of political cover for entering into what is seen by critics here as an agreement to cement Indo-U.S. relations. Post is urgently seeking a meeting with the MEA Joint Secretary responsible for Iran to seek further clarity on this visit and raise concerns about Ahmadinejad and the Iranian government. End comment.

6. (S/NF) Action request for SCA and NEA: The Foreign Ministry official offered for the Indian government to pass any messages the USG might want to give to Ahmadinejad during the April 29 visit. Post requests guidance, if any, on whether the USG wishes to accept this offer and, if so, what the message would be.

WHITE

**WikiLeaks Link:** <http://www.wikileaks.ch/cable/2008/04/08NEWDELHI1065.html>

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**14. Year 2008: Following-Up With India on the XXXXXXXXXXXXX Graphite Case (S)**

Reference ID	08STATE23763
Created	2008-03-07 15:00
Released	2010-12-16 21:30
Classification	SECRET
Origin	Secretary of State

Classified By: ISN/MTR DIRECTOR PAM DURHAM FOR REASONS 1.4 (B), (D).

1. (U) This is an action request. Please see paragraph 6.
2. (S) Background: In October 2007, we shared with Indian officials information indicating that India's XXXXXXXXXXXXX had offered French-origin, MTCR-controlled graphite blocks to Iran's Ward Commercial Company (Ref A). Ward had previously been involved in the procurement of items on behalf of the Shahid Hemmat Industrial Group (SHIG - Iran's primary liquid propellant ballistic missile developer).
3. (S) In November, we learned that XXXXXXXXXXXXX was working to ship additional consignments of graphite to Ward, and that Indian officials were holding a shipment of potentially nuclear-grade graphite blocks in the Air Cargo Complex at the international

airport in Mumbai (Ref B). We expressed our concerns to the GOI about the possible imminent release of this graphite for onward shipment to Iran, and also advised Indian officials that XXXXXXXXXXXXX was readying follow-on shipments of graphite for Ward. In response to our concerns, Indian officials told us that they had begun an investigation of this matter, and that the shipment would not go forward until their investigation was complete (Refs C & D).

4. (S) In December, we shared with the GOI information indicating that four to five tons of graphite being readied at a XXXXXXXXXXXXXXXX warehouse for shipment to Ward had been moved from that location (Ref E). This graphite - like the shipment at the Mumbai airport - had been placed on hold by Indian authorities, preventing its onward shipment. We had no information on the date of the graphite's removal or its location, but believed that it could still be in the country, awaiting shipment to Iran from another location in India. Indian authorities advised us that they had not cleared the graphite shipment for export because its investigation was not yet complete, and that they were working to locate the missing graphite (Ref F). As of early January, the GOI informed us that none of the graphite had shipped, and that India was taking unspecified action on the case (Ref G).

5. (S) Objectives: We now want to follow-up with Indian officials on this case, and request information concerning the status or whereabouts of the graphite ) both that which was detained at the Airport as well as the graphite that was removed from XXXXXXXXXXXXXXXX's warehouse. We also want to share with Indian officials new information identifying the intended end-user of the graphite as the Sahand Aluminum Parts Industrial Company (SAPICO), a cover for Iran's primary liquid- fueled ballistic missile producer, and to advise the GOI that Ward's efforts to procure this graphite for SAPICO continues.

6. (U) Action Request: Department requests Embassy New Delhi approach appropriate host government officials to deliver the talking points in Paragraph 7 and report response. Talking points may be left as a non-paper.

7. (S) Begin talking points/non-paper:  
(SECRET REL INDIA)

-- We would like to follow-up on a matter of potential proliferation concern we discussed with you previously.

-- In October 2007, we shared information with you indicating that the Indian company XXXXXXXXXXXXXXXX offered to provide 255 blocks of French-origin high density graphite to Iran's Ward Commercial Company.

-- We alerted you to this activity because we believed Ward Commercial Company may have been seeking this graphite on behalf of Iran's missile program.

-- Ward Commercial Company has previously worked to procure items on behalf of Iran's liquid-fueled ballistic missile developer, the Shahid Hemmat Industrial Group (SHIG), an entity designated in UN Security Council Resolution 1737.

-- On November 20, we expressed our concerns that XXXXXXXXXXXXXXXX was working to ship additional consignments of graphite to Ward, and that we were aware that Indian

officials were holding a shipment of potentially nuclear-grade graphite blocks in the Mumbai Air Cargo Complex near the international terminal.

-- We also advised you that XXXXXXXXXXXXX was likely readying additional graphite shipments to Iran.

-- We were pleased to hear on November 21 that your government had prevented the onward shipment to Iran of the graphite being held at the Mumbai Air Cargo Complex Terminal, and that you were investigating this matter.

-- In December 2007, we informed you that four to five tons of graphite being readied for shipment to Ward had been removed from XXXXXXXXXXXXX's warehouse, and that its current location and disposition were unknown.

-- You subsequently informed us that your government had not cleared the graphite shipment for export because its investigation was not yet complete, and that you would work to locate the missile graphite.

-- In early January, India advised the U.S. Embassy in New Delhi that nothing had gone to the final destination, and that your government had taken unspecified action on the case.

-- We remain very concerned about this case, and would be interested in hearing any information you can provide regarding the status or whereabouts of the graphite ) including that which was detained at the Mumbai Airport as well as the graphite that went missing from XXXXXXXXXXXXX's warehouse.

-- We would appreciate any updates you can share with us concerning actions your government has taken to prevent the shipment of this graphite to Iran.

-- We also want to share with you new information identifying the intended end-user of the graphite as the Sahand Aluminum Parts Industrial Company (SAPICO), a cover name for SHIG.

-- We understand that as of late January 2008, Ward was continuing its efforts to procure this graphite from XXXXXXXXXXXXX on behalf of SAPICO.

-- We hope this information is useful in your efforts to prevent this graphite from being shipped to Iran's ballistic missile program, and would appreciate any information you can provide on this matter.

End talking points/non-paper.

8. XXXXXXXXXXXXX

9. (U) XXXXXXXXXXXXX. RICE

NNNN

End Cable Text

**WikiLeaks Link:** <http://www.wikileaks.ch/cable/2008/03/08STATE23763.html>

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**15. Year 2008: Admiral William J. Fallon's Meeting with Sultan Qaboos**

Reference ID:	08MUSCAT174
Created:	2008-03-01 05:49
Released:	2010-11-28 18:00

Classification: SECRET//NOFORN  
Origin: Embassy Muscat

Classified By: Ambassador Gary A. Grappo for Reasons 1.4 (b, d)

## SUMMARY

1. (C) Sultan Qaboos discussed both domestic and regional issues during his February 19 meeting with Admiral William J. Fallon, CENTCOM Commander. On the domestic front, the Sultan described his desire to empower the government to be more responsive to citizen concerns. Seeking to strengthen the role of Omani women, the Sultan plans to convene a conference in 2009 designed to increase the participation and leadership of women in all aspects of Omani society. Sultan Qaboos also shared plans for continued infrastructure development in Oman and described efforts underway to obtain more natural gas. On Iraq, the Sultan advised against a premature withdrawal of U.S. forces and stated that more regional assistance would be forthcoming if Iraqis would "come together" to take charge of, and invest in, their own country. Sultan Qaboos shared U.S. concerns about Iranian meddling in Iraq and elsewhere, but contended that Tehran knew confrontation with the U.S. was not in its interest. Iran's "charm offensive" in the GCC had succeeded in lessening suspicions of some officials about the true intentions of Iranian policies. End Summary.

{...}

9. (C) Looking offshore, the Sultan said he hoped that new gas fields would be found in the Gulf of Oman to help ease the country's natural gas shortage. India's Reliance Industries was currently exploring a deepwater oil and gas block in this body of water, but had made no significant discoveries yet. Qatar would begin supplying gas to Oman by 2013, the Sultan noted, but not in quantities sufficient to meet outstanding needs. He added that Oman was still supplying limited gas from Musandam to Ras al-Khaimah in the UAE due to an agreement he made with its emir -- and which the Sultan felt he could not break -- well before Oman was squeezed for this resource.

{...}

**WikiLeaks Link:** <http://www.wikileaks.ch/cable/2008/03/08MUSCAT174.html>

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### **16. Year 2007: Iran Manipulating Indian Elite Opinion-Makers**

Reference ID: 07NEWDELHI2142  
Created: 2007-05-04 11:42  
Released: 2010-12-16 21:30  
Classification: CONFIDENTIAL  
Origin: Embassy New Delhi



Classified By: Charge Geoffrey Pyatt for Reasons 1.4 (B,D)

1. (C) This cable contains an action request for SCA. Please see paragraph 6.

New Iranian Mischief

2. (C) Ambassador K.V. Rajan, former Secretary of the Ministry of External Affairs and current Chairman of the Prime Minister's National Security Advisory Board (NSAB), called Charge May 4 for an urgent meeting in which he told Charge that he had been invited by the Iranian Embassy for an all expenses paid trip for "politicians, scholars and commentators." The list of invitees in a fax from the Iranian Embassy press section included notorious America-critics, such as XXXXXXXXXXXXX. The visit was scheduled for April 28-May 4, and the Embassy said the guests would meet Iranian officials, scholars and would visit "one or two Iranian nuclear establishment(s)." Reports this week in the "Asian Age" and "The Hindu" indicate the group visited the Arak Heavy Water Complex and met with Minister of Energy Parviz Fatah.

3. (C) Rajan told Charge that this trip was part of an effort on the part of the Iranian government to encourage anti-American, pro-Muslim scholars and think-tankers in India to influence Prime Minister Singh's supporters to take a more pro-Iranian, anti-U.S. view, and that his presence on the delegation would have handed Iran a PR coup. In light of his suspicions, Rajan canceled at the last minute, citing a sudden family emergency. Following is the invitee list, which Rajan provided to Charge:

-- XXXXXXXXXXXXXXXX

India Seeks U.S. Help

4. (C) To counter this new and worrying effort to reach out to Indian opinion makers, Rajan proposed a visit to the United States starting May 14 in his NSAB capacity for five to seven days to talk to officials, think tanks, and the intelligence community to discuss ways to understand better U.S. assessments of Iran. He would expect this to feed into NSAB discussion of Iran policy options.

5. (C) Rajan's analysis of Iranian intentions to influence PM Singh's domestic constituencies is deeply worrying and spot-on, and confirms what we have been reporting. Rajan also noted stepped up Iranian funding to sympathetic Shia clerics. The United Progressive Alliance government is deeply interested in appeasing its Muslim and Left Front supporters, and is concerned about the outcome of elections in Uttar Pradesh state, where a large number of Muslim constituents reside. We see evidence that Iran has been buying off journalists, clerics and editors in Shia-populated areas of Uttar Pradesh and Kashmir, doling out large sums to stoke anti-Americanism. Now, it seems Iran is focusing squarely on influential elite audiences in Delhi, with a view to shaping the debate of India's IAEA policy and the nuclear deal.

ACTION REQUEST: HIGH-LEVEL MEETINGS

6. (C) To counter this insidious new Iranian effort, we recommend Rajan receive meetings, if possible, with:

-- XXXXXXXXXXXXXXXX

**WikiLeaks Link:** <http://www.wikileaks.ch/cable/2007/05/07NEWDELHI2142.html>

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**17. Year 2007: Scene-setter for Department Of Energy Secretary Samuel W. Bodman's March 2007 Visit to India**

Reference ID: 07NEWDELHI1218  
Created: 2007-03-13 13:28  
Released: 2011-04-04 01:00  
Classification: CONFIDENTIAL  
Origin: Embassy New Delhi

Classified by CDA GEOFFREY PYATT FOR reasons 1.4 (b, d)

1. (C) SUMMARY: Secretary Bodman, the members of the Country Team warmly welcome you to New Delhi and Mumbai and look forward to your arrival on March 19. You are visiting at a crucial time in Indo-U.S. relations and are positioned to significantly advance our growing government-to-government, commercial, and investment relationship in the energy sector. The GOI will stress that, in order to sustain the high level of economic growth needed to lift millions out of poverty, India must rapidly expand its energy production, consumption, and imports, while inevitably increasing its carbon emissions and maintaining domestic energy price controls. However, from the perspective of the Indian press and political class, the U.S.-India civil nuclear agreement will take center stage during your visit.

{...}

6. (C) The politics around India's energy policy reflects a struggle between needed economic reform and political impediments to change. Prime Minister Singh and Deputy Chairman Ahluwalia are well aware of what economic reforms are needed to enhance India's long term growth. They realize that reasonable regulation and market-based pricing of electricity, petroleum products, natural gas, and coal would be most conducive to encouraging investment, reliable revenue streams, energy efficiency, and rational choice among projects and energy sources. However, the political imperatives of middle-class and poor voters' resistance to price increases, particularly with consumer inflation recently exceeding 6%, have induced the GOI to maintain price controls and government subsidies. Similarly, although the GOI privately doubts Iran's reliability as a potential source of natural gas by pipeline or of liquefied natural gas, it continues negotiations with Iran to appease Muslim and left-wing voters and Members of Parliament.

13. (C) MPNG Minister Murli Deora has close ties to Sonia Gandhi and the Congress Party's inner circle, and his own strong political base in Mumbai, where his son now holds his previous parliamentary seat. Deora has been a key interlocutor with Ambassador Mulford on the dynamics between India's Parliament and the U.S. Congress on bilateral legislation issues. The MPNG has control over the several central government oil and gas companies that continue to dominate India's exploration, production, and distribution. Secretary Srinivasan has been the GOI's main negotiator on

the proposed 2,600-kilometer Iran-Pakistan-India natural gas pipeline, but the MPNG has told us that they do not expect a final agreement to be reached due to Iranian unreliability and Iran changing the terms of the June 2005 agreement to sell India LNG from its South Pars field for 25 years. The MPNG increasingly sees LNG from Qatar and Australia as a more viable option than several proposed pipeline projects. India obtained 12.6% of its crude oil imports from Iran in 2006.

{...}

WikiLeaks link: <http://www.wikileaks.ch/cable/2007/03/07NEWDELHI1218.html>

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### **18. Year 2006: Olmert Tells Codel Specter He is Skeptical about Syria Absent Credible Signals**

Reference ID:	06TELA VIV5004
Created:	2006-12-29 14:22
Released:	2011-05-04 00:00
Classification:	CONFIDENTIAL
Origin:	Embassy Tel Aviv

Classified By: Ambassador Richard H. Jones. Reason 1.4 (B/D)

1. (C) Summary: Senator Arlen Specter (PA) briefed Prime Minister Olmert on President Assad's willingness to negotiate with Israel. Specter noted that Assad had expressed a willingness to exert Syrian influence over Hamas, and pledged to cooperate with the Hariri assassination investigation and UNSCR 1701 implementation. Olmert indicated that he expects a credible signal of seriousness from the Syrian leader before he would consider negotiations. Olmert stressed that his first priority is the Palestinian track, but he also indicated that he does wish to make peace with Syria. End Summary.

{...}

Iran

9. (C) Senator Specter asked Olmert for his assessment of Iran, sharing his own impression from meetings in India that the Indians are allies. Olmert stressed that Iran was a "moral issue of the highest priority." Olmert said the UN measures were "very important," but he thought that other measures could be taken as well, even if they are not all taken by the UN Security Council. For example, Olmert noted that certain financial measures could have a serious impact. Senator Specter agreed that we can do more on this front.

{...}

**WikiLeaks Link:** <http://www.wikileaks.ch/cable/2006/12/06TELA VIV5004.html>

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**19. Year 2006: IPSC PD IMO RES ECON DCM DAO AMB AID ADM RSO**

Reference ID: 06TELAIVIV4604  
Created: 006-11-24 13:02  
Released: 2011-05-19 23:30  
Classification: SECRET  
Origin: Embassy Tel Aviv

Classified By: Classified by Charge Gene Cretz. Reasons: 1.4 (b) (d).

Summary

1. (S) During a November 12 meeting, <> Chief Meir Dagan told Assistant to the President for Homeland Security and Counterterrorism (APHSCT) Frances Fragos Townsend that USG efforts to designate Iranian banking facilities have proven effective and are forcing the Iranians to move their funds to banks in the Gulf States and the Far East. Dagan urged the U.S. to continue activity in this direction, noting that Swiss and Japanese banks are forgoing business with Iran. Dagan warned that Iran and the Hezbollah are trying to bring the Siniora government down in Lebanon, and that Hezbollah's next step is to rally Shiites in the streets to put more pressure on the GOL. Dagan said he anticipates that this current effort will ultimately lead to violence and the murder of some of Siniora's political allies. On Syria, Dagan said that Assad is comfortable with the current situation and has no intent of breaking from his strategic alliance with Iran, or stopping his support of Hezbollah and Hamas. Dagan expressed frustration with European attempts to engage Assad with the hope of bringing him around, predicting that these attempts will fail, and only encourage Assad to engage in more bad behavior. Dagan said that the best way to change Assad's behavior is to threaten force. He encouraged the U.S. to ratchet up pressure on Syria by designating its Commercial Bank, and asking the Saudis to put pressure on banks in Europe and Dubai. Dagan expressed frustration with European reluctance to designate Hezbollah as a terrorist group.

End summary.

Dagan: keep up the financial pressure on Iran

2. (S) Dagan said that Treasury Department designation of Iranian banking facilities has succeeded in its aims and has proven very effective. The Iranians are now preoccupied with this problem and trying to move funds to banks in the Gulf States and Far East, specifically India, China ((MLM: Dagan specifically noted Hong Kong)), Taiwan, and Singapore. He added that the Iranians are also encountering difficulties with European banks. Dagan urged the U.S. to continue to move in this direction. He noted that the <> has sent some of its own people to Europe to keep up the bank pressure on Iran. He said that Iran's economic situation is weak, and that this is causing bankers and the Iranian middle class to increase their criticism of Ahmadinejad and his regime. He said that they are increasingly concerned that Ahmadinejad's policies are going to lead Iran into

"financial disaster." Dagan added that Credit Suisse, UBS and a number of Japanese banks have asked Iran not to do business with them anymore.

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**WikiLeaks Link:** <http://www.wikileaks.ch/cable/2006/11/06TELA VIV4604.html>

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## **20. Year 2006: An Indian Rogue's Gallery Entertains a Pakistani Taliban Apologist**

Reference ID:	06NEWDELHI3506
Created:	2006-05-19 13:50
Released:	2011-03-26 01:00
Classification:	CONFIDENTIAL
Origin:	Embassy New Delhi

Classified By: PolCouns Geoff Pyatt for reasons 1.4 (B,D)

1. (C) Pakistani hard-liner and Taliban advocate Fazlur Rahman visited India from May 15-19. During his visit, he was guest of honor at a Delhi reception hosted by the Deobandi Political organization Jamiat-i-Ulama-i-Hind (JuH), that we steered well clear of. The JuH failed to convince most prominent Muslims to attend, although former Foreign Minister Natwar Singh and former J&K Chief Minister Farooq Abdullah were there. At the reception, Rahman purportedly accused the US and its coalition partners of ""butchering Muslims"" and threatened eternal war in Afghanistan unless the Taliban were taken into the government. English press coverage was scanty and mild, but Rahman's comments were covered in detail in the Urdu press. Indian Muslims entertain no sympathy for the Taliban or Rahman and those at the reception were a virtual rogues' gallery of discredited hard-liners and fundamentalists. The Rahman visit culminated in a May 19 meeting with Prime Minister Manmohan Singh, which we interpret as another facet of his relentless outreach to the people of Pakistan, whatever their political coloration. The Rahman trip is further evidence that a witches' brew of anti-US and pro-Iran Muslims and the Samajwadi Party (SP) of Uttar Pradesh is working together to oppose the UPA government and the US. End Summary.

{...}

Comment - Vultures of a Feather Flock Together

8. (C) Natwar's presence at such a disreputable event can only hurt his political future and further alienate him from the Congress leadership, which is not amused by his antics. Singh and the other prominent guests share an anti-US, anti-UPA and pro-Iran orientation and belong to a long list of persons tied to Lalit Suri through political and business deals. Moderate Muslims are pointing to the guest list as further evidence that there is a growing nexus between the SP, the JuH, and other extremist Muslims (including radical Shias), which most believe is being encouraged and funded by Iran.

{...}

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**WikiLeaks Link:** <http://www.wikileaks.ch/cable/2006/05/06NEWDELHI3506.html>

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### **21. Year 2006: India Denies Flirting with Iranians**

Reference ID:	06NEWDELHI2091
Created:	2006-03-27 13:50
Released:	2011-03-17 01:00
Classification:	CONFIDENTIAL
Origin:	Embassy New Delhi

Classified By: Ambassador David C. Mulford for Reasons 1.4 (B, D)

1. (C) Summary: In response to DCM's questions and concern about a Defense News article detailing Indian ""training"" of the Iranian Navy in Cochin, Joint Secretary (Pakistan, Afghanistan, Iran) Dilip Sinha told DCM and Poloff on March 27 that the visit of an Iranian Vice President to New Delhi and port call of Iranian warships were insignificant and should not trouble the US. Navy Chief Arun Prakash told visiting USMC Commandant Hagee that the Iranian visit consisted only of a port call by a cadet ship, with no training component. While New Delhi's underlying posture toward Iran has not changed, the GOI clearly does not mind letting the press play up positive stories about the Iran relationship to counteract the domestic criticism it received following the September and February IAEA votes. End Summary.

#### **WARM RECEPTION FOR IRANIAN VP**

2. (C) Sinha told the DCM and Poloffs that Iranian Vice President Isfandiar Rahim Mashae was in India to attend cultural events, including a convention to honor a pioneering Urdu poet. Outsiders should not be concerned about the visit, he added, which had little political content. Indian media reported that PM Manmohan Singh discussed energy cooperation with the Iranian VP on March 25, agreeing to continue Efforts to construct the Iran-Pakistan-India and to schedule another meeting of the India-Iran Joint Commission, a forum for negotiating ongoing bilateral issues, including energy.

3. (C) Mashae, who is also the Chair of Iran's Cultural Heritage and Tourism Organization, visited Agra, Hyderabad and Bhubaneswar after New Delhi. Political section contacts in India's Shia center of gravity in Lucknow who have previously reported on the Iranian Mission's efforts to promote anti-American sentiment among India's Shia community (Ref A) told us that Mashae's visit helped to defuse the building anti-government sentiment among Shias over India's close ties to the US and votes in the IAEA. They suggested the attention the PM gave the VP may have helped stave off



future criticism of the GOI by radical Shia clerics who had encouraged demonstrations after the IAEA votes.

#### NAVY EXERCISE PLAYED UP IN MEDIA

4. (C) Flagging US and Indian press reports of India-Iran joint naval exercises, the DCM pointed out to Sinha that military cooperation with Iran, including reported Indian training for 222 Iranian personnel, was of serious concern to the US given Iran's current terrorism and WMD programs and past military actions against the US. It could also seriously complicate efforts to convince the US Congress to approve the Civil Nuclear Cooperation initiative. The DCM stressed that the US would see military cooperation with Iran as fundamentally more worrying than simple economic ties. He encouraged the GOI to prepare a response on this issue for Foreign Secretary Saran's March 28-29 Washington visit. Sinha replied that, contrary to press reports, the Iranian visit was a routine port call, and training was not part of the planned visit. Nonetheless, he stated, the two Navies have had a long engagement and have frequently conducted personnel exchanges and training. India has strictly avoided sharing hardware with Iran, he added.

#### DOWNPLAYED BY THE NAVY

5. (C) Meeting with visiting Commandant of the Marine Corps General Michael Hagee, Indian Chief of Naval Staff Admiral Arun Prakash said that the Iranian visit consisted only of a port call by a cadet ship, with no training component. The only Indian support provided to the Iranian Navy was refueling of their ships, he added. DIA septel will report on General Hagee's discussions in detail along with additional Indian Navy denials of the Defense News story regarding joint training.

#### COMMENT: STILL TRYING TO FIND THE RIGHT BALANCE

6. (C) As discussed Ref B, the GOI still feels very acutely the pressure brought to bear on its Iran policy through domestic political opponents, Muslim groups, and the Iranian Embassy working through those actors. New Delhi likely sees events such as the VP's visit and the naval exercises as an opportunity to smooth feathers with Iran and its domestic critics without changing its actual stance of opposition to Iran's nuclear program. India is clearly rattled by Iran's refusal (after the IAEA votes) to confirm the preferential price for the sale of five million tons of LNG per year, and perceives that some conciliatory motions would help salvage its important energy relationship. However, we have made clear to the GOI that dallying with Iran is not only dangerous for regional stability but also puts at risk Congressional support for the civil nuclear deal.

7. (U) Visit New Delhi's Classified Website: (<http://www.state.sgov.gov/p/sa/newdelhi/>)

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**WikiLeaks Link:** <http://www.wikileaks.ch/cable/2006/03/06NEWDELHI2091.html>

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**22. YEAR 2006: 2/21 Staffdel Talwar Visit: Iran, Iraq**

Reference ID	06PARIS1236
Created	2006-02-28 11:43
Released	2011-02-25 00:00
Classification	CONFIDENTIAL
Origin	Embassy Paris

Classified By: Political Minister-Counselor Josiah Rosenblatt, reasons 1.4 (b) and (d).

1. (C) Summary: Senate Foreign Relations Committee Professional Staff Members Puneet Talwar and Tomicah Tilleman met a series of senior French officials February 21, in discussions that addressed Iran, Iraq, Syria/Lebanon, NATO/Darfur, Hamas, regional reform, and counterterrorism. On Iran, Chirac's Middle East advisor assessed that international sanctions would pose real hardships for the Iranian regime, and suggested that sanctions should be gradual, consensus-driven, and target the regime. MFA policy planning staff confirmed that Iran sanctions options under GoF consideration included bans on travel, investment, and students. On Iraq, Chirac's Middle East advisor called for a "perspective" for a departure of foreign troops to help split terrorists from Sunni resistance. On Syria, Elysee officials emphasized French support for behavior change (vice regime change), and criticized former VP Khaddam. MFA officials suggested willingness to consider a NATO contribution in Darfur, while strongly emphasizing resource concerns and the need for the U.S. to offer a commitment. On Hamas, French officials reaffirmed the GoF's no-contact policy, while stressing the downsides of a cut-off in international assistance to Palestinians. MFA officials voiced familiar views on protecting EU equities in the BMENA efforts. A senior Ministry of Interior advisor revealed details of a new, values-based and pro-American foreign policy platform for presidential hopeful/Interior Minister Sarkozy, while praising U.S.-French cooperation on counterterrorism. End summary.

{...}

3. (C) Boche voiced optimism on middle term prospects for Iran, concluding that Iran would come to realize that it needed external support and would face international sanctions with difficulty. In the case of petroleum sanctions, Boche observed that Iran remained vulnerable due its low refinery capacity, which forced it to import oil from India. {...}

WikiLeaks Link: <http://www.wikileaks.ch/cable/2006/02/06PARIS1236.html>

**23. Year 2006: India Noncommittal on Iran, Curious to Know Others' Voting Plans**

Reference ID:	06NEWDELHI760
Created:	2006-02-02 14:48
Released:	2011-03-17 01:00
Classification:	CONFIDENTIAL
Origin:	Embassy New Delhi

Classified By: Ambassador Mulford for Reasons 1.4 (B, D)

1. (C) In a February 2 meeting with the Ambassador to deliver reftel points, Foreign Secretary Shyam Saran refused to be drawn on Iran's IAEA BOG vote, although he noted the Secretary had spoken to Prime Minister Singh on February 1. Saran indicated the Chinese had already given India the EU-3 draft resolution, which we also shared. When pressed, Saran asked if we knew how other states -- he mentioned Egypt and South Africa in particular -- would vote. When told it seemed we had a solid number of votes, including those of the P-5, but did not have a country-by-country breakdown of likely supporters, Saran asked if he could receive that information.
2. (C) ACTION REQUEST FOR IO, NP and UNVIE: We would like to share the vote count breakdown by country with India if that information can be shared.
3. (C) COMMENT: The PM told the media February 1 India would vote in its ""enlightened national interest"" as an emerging global power, but intense domestic political controversy around this issue is leading the GOI to look for as much political cover as possible -- including flimsy fig leaves like Egypt and South Africa.  
END COMMENT.

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**WikiLeaks Link:** <http://www.wikileaks.ch/cable/2006/02/06NEWDELHI760.html>

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**24. Year 2006: NEW DELHI 000657**

Reference ID:	06NEWDELHI657
Created:	2006-01-30 13:24
Released:	2011-03-15 00:00
Classification:	CONFIDENTIAL
Origin: Embassy	New Delhi

Classified By: Ambassador David C. Mulford, for reasons 1.4 (B, D)

1. (C) Summary: The UPA's January 28 cabinet shuffle signifies a determination to ensure that US/India relations continue to move ahead rapidly, and strengthens the cadre of modernizing reformers at the top of the GOI. Removing contentious and outspoken Iran pipeline advocate Mani Shankar Aiyar from the Petroleum portfolio, the UPA replaced him with the pro-US Murli Deora, who was one of several figures inducted with long-standing ties to the Indo/US Parliamentary Forum (IUPF) and the Embassy. The UPA also inducted a large number of serving MPs, including seven from the IUPF who have publicly associated themselves with our strategic partnership. To ensure that there are no foreign policy ripples before the President's visit, PM Singh retained the critical MEA portfolio and is likely to hold on to it until after the next session of Parliament concludes and Congress has weathered crucial Assembly elections in Kerala and West Bengal in May. Viewing the shuffle as a shift towards the US, the left has become more alienated from Congress and more determined to obstruct UPA economic liberalization

and foreign policy initiatives, all but ensuring political fireworks in the months ahead. The net effect of the reshuffle, however, is a Cabinet that is likely to be excellent for US goals in India (and Iran). End Summary.

{...}

#### The Aiyar Controversy

4. (C) Our Foreign Ministry contacts welcomed Aiyar's departure, commenting that his energy diplomacy had encroached on MEA turf too many times, leading to MEA appeals to the Prime Minister's Office to intercede. Despite the PMO warning to back off, Aiyar's Ministry of Petroleum and Natural Gas (MPNG) continued to interfere with MEA attempts to craft policy, our contacts said, citing Pakistan, China, Burma, Bangladesh, Iran and Sudan as areas of intergovernmental conflict. Aiyar's unwillingness to step back reportedly led to the PM's decision to remove him from this high-profile portfolio, and cements MEA's position as the lead bureaucracy on strategic policy making.

5. (C) Aiyar's dismissal as Petroleum Minister will leave MEA officials breathing easier, and put MEA back in charge of policy toward these energy suppliers, including the ""problem children"" of Sudan, Burma and Iran. Unlike Aiyar, who cultivated a reputation for anti-Americanism, Murli Deora has been associated with the US/India relationship for years. Lacking Aiyar's ambitions (or entrepreneurial zeal), he will be a more cautious Minister. Clearing these lines of authority should make the PM's job of coordinating India's often-conflicting interests in energy security, trade, investment, anti-terrorism and stronger ties with the West a bit less muddled. His departure also weakens the holdouts fighting a rear-guard action against stronger engagement with the US, who would prefer that India hold true to its non-aligned traditions. Local journalists speculate that Aiyar's parting shot was the leak on January 28 of the USG demarche (ref A) protesting Indian investment in Syrian oil projects, spun by opponents of US-India engagement as another attempt by the US to dictate policy to India.

6. (C) Our contacts (protect) in the Government-owned Gas Authority of India Ltd. (GAIL) confirmed that Aiyar had vexed the PMO and MEA by positioning the MPNG to usurp the lead on India's strategic posture for energy security issues, inducting Additional Secretary Talmiz Ahmad, a senior career diplomat, to lead on oil and gas diplomacy, and taking a pro-active stance on the proposed Iran-Pakistan-India (IPI) natural gas pipeline (Reftels B and C). Before Aiyar's ouster, a Planning Commission energy expert (protect) told us that Aiyar's international forays in search of oil and gas equity had been taken as ""fishing expeditions"" at Aiyar's initiative, and that any significant deals would be subject to Cabinet scrutiny before approval. The GAIL contact said the MPNG's civil bureaucracy had run a whispering campaign against Aiyar calling him autocratic and disrespectful of IAS officers, including a public criticism of MPNG Joint Secretary (for International Cooperation) Prabh Dass in front of government-run entities.

{...}

8. (C) One analyst at Petrowatch, an industry publication in Mumbai, noted that Aiyar's dismissal removes a powerful supporter of the Iran Pipeline project and speculated that it could signal a shift in the GOI's energy-related foreign policy. Our GAIL contact said the private conglomerate Reliance probably lobbied heavily for Deora, particularly in view of Aiyar's clashes with Reliance during the five year rule of the National Democratic Alliance. Deora said his priority is to strengthen the chronically loss-making public sector oil firms and tackle the fuel subsidy issue, drawing on his experience as chairman of the standing committee on finance. While we expect Deora to more faithfully uphold the PM's foreign policy vision, the MPNG Petroleum Ministry is likely to be less proactive and energetic in its drive to acquire foreign oil and gas assets than it was under Aiyar's globe-trotting leadership. New Delhi energy analysts have questioned the wisdom of removing Aiyar, predicting that his departure puts several nascent energy partnerships and deals in doubt (including a much-trumpeted pact to cooperate with China on energy purchasing signed during Aiyar's January visit to Beijing). In the end, however, the high-profile deals have all been of highly tentative nature, and Aiyar's self-promoting maverick diplomacy was too much for PM Singh to accommodate.

#### The New Minister of Power

9. (C) The new Minister of Power, Sushil Kumar Shinde, a close political ally of Sonia Gandhi, fills the ministerial slot vacated by the death last December of Minister PM Sayeed, who was viewed more as a figurehead political appointee. The power ministry is pivotal, in that the power sector must attract huge investment, while being politically-sensitive to needed price increases; and rapid long-term growth in power generation capacity and production is crucial to achieving the GOI goal of sustained 8% annual GDP growth. The power sector's reliance for growth on most forms of generation - nuclear, hydroelectric, coal-thermal, gas-thermal, wind, and solar - underscores the political sensitivity of related issues outside the Power Ministry's purview, such as seeking natural gas from Iran or alternative foreign sources, civil nuclear energy cooperation with the US, or social and environmental aspects of increasing coal production.

{...}

#### Comment - A Boost to US Energy Interests

14. (C) Our initial assessment is that appointment of the three new energy ministers will boost USG interests by enhancing bilateral cooperation under the US/India Energy Dialogue (Reftel F) prior to US. Department of Energy Under Secretary David German's visit to New Delhi (expected Feb SIPDIS 8-9). Aiyar's dismissal, following on USG demarches against oil and gas cooperation with Iran and Syria, will probably disrupt the recent momentum built by Aiyar and MPNG Additional Secretary Talmiz Ahmad in favor of the Iran-Pakistan-India natural gas pipeline, as well as cooperation with Syria, as Deora conducts a thorough review of these transactions.

{...}

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**WikiLeaks Link:** <http://www.wikileaks.ch/cable/2006/01/06NEWDELHI657.html>

**25. Year 2006: NSA Suggests India Will Vote against Iran**

Reference ID:	06NEWDELHI265
Created:	2006-01-12 14:49
Released:	2011-03-17 01:00
Classification:	SECRET
Origin:	Embassy New Delhi

Classified By: Ambassador David C. Mulford for Reasons 1.4 (B, D)

1. (S) Summary: NSA MK Narayanan told the Ambassador on January 12 that India ""would like to"" vote for IAEA referral of Iran to the UN Security Council. New Delhi considers Iran in violation of its NPT obligations. However, he said, the GOI must still determine how to ""sell the vote"" domestically to its Muslim constituency. The Ambassador emphasized that abstaining would not be enough at this stage, highlighting the importance of India's September 24 IAEA vote. End Summary.

Iranian Provocation

2. (S) The Ambassador, PolCouns, and Poloff met with NSA Narayanan and Venkatesh Verma, Director (Prime Minister's Office) to discuss Iran's breaking of IAEA seals and renewal of uranium enrichment activities. The Ambassador noted that Iran's actions would likely lead to an IAEA Board of Governors (BOG) vote on referral to the Security Council, a move that would be obligatory under the IAEA Statute. The U.S. and EU were confident that key members of the BOG would cooperate on the referral, and the USG hopes India will vote for such an action, the Ambassador stated. (NOTE: The Ambassador did NOT/NOT deliver Ref A points as prepared, as the EU-3 meeting had not occurred at the time of his encounter with NSA Narayanan. END NOTE)

Likely to Vote against Iran

3. (S) Narayanan was familiar with the state of play, reporting that he had just gotten off the phone with British NSA Nigel Sheinwald. He replied immediately to the Ambassador's opening that the GOI ""would like to"" vote for a resolution referring Iran to the UNSC, emphasizing that New Delhi is opposed to a nuclear-armed Iran. The question is ""how we deal with our domestic Muslim constituency,"" he continued. Muslims in India may not look at this in a rational manner of preventing another nuclear state in India's neighborhood, but could view an IAEA vote against Iran as an example of a Muslim country being ""ground under the heels"" of the West. Senator John Kerry had also raised India's position on a potential BOG vote with PM Manmohan Singh on



January 11, Narayanan noted (Ref B). Echoing PM Singh's statement of India's uncompromising stand against proliferation, Narayanan concluded that Iran's case is ""an NPT violation.""

#### International Agreement will Help

4. (S) The Ambassador noted that the US would likely seek an affirmative vote from India on referring Iran to the UNSC. Abstaining at this stage is not enough, he said, highlighting the importance of India's September 24 BOG vote and the fact that an abstention now would be seen as walking back the GOI's non-proliferation commitments. Referring to his call with Sheinwald, Narayanan quipped that the US and UK ""have Iran on the brain, while we have it on our back."" Narayanan had told his British counterpart that India would like to work with the UK on the language of the resolution, in order to find a way to sell India's vote domestically. If Russia and other key board members go along, it will be an easier task, he observed.

5. (U) Visit New Delhi's Classified Website:  
(<http://www.state.sgov.gov/p/sa/newdelhi/>)

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**WikiLeaks Link:** <http://www.wikileaks.ch/cable/2006/01/06NEWDELHI265.html>

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### **26. Year 2005: Ahmadinejad's Irrationality: An Indian Ambassador's Perspective**

Reference ID:	05NEWDELHI9421
Created:	2005-12-15 09:12
Released:	2011-04-04 01:00
Classification:	SECRET
Origin:	Embassy New Delhi

Classified By: DCM Robert O. Blake for Reasons 1.4 (B, D)

1. (C) Summary: During PolCouns's introductory call on new MEA Additional Secretary (UN and International Security) KC Singh, Singh shared his impressions from his recent posting as India's Ambassador in Tehran, emphasizing that Iranian President Mahmoud Ahmadinejad's perspective is skewed by his fervent anticipation of the imminent return of the prophesied twelfth Shia imam, making him prone to respond to threats by acting as a martyr. The irrational nature of Iran's new regime requires a different approach from the current strategies of the US and EU-3, Singh argued. Biographical information on Singh, a capable diplomat who may yet rise to the top of the MEA, is included. End Summary.

Ahmadinejad Waiting for the 12th Imam

2. (C) Sharing his impressions from his latest assignment as Ambassador to Iran (2003-05), Singh told us that Ahmadinejad is more radical and irrational than the world initially believed. It appears that he has ""taken even the Supreme Leader for a ride,"" he continued, because Ahmadinejad's true religious loyalty lies with Ayatollah Mesbah Yazdi, an arch-conservative imam in the Qom seminary. Ahmadinejad believes in the imminent prophesied return of the twelfth Shia imam (Mohammad al-Mahdi, born in the ninth century), Singh said, and even told those accompanying him to the opening of the UNGA Summit in September that he ""felt his presence"" there. Singh told us that he met with Ahmadinejad in January 2005 when he was the mayor of Tehran and a long-shot candidate for the presidency. Since then, Singh has fielded repeated queries from Iranians asking if it is true that Ahmadinejad told Singh that the ""resolution of the nuclear issue does not matter because the twelfth imam will return soon."" Although the story is untrue, Singh said, it is telling that so many Iranians are ready to believe that their President had said it. In fact, he continued, Ahmadinejad's cabinet recently drafted a resolution addressed to the twelfth imam, and dropped it in a well in Qom, where petitions to al-Mahdi are traditionally deposited.

#### ""Persian Mentality"" Responds Badly to Pressure

3. (C) Singh summarized the impasse over Iran's nuclear program as a ""paradox."" Resolving the problem of its nuclear program means helping Tehran feel secure, he said, but how could Iran feel secure without its nuclear program? Iran is ""propelled by paranoia,"" and that fear is enhanced by the US presence in Afghanistan and Iraq. The threats are both real and imagined, he elaborated, because in the ""Shia mind"" the presence of threats recalls the betrayal of Hassan and Hussein in the seventh century. In response to perceived threats, the ""Persian mentality"" resorts to a martyr mode, and Iran's leaders would provoke confrontation under this influence instead of rationally turning away.

4. (C) One thing is clear, Singh emphasized: if the Western world applies pressure to Iran, its population will rally behind Ahmadinejad. Ahmadinejad has encountered resistance since taking office, and most of the people disapprove of his fervor for religious influence throughout society and government, Singh said. However, he continued, although Ahmadinejad emerged as the leader because of economic dissatisfaction, not true popular support, the irrational Persian response to threats means that Iranians will now back him in a confrontation with outsiders.

5. (C) Singh argued that the US and the West must choose between completely peaceful engagement or application of force, but not alternate between engagement and threats. Citing former NSA Brzezinski's analysis of the failure of the Shah's regime to act with consistency, he said that verbal threats only ""inoculate"" the population against the threat, and force the Iranian regime to ""mutate"" into something more dangerous. Perhaps the Russians understand the Iranian mind best, he mused, approving of Russia's slow application of pressure to encourage Iran to accept its compromise solution to dispel the IAEA crisis. Pushing harder, Singh continued, would only propel Iran's leaders into the ""martyr mode.""

### Enough of a Democracy to be Unpredictable

6. (C) Although the election of Ahmadinejad is a reaction to the reformist trend of the 1990s, the population has "overcorrected," Singh said. Most people oppose his hard-line philosophy. The population is not anti-US, he continued, but is rather in need of help as the people of Iran are victimized by the regime. He predicted that Iran was not on the course to "Indian or Western-style" democracy, but left to itself would retain the Supreme Leader. Nevertheless, Iran is "enough of a democracy" that a "rabble-rouser" can rally popular support in a situation of stress. Thus, outside countries need to "wean" the Iranian population away from their widespread support for the nuclear program in a way that does not allow hard-liners like Ahmadinejad to use patriotism or the martyr sentiment to solidify their position, Singh suggested. Western nations should use a softer approach to the nuclear issue -- to "address the Persian mind" -- or else the entire population will "nurse a hurt" against the West.

### Indian Influence on Iran's WMD Ambitions

7. (S) PolCouns emphasized our hope that India will use its influence in Tehran affirmatively to steer the country away from the abyss. Clarifying that he spoke personally and not in his official capacity, Singh responded that India's role in resolving the nuclear issue would have been greater had New Delhi abstained in the September 24 IAEA vote. The Iranian reaction has been emotional, he emphasized, with ordinary Iranians asking visiting Indians why they let Iran down. As a result, India's influence has been weakened. Singh related an encounter with Javad Larijani, the brother of nuclear negotiator Ali Larijani, at a seminar on the IAEA vote. Larijani highlighted India and Israel in discussing states that have remained outside of the NPT, Singh said, pointedly omitting Pakistan as a way to slight India. Singh emphasized that Larijani would not have grouped India with Iran's arch-enemy Israel if not for India's vote. Nevertheless, he added, it appears that Iranian leaders have "internalized" their disappointment for now and will avoid a public rift with India, as they still hope New Delhi could provide support in future battles on the same issue.

### COMMENT: A Good Contact

8. (S) Singh's comments on Iran are a surprisingly clear window into the flavor of politics in Tehran from a diplomat who has enjoyed good access to Iranian leaders. His willingness to air his disagreement with government policy as a point of friendly discussion, without grousing or complaining, is a surprise in the MEA bureaucracy. We hope that our future interactions with this senior GOI official will be as frank and useful as this discussion.

9. (C) COMMENT CONTINUED: Singh's forthcoming conversation is an optimistic signal for productive cooperation in the important and wide-ranging portfolio that he covers. In addition to leading the Counter-terrorism Joint Working Group with S/CT

Hank Crumpton (septel), Singh will be our ranking operational interlocutor on other areas of US priorities, including non-proliferation and UN issues.

Bio Notes

10. (SBU) Singh is an articulate and polished speaker. In addition to his assignments as Ambassador to Iran (2003-05) and the UAE (1999-2003), Singh has served two tours as a Joint Secretary in the MEA, first as the MEA's Spokesperson (1992-96) and then in the Consular, Passport and Visa Division (1996-98). He had previous assignments in Ankara, New York, and Cairo, and also served in the office of the President of India Giani Zail Singh (1983-87). Singh is a Sikh, born May 30, 1948, and speaks English, Hindi, Urdu and Punjabi. He holds a master's degree in English literature and an LL.B. degree.

11. (C) Singh is a breath of fresh air in this office for his candor and forthright manner. In Tehran he was noted for his advocacy of expanding strategic and energy cooperation with Iran. Although we do not know how much longer he will remain in the MEA bureaucracy, this obviously sharp and capable diplomat is of a caliber to aspire to the office of Foreign Secretary, following the path of many previous Secretaries who have done their turn as spokesperson. The good news for us is that Singh, unlike his predecessor, appears fully attuned to the new, collaborative dynamic of US-India relations.

12. (U) Visit New Delhi's Classified Website:  
(<http://www.state.sgov.gov/p/sa/newdelhi/>)

MULFORD

**WikiLeaks Link:** <http://www.wikileaks.ch/cable/2005/12/05NEWDELHI9421.html>

**27. Year 2005: Jaswant Singh Believes the UPA is Incapable of Managing the Indo/US Relationship**

Reference ID:	05NEWDELHI8231
Created:	2005-10-24 10:56
Released:	2011-03-26 01:00
Classification:	CONFIDENTIAL
Origin:	Embassy New Delhi

Classified By: Ambassador David C. Mulford, for Reasons 1.4 (B, D)

1. (C) Summary: Meeting with U/S Burns and the Ambassador in New Delhi on October 21, former Foreign Minister and BJP leader Jaswant Singh expressed wholehearted support for the India/US agenda and its many components, but reading between the lines, that support was actually qualified. Singh seemed preoccupied by

domestic political considerations and very critical of the UPA and its performance. He was adamant that the UPA lacked the ability to properly manage the India/US agenda and was critically handicapped by its reliance on Communist support to remain in power. Singh implied that as long as the UPA was ruling, the US should not expect dramatic progress on its agenda and would have to wait for an NDA return to power to see real progress. This changed stance reflects the changed fortunes of his party, which has suffered many political setbacks since joining the opposition in 2004. Singh appeared to doubt that the BJP and its NDA allies could provide sufficient influence in the current political setup to move the process forward, that the BJP would place domestic considerations first, and would not sacrifice its political capital to advance the US/India agenda. End Summary

{...}

9. (C) The U/S also pointed out that there is scope for "much more active cooperation" with India in regional affairs and in transnational issues such as HIV/AIDS, crime, narcotics, trafficking in persons and nuclear nonproliferation. He did not see much "separation" between the two countries on these issues and foresaw India playing a global role in the future.

and Iran

10. (C) U/S Burns pointed out that the US position on Iran and the IAEA is more "nuanced" than popularly perceived in India. The USG seeks a negotiated settlement of the dispute. The Secretary has met with the Russians to broaden the diplomatic environment beyond the EU3 to eventually include Russia, India, China, Brazil, and South Africa. The goal is to isolate Iran and pressure it back to the negotiating table.

11. (C) Emphasizing that the new government in Teheran is "more conservative" than the previous one, (half of its Cabinet comes from the Revolutionary Guard), the U/S noted that it will need more time to determine its policy orientation, and may be getting back to a more balanced position. The US is prepared to go to the IAEA and the UNSC for votes, but would prefer multilateral negotiations, and believes that Russia shares this view. India should encourage Iran to return to talks and should advise against enrichment. It is significant that India voted with the majority in the IAEA and that Iran is isolated. The President has agreed that every country has a right to peaceful nuclear energy, but Iran needs to rebuild trust within the IAEA that was lost by its deception. This will be a gradual diplomatic process in which India will pay a key part. Iran must come to realize that its position on nuclear weapons does not make sense.

India is Supportive, But...

12. (C) Jaswant Singh maintained that the BJP has always pressed India to help by engaging Iran, and believes that a nuclear armed Iran is not in India's interest. However, the UPA stance on this issue is not correct. It needs to sit down and consult with the opposition and explain its position. India is in a unique position in this regard in that 40 percent of its Muslims are Shias and it is the third largest Shia country in the world. India must know something about Islam, as its Muslims are not involved in terrorism.

{...}

23. (C) Singh concluded by urging the US not to become ""illogical"" in its relations with states such as Pakistan. He recounted how an American at the IAEA had once proposed a new category of ""gross violator"" of the NPT. If this policy had been pursued in regards to Pakistan, it would have upset US/Pakistan policy. The same thing could now happen with Iran. The US need less arbitrary policies that appear less ""mismatched"" than at present. Singh confirmed that he hoped to travel to the US at the beginning of 2006 and would visit the State Department while in Washington.

Comment

24. (C) Singh made the right noises regarding NDA support for the US/India agenda, and the Indian stance regarding Iran in the IAEA, but appeared more focused on domestic politics than the international agenda. His criticism of the Prime Minister and his performance was more vitriolic than expected, and he was particularly contemptuous of the UPA's Communist allies. Singh was convinced that the UPA is an unholy alliance between a clueless Congress and rapacious Communists that is unworkable and unable to deliver on any aspect of the political/economic agenda, whether it be economic reform, dealing with Iran and Pakistan or the India/US relationship. Such an absolutist approach would imply that only a return of the NDA to power can save the agenda. The BJP out of power presented a different picture than the BJP in control in New Delhi. The party has suffered many setbacks since leaving office in 2004 and is clearly on the defensive. It is clear that as long as it faces an uphill battle against the UPA, it will not be prepared to sacrifice its domestic political fortunes on the altar of improved US/India relations.

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MULFORD

WikiLeaks link: <http://www.wikileaks.ch/cable/2005/10/05NEWDELHI8231.html>

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## **28. Year 2005: India's Stance on Iran and the IAEA Continues to Arouse Controversy and Opposition**

Reference ID:	05NEWDELHI8162
Created:	2005-10-20 12:37
Released:	2011-03-17 01:00
Classification:	CONFIDENTIAL
Origin:	Embassy New Delhi

Classified By: Charge' Bob Blake for Reasons 1.4 (B, D)

1. (SBU) Summary: The spate of media and political criticism touched off by the GOI's decision to vote with the US and the EU3 (UK, France, and Germany) at the September 24 IAEA meeting on Iran is increasing rather than dying down. Foreign Secretary Saran recently summoned Ambassadors from the EU3 to push for resolving the Iran issue without referral to the UNSC. Meanwhile, Iran is stepping up its own pressure. Tehran announced another pipeline Working Group meeting for October 24, and Iran's



Ambassador in New Delhi has mounted a high-profile lobbying campaign. Public interest in the debate is continuing, spurring speculation that the GOI is under growing pressure to backtrack from its earlier stance. The left is most outspoken, predictably accusing India of caving in to American pressure, but others from across the political spectrum are joining the chorus. Only a minority of strategic analysts supported India's decision, arguing that it serves India's interests, heightens the GOI's credibility within the IAEA, and makes the point that the country has moved beyond blind obedience to the non-aligned movement (NAM) position. The October 21-22 visit of U/S Burns will offer us an opportunity to present our case with Saran and key opinion makers. End summary.

#### MEA Position

2. (C) On October 13, Indian Foreign Secretary Saran summoned the EU3 (UK, France, and Germany) Ambassadors to discuss potential political solutions for Iran that would keep the matter out of the UNSC. The German Embassy's Polcouns offered Poloff a detailed read-out on the meeting. According to the German, the Indians want to avoid confrontation with Iran by keeping the nuclear issue within the IAEA. Saran insisted that the recent BOG vote instigated debate within the Iranian government to reconsider its position. He urged the EU-3 to encourage Teheran to compromise by presenting a "face-saving" way to return to the negotiating table. Noting that in the past, the international community has discussed confidence-building measures with Iran, Saran suggested that the EU-3 propose a compromise in which Iran would:

- reduce feedstock in Esfahan by 50% (Note: "Feedstock" refers to the gases needed for enrichment and to "feed" the rest of the nuclear fuel cycle. End note.);
- stop conversion at the U4 stage rather than proceeding to the more advanced U6 stage; and/or - export finished nuclear materiel rather than storing it within Iran.

3. (C) Our German interlocutor added that Saran emphasized that Iran could become more confrontational if backed into a corner. Saran reportedly indicated that New Delhi is willing to speak to Iran, but needs joint parameters from its allies. A UK poloff confirmed to us on October 19 that Saran was sincerely interested in a dialogue with the EU3 and its allies. She posited that although there is no guarantee India will vote the same way again at the November IAEA meeting as it did on September 24, the GOI's willingness to step away from pro-NAM or pro-Iran rhetoric and constructively plan ahead and engage with others is an encouraging sign.

#### But Politics Persist...

4. (SBU) Internal debate on India's IAEA vote referring Iran to the UNSC is also heating up. In a recent London School of Economics speech, Hindu Editor-in-Chief N. Ram described India's vote as a massive foreign policy "blunder," contrived to convince the US that it was an ally, and earn Washington's support for an Indian Security Council seat. Ram was not alone in this assessment- a variety of pundits and politicians have painted India's decision in the same harsh light, increasing the pressure on Manmohan Singh's government to abstain in any future IAEA vote. On October 3, party leaders from the leftist CPI(M), CPI, Forward Bloc, and RSP agreed to begin a nation-wide "campaign of

agitation"" to begin October 28. The campaign will try to force the GOI to reverse its position on referring Iran to the UNSC. In addition to reports on the left's activities, numerous op-ed pieces have pointed out that India's relationship with Iran will be strained and that India will now be perceived as subject to undue American influence. Nevertheless, the debate in the media has not been one-sided. Some analysts have posited that India has actually enhanced its reputation of fairness and independence by breaking with the NAM in the IAEA vote. Furthermore, the MEA's media spin argues that India's inputs to the resolution allowed Iran further time to negotiate before being referred to the Security Council.

### Iranian Lobbying

5. (U) Despite the MEA's publicity efforts, it seems Tehran sees a faultline within the GOI and is attempting to broaden that rift. Press reports indicate that senior Iranian diplomats met key leftist politicians with the hopes of recruiting allies within the GOI. Also, on October 15, Iran's Ambassador to India S.Z. Yaghoubi called on External Affairs Minister K. Natwar Singh. Although the MEA press statement provided no details, there was broad speculation in the media that the meeting was part of an Iranian campaign to pressure India to change its IAEA stance. Yaghoubi has also taken his campaign public, writing op-eds carried in the Times of India and Hindustan Times that talk up Iran-India energy cooperation and decry ""politically motivated"" pressure from ""foreign colonial powers"" against Iran- an argument that resonates with domestic critics of India's vote.

6. (SBU) On October 19, Iran added another element to the GOI's decision-making dilemma by unexpectedly calling for an October 24 meeting of the Joint Working Group on the proposed Iran-Pakistan-India pipeline. Iran is expected to continue to lobby the GOI to abstain in November's vote. Media have reported that a GOI delegation will attend the meeting in Tehran, but the MEA's Iran desk told us that it is unclear as yet whether MEA or the Ministry of Petroleum will be leading that group.

### Comment

7. (C) The Congress-led UPA Alliance committed itself to the September 24 vote without attempting to garner support from Parliament or political leaders. In an October 15 conversation with the Charge', Indo-US Parliamentary Forum Chairman Jay Panda commented that Prime Minister Singh has gone well beyond the national consensus in siding with the US in the IAEA's September vote. Against the background of leftist agitation, he predicted, the Prime Minister will now be obliged to back down. Prime Minister Singh himself has let it be known that he is committed to his current course, but that opinion is not unanimously shared amongst our Congress contacts. Although India voted with the US in September, the GOI may not have the required domestic support to sustain that position. The GOI faces intense domestic criticism and pressure to back down from its stance, and is hoping to avoid further controversy by resolving the Iran issue through behind the scenes diplomatic negotiations that would avoid a November IAEA vote. Our German colleague told us that Saran mentioned an ""exit in honor"" for

Iran. As New Delhi pursues this course, we will need to be very clear about our own red lines, especially if those diverge from the EU3. End comment.

BLAKE

**WikiLeaks Link:** <http://www.wikileaks.ch/cable/2005/10/05NEWDELHI8162.html>

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### **29. Year 2005: Indian Government Aggressively Defending its Vote on Iran**

Reference ID:	05NEWDELHI7493
Created:	2005-09-26 13:06
Released:	2011-03-15 00:00
Classification:	CONFIDENTIAL
Origin:	Embassy New Delhi

Classified By: Charge Robert Blake, Jr. for Reasons 1.4 (B, D)

1. (C) Summary: India's decision to support the US/EU resolution on Iran at the IAEA was the most important signal so far of the UPA's commitment to building a transformed US-India relationship. To counter the domestic backlash, the GOI launched an aggressive campaign to explain to its domestic constituency, critics, fellow NAM states, and Tehran how its vote in favor of the EU-3 resolution effectively promotes a diplomatic resolution of the ongoing dispute about Iran's nuclear program. Of particular sensitivity to Indian opinion is the question of whether the GOI has become a "lackey in the US camp." Opinions about the vote seem to be split along predictable political lines, but the leadership of India's sizeable Shia population has voiced tentative support for the GOI decision. We need to appreciate that this is the UPA's first significant step away from the relatively risk-free comfort zone of the NAM (and Russia and China, both of whom abstained), but exposes the government to severe domestic criticism, runs the risk of losing vital support from NAM partners on issues such as a UNSC seat, and, not least of all, endangers traditionally friendly relations with Iran. End Summary.

#### Explaining the Vote

2. (SBU) India's decision to support the US/EU resolution on Iran at the IAEA was the most important signal so far of the UPA's commitment to building a transformed US-India relationship. In a briefing memo released soon after the Sept 24 IAEA decision and a September 26 press briefing with Foreign Secretary Shyam Saran, New Delhi argued that its vote was in harmony with its position to keep the issue within the realm of the IAEA and to facilitate resolution through diplomacy. The GOI argued, "We were not for the Iran nuclear issue being referred to the UN Security Council. The resolution has kept consideration of the issue within the purview of the IAEA itself...The draft resolution has conceded that by deferring any decision till a further consideration of the matter at the next Board meeting in November 2005. We have thus gained time for further consultations." Trying to lessen the sting of this decision to both Tehran and NAM, New Delhi also spelled out its opposition to designating Iran as non-compliant

with its safeguards agreement and stated its preference for a future decision based on consensus and voiced conditional support for Iran's civilian nuclear energy program ""within global non-proliferation norms.""

3. (SBU) New Delhi also tried to preempt predictable criticism that India has abandoned its cherished neutrality. Citing India's extensive consultations with the EU-3 and the NAM in Vienna and New York, the GOI briefing noted that several NAM and developing countries also supported the EU-3 resolution. Addressing criticism that India's decision was made to secure support for the July 18 civil nuclear agreement with the US, the briefing memo emphatically states, ""Nothing could be further from the truth. The agreement stands on its own, based on a mutual recognition of Indian energy requirements, its global impact and on our acknowledgment of India impeccable record on non-proliferation.""

#### Hail of Criticism...

4. (SBU) The usual cast of detractors, including the Left, were quick to rail against the vote, citing arguments anticipated by the GOI. Most vocal was a personal statement issued by former BJP Minister of External Affairs Yashwant Sinha accusing the government of abandoning Iran to save its own ""questionable deal"" with the US. ""The veil is off. India is now firmly in the US camp... The UPA government has made India a client state of the US."" Sinha went on to warn, ""Relations with Iran are now in jeopardy"" and lamented that India had lost its unique position to ""play the role of umpire"" regarding Iran. Carrying that theme further, hawkish commentator Bharat Karnad wrote in the Asian Age that by rebuffing Tehran, New Delhi has not only endangered its access to a reliable source of oil, but has undermined Iran's ability to check the spread of Wahhabi Islam and complicate Pakistan's strategic calculus. Brahma Chellaney, Professor of Strategic Studies at the Center for Policy Research, expressed resentment that India was forced to make a choice between the US and Iran, ""(The US) still wants Germanys and Japans for friends, countries that didn't have a choice after WWII. They cannot expect India to be Germany or Japan in the 21st century.""

#### ...And Support

5. (SBU) Other commentators, however, were more positive about the effect the vote would have on the international objective to gain Iran's full compliance in the short term, as well as giving India a higher profile on the international stage, and aligning its position with its long-term interests. Rebuffing the contention that India's vote was a quid pro quo for its nuclear agreement with the US, influential strategic commentator K. Subrahmanyam (who is also in charge of advising the PMO on the implementation of the July 18 agreement) focused on India's vote as a means to compel Iran's full compliance with its IAEA obligations, and bring about full disclosure of the source of source of Iran's nuclear know-how, i.e., AQ Khan: ""An abstention vote by India would mean that this country connived with Pakistan and section of the past US Administration and its supporter to hush up the Pakistan-China proliferation activity."" He explained that besides the US, India needs to have the support of France, the UK, Germany, and other

members of the Nuclear Suppliers Group to access the nuclear fuel it needs. Writing in the Sept 24 Indian Express, Strategic Affairs editor Raja Mohan reasoned that if it had abstained, India would have found itself in a worse position by ""reinforcing the signal of ambiguity from New Delhi,"" thereby undercutting nuclear cooperation with the US without changing the discourse on Iran.

6. (SBU) On the more immediate issue of how the vote will affect the proposed pipeline with Iran, the Sept 23 International Herald Tribune reported that some Indian officials privately view the IAEA decision as an opportunity to allow the technically and politically beleaguered pipeline project to dry up without being overtly hostile to it, thus removing a further irritant in the US-India relationship.

7. (C) Congress spokesman and Gandhi family confidant Ananad Sharma signaled strong support for the IAEA decision in a September 26 conversation, noting that he was preparing to deal with attacks on the GOI's policy from both the Left and right (BJP). Sharma recalled that India has been saying for months that Iran must comply with its NPT obligations, and echoed MEA back grounding that described how GOI concerns had been taken into account in drafting the final IAEA resolution. Nonetheless, Sharma concluded, there was some political work to be done in defending the GOI's Vienna decision.

#### Lukewarm Support from India's Shia Leadership

8. (SBU) Shia Muslim leaders in Lucknow have dismissed concerns of an Indian Shia backlash against the GOI vote, noting that Indian Shias tend to support Indian government in foreign policy decisions, and recognize the danger of WMD proliferation. ""How can a true Indian oppose his own government's decision?"" Maulana MM Athar, chairman of the Shia Personal Law Board, asked Embassy personnel on Sept 26. Zaheer Mustafa, editor of the *In Dinon* Urdu daily, told us that how the UPA government sells the decision to the public will determine whether the Shia oppose it or not. Other Shia clerics pointed out that so far the loudest protest from Muslims have come from Sunni leaders, but observed that some traditionally pro-Iranian Shia leaders would likely try to stoke discontent, and expected Shia groups funded by the Iranian Embassy to organize anti-US protests on Friday, Sept 23.

#### Public Diplomacy Implications

9. (SBU) In the midst of the intense public debate on a highly complex domestic political issue in which the GOI finds itself being criticized from the left, right, and sometimes the center, there is no benefit for the USG to insert itself. While the USG clearly welcomes the Indian decision, as do many Indian analysts, the USG's public posture should be to respond to questions on the Indian decision by referring questions to the GOI. The debate on Iran's nuclear program and the GOI vote is deeply entangled with discussion on India's role in the proposed Iran-Pakistan-India (IPI) pipeline. It is almost inevitable for the US position on Iran and the Iran-Libya Sanctions Act to appear in discussions of the US-India dynamic on Iran's nuclear program, with the comment that the USG opposes

the IPI pipeline. We should be prepared to answer questions regarding the pipeline as well as questions about Iran's nuclear programs.

10. (SBU) We suggest the following press guidance on the issue of the GOI vote on the Iran resolution at the IAEA:

-- The United States welcomes the broad diplomatic support the EU-3 resolution received at the IAEA on Saturday. We look forward to working with the EU-3 and the international community, including India (if asked), in the IAEA as this issue moves forward.

-- (If asked) We refer you to the GOI for comments on its vote at the IAEA. The following is suggested guidance on US policy on the Iran-India pipeline:

-- The USG's concerns on Iran are clear and well-known. We are deeply concerned about Iran's problematic behavior, and we are sharing our concerns in a constructive way with India and Pakistan, which is appropriate in discussions with countries with which we have close ties. At the same time, we are seeking ways to cooperate with India to ensure that the energy needs of India's rapidly-growing economy are appropriately met.

#### A Difficult Step

11. (C) Comment: The decision to vote with the EU and US when several other NAM stalwarts abstained is the first significant public step that the UPA has taken to break from its traditional developing country solidarity, and is not cost-free for the GOI. Stepping out on this issue makes the UPA an easy target for sincere or opportunistic sniping from both the BJP opposition and its Left Front partners, as well as running a risk of losing goodwill and vital support from NAM partners on other issues India cares deeply about (like its continuing pursuit of a permanent UNSC seat). While we need to be careful to not publicly exacerbate the downside of New Delhi's choice by giving fodder to critics who complain that India is kowtowing to the US or marching to our orders, we should appreciate the political and diplomatic difficulty of this step for the GOI.

End Comment.

12. (U) Visit New Delhi's Classified Website:  
(<http://www.state.sgov.gov/p/sa/newdelhi/>)

BLAKE

**WikiLeaks Link:** <http://www.wikileaks.ch/cable/2005/09/05NEWDELHI7493.html>

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### **30. Year 2005: Scene-Setter for Meetings with Manmohan Singh & Natwar Singh in New York**

Reference ID:	05NEWDELHI7100
Created:	2005-09-13
Released:	12:49 2011-03-18 01:00
Classification:	CONFIDENTIAL
Origin:	Embassy New Delhi



SUBJECT: SCENE-SETTER FOR MEETINGS WITH MANMOHAN SINGH & NATWAR SINGH IN NEW YORK

Classified By: Ambassador David C. Mulford for Reasons 1.4 (B, D)

1. (C) Summary: Madame Secretary, your meetings this week with (we hope) Prime Minister Manmohan Singh and Foreign Minister Natwar Singh provide an occasion to sketch the real challenges we face in implementing legislative actions necessary for us to fulfill the civil nuclear vision of the July 18 Joint Statement, and to challenge India to take equally difficult steps on relations with Tehran and separation of India's civil and military nuclear facilities. In my meetings with the Foreign Minister and Foreign Secretary Saran, I have found them reluctant to acknowledge that Iran could jeopardize both our nuclear initiative and India's regional security interests. Your meetings provide an occasion to encourage the GOI to exercise leadership on this Iran issue, rather than hiding behind the NAM consensus, as happened on UN reform. In the region, Indo-Pak relations are progressing steadily, and you should urge India to consider further initiatives that build on the recent Delhi-Srinagar dialogue and PM Singh and President Musharraf's meeting on September 14 to sustain positive momentum. If there's time, you may also wish to elicit Natwar's thoughts on Afghanistan, Bangladesh and Nepal, where our partnership is increasingly visible. End Summary.

Iran: India Needs Alternatives

2. (C) The September 8 House International Relations Committee hearings alerted the GOI to the need to stop fence-sitting when it comes to Iran's nuclear weapons program. New Delhi is trying to support us without alienating Tehran, on whom it depends for current oil supplies, future natural gas imports (pipeline and LNG), and access to Afghanistan and Central Asia. The GOI claims that the Iranians reacted very negatively when Natwar pushed privately on NPT compliance during his recent visit to Tehran. New Delhi believes it has helped behind-the-scenes in Vienna by moderating the position of other NAM countries, and FM Singh will likely point out that Congressman Lantos and others have not sufficiently appreciated India's positive role in the IAEA. On the plus side, there is little warmth to the India-Iran relationship, suggesting that India's attachment to Iran could weaken as and when New Delhi is able to secure other energy sources (e.g. gas pipeline from Bangladesh) and alternative access routes to Central Asia (e.g., overland transit through Pakistan). That said, Natwar Singh must be made to recognize that Congress is watching India's role at the IAEA with great care, and the Indian vote in Vienna will have real consequences for our ability to push ahead on civil nuclear energy cooperation. At least some in India's strategic elite have begun to argue that Indian indulgence of Iran's nuclear shenanigans does not serve the country's strategic interests.

Civilian Nuclear Energy Cooperation

3. (C) In the face of Congressional and third country criticism over the non-proliferation ramifications of the July 18 agreement, the GOI has understood the importance of showing its willingness to cooperate with us on key proliferation benchmarks. There is a real debate inside the Indian strategic and scientific communities over how far to go, and how fast, on separation of civil and military facilities. In addition to India's critical support on Iran, you could use this opportunity to remind FM Singh of the need to be fully engaged as a partner in non-proliferation by moving briskly on civil/military nuclear separation and supporting the PSI Statement of Interdiction Principles. (Note: GOI concerns over the Suppression of Unlawful Activities Convention and PSI are on the agenda for a September 15 video-conference between NP experts and GOI counterparts. End Note)

{...}

Explaining the Stakes while Preserving our Equities

7. (C) In sum, we are enjoying real momentum from the July 18 Joint Statement, and the Indian team will arrive in New York with a good political tailwind from the Parliamentary debate over relations with the US and successful summit meetings with Blair and Chirac. However, Iran looms as a major political hurdle in Washington and a significant early test of India's readiness to exercise the responsibilities of global leadership. Our GOI contacts tell us that Natwar was struck by the forcefulness of your presentation on September 9 and feels squeezed between admonitions from us and pressure from the Iranians. Under the circumstances, the Indian instinct will be to lie low and hope that discussions in New York avoid the unpleasant prospect of a BOG vote on September 19. We need to give a clear accounting of these stakes, while also preserving the significant equity that we have built-up in the transforming US-India relationship.

MULFORD

WikiLeaks link: <http://www.wikileaks.ch/cable/2005/09/05NEWDELHI7100.html>

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### **31. Year 2005: India-EU,UK Summits: The Sincerest Form of Flattery**

Reference ID:	05NEWDELHI6994
Created:	2005-09-09 14:40
Released:	2011-03-20 01:00
Classification:	CONFIDENTIAL
Origin:	Embassy New Delhi

Classified By: A/DCM Geoff Pyatt for Reasons 1.4 (B, D)

1. (U) Summary: Tony Blair wrapped up two days of EU and UK summits on September 8, leaving behind an EU-India joint action plan, British and European support for Indian ITER participation, a framework agreement on Galileo, and UK assent to increased civil nuclear cooperation. Trade representatives sparred over market access for Indian and EU products, but EU delegates emphasized the ""close coordination"" that India and the EU

aim for on regional political matters like Sri Lanka and Nepal. Germany's EU-3 Iran point-person arrived in New Delhi for talks with MEA officials September 9. End Summary.

{...}

EU3 and Iran: Germany's Turn

7. (C) Following hot on the heels of the EU summit, Germany's point-person on Iran nuclear negotiations, Michael Schaefer, visited New Delhi September 9 to hold talks with MEA Additional Secretary (International Security) Meera Shankar and Secretary (East) Rajiv Sikri. D/PolCouns and Poloff emphasized to German Embassy counterparts the importance of giving India the message that Iran should not be able to hide behind New Delhi's support to avoid accounting for its nuclear activities (Ref B).

{...}

**WikiLeaks Link:** <http://www.wikileaks.ch/cable/2005/09/05NEWDELHI6994.html>

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### **32. Year 2005: India Notes US Iran Views; Trying to Clarify its Position**

Reference ID:	05NEWDELHI6974
Created:	2005-09-09 10:35
Released:	2011-03-15 00:00
Classification:	SECRET
Origin:	Embassy New Delhi

Classified By: A/DCM Geoff Pyatt for Reasons 1.4 (b, d).

1. (S) SUMMARY: Our efforts here and Congress' reaction in Washington seem to be encouraging the Indians to review their public postures on Iran. According to a senior MEA contact, they are mulling ways to restate their position in an unambiguous and helpful way. Our MEA contacts cite Indian engagement with the EU3, Singapore, South Africa, and others in the IAEA in Vienna as evidence of their desire to be helpful on Iran. END SUMMARY.

WE GOT THEIR ATTENTION

2. (S) A/DCM met MEA Joint Secretary (Americas) Dr. Jaishankar on September 9 to review Iran (other topics covered septel). Referring to the prominent Indian news coverage highlighting Rep. Lantos and others' views on India's Iran policy during U/S Burns' and Joseph's hearing on September 8, A/DCM handed Jaishankar the testimony transcripts and asked what India planned to do to address its critics. Jaishankar said India appreciated Burns' statement that FM Natwar Singh's remarks were only partially known and that the USG would seek further clarification of media reports. Natwar Singh had complained privately that he had been misquoted by the Iranian News Agency.

### WHAT IS YOUR POLICY, THEN?

3. (S) Jaishankar explained that India's positions and those of America were not as far apart as the hearing made it appear to be. "Nobody here says Iran is an exception to nonproliferation goals," clarified Jaishankar, It would be damaging to India, he insisted, if Iran were to become a nuclear weapons state. Moreover, Jaishankar stressed that, since Iran is an NPT signatory, it must abide by its obligations or accept the consequences. Jaishankar complained that India, as the "man in the middle" in the Iran-US confrontation, was facing criticism from both sides. He conceded that Iranian pressure was not as public as that of Congress, but it was nonetheless a factor. Given India's ties with Iran, India could not just rebut Lantos by explaining its helpful stance behind closed doors at the IAEA in Vienna, lamented Jaishankar. In any case, he admitted, India could not duck the issue; it would work in the IAEA with us, the EU3, South Africa, Singapore, and just as it had in the past. Jaishankar reported that FM Singh had consulted prior to visiting Tehran with his German and British counterparts (and was about to meet Germany's Iran point-person Fischer as we left the meeting).

### SO WHAT TO DO?

4. (S) A/DCM pressed Jaishankar to explain how India would address concern in Washington over its Iran policy and perceptions of ambiguity created by Natwar Singh's public remarks. Jaishankar suggested that India might be able to issue a nonpaper reiterating its views or might use a Foreign Ministry press briefing to re-articulate them. In any case, he said, Iran should figure in Singh's conversation later September 9 with the Secretary and in Foreign Secretary Saran's conversation the same day with U/S Burns. Much, he speculated, would be cleared-up that way. A/DCM also pressed for public clarification of India's opposition to Iran's WMD effort, a suggestion Jaishankar agreed to pursue. Later, he told A/DCM India would convey a nonpaper on Iran to us on Saturday, September 10. Hopefully, he said, the nonpaper would clarify any misunderstandings. A/DCM explained that in the past former NSA Mishra had regularly briefed the Secretary on India's official interaction with Iran when she was his counterpart. Such consultations lent transparency to what India was doing and helped the US understand fully the situation. Jaishankar took the point.

### SMELLING THE COFFEE

5. (S) COMMENT: The September 8 HIRC statements on Iran by members of Congress served as a wake-up call to India that its Iran stance would directly impact its desire for legislative fixes that would implement the July 18 POTUS-PM Singh agreements, especially on civil nuclear technology. India is sufficiently concerned to restate its position on Iran's nuclear weapons. We have an opportunity as a result. The Indians believe they have been helpful in the IAEA on Iran, but we should press for more.  
END COMMENT.

MULFORD

**WikiLeaks Link:** <http://www.wikileaks.ch/cable/2005/09/05NEWDELHI6974.html>

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### **33. YEAR 2005 A Nuclear Iran Still Unacceptable to India, but Delhi Questions Eventual Armed Confrontation**

Reference ID:	05NEWDELHI6840
Created:	2005-09-06 13:34
Released:	2011-03-15 00:00
Classification:	SECRET
Origin: Embassy	New Delhi

This record is a partial extract of the original cable. The full text of the original cable is not available.

Classified By: Ambassador David C. Mulford for Reasons 1.4 (b, d).

1. (S) Summary: Indian FS Saran listened attentively to Ambassador's views on Iran, including our disappointment with FM Natwar Singh's public statements on his September 3-4 visit to Tehran; and reaffirmed India's long-standing policy on Iran, i.e., that Iran must comply with its international commitments, that Iran has a right to a peaceful nuclear energy program, and (when pressed at the end of the meeting) that a nuclear Iran is unacceptable. The Foreign Secretary also repeatedly questioned what he characterized as the ultimate outcome of our aggressive approach to Iran -- namely, military confrontation. The Foreign Secretary urged giving dialogue with Iran more time. Ambassador pushed Saran hard to consider that India's own policy of fence-sitting in the hope that something positive would happen would only give Iran more time to work on its clandestine weapons program, and ultimately weaken prospects for a peaceful solution. Saran promised to convey the gist of our briefing and demarche, as well as an offer to brief the PM, to Natwar Singh, who had just returned from Tehran. Our message and briefing may have hit home finally with Saran; we will follow-up to see if India's calculus shifts toward helping us more in Vienna before the September 19 IAEA BOG meeting. End Summary.

Delivering the Mail (Wrapped in a Brick)

2. (S) As instructed, the Ambassador, joined by Washington briefers and Embassy officials, delivered points in Ref A to Indian Foreign Secretary Saran and MEA J/S (Americas) Dr. Jaishankar on September 5, 2005. The Ambassador took Saran to task for what we had perceived in media reports as an unacceptably weak set of statements on Iran's nuclear program by Natwar Singh while visiting Tehran. Ambassador explained that the time was drawing near for fence-sitters to make hard decisions for the good of regional security and stability. Many in Congress and throughout Washington, he reminded Saran, were watching India's treatment of Iran prior to Congressional debate on the US-India civilian nuclear initiative. The IAEA BOG meeting September 19 offered India a chance to be helpful. The Ambassador stressed the moment of truth was

approaching, particularly as it was now clear that the Iranians were working feverishly to weaponize despite their public statements and undertakings to the EU3. India had a key voice in the NAM and could swing opinion in the BOG; it was time, he said, for us to know where India stood.

#### Our Tune Hasn't Changed

3. (S) Saran insisted there had been no ambiguity in Natwar Singh's statements in Tehran; the Minister had stuck with India's consistent formula, i.e., the GOI recognizes Iran's right to pursue a peaceful civilian nuclear energy program, and Iran should comply with its international treaty commitments with regard to its nuclear programs. India believed Iran's nuclear programs was best ""sorted out"" with the EU3, and ""a slide into confrontation"" would not be useful. After Natwar's visit to Tehran, India realized the regime was ""hard line,"" but Saran affirmed India's support for continued dialogue. Any rupture, said Saran, would end whatever leverage the EU3 or IAEA might wield. Saran professed his belief that referral to the UNSC would cause greater turmoil in energy markets, which would be detrimental to India. India, he said, would continue to use its ties with Iran to convince it to avoid confrontation and stay on track.

#### Thrust and Parry

4. (S) Ambassador again reminded Saran that the entire time Iran had talked to the EU3, it had been cheating in secret, as the briefing we provided demonstrates. More delay and dialogue would just buy Iran the time it needed to complete its plans. The Ambassador called Saran out on neglecting to mention one key element of India's long-standing position, that an Iranian nuclear weapons capability was unacceptable. Saran demurred, saying even the IAEA had cited Iranian cooperation in its latest report, while noting unresolved questions; was that, he said, not enough proof that Iran was trying to be in compliance? The Ambassador dismissed that logic out-of-hand, saying Iran had already had three years of negotiations during which it had continued to develop a nuclear bomb in secret.

5. (S) At this juncture, Washington visitors delivered the briefing referred to in Ref B. Saran characterized the briefing as being more evidence of a delivery system than a bomb program, but the analysts outlined evidence of related technical functions and design characteristics that could only relate to the delivery of a nuclear weapon. Moreover, the analysts said denial and deception had continued in parallel with EU3 and IAEA talks. More talking would just give Iran more time to be ""completely dishonest."" Faced with the evidence, Saran again asked what it would take for the US to avoid the UN route. The Ambassador was clear: given Iran's clear willingness to deceive, time was of the essence. We have to act. A/DCM added that Washington still sought to make diplomacy work; Indian help at the BOG meeting would enhance diplomatic prospects for a solution. The EU-3 effort was launched in 2003 in lieu of UNSC referendum. Since that effort has run its course, it is time to go to the Council. At this, Saran conveyed that the Iranians had affirmed to Natwar their desire to avoid a confrontation, but needed a ""face-saving way out.""



### All We Are Saying Is Give Peace a Chance

6. (S) Saran again said armed confrontation was not helpful. It would, he said, be "quite disastrous" and the consequences needed to be thought through carefully. Armed conflict with Iran would impact India's interests. War was unacceptable to India, insisted Saran, and counseled us not to pursue a course of action with an unforeseen outcome. The Ambassador emphasized that India now had to calculate for itself which option was the least destructive of its national interests. America could not afford a nuclear Iran; could India?

### When Squeezed: A Nuclear Iran is Unacceptable to India

7. (S) When Ambassador for the second time reminded Saran of India's long-standing policy that a nuclear Iran was unacceptable, Saran reiterated that third pillar of the formula. However, he again insisted that armed confrontation was also problematic. "How do we get where we want to get?" The Ambassador said if we keep letting the Iranians string us along, a weaponized Iran would be inevitable. India's policy seemed to be to keep the current diplomatic process going and hope that something "works out." The Ambassador expressed the view that India needed to face the reality that the something that would "work out" if this approach were followed is a nuclear weapon in the hands of Iran. Meanwhile, the Ambassador emphasized that the diplomatic avenue was not yet at an end, but we needed our friends to use their influence. Saran promised to convey our points and the gist of our briefings to his leadership, especially EAM Natwar Singh, who had just returned from Tehran.

### Ready to Brief PM Singh As Well

8. (S) The Ambassador said we would be happy to have the team brief the Prime Minister at his convenience, preferably before he saw POTUS at UNGA in September. Saran promised to convey the offer.

### COMMENT: Do We Detect a Chink in the Armor?

9. (S) COMMENT: Ref C lays out our assessment of India's strategic interests with Iran. India needs to balance those interests with its expanding ties with Washington. We pushed Saran pretty hard, and although he pushed back with equal vigor we may have gotten our message through: it is time for India to make some hard decisions. We are approaching the moment when fence sitting will not be an option. We will keep pressing to see if India's position on Iran shifts as we head into the September 19 IAEA BOG meeting in Vienna. India has in the past played a helpful role on Iran in the BOG; we need to ensure they do so again.

END COMMENT.

MULFORD

**WikiLeaks Link:** <http://www.wikileaks.ch/cable/2005/09/05NEWDELHI6840.html>

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### **34. Year 2005: India Walking Iran Tightrope**

Reference ID: 05NEWDELHI6804  
Created: 2005-09-02 14:39  
Released: 2011-03-15 00:00  
Classification: CONFIDENTIAL  
Origin: Embassy New Delhi

Classified By: A/DCM Geoff Pyatt for Reasons 1.4 (B, D)

1. (C) Summary: As Natwar Singh travels to Tehran September 2 to meet the new regime, India's overriding goal is securing energy, followed by preserving access to Afghanistan, maintaining influence in what India perceives as a swing state in the debate over Islam, and advancing other business relationships. Growing international unease about Iran's nuclear ambitions and long-standing relationships with terrorist organizations are subordinated to India's realpolitik interests in Iran. New Delhi hopes statements in the IAEA and elsewhere encouraging Iran in the right direction will appease other partners (especially the US) without upsetting its ties with Tehran. The GOI has clammed up about the August 30 visit of Tehran's nuclear negotiator Ali Larijani, with normally open interlocutors protesting ignorance of his message. India needs good relations with Washington and Tehran, and hopes to avoid being forced to choose between the two. End Summary.

#### Balancing Interests in Iran: Pipeline Trumps

2. (C) India is engaged in a risky balancing act in its Iran policies. While the GOI has no illusions about Iran's nuclear ambitions or support for terrorism, these concerns are subordinate in its foreign policy and economic considerations. New Delhi does, however, fear the consequences of being forced to choose between Iran and the US or other western countries if the nuclear standoff escalates. Against this danger, India sees Iran as an enormous actual and potential energy supplier, and a balancing power on Pakistan's opposite border. Thus, Indian policy tries to advance its interests with Tehran, appease the West, and largely ignore the looming crises.

3. (C) To this end, New Delhi hosted the visit of Iran's top nuclear negotiator, Ali Larijani, for talks August 30. Larijani sought support for Iran's IAEA position in meetings with Natwar Singh and NSA Narayanan. Larijani told the press that he sought India's help in the IAEA on Iran's nuclear program, insisted Iran was fully committed to international regulations related to the nuclear field, and reported that the focus of his talks was expanding ""strategic relations and partnership"" with India on energy, including the planned \$7 billion, 1800 mile natural gas pipeline from Iran through Pakistan to India and the recently-agreed deal to export liquefied natural gas to India. Star News foreign affairs editor Jyoti Malhotra told us September 2 that the pipeline deal is moving fast. Larijani told IRNA upon his arrival in Tehran that the modalities of Pakistan transit were a key element of his New Delhi talks.

#### MEA: Iran a Lower Priority

4. (C) In this context, USG concerns with Iran (WMD programs and support for terrorism) remain largely unaddressed in GOI policy-making in part because they are hidden under two levels of neglect from decision makers. First, Iran is the third priority in the MEA division tasked with overseeing the relationships with Pakistan and Afghanistan. Indeed, Natwar Singh's reaction when the Ambassador raised Iran with him on August 23 (Ref A) suggested strongly that the Minister was unaware of the coincidence between his visit to Tehran and the next IAEA report. Second, Iran's attraction for Indian foreign policy is primarily as a source of oil and natural gas, and not out of any ideological affinity. Iran's role as a gateway to Afghanistan, a neighbor to play off of Pakistan, and a swing state in the Muslim world are also important. Although the GOI acknowledges international worries about Iran's nuclear deceit and support for terrorism, it has limited itself in public to anodyne suggestions encouraging Iran to clear up problems through dialogue with the IAEA. In private we understand the GOI approached Iran at the UK's behest to urge a positive reply to the latest EU-3 offer.

#### MEA Statements on Iran

5. (SBU) GOI interlocutors have been mum on the content of Larijani's New Delhi visit, but MEA spokesman Navtej Sarna previewed for the media the FM's September 2-4 Tehran trip on September 1 and took questions on Larijani's visit. Sarna refused to comment on Iran's IAEA and EU-3 negotiations, even avoiding the standard GOI encouragement for Iran to comply with its NPT obligations. Sarna declined to answer whether India had consulted with the US, or to discuss the nuclear matter further. He also avoided questions on India's view of a role for the NAM in the IAEA or EU-3 negotiations.

6. (C) In the absence of the regional Joint Secretary (accompanying the FM to Tehran), A/DCM called J/S (Americas) S Jaishankar to express concern about the forgiving tone of Sarna's briefing, noting that in the past GOI officials have been clear about the requirement for Iran to live up to its NPT obligations. At this juncture in the EU-3 process, we have stressed, it is important that Indian actions and statements not give the impression of forgiving Iran. Jaishankar reported that he had discussed Iran with the Foreign Minister, who indicated that he would rather not conduct India's Iran diplomacy ""in the glare of the public spotlight."" The J/S added that both Natwar and Foreign Secretary Saran would want Iran to be a priority topic of discussion during meetings with the Secretary and U/S Burns on the margins of UNGA.

#### Domestic (NAM and Shia Muslim) Considerations

7. (C) Domestic opinion continues to influence GOI policy toward Iran. The UPA government derives a significant portion of its support from the Left Front and Congress factions who view Iran as a plucky developing nation holding out against Western imperialism. Although we do not believe this view prevails among senior GOI officials,

who strongly oppose Iran developing nuclear weapons and recognize the threat this will pose to Indian interests, it does constrain their ability to speak out publicly against their fellow NAM member and be seen as siding with the United States. An op-ed by a reliably anti-American reporter for the Hindu on September 1 encouraged the GOI to stand by Iran as the "litmus test" of India's willingness to pursue an "independent" foreign policy.

8. (C) Additionally, Iran sees itself as a protector of Shia around the world, including some 13 million in India. The Iranian Embassy is very active in Shia cities like Lucknow, and our Shia interlocutors have told us that they expect the new Ahmadinejad regime in Iran to be more active in trying to whip up anti-American sentiment among Indian Muslims (Ref B). This religious appeal will also restrict the leeway of the UPA government to be seen siding with the US, as the UPA came to power promising to improve India's relations with the Muslim world. These domestic sentiments (which Iran played up with its appeal to involve the NAM in the nuclear negotiations) will be a thorn in the side, forcing the GOI leadership to make difficult choices as it calibrates its public approach to Iran.

#### The Middle Neighbors: Pakistan and Afghanistan

9. (C) India's ties to Iran have a Pakistan and Afghanistan dimension as well. India sees Iran as a useful power with which to cooperate to encircle Pakistan, although it recognizes that Tehran aligns with Pakistan on the issue of Kashmir, and has in the past protested India's treatment of Muslims (Ref C). Iran, desiring Indian business and suffering its own strained relations with Pakistan, appears deliberately to have toned down its earlier comments on Muslims in order to maintain good relations with India. The outcome of both parties' balancing is a politely cordial but shallow commonality of interests.

10. (C) Iran's importance to India is greatly enhanced by Pakistan's unwillingness to grant transit rights to Indian goods moving to Afghanistan. Helping Afghanistan is a top Indian foreign policy goal. Iran is India's least expensive alternative entry point to reach Afghanistan and Central Asian markets, leading to the Indian commitment to expand the Chabahar port and build roads from there to Afghanistan. However, the MEA has complained to us that Iran has been less than helpful to India in providing access to Afghanistan and support (supplies and fuel) for India's Afghan reconstruction efforts.

#### Hoping to Duck a Confrontation Between Useful Partners

11. (C) Ultimately, although formal India-Iran relations are cordial, they remain prickly and ultimately self-serving. Retired Ambassador to Iran Hamid Ansari, now a member of the Prime Minister's National Security Advisory Board, agreed that India's policy has always been based on hard national security interests, despite all the talk of brotherly relations. What is clear is that the elites in New Delhi do not want to have to choose sides between Tehran and Washington. India has so far publicly supported our stance on Iran's NPT obligations while desperately hoping to avoid any vote in the IAEA that

would force it to come out publicly in favor of one capital over the other. Indian policy is informed by a hard-nosed realpolitik calculus, but reflects a hope that Washington may one day adopt a modus vivendi with Tehran, at which stage India would position itself to help build bridges between its two partners.

#### What We Can Do to Try to Alter the Dynamic

12. (C) If the two main areas of Indian interest (energy and Central Asian access) were to disappear, India would have much less glue left in its relations with Tehran. Despite our commitments, the USG cannot solve India's energy needs immediately, but we do have an opportunity to try to eliminate the attraction of access via Iran to Central Asia by helping convince Pakistan to allow Indian transit to Afghanistan (septel).

13. (C) The mixed signals from the GOI (including the near simultaneous acceptance of our Iran briefing team, Larijani's New Delhi visit, and dispatching FM Singh to Tehran) illustrate India's continued efforts to straddle the fence. We should continue to make clear to New Delhi our view that turning a blind eye to Iran's nuclear ambitions out of NAM-centric motivations will not help India's relations with us or with Iran in the long run. The GOI realizes that coming down on either side of the fence will involve painful choices; we need to help soften the impact of sticking with us by eliminating India's need for Iran to advance its Afghan policy and achieve energy security. Without these two linchpins, India's affinity for Iran could fade, and a potential major irritant in our relations with India might subside.

14. (U) Visit New Delhi's Classified Website: (<http://www.state.sgov/p/sa/newdelhi>)

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**WikiLeaks Link:** <http://www.wikileaks.ch/cable/2005/09/05NEWDELHI6804.html>

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### **35. Year 2005: Scene-setter for Admiral Felon's April 13-16 Visit**

Reference ID:	05NEWDELHI2550
Created:	2005-04-05 14:21
Released:	2011-03-28 01:00
Classification:	SECRET
Origin:	Embassy New Delhi

1. (C) Summary: Admiral Fallon, we welcome your upcoming visit to India, coming at a time of excellent relations in a fast maturing defense cooperation relationship. You also come soon after Secretary of State Rice's first visit last month, which has been characterized as the most successful visit of any US Secretary of State. Secretary Rice proposed a new and greatly expanded strategic relationship, specifically based on the US pledging to help India realize its vision to become a world power in the 21st Century. Secretary Rice proposed a number of new initiatives on her trip, including: starting a strategic dialogue to discuss global security problems, and regional issues such as disaster response planning (tsunami), and Nepal and Bangladesh. A newly launched defense

initiative will assess India's defense requirements and areas for defense cooperation to include issues of defense transformation and advanced technology. She also proposed starting a high-level dialogue on energy security to include civil-nuclear issues, and a working group to strengthen space cooperation. The Secretary and the GOI also agreed that we will revitalize our economic dialogue to address legacy problems and establish conditions to enable robust growth in exports and investments. She also conveyed the President's invitation to Prime Minister Singh to visit Washington this summer. Secretary Rice also indicated that the US Government will authorize American firms to compete in a tender for the purchase of 126 multi-role combat aircraft, including the F-16 and F-18. This visit has produced the most substantial agenda for US-India cooperation ever. As the first senior level visitor following Secretary Rice, your views and public comments will be closely scrutinized by the media and GOI officials looking for clues as to how we will fulfill the Secretary's ambitious vision and how quickly we will move forward.

{...}

Iran

33. (C) India views Iran as a source of energy, a corridor for trade to Central Asia (most importantly to Afghanistan), a partner in stabilizing Afghanistan, and as a counterweight in Pakistan's regional calculations. Increased high-level exchanges and intensified cooperation in the energy sector illustrate the degree to which the GOI values the relationship. There has been considerable movement recently in the Indian position on the proposed Iran-Pakistan-India pipeline. India has removed its Most Favored Nation and transit corridor conditions and given Cabinet backing for the Petroleum Minister to negotiate with Iran and Pakistan. At the same time, the GOI is strongly opposed to Iran's acquisition of nuclear weapons. New Delhi is pursuing a low-key but engaged policy toward Iran, attempting to achieve its strategic goals in the Gulf without jeopardizing its growing ties with the US or Israel. New Delhi portrays itself as a moderating influence on Tehran, particularly on nuclear issues where Indian and US interests on nonproliferation converge. I have outlined for India's energy minister the USG's concerns about large scale energy cooperation with Iran because such cooperation could bolster Iran's support for terrorism with its efforts to acquire WMD.

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**WikiLeaks Link:** <http://www.wikileaks.ch/cable/2005/04/05NEWDELHI2550.html>

### **36. Year 2003: Former GCC SecGen Optimistic for the Region**

Reference ID:	03KUWAIT5342
Created:	2003-11-22 11:57
Released:	2011-05-04 00:00
Classification:	CONFIDENTIAL
Origin:	Embassy Kuwait

Classified By: CDA Frank C. Urbancic for reasons 1.4 (b) and (d)



1. (C) Summary: Poloffs met with senior Adviser to the Prime Minister and former GCC Secretary General Abdullah Bishara on November 19. After sharing details of Prime Minister Shaykh Sabah Al-Ahmed's domestic agenda (septel), Bishara offered an upbeat view on prospects for the region, based on the US liberation of Iraq. End Summary.

{...}

Iran

5. (C) Bishara, whose nephew is Kuwait's current Ambassador to Tehran, said Iran had signed the recent IAEA agreement under duress, and predicted the regime would not last more than five years in its current state. He said the people are fed up with the poor leadership of the mullahs and the lack of economic opportunity. "Only oil is keeping the country afloat," he added. Bishara said the regime's external policies were dominated by the need to stay relevant in the world, and Iran tried to balanced its lack of relations with the US by maintaining and increasing its ties to countries such as China, India and Russia.

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**WikiLeaks Link:** <http://www.wikileaks.ch/cable/2003/11/03KUWAIT5342.html>

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