

# **INDIA SPEAKS**

(Monthly Digest of Official Indian Statements on Middle East)

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**No. 25**

**August 2011**

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## **Bilateral Issues**

### **a. Iran**

#### **1. Foreign Secretary's visit to Iran, Tehran, 6 July 2011**

Mrs. Nirupama Rao, Foreign Secretary, Government of India, accompanied by Mr. Y.K. Sinha, Joint Secretary (PAI) is on a visit to Tehran from 5-7 July, 2011 for the 9th round of Foreign Office Consultations at the invitation of her counterpart Dr. Mohammad Ali Fathollahi, Deputy Foreign Minister for Asia & Oceania of the Islamic Republic of Iran.

During her stay in Tehran, besides holding the Foreign Office Consultations, she called on Foreign Minister Dr. Ali Akbar Salehi and Secretary of the Supreme National Security Council, Dr. Saeed Jalili.

Foreign Secretary's discussions covered issues pertaining to bilateral, regional and international developments. Views were exchanged on combating global terrorism, energy security, the North-South Transport Corridor, developments in Afghanistan and regional security and stability. It was agreed that the next meeting of the India-Iran Joint Commission will be held in Tehran at an early date. In her meeting with Foreign Minister Dr. Salehi, Foreign Secretary reiterated the invitation for him to visit India.

During the visit, both sides exchanged the Instrument of Ratification for the Agreement on Transfer of Sentenced Prisoners signed in July 2010 thereby operationalizing the Agreement.

*Source: Ministry of External Affairs, <http://meaindia.nic.in/mystart.php?id=530217813>*

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## b. Libya

### 2. Libyan FM visits Delhi to brief about latest developments, New Delhi, 22 July 2011

The Foreign Minister of Libya, Mr. Abdel Aati Al Obeidi visited New Delhi on July 22, 2011. He met Minister of State (MOS) for External Affairs Shri E. Ahmed and briefed him on the latest developments in Libya and the status of various initiatives for resolving the crisis in Libya.

MOS reiterated India's position which calls for immediate cessation of all hostilities in Libya and supports peaceful resolution of the Libyan crisis through dialogue, taking into account the legitimate aspirations of the people of Libya. He conveyed India's consistent stand to maintain unity and territorial integrity of Libya. He also expressed support for the African Union-High Level Ad-hoc Committee initiatives and the African Union Road Map for the peaceful and consensual resolution of the conflict.

The Libyan Foreign Minister left New Delhi today afternoon.

*Source: Ministry of Foreign Affairs, New Delhi,  
<http://meaindia.nic.in/mystart.php?id=530217863>*

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## c. Sudan

### 3. Prime Minister Mr. Manmohan Singh greets the people of South Sudan on their proclamation of independence, New Delhi, 9 July 2011

The Prime Minister Dr. Manmohan Singh has greeted the people and government of South Sudan on the occasion of the declaration of the country's independence. In a letter to President General Salva Kiir Mayardit of South Sudan the Prime Minister applauded the new nation's commitment to addressing all outstanding issues with North Sudan in an amicable and peaceful manner.

The text of the Prime Minister's letter is as follows:

“I have received your gracious letter sent through Her Excellency Dr. Priscilla Joseph Kuch, Minister in your office, inviting me to attend the historic celebrations scheduled on July 9, 2011 in Juba when South Sudan will formally proclaim its independence.

On behalf of the people and Government of India, I convey my warmest felicitations and greetings to the people and Government of Southern Sudan on this momentous and happy occasion. It marks the successful conclusion of important landmarks spelt out in the Comprehensive Peace Agreement of 2005, including, in particular, the peaceful conduct of the referendum.

I take this opportunity to convey India's best wishes to Your Excellency and the people of Southern Sudan as you embark on a new journey of nation building and development and greater peace and prosperity in the region. We applaud your commitment to addressing all outstanding issues with North Sudan in an amicable and peaceful manner.

I have been apprised of the comprehensive discussions held in April this year between Her Excellency Dr. Priscilla Kuch and my colleague Mr. S.M. Krishna, Minister of External Affairs, on important issues of mutual interest. The Minister of State for External Affairs, Mr. E. Ahamed led a multi-disciplinary delegation to Juba on June 15, 2011 to reiterate India's support and solidarity with the people of Southern Sudan. India stands ready to share its development experience and extend whatever assistance possible to Southern Sudan. I am confident that our cooperation will grow from strength to strength in the coming days for the mutual benefit of our two peoples.

My prior commitments do not permit me to attend the historic celebrations in Juba. I wish to assure you that India will be represented at the event at a high level.

Please accept, Excellency, the assurances of my highest consideration.”

*Source: Press Information Bureau, New Delhi,*

<http://pib.nic.in/newsite/PrintRelease.aspx?relid=73124>

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#### **4. Statement by H.E. Mr. H. S. Puri, Permanent Representative of India, At the UN Security Council Meeting on Sudan, New York, 13 July 2011**

Thank you, Mr President.

It gives me great pleasure to welcome Vice President Dr Riek Machar and other members of his delegation to the Council on this historic occasion. I also wish to welcome the honourable ministers participating in today's session, yourself, Mr President, and those from Brazil, Bosnia-Herzegovina, South Africa, France, Portugal, Russian Federation and United Kingdom to the Security Council. Their presence in our midst today underlines the importance we all attach to this occasion. I would like to thank Under Secretary General and my distinguished colleague the Permanent Representative of the Sudan Mr Ali Osman for their statements.

Mr President, sixty-four years ago India's first Prime Minister Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru had declared, “at the stroke of the midnight hour, when the world sleeps, India will awake to life and freedom. A moment comes, which comes but rarely in history, when we step out from the old to the new, when an age ends, and when the soul of a nation, long suppressed, finds utterance.”

Today is one such moment of a tryst being kept with destiny when after a long struggle, the voice of the people of South Sudan has found expression. Let me, at the outset, convey the Government of India's warm welcome to the new state of South Sudan born on 9 July 2011, after a peaceful and transparent Referendum where the people of South Sudan voted to form a new State. Our Vice President H.E. Mr. Hameed Ansari participated in the joyous celebrations in Juba on 9 July.

Mr President, the Government of India commends the leadership of both the Sudan and South Sudan who have shown exemplary patience and maturity to see the fulfilment of this important CPA landmark, which India has supported from its very beginning in 2005. We, therefore, convey our congratulations to both the parties for successfully marching to this day.

India and Sudan share the most cordial of relations. We are deeply committed to the development and to the peace and prosperity of Sudan. It is in this context that India welcomes the developments over the past year in the Sudan which have brought peace closer to this troubled land. In particular, we welcome the emergence of South Sudan as a new State and the newest member of the international community. As a member of the Security Council, it has been our great pleasure to be associated with adoption of a resolution today that will lead to the General Assembly accepting the Council's recommendation on South Sudan's application for UN membership. We look forward to South Sudan joining the United Nations as a full-fledged member tomorrow.

Mr President, India and Sudan have deep-rooted ties. For over a hundred years, people of Indian origin have made Sudan their home. Nearly 10,000 persons of Indian origin live in Khartoum, Omdurman, Wad Madani and Port Sudan. The economic interaction between the two countries is substantial and our two-way trade is around US \$ 1 billion per annum. This is among the largest with the countries of Africa. India was one of the first Asian countries to open a consulate in Juba. This will soon be upgraded to an Embassy. We look forward to the continued growth and diversification of these relations as the two Sudans chart their independent destinies.

There have recently been exchanges of high level visits from both sides. These interactions have facilitated substantial exchange of views for chartering the course of action and future road map for intensifying our relations with both Khartoum and Juba. For India, the two entities of Sudan taken together remain a major force and partner in Africa. The recent India-Africa Forum Summit held in Addis Ababa testifies to our commitment to working together with our African friends for the collective development of Africa.

Mr President, India was witness to the Nivasha Agreement of January 2005 establishing the Comprehensive Peace Agreement (CPA). We have watched the progress made in its

implementation with keen interest and are happy to see an important CPA landmark achieved with South Sudan's independence. We are sure that outstanding CPA issues, like status of Abyei etc. will also be dealt with by both sides in the same spirit of cooperation and mutual accommodation. In this regard, we deeply appreciate the work done by the Special Representative of the Secretary General, Mr. Haile Menkerios in overseeing the implementation of the CPA and in maintaining peace in the region. We are happy to note that the agreement between both sides to demilitarize Abyei, which demonstrates the will of the two sides to jointly move ahead towards a negotiated settlement. In keeping with this spirit of seeing a peaceful and prosperous region, we also support all ongoing efforts at achieving peace in Sudan, including the Darfur issue. We would like this issue to be resolved soon. Our appreciation is due to the State of Qatar and the African Union High Level Implementation Panel (AUHIP) on Sudan, led by Mr. Thabo Mbeki who has played a very significant role in this regard.

India has been one of the largest troop contributors to the United Nations Mission in Sudan (UNMIS) in addition to the notable contribution of Indian Police officers to both UNMIS and the Government of South Sudan. We have recently pledged US\$ 5 million for development assistance to South Sudan as also other capacity building projects under our Aid to Africa and IAFS-II programme. Sudan is a major beneficiary under India's Technical and Economic Cooperation programme. To continue our engagement with South Sudan under this programme, 75 additional seats have recently been announced for South Sudan. The Pan-Africa E-Network Project undertaken by India in Africa has been a huge success. We are considering to extend the entire package of Pan-Africa E-Network, including its tele-medicine and tele-education components, to South Sudan. As already indicated by the Hon'ble Foreign Minister of Brazil, India also intends to work along with Brazil and South Africa as part of the IBSA group and within the IBSA Fund on projects that benefit the peoples of both the Sudan and South Sudan.

Mr President, we recognize that the Sudan and South Sudan will face enormous challenges in the years ahead as they chart their independent destinies. For its part, India is ready to assist this process, both on a bilateral basis and on the basis of its rapidly growing interaction with Africa. On behalf of the Government and the people of India, may I once again congratulate the leadership of both the Sudan and South Sudan for their statesmanship, their commitment to peace and to the welfare of their peoples. India stands ready to extend all possible assistance in their path to progress and prosperity.

Thank you.

*Source: Permanent Mission of India to the United Nations, New York,*

<http://www.un.int/india/2011/ind1883.pdf>

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## d. Turkey

### **5. Mrs. Susmita Gongulee Thomas appointed as the next Ambassador of India to Turkey, New Delhi, 11 July 2011**

Mrs. Susmita Gongulee Thomas, Consul General of India to San Francisco has been appointed as the next Ambassador of India to Turkey. She is expected to take up her assignment shortly.

*Source: Ministry of Foreign Affairs, New Delhi, <http://meaindia.nic.in/mystart.php?id=530217828>*

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## Multilateral Issues/ Regional Issues

### e. India and the Middle East/ West Asia

### **6. Joint Press Interaction of EAM and Secretary Clinton, New Delhi, 19 July 2011**

.... India has vital interests and strong relationships in the Gulf, West Asia and North Africa. Last week, India and the US launched our West Asia Dialogue. Today, Secretary Clinton and I expressed the hope for the fulfilment of the aspirations of the people of the region and for early restoration of peace and stability. Secretary Clinton briefed me on the Libya Contact Group meeting in Turkey last week. We agreed to remain in touch as the situation evolves in the region....

*Source: Ministry of External Affairs, New Delhi, <http://meaindia.nic.in/mystart.php?id=530317854>*

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### **7. Statement by Ambassador Hardeep Singh Puri, Permanent Representative of India at the UN Security Council Open Debate on the Middle East, New York, 26 July 2011**

Thank you, Mr. President.

At the outset, I would like to welcome you, Mr. President, to New York and thank you for chairing this Open Debate. I would also like to thank Special Coordinator Robert Sherry for his comprehensive briefing and the Permanent Representative of Israel and the Permanent Observer of Palestine for their statements which have carefully noted.

Since our last Open Debate in this Council, Mr. President, the Palestinian factions signed an agreement. The main elements of the agreement include reform of PLO, holding of

election by May 2012, establishment of unified agencies, national reconciliation and joint committee to implement the agreement. The unity between the Palestinian parties should not only end the division between the West Bank and Gaza, but also create state institutions in Gaza. To this end, we hope that the Palestinian parties would succeed in speedy implementation of the reconciliation agreement. We also hope that Hamas will not only accept the State of Israel as a reality, but also cooperate with the Palestinian Authority to deal with Israel's security concerns.

Stalemate in peace talks, however, appears to be giving rise to a sense of desperation in the Palestinian territories. For more than four months now, the monthly debates on the Palestinian issue in this Council have hinged on a hope that the Quartet would put forward a set of practical steps, which could enable Palestinians and Israelis to resume talks. This hope was yet again belied when the Quartet meeting Washington on 11<sup>th</sup> July ended without any statement.

Over the last few years the Palestinian authority has made significant progress in building state institutions, improving the economy of the West Bank and rapprochement with various factions including Hamas. This progress has invited commendation from the international community at large. The state building efforts of the Palestinian Authority have, however, reached their geographical and institutional limits. Any further progress would require resumption of talks on final status issues.

The humanitarian situation in the Gaza Strip, meanwhile, remains a cause for serious concern. The blockade on Gaza is not only adversely affecting the population but also driving militant elements to vent their frustration through violence, thereby further complicating the situation on the ground and increasing Israel's vulnerability and security concerns.

The stalemate in peace talks and grim humanitarian situation can further complicate an already fragile situation. We concur with the sense of the international community that freezing of settlement activity in the Palestinian territories could enable the peace talks to resume. We, therefore, call upon Israel to implement Prime Minister Netanyahu's address to Knesset in May this year wherein he said that Israel could consider territorial compromise in return for security and recognition. Putting a stop to settlement activities should be the first step in this process.

Unless this essential step is taken and peace talks resume, the growing desperation may lead the parties to actions that can spiral out of control. As the month of September 2011 approaches, it is important to realize that there is limited time for Palestinians and Israeli to seize the opportunity.

Other issues relating to Arab lands that remain under Israeli occupation are equally important. Progress in the Lebanese and Syrian tracks constitute the essential core to achievement of a comprehensive and durable peace in the region. In a region witnessing protests movements all around, continuing impasse in peace talks could have destabilizing effect on a much larger area.

In this context, events of 15 May and 5 June show how fragile the situation is and how easily violence can be incited on a larger scale, destabilizing the whole region. We are, therefore, afraid that if the peace talks do not recommence quickly, unilateral steps by the parties would ensue, which would increase the distance between them and make it more difficult to find a comprehensive settlement. We, therefore, call on the members of the Quartet to intensify their collective and individual efforts to break the stalemate.

Mr. President, India has a long-standing tradition of solidarity with the Palestinian people. India has supported the Palestinian people's struggle for a sovereign, independent, viable and united State of Palestine with East Jerusalem as its capital living within secure and recognized borders, side by side and at peace with Israel, as endorsed in the Arab Peace initiative, Quartet Roadmap and relevant UN Security Council Resolutions.

India has been assisting in the capacity and institution building of the Palestinian people with its material and technical assistance programmes. India has extended assistance through IBSA forum. India is also contributing US \$ million to UNRWA continuing our solidarity with the Palestinian people in their pursuit of legitimate goals and quest for development based on dignity and self-reliance. In addition, we have provided untied budgetary support of US\$ 10 million to the Palestinian Authority for each of the past two years.

In conclusion, Mr. President, let me reiterate our expectation that the parties will restart talks without further delay. These talks should lead to a final and comprehensive resolution of the Middle East conflict. We owe it to ourselves and to the future generations of Israelis and Palestinians that they do not remain mired in a conflict but live in peace and security.

Thank you.

*Source: Permanent Mission of India to the United Nations, New York,*  
<http://www.un.int/india/2011/ind1886.pdf>

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**Compiled By Anjani Kumar Singh**

Anjani Kumar Singh is a Doctoral candidate in the School of International Studies, Jawaharlal Nehru University, New Delhi. Email: [aks1511@gmail.com](mailto:aks1511@gmail.com)

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