LOOKING AHEAD TO 1995

EMANDS by economi-

cally resurgent Asian

more seriously in the in-

ternational arena will be a lea-

ture of the political scene in

members: the United States.

for recognition of its global

join the top table, Japan cites

the 1993 elections in

Cambodia under UN auspices.

its emergence as the world's

biggest aid giver and as a major

India, which has been

contributor to the UN budget.

lobbying for a permanent seat

for years, will point to its

keeping in Somalia. The size of

population - every sixth

person in the world is of

Indian origin - the country's

democratic traditions and

independence of foreign policy

will be emphasised by Indian

UN is keen to rock the boat.

the be t New Del'ni can hope

for is a permanent Security

Mahathir Mohammad is an-

other keen exponent of UN re-

form and it is his country's

economic muscle - Malaysia is

one of the fastest growing

economies in the world with

an annual growth rate of eight

per cent - that gives him the

age a regional economic group-

ing that excludes the US re-

mains high on the agenda.

though given the power of the

US economy. Washington's

domination of the APEC (Asia-

Pacific Economic Cooperation)

/Other Asian regional blocs

such as the Association of

South East Asian Nations

(ASEAN), embracing Malaysia.

Singapore, Indonesia, Thai-

land, Brunei and Philippines.

may expand in 1995 to include

the former communist

countries of the region.

Vietnam has already applied

for membership. Laos is an

group is likely to continue.

Malaysian efforts to encour-

clout to speak out.

Council seat without a vern

But given that no-one at the

Malaysian Prime Minister

diplomats.

contribution to UN peace-

In support of its claim to

As Asia's strongest econ-

China.

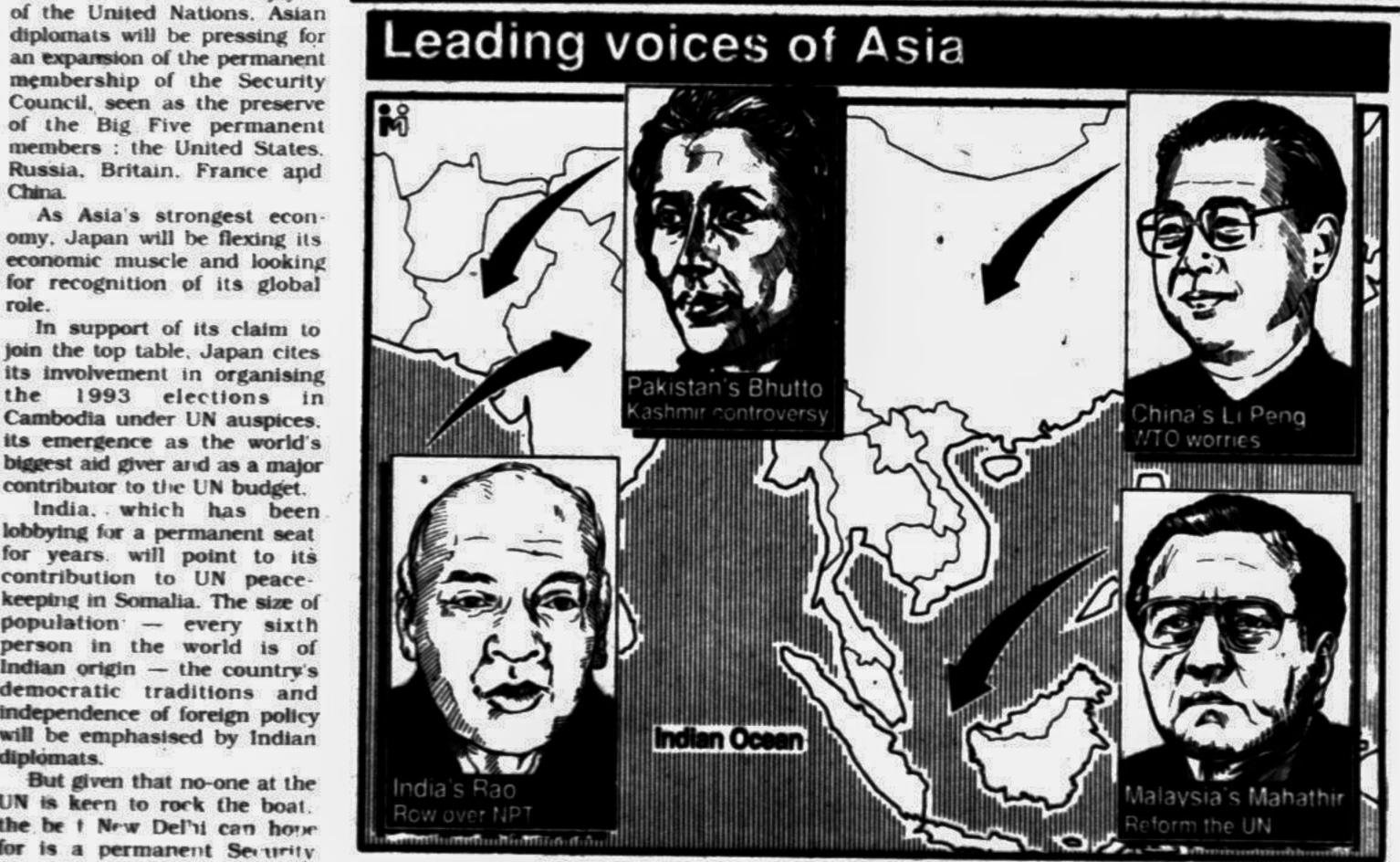
In the 50th anniversary year

countries to be taken

Assertive Asia Aspires to a Greater Say

Daya Kishan Thussu writes from London

Economic power is giving a new assertiveness to Asian nations, a trend likely to continue in the new year. As a result, they are demanding reform of the UN Security Council. Gemini News Service looks at their prospects in the new year.



observer, at 1 Cambodia has applied for observer status.

But the economic success story of the year is likely to have a Chinese flavour. According to World Bank estimates, by 2015 China will be the world's largest economy.

China is likely to be the biggest beneficiary, after the European Union, of the world trade deal signed under the auspices of GATT (General Agreement on Tariffs and ·Trade). By 2002, GATT says. China will be earning \$37 billion a year from trade liberali-

But China's entry into GATT's successor, the World Trade Organisation, which comes into force in January, is likely to dominate economic diplomacy. Western countries are blocking Beijing's entry, on the grounds that China does not provide market access to Western products. They also want more liberal arrangements for repatriation of funds by transnational companies.

Given the potential of China's market, the West is likely to relent.

The international spotlight will also fall on China when it hosts the UN conference on women in September. Beijing's human rights record, particularly its one-child policy. which has contributed to a declining number of girl babies. will come under the scrutiny of the assembled media and pressure groups.

The nuclear issue will also feature prominently on Asia's 1995 agenda. The nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT), which marks its silver jubilee in 1995, comes up for review in April. A conference will "decide whether the Treaty-shall continue in force indefinitely, or shall be extended for an additional fixed Asian countries such as

India and Pakistan, both believed to have nuclear capabil ity, argue that the treaty discriminates against the South by restricting nuclear weapons to a small group of rich countries. Both have been under intense pressure from Washington to join the NPT which now has 167 members. But it is unlikely that the two

will succumb to arm-twisting. The nuclear issue will also dominate regional discussion in south Asia where Pakistan's demands for a regional nuclear free zone have been rejected by New Delhi.

Tensions between the two rivals will simmer on. Pakistan Prime Minister Benazir Bhutto will blame India for instigating ethnic trouble in Sindh province, while New Delhi will blame Islamabad for promoting separatism in Kashmir.

Prime Minister P

Narasimha Rao has promised to hold elections in Kashmir. India's only Muslim-majority state. Rao faces a difficult year. his position undermined by humiliating electoral defeat in two southern states in December. But since there is

no obvious successor, the 71year-old premier is likely to scrape through the year.

India's economic liberalisation programme prescribed by the World Bank and the International Monetary Fund will carry on, combining economic growth with disastrous effects on the poor.

Growing unemployment will be a major problem. There is a freeze on government jobs. and transnational corporations queuing to open shop in India are not in the market for unskilled workers.

In foreign policy. India's shift from non-alignment and towards the US will be reinforced. Already. New Delhi is undertaking joint naval exercises with the US, which has become the biggest foreign investor in the country. For its part, the US is keen to promote its products to India's 200-million-strong middle-

Bangladesh will mark the new year with the 20th anniversary of the death of its founder. Sheikh Mujibur Rahman, assassinated in a mili tary coup in 1975. His daughter. Sheikh Hasina, currently leader of opposition, will make use of her father's name to challenge Prime Minister Khaleda Zia, who is on shaky political ground.

In Central Asia, Islamic revivalist groups will gain new ground with increased anti-Moscow sentiment generated by the Russian invasion of the Chechnya republic.

There is little hope that the year will bring peace to wartorn Afghanistan. Outside powers such as Pakistan and Iran will continue to keep their fingers in the Afghan pie, supporting their favourite warlords.

In Sri Lanka, however. there is a chance for an end to years of ethnic violence. President Chandrika Kumaratunga's new People's Alliance government appears keen to make peace with the Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam (LTTE) who are fighting for an independent homeland for Sri Lanka's Tamil minority in the north-east.

Kumaratunga has already lifted the economic embargo on the Tigers' stronghold in the Jaffna peninsula and talks have started with LTTE representatives.

DAYA KISHAN THUSSU is Associate Editor of Gemini News Service.

UN Plans to Party, Despite Dashed Hopes

Elvi Ruottinen writes from New York

Deep in debt and under fire for botched jobs in Rwanda, Somalia and Bosnia, the UN is nevertheless going ahead with celebrations for its 50th anniversary. Gemini News Service reports on the party plans.

HE United Nations is getting ready to celebrate its 50th anniversary in 1995 though it has not lived. up to humanity's hopes or the ideals and promise of its Charter to eliminate "the scourge of war."

For half a century the organisation born from the ashes of World War Two has managed to lessen and even prevent some of the furies unleashed by the more irresponsible leaders of its member nations - but only when the Security Council's five veto-powers - the United States, Britain, France, Russia and China - have found it in their national economic or military interest to have the UN do so.

However. Under Secretary-General Gillian Sorensen, special adviser for public policy to the Secretary-General, points to number of accomplish ments: "We want to see wider recognition of the UN's efforts not only in peace-keeping, but also in promoting developdisarmament ment. democratisation and human rights, providing refugee assistance and protecting the environment.

Up to 160 heads of state or government are expected to

The UN family

ending up in Reykjavik. Iceland, in October 1996.

Also on the agenda are an International Conference on Counselling for Tolerance in Valletta, Malta; a symposium on Science and Culture Common Path for the Future. in Tokyo, organised by the UN Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organisation (UNESCO), which is also sponsoring a Floating University Cruise

In Tampere, Finland, the 80th World Esperanto Congress will dedicate one day to a Model United Nations Assembly involving young people from a wide range of countries with debates in the would-be common global language of Esperanto.

India's Rajiv Gandhi Foundation is sponsoring a seminar on the UN in the 21st Century and the UN plans to look at itself for two days in Vienna, with a Forum on the Administrative Coordination on the Next Fifty Years.

San Francisco, where the Charter was signed by the founding 51 nations on June 26 1945, is the centre for many anniversary observances, from think-tank meetings to dance festivals.

With former Soviet presi-

Corporation for Microelectronics and

Watchmaking Industries. Most of the funding will go to communications and educa tional materials in schools and universities around the world. according the UN's 50th anniversary director. Samuel

"Outreach to youth is at the heart of our most important efforts. Youth is the world of tomorrow and the United Nations of tomorrow," he says.

Coordinator Tabatabai adds "We are gratified at the response we receive from the young from all over the world. They are eager to learn and more readily than some of their elders, can see that namonalism and internationalism are not mutually exclusive. Major issues need global solu-

in March in Malinska, Croatia, the World Youth Conference will meet on the theme. "Youth in an interde-. pendent world" - if the world has managed to persuade the Serbs of former Yugoslavia, including those occupying parts of Croatia, to stop their shelling and killing.

The targets of that shelling in Bosnia and Perzegovir a will not be celebrating the 50th

International Court of Justice UNHCR, ILO. **ESCWA** Economic FAO, IFAD and Social Commission Bandkok ----**ECLAC Economic ESCAP** Economic and Social Commission America and Caribbean for Asia and Partific

show up at a special three-day commemoration during the General Assembly session in New York in October, culmi nating on October 24. United Nations Day

Many UN staff members hope that world leaders will use the occasion to re-acquaint themselves with the Charter. especially the articles pertain ing to member nations' duties and obligations such as providing peace-keepers and paying their budget contributions Russia and the US, two of the world body's founding fathers together owe well over \$1 bil-

Nevertheless, there will be celebrations, says 50th anniversary chordinator. Zoreh Tabatabai

"We the People's referred to in the Charter's Preamble is the theme of the anniversary year and 'we the people' are taking a big interest," she says. "In more than 100 nations, organisations, schools and churches are creating educational and celebratory events in honour of the anniversary."

United Nations Associations are the driving force behind the events and ceremonies in many countries.

Events include a world tour by Britain's Royal Philharmonic Orchestra to commemorate two 50th anniversaries - its own and the UN's. Its conductor. Vladimir Ashkenazy, plans performances in 50 cities.

Foundation is organising State of the World Forum in San Francisco, at which leaders involved in ending the Cold War will join youth leaders to explore global security and other critical issues of the 21st century.

dent Mikhail Gorbachev as

Building on the precedent set by Canadian businessman Maurice Strong when, as secretary general of the Earth Summit two years ago, he invited businesses to contribute to the activities of the conference, the Business Council for the UN will hold a congress in New York.

A \$ 15 million trust fund has been pledged by the international business community. governments, non-government organisations and individuals to support activities provided by the UN Secretariat world-Among the first donors

were Felissimo, the Japanese direct mail and retail market ing company. Goldstar, the South Korean electronics and home appliances manufacturer, and Foundacion Amalia Lacroze de Fortabat, a private foundation in Argentina.

More support comes from Aktobolaget Electrolux of Sweden, the Archer Daniels Midland Foundation of the US. William R. Hearst Jr. also American, and the SMH Swiss

armiversary of the UN. Says host, the Gorbachev Mohammed Sacirbey, Bosnia's ambassador to the UN Bosnians mourn the UN that might have been; the organisation promised to the warweary humanity by its Charter. But the victors have forgotten the expensive appeasement lessons of the last World War. Now again, in Winston Churchill's words, darkness has fallen over Europe'. And there is no Churchill.

> "We mourn the Security Council's Charter violations. Under Article 51 every member nation is entitled to selfdefence. Bosnia's right is being denied by some of the vetopowers while at the same time our civilians are not being protected against murder and rape as tools of genocide even in the few safe zones the Council solemnly resolved to protect

> We mourn the hundreds of dead or wounded UN peacekeepers of many nations who were deliberately targeted and others kidnapped and held as hostages or blackmatled by the madmen of Pale in their barbarian campaign for their Greater Serbia

We mourn the darkness fallen over the United Nations'

ELVI RUOTTINEN Gemini News Service correspondent at the United Nations in New York.

A One-in-three Chance for Peace

Michael Jansen writes from Nicosia

Palestine is the core of the Middle East problem and Israeli Prime Minister Yitzhak Rabin has made himself the chief obstacle to a Palestinian solution, argues a Gemini News Service correspondent. This will be a dangerous year for the peace process and, if matters are badly handled, for many Arab rulers.

TDDLE East peace-makers have three choices for 1995 — but only

one can prevent violence. The choices are: full im plementation of the agree ments between the Palestini ans and Jordan and movement on the Lebanese and Syrian tracks: partial implementation of the agreements; or non-implementation, leading to the

collapse of the peace process. in reality, only full implementation is valid because the other choices can lead only to Arab alienation and a return to violence, if not full-scale war-

All the Arab parties, and the United States, insist that real peace must be comprehensive. involving Israel and all its Arab neighbours

This can be reached only by implementation of United Na tions Security Council resolutions which call for Israeli withdrawal from territories occupied as a result of the

1967 war The Arabs give priority to the Palestinian-laraeli track Here there must be implementation of the self-rule agreement between largel and the " of the occupation of the West Bank and Gaza, for Palestine is the core of the Arab-Israel dis-But Israeli Prime Minister

Pak stinians leading to an end

Yitzhak Rabin has now made himself the obstacle to a Palestine settlement, in the last weeks of 1994, after signing a peace treaty with Jordan, the second with an Arab neighbour. Rabin balked at going beyond Israel's limited withdrawal from the Gaza and Jericho enclaves now ruled by

the Palesturian National Au-Continued on page 10

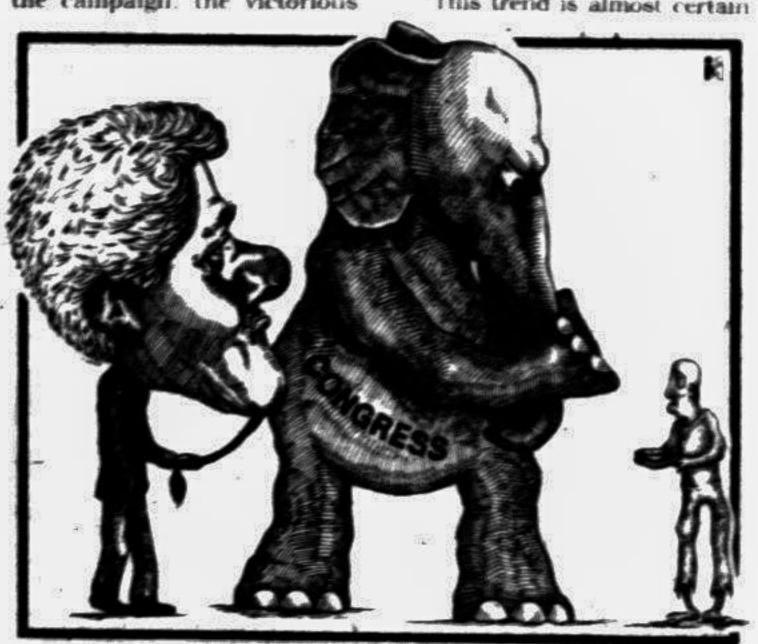
Anchoring, Zen-ding and Power Rangers Set the Mood Kevin J. Kelley writes from Washington

moving resolutely for ward into the past as it enters 1995

The Republican Party's take-over of Congress in the November elections signifies that a majority of US voters prefer the doctrinal certainty of the Reagan era to the confusing flexibility associated with the Clinton administra-As they promised during

the campaign, the victorious

ample, the top one fifth of US earners enjoyed the greatest percentage increase in pay while the bottom fifth experienced the smallest rise in in



conservatives will attempt to resurrect Reaganomics. The formula of tax cuts and military spending increases is likely to once again become national policy, at least in modified form Democratic President Bill Clinton seems quite willing to strike a bargain on this and other issues with the Republican majority in

Congress. The result will probably be similar to what happened when Reaganomics was originally applied - a scarring federal budget deficit and a further widening of the gulf between rich and poor. Income inequality has become steadily more pronounced during the past decade. Last year, for ex-

A combination of drift and frustration will probably also be evident in foreign policy.

US politics are going back to the future and there is so much

unpleasantness around that cyberspace is set to become more popular because virtual reality is so much nicer than life.

This trend is almost certain

tendencies simultaneously.

to persist in 1995 regardless of what Clinton and Congress do. So a key development in the new year will be the continuation of an old phenomenon - the rich will get richer, and the poor will get

Despite forecasts of vigor ous overail growth, middle class Americans are likely to remain dissatisfied with their own economic situation. The typical US household saw its buying power shrink in 1993 and 1994, and the general mood of disappointment and discontent will not quickly

Republicans are just as uncertain as Democrats in Hier prescriptions for US behavrour in the post-Cold War

home members of the new Congressional majority take a belligerent approach toward trouble spots such as Bosnia. Others espouse a xenophobic 'America-first' attitude that eschews military involvement in much of the developing world' A number of Republicans exhibit these conflicting

Foreign policy in 1995 may thus be characterised more by deadlock than by decistveness. in the absence of any guiding consensus. Washington will lurch unpredictably from crisis

Chauvinistie rhetoric will surely be heard more frequently. With rightist Jesse Helms chairing the Senate Foreign Relations Committee. the rest of the world can expect to hear regular tirades directed at United Nations peace-keeping operations Helms will also champion the "Star Wars" anti-missile system, thereby helping revive a vocal debate over installing laser weapons in outer space.

The world can also look forward to continued exposure to the pervasive nastiness in US culture.

For example, the most

popular holiday-season toys in the US are models of the Power Rangers - a multi-racial group of young super-heroes whose televised exploits are followed by millions of American children. The imported Power Rangers show has been denounced in some countries as encouraging violeine by impressionable view

Violence against women will continue to occupy the nation's attention as the murder trial of former football star O.J. Simpson gets underway Already something of a cultural teon. Simpson will become even more celebrated in cer tain segments of US society as his courtroom drama unfolds on national television.

Resentment against immigrants from developing coun tries is becoming a common sentiment. California again appears to be leading a nation wide trend as calls for a crackdown on unlawful immigration are heard across the country following California voters' recent approval of a controversial state measure in tended to deny social services. including education, to immi grants who entered the US il

Hostility toward the less fortunate is evident in the growing demand for a halt in welfare payments to the longterm dependent. Some type of restriction on aid to the poor is almost certain to be implemented in 1995. Any such initiative will be felt most severely by single mothers many of them black - who cannot find paid work and safe care for their young chil-Underlying this punitive

outlook is a conservative phi-

losophy that blames social

breakdown in the US on a lack

of individual and family disci-

pline. Cultural wars will be

fought in 1995 around the issue of prayer in the nation's Mandatory prayer by students in the classroom has

long been barred under the constitutional doctrine of separation of Church and State But some Republicans are pressing for a "voluntary" form of organised worship, which opponents say would be offersive to non-believers.

Conflicting interpretations of US history will also make news in 1995. the new year marks the 50th anniversary of the nuclear bombing at Hiroshima and Nagasaki. Heated debates have already begun over whether the US was justified in incinerating the Japanese cites as a means of ending World War Two.

The centrality of violence in American life is giving rise to a trend that future-forecaster Faith Popcorn describes as "armoured cocooning". Many households already wrap themselves in a protective cocoon, choosing to seek their entertainment in the safety of home rather than venturing onto dangerous streets. Popcorn predicts that the quest for cocoon-like security will grow even more avid in

She and other futurologists further anticipate increased immersion in the "virtual realities' created by sophisticated computer software. More people will spend more time in cyberspace. Popcorn foresees, because it is a much nicer place than the US of 1995. Anchoring is identified as

another hot trend for the coming year. That term refers to the practice of seeking solace in the form of ancient rituals such as meditative chanting. Anchoring in turn encourages "Zen-ding" -- the act of spending money on products with a reassuringly other-worldly aura, such as scented candles and astrology - GEMINI NEWS charts.

· KEVIN J. KELLEY is a freelance American writer and journalist.