Bangladesh-India

It's a Long Road

Harun ur Rashid writes from Canberra



relations with India are one of the most important planks of its foreign policy. They are complex and sensitive, often seen not as dispassionate. Generally speaking bilateral

relations with the neighbouring countries appear not to be smooth anywhere. If we look at the world map we will find that hardly any country contiguous to each other appears to be free from disputes.

The only point is that the issues should not develop as irritants and should be resolved through peaceful negotiations. The ideal bilateral relationship appears to be the US-Canadian one. Although there are bilateral disputes between them, they do not affect adversely their good relations. Franco-Swiss relationship could be cited as another one in Europe.

India is not only a hugging neighbour of Bangladesh with more than 4000 kilometres of common border, its role in 1971 during the war of independence of Bangladesh was commendable and decisive. Although critics could say that India was the 'midwife' of the birth of Bangladesh for its own "self-enlightened interests". that does not deter from the fact that millions of Bangladeshis took refuge in India and they were cared for in that country during the most difficult days. It should be borne in mind that once

Bangladesh became independent it had to formulate its own foreign policy on the strengths and weaknesses of the country. Bangladesh foreign policy cannot be formulated in a vacuum. It has to take into account certain basic ingredients that can not be changed, such as history, geography, size of the territory, religion of the population and natural and human resources.

Bangladesh cannot re-fashion its neighbours and has to live with it. Each country including Bangladesh is unique in its characteristics and this simple truth should be acknowledged, although there are many things common between India and Bangladesh.

Foreign policy is not set in hard stones and has been always flexible. Foreign policy is not confined to political and diplomatic relations. It covers the entire gamut of external relations in areas such as trade, foreign aid, foreign investment, humanitarian and environmental issues of the day. The Foreign Office has been entrusted with the co-ordinating role on these issues with various lead ministries or agencies of the government.

Foreign policy must be assessed by its outcomes and not by its intentions or aspirations. In this world of hard being 23 times larger than the size of reality, each country is keen to promote and safeguard its national interests. The term 'national interest' is a generic term and a variable concept and can be described in many ways. Some say that it is a contested concept because it cannot be described precisely since its perception can vary at different times and at different situa-

tions. This implies that what is not a national interest today may constitute national interest at a future date.

In the light of the above general observations, let us look at the state of

Indo-Bangladesh relations. It is safe to say that during almost

the last three decades, it has gone through up and down curves. This uneven graph of state of relations appears to be due to the misplaced perception of one country against the other at different times. Both countries have been sensitive to each other's role and attitudes towards the other. It has brought many times strains on their relationship but they always maintained the glue of its association. The diplomatic boat sailed through rough waters but it did not capsize. It never got unstuck in diplomatic terms and the line of communication was retained at all times.

In my view the relations between the two countries had not been maintained on the same level of understanding and cordiality for various reasons. I would cite a few of them in the following paragraphs.

Bangladesh, cannot expect reciprocity on every occasion from its smallersized neighbours. This has been recognised by former Indian Prime Minister I.K.Guiral who wrote in his book "The Guiral doctrine", "if I may call it so, states that first with neighbours, like Bangladesh, Bhutan, the Maldives, Nepal and Sri Lanka, we do not ask for

One of them appears to be the insis-

tence from India on 'reciprocity'. India,

reciprocity but give what we can in good faith." (It is interesting to note that he did not name Pakistan). This non-reciprocal conduct appears to be important in removing the perception that India's behaviour is compared to that of an arrogant "big brother".

Another appears to be the lack of understanding of the differences of interests that exist between India and Bangladesh. Both countries, especially India, in my view ought to acknowledge that perspectives on any given issue could be different and both may vote in different ways in the international forums. Bangladesh has no agenda of its own to become a regional power. India is a regional power and its rivalry with China is well known. India's approach to regional and global issues is seen from the perspective of a regional power.

As a result, Bangladesh and India may assess any given issue from its own different angles. Furthermore Bangladesh is a Least-Developed country and its economic and trade policies often ran counter to those pursued by India. In UNCTAD and in WTO, the interests of Bangladesh are different from those of India. During tions, Bangladesh's policy on textile and clothing regime were opposite to

The fact that Bangladesh is a close neighbour and a friend of India does not mean that it should have the same view as that of India on any given issue. If a good friend says to another "I differ from you on this issue", it should

be considered as a sign of stable friendship. One of the tests of friendship is to be sincere and to appreciate each other interests objectively. It is of no use to play "hard ball" games with each other.

Another matter is the consideration that the people in a smaller-sized countries remain unusually vigilant and alert and resist any perceived interference in their internal matters and often accuses the larger country for its "overbearing attitude". This psychological make-up is not only noticed in this region but also in other regions, such as New Zealander's attitude towards Australia and Canadian's towards the US. This appears to be a political reality for a larger resources- endowed country.

Another element that created obstacles in the relationship appears to be the existence of military governments in Bangladesh. The take-over by the military of the government in 1975 and in 1982 was not comfortable to India. There is a view that India considered it 'a military adventurism' and had kept the important bilateral issues unsettled. India appeared not to be in a mood to resolve bilateral issues with a the Uruguay Round of Trade negotia- government in Dhaka it did not approve of.

> There is also view that India perceived the governments from 1975 to 1991 adopted 'right wing' policies and they were not strictly secular in their attitudes. It is argued that the amendments of the Constitution of Bangladesh in 1977 and in 1988 were seen diluting the concept of secularism. A

view prevails that even the democratically elected government in Bangladesh in 1991 was not perceived to be an 'eligible good partner' by India in resolving the Ganges Water issue.

I would argue that a few factors seem to work against the confidencebuilding efforts of both countries. They appear to be: India's mistaken view that its certain proposals would accrue benefits to Bangladesh and an anti-Indian sentiment among a section of people in Bangladesh because of the perceived fear that Bangladesh is being "used" for India's economic and strategic interests.

Trust and confidence can be built only in deeds not in words There are a few outstanding issues with India, such as, Sea boundary in the Bay of Bengal, the India's proposal of barbedwire fencing of Indo-Bangladesh border, the heavy trade-deficit issue with India, total implementation and the ratification of Indo-Bangladesh Border Treaty of 1974 by India and the sharing of the waters of common rivers flowing through Bangladesh on equitable basis. These issues affect the common people of Bangladesh and need to be resolved to the mutual satisfaction of both countries.

The fact is that it is desirable to confront and settle the issues. There is no use of hiding or avoiding the issues. There seems to be no substitute for knowing the sentiments and feelings of each other on bilateral issues. I would argue that India, being the larger partner, should be circumspect in dealing with Bangladesh with equality, respect, sensitivity and fairness.

Once trust is established at the people's level, a democratic government of the day in Bangladesh irrespective of its political party affiliations, will be encouraged with people's support in taking decisions in such areas as gas export to India, transshipment of goods through Bangladesh territory and railway communication between Chittagong and Agartala for the use of the sea-port of

The relations with India under the government of Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina are at a cordial level. Bilateral highest level contacts appear to be maintained. The relations seem to be at a top gear and its demonstration appears to be the conclusion of the 30year Treaty on the Ganges Water (although critics in Bangladesh would argue that the Treaty was in India's advantage). The conclusion of the Peace Agreement on Chittagong Hill Tracts, many would argue, could not have been achieved without the support and assistance of India.

India and Bangladesh are destined to live as neighbours. There is no escape to it. One may not forget that friendship must be built on the positive factors as they exist and not as they should be or on negatives. Both countries need to strive with sustained good will and diplomatic common sense to make the bilateral relations mutually supportive and beneficial. It is this reality with which the leaders must deal in the years ahead.

The author, a Barrister, is former Bangladesh Ambassador to the UN.

Nepal

Beyond Borderline Insanity

C. K. Lal writes from Kathmandu

Lagainst my brother

I and my brother against our

I, my brother and our cousin against the neighbours All of us against the foreigners Skinhead Scriptures



AFTER Prithvi Narayan Shah created Nepal by extending the territory of his tiny Gorkha principality, he faced an even greater challenge. Nepal

now existed, but how about Nepalis? Forging a national identity for such a diverse land was more difficult than checking the hegemonic forces of the East India Company. So he tried to kill two birds with one stone: he defined Nepali nationality in terms of distrust of people from the south. Seeds of xenophobia were sown by the founding father himself. To this day, we see Nepali nationalism defined usually as anti-Indianism.

The Anglophile Ranas continued this policy even though they

socialised mostly with Indians tion, court ideologues rediscovand hired hagiographers, like the rulers had done earlier, to trace their ancestry to the royal houses of Rajasthan. Over a period of time, this love-hate relationship with India got embedded in the psyche of Nepali people. When Ranas were overthrown with the help of Indians in the spring of 1951, New Delhi came to be regarded with a mixture of fear and hope by the elite of

King Mahendra exploited the fear when he staged a bloodless coup by imprisoning the prime minister, dismissing the entire cabinet and dissolving the first elected parliament of the country in 1960. To create solidarity around the crown, he instilled the fear of Indians in the masses. For King Mahendra, "we" were those who supported his Panchayat, all others were "they" Indians or their stooges. Nationalism became the rallying cry of a regime that needed India to define itself.

Those were also the days when the Naxalbari uprising was sweeping eastern India. In Calcutta, students protested the Vietnam War. To deflect atten-

ered the old bogey of "Indian expansionism" and served it on a platter to the Nepali leftists. For the followers of Naxalbad in Nepal, the Jhapali communists, Indian expansionism thus became a louder cry than American imperialism. Indira Gandhi swallowed up Sikkim much later. The fear of Indian expansionism

in Nepal predates that event. This brand of what came to be called "Mandale-Male" nationalism (an unlikely fusion of extreme-right and extreme-left ideologies) was so pronounced on Nepal's college campuses during the seventies that when students' leaders thundered, 'We will blow up the Kosi barrage and wash Bihar into Bay of Bengal" we actually took them seriously.

Then reality began to bite. When the Indians imposed an economic blockade for almost two years in 1988-89 it suddenly dawned on us that 'hate-India' was a very fragile foundation of Nepali nationalism. Indianism lost some of its charm when the neighbour up north refused even moral support during our face-off with India. The

resulting economic turmoil hastened the People's Movement.

During the decade of democracy, no event captured the fervour of anti-Indianism of the seventies. Mahakali, Kalapani, Laxmanpur, IC 814 and even the scurrilous publication of "Nepal Gameplan" by the Indian media failed to rally Nepali people against the Indian state. It appeared as if Nepalis had seen the futility of fuming at an enemy outside when most our real enemies were within. All that was proved wrong by the events of last week. Proof is the 'hate-India' sentiment, assiduously cultivated by interest groups for decades. That poor Hindi film actor was just an excuse. In all probability whoever started the rumour knew that the spark had a receptive dry hay waiting to catch fire. And how the capital burntand continued to burn even after the statement was proven to

The media was one of the reasons the fires refused to abate. It is easy to dismiss the complicity of the Chitwan media, who first picked up the story, by attributing it to 'small-town sensational

ism'. However, the complacency of national broadsheets who followed up on the story without once double-checking it is unforgivableespecially when the infamous interview was available on the Internet. The national media forgot that foolproof rule of journalism: when in doubt, leave out. Everyone was out to outscoop the competition by playing up the story with inflammatory headlines and sensational captions. So the whodunit, last week's deadly farce, still hasn't been solved. But we know that there has been a serious rupture in ethnic relations within the country caused by a situation

Hypothetically, let us examine what would have happened if events were allowed to run their course. As the violence escalated, the army could have taken over the streets in order to enforce peace. In all probability, this would have happened after the dismissal of the present government on charges of incompetence. An even worse outcome could have been the arrival of Indian troops supposedly upon

that got out of hand because of a

serious crisis of governance.

the 'request of His Majesty's Government of Nepal" because of the threat to "Indians and people of Indian origin in Nepal".

Considering such a conspiracy, it doesn't look very surprising that the rumour was spread deliberately, carefully followed through, and its after-effects well co-ordinated. Protests were too well organised to be spontaneous.

The only consolation is that things could have been worse. As a Madhesi who was repeatedly abused and threatened during the winter of discontent last week, let me say this: King Prithvi Narayan Shah did not mean this country to be the exclusive domain of any one racial group ethnic community, cultural cluster, economic class or dominant castes. He meant Nepal to be a garden of diversity. The moment that diversity is disturbed, we all are doomed. If we can't hang together in adversity, we will all be hanged separately by forces that do not want to leave us alone or live together. The moral of the story: nationalism that is hatred towards others is selfannihilation. We must build an

inclusive nationalism.

Pakistan

Return of the Native?

By Zaglul Ahmed Chowdhury



General Pervez Musharraf is currently on a swing to some countries. While certainly

his discussions with the leaders of these countries will focus on seemingly intractable Middle Eastern crises and Islamabad's bilateral ties with the nations he is visiting, some reports suggested that there is a likelihood that Pakistan's opposition leader and former prime minister Benazir Bhutto's likely return to her country may figure in the talks during the visit. Arguably, such a matter concerning the internal matters of Pakistan is unlikely to be discussed officially with any country. But it is possible because Gen. Pervez himself has acknowledged some time back that Pakistan's close friend Saudi Arabia brokered the process of granting a state pardon and sending former prime minister and Muslim League chief Mian Nawaz Sharif to exile to Jeddah from Jail.

Sharif was serving life imprisonment after being convicted in several charges by the military regime. The dramatic decision to send him to exile had taken most by surprise and the logical conclusion was that Gen. Musharraf could not turn down requests from Saudi crown prince for being lenient to Sharif, who like any other Pakistani head of government had developed close rapport with Saudi leaders.

The possibility of backstage talks by Gen. Musharraf with Arab leaders on Benazir's possible return received credence through earlier reports that former Pakistani prime minister had summoned some leaders of her PPP to Dubai for discussions on a possible understanding with military administration on her return. It is difficult to vouch for the authenticity of the reports whether Gen. Musharraf discussed the issue with any Arab leaders during his visit. But this cannot be ruled out in the context of the fast-developing scene in Pakistan, involving top political leaders.

The topsy-turvy politics of Pakistan seems to be taking another interesting turn with the exile of Nawaz Sharif and likely return of Benazir Bhutto. Nawaz was despatched to Jeddah with his most family members a few weeks ago when several conditions were attached. He cannot return home in next ten years, he will not indulge in politics from abroad and his disqualification from public life for 21 years will stand regardless of the condoning of the jail sentences. However, Nawaz's wife Kulsoom, who was increasingly demonstrating a role in politics following husband being in jail, had spoken differently over the development, saying they were forced to exile and will return at an appropriate time. Gen. Musharraf dismissed this claim as baseless and made it sure that there is no scope that the former head of government would return to Pakistan in the coming years and Saudi governassured him that Nawaz would

ment - which mediated the exile not take part in politics. Now, there are speculations that Benazir would return to Pakistan following some kind of understanding with the military regime for which backstage negotiations are going on. Mediators are busy with a dialogue between the two sides. Benazir has been in self-exile since her conviction in the corruption case which gave her five year's jail sentence. The verdict against her was given during the period of Sharif's government which was a bitter political foe of Benazir's PPP and she kept up the pot boiling from abroad against the military regime too despite being gleeful at

PAKISTAN'S the beginning at the ouster of the Sharif government by the army on October 12,1999.

> When the new regime started coming down heavily on the "political culture", the politicians regardless of their differences woke up and slowly forged broader unity for restoration of democracy. Two main political parties Nawaz's Muslim League and Benazir's Peoples Party also finally found common ground and joined the Alliance for Restohas given a new shape to the anti-

ration of Democracy (ARD). This military regime forum which is calling for early general elections. Gen. Musharraf maintains that polls will be held by October, 2002 as set by the Supreme Court in a momentous ruling which, however, validated the army take-over much to the dismay of the political parties. The timeframe set by the Supreme Court for restoration of the representative government allayed fears of the politicians that the army rule may be quite long as demonstrated from past experiences.

The exile of Sharif and likely return of Benazir are significant in Pakistan's political course. Gen. Musharraf appears to have launched initiative in the political front after completing first year in power and the developments involving two main political figures certainly fall in the line of the future plans of the military strongman. Musharraf is hell bent on denigrating politicians and tarnish the "political culture". True, both Nawaz and Benazir are largely seen as corrupt by their countrymen and this is one reason that few shed tears when their governments were prematurely and undemocratically dismissed. But this failure cannot be a pretext for army take-over. Nawaz, although in jail, was a threat for the regime as his Muslim League enjoyed more than two-thirds majority in parliament. Benazir was active in

Clearly, Musharraf accepted the request from Saudi Arabia to send him in exile because this in one hand will remove a threat from the country and on the other would help tarnish his image as "compromising". Many feel that both objectives have been largely achieved. By facilitating a return of Benazir, he may also be thinking that this too will discredit her as she may be seen as someone now keen to return to home to capitalise the absence of arch political foe Nawaz and also agreeing to terms of the military. Her husband Asif Zardari is in jail for corruption but has so far shown no sign of lack of courage from incarceration has he seems rely more on wife's political triumph - whenever it comes rather than mercy. Speculations are adrift that a quid pro quo is in works in the form of sending him to exile after granting a pardon and facilitating Benazir's return to Pakistan. This may give the impression that Benazir too has compromised for husband's freedom like Nawaz's spouse Kulsoom did for her husband while she was playing a hard-line role against the military establishment.

politics from abroad.

Benazir's return may also send wrong signals to the ARD that she is seeking to cash in on Nawaz and Kulsoom's absence from the country and this may bring about a cleavage in the new found opposition unity and eventually go to the benefit of the military. However, both sides are sure to weigh the pros and cons and Benazir is unlikely to act in haste since her political future and more importantly safety of "political culture" is involved with the matter. It appears that the process of her return has not made expected progress so far and might have suffered setbacks. The regime too is expected to consider its advantages. It remains to be seen whether a deal is reached in near future while complexities still seem unresolved.

India

Dynamic Ties with Asean?

By Amit Baruah



Khai, to quested to him by The Hindu.

Question: How would you describe the current status of Vietnam-India relations?

India have long entertained traditional, close and reliable relations and multi-faceted co-operation. These relations are now continuing to develop well for the benefit of our two peoples and in the interest of peace, stability, cooperation and development in the region. Since our two countries gained independence, the late President, Ho Chi Minh, and the late Prime Minister, Jawaharlal Nehru, contributed a lot to build and cultivate close ties between the two countries. In recent years, bilateral relations have increasingly developed at various levels and in several fields - political, cultural, scientific, technical, and accelerating the implementasecurity and defence. High-level tion of the hunger elimination visits between the two countries of which the most recent are those paid by the President, Mr. Tran Duc Luong, to India in December 1999 and the Prime Minister, Mr. Vajpayee to Vietnam now have contributed to consolidating and strengthening friendly relationship and multi-faceted co-operation. The two Governments have set up a mechanism aimed at co-ordinating bilateral co-operation like the Intergovernmental Committee for Economic, Cultural and Scientific-Technical Co-operation and the Joint Working Group on IT cooperation and others. All this have helped increase the efficiency of our relations.

What are the areas in which Vietnam and India can cooperate

further? Currently, the two countries are making efforts to promote economics, trade, finance, credit, education-training, sciencetechnology, agriculture, forestry and fishery. These relations have proven to be highly effective in

promoting economic development and developing human resources for Vietnam. In the current regional and international situation, we wish to see the further strengthening of cooperation between the two countries. We believe that it is necesscope of co-operation and while moving to the areas that Vietnam Phan Van Khai: Vietnam and like education and training, and economics, etc.

> India were party to the launch of the Mekong-Ganga Co-operation initiative. How do you view this?

The Inaugural Ministerial Meeting on Ganga Mekong Cooperation took place in Vientiane at the initiative of India and Southeast Asian countries in November last. Ministers from six countries agreed on the steps to be taken to promote and increase the efficiency of multi-faceted cooperation. This has contributed to enhancing solidarity between the six participating countries and poverty reduction programme in Vietnam.

The Ganga-Mekong Cooperation will make an active contribution to the implementation of co-operative programmes and projects in the Mekong basin and thereby to the region's sustainable development. Among the areas of co-operation agreed upon recently, tourism, identified as a priority at the meeting, holds much potential for fast implementation. Vietnam's competent agencies and bodies are now actively preparing for the exchange of the most feasible cooperative projects and programmes with other countries concerned. Vietnam will also make efforts to host the 2001 Ministerial Meeting on Ganga-Mekong Co-operation.

India in the Asia-Pacific region?

sary to find effective measures to promote the current level and and India can further cooperate information technology, trade

In November, Vietnam and

What role do you foresee for As a big country in the region.

India has an increasingly important role and position in the region and the world. India has

been consistently following a foreign policy of independence, peace, and non-alignment both in the past and at present. India has made efforts to strengthen its relations with neighbouring and regional countries, contributed actively to the Non-Aligned Movement, promoted the South-South co-operation and safeguarded the legitimate interests of developing countries at international fora.

the Vietnam-India Intergovernmental Committee for Economic, Cultural and Scientific-technical Co-operation, held in New Delhi in 1999, the two Governments agreed to the establishment of the Joint Working Group on Information Technology in order to materialise potential in this area. The Vietnamese FPT Company has already set up its branch in India and entered

On the basis of the priorities set forth in the Hanoi Plan of Action, we should build a more dynamic and effective ASEAN-India relationship.

We support improved relations between India and ASEAN in the future...The two countries have made active contribution to the South-South co-operation, made the voices of developing countries heard more loudly and defended their legitimate interests at international fora. Vietnam and India need to work closer toward building a

peaceful and stable regional and international environment without causing detriment to any third party.

India has recorded important achievements in the course of reform and economic development and thus enhanced people's living standards. This will surely help enhance India's standing on the international arena, especially in the Asia-Pacific region.

What are the possibilities of co-

operation in the field of informa-

tion technology between the two

Though new, information technology is a very important area of co-operation and a central component of Vietnam-India relations. At the ninth meeting of into joint venture with APTECH to open training centres for Vietnamese IT experts. These companies have operated effectively. The Indian Government has agreed to provide soft credits to Vietnam to assist the latter in establishing training centres and developing computer software. It is our hope that early implemen tation of these projects in Vietnam will help strong IT development in Vietnam and constitute a new bright spot in our bilateral co-operation picture. India is already a dialogue

partner of ASEAN. Do you see any

greater formal engagement between ASEAN and India in the coming months and years? The foundation of ASEAN-

India co-operation dates back to the 1980s and India became a full dialogue partner of ASEAN in 1995. Ever since, India has made great efforts and active contribution to many fora such as ARF, PMC, etc. Those activities of India, together with the endeavours of other dialogue partners, have enhanced peace, stability, co-operation and development in the region. India's economic and trade relations with ASEAN are also in the increase; with two-way trade reaching US\$7 billion in 1999. It is, however, still modest, accounting for less than one per cent of ASEAN's total trade value. In the near future, we need to make greater efforts in promoting our economic co-operation, and try to seek ways and means to expand trade and investment, science and technology, etc. On the basis of the priorities set forth in the Hanoi Plan of Action, we should build a more dynamic and effective ASEAN-India relationship. We support improved relations between India and ASEAN

in the future. In bilateral trade. Vietnam faces an adverse trade balance. What specific measures can be taken by India to improve the

balance of trade? Recently, two way trade between Vietnam and India has kept increasing, and currently amounts to around US\$ 160 to 170 millions a year. However, this has not been commensurating with the vast potentials of each country as well as with our fine political relations. In fact, Vietnam's trade with India is in deficit. There are a variety of reasons for this, yet, the most important one is the similarity in their exports, as well as the lack of understanding of each other's market and business environment. In an effort to improve the balance of trade, at the tenth meeting of the Joint Commission on Economic, Cultural, Scientific and Technological Co-operation in Hanoi last November, the two Governments agreed to consider

the diversification of Vietnam's exports to India, enable businesses of each country to study the other's market and business environment, streamline unnecessary and cumbersome administrative procedures, etc. We hope that India will come up with a more appropriate tariff regime to encourage Indian businesses import Vietnamese goods, especially crude oil, coal, ceramics handicrafts, construction materials, etc. Besides efforts by our two Governments, businesses of the two countries should be more active in exploiting on our vast business potentials.

Vietnam and India have been firm friends during the anti-colonial struggle. What new challenges will define this relationship in coming years?

The world and regional situa-

tion have been witnessing fast

and profound development. The

globalisation process is an inevitable trend which brings about both positive and negative impacts to all countries in the world. In this context, India, Vietnam as well as other developing countries enjoy various opportunities for development, but, at the same time, have to face many challenges in the security, political, economic and cultural areas. In the economic field, the threat of lagging behind presents the biggest challenge to us. We both want a peaceful and stable environment in the region as well as the world which serves as a precondition for us to focus on national development. We, therefore, should work closely with each other in coping with those challenges, further consolidate and develop our fine traditional relationship, fully exploit every potential for co-operation and advance forward. Recently, the two countries have made active contribution to the South-South co-operation, made the voices of developing countries heard more loudly and defended their legitimate interests at international fora. Vietnam and India need to work closer toward building a peaceful and stable regional and international environment without causing detriment to any