

## **EIR**SpecialReport

# India: the fight for peace and development

by Peter Ennis

Several weeks ago, a Parliamentary Consultative Committee report on India's foreign policy circulating in New Delhi stated the commitment of the government of Prime Minister Indira Gandhi ability to defuse the growing military and political tensions throughout the Indian Ocean area. Two fundamental planks of this policy were specifically mentioned: India's relations with the Soviet Union, "which strengthen our ability to diffuse the situation," and India's ties with France, which were consolidated during a visit of French President Giscard to New Delhi earlier this year.

At the same time that the report appeared, India was in the midst of a heated electoral campaign, with polling set to take place for state assemblies in nine states. Every weekend during the month of May, Mrs. Gandhi visited various constituencies in the nine states and delivered a simple and straightforward message to the urban and rural populations: the world is on the brink of war and India, "as part of the human race, must face the enormous difficulties and challenges of the day" to play a role in securing peace. The elections, held in the last days of May, resulted in big victories for Mrs. Gandhi's Congress Party in eight of the nine states, giving her a mandate to further pursue the policies for peace.

Both the foreign policy report and the successful election campaign conducted by the Congress Party-I (Indira) have served to emphasize an important fact not well understood: If war is to be avoided, India will play a central role in that process. Indeed, as East-West tensions continue to flare, India is a country uniquely positioned to cool things out, having close ties and being held in respect by countries of both East and West.

For this reason, the world has a great stake in the stability of India and the Gandhi government, and the future economic development of the country.



Photo: NSIPS/Zykofsky

Since coming to office last December, the Gandhi government has devoted extensive time and effort to formulating political solutions to both the crisis in neighboring Afghanistan, to the west, and the still-tense situation in Southeast Asia. The economic policies of the Indian government which emphasize the importance of high-technology and industrial development, have been very important for war-avoidance as well. Perhaps more than anything else, the underlying cause of war danger in the world today is the effort of the World Bank and the Club of Rome, with the backing of the Carter administration and the government in Peking, to impose on the developing countries economic policies similar to those China used in Kampuchea to murder upwards of three million people. A Gandhi government pursuing nuclear energy development and related policies poses a severe threat to this Dark Age strategy. Much of the Third World will follow India on the route Gandhi chooses.

In both its diplomatic and economic efforts, the Gandhi government has been faced with tremendous obstacles and threats from the communist Chinese, who are now fully allied with the Carter administration.

### **Chinese threat**

Throughout India, there is not simply a "general" feeling of international war danger, but a very intense

sensing that the immediate national security of India is being threatened by the actions of China in the region. Well informed security and political analysts speak of a growing "encirclement" of India by China, backed by its Carter allies.

To the west, there is the crisis in Afghanistan, where the Chinese have a heavy hand. Together with Pakistan, China has been funneling arms and money to spur a "rebel" movement in Afghanistan against the Soviet-allied government in Kabul. The crisis in Afghanistan is a direct extension of the U.S. and Chinese-backed "revolution" in Iran that put Khomeini in power. Now, Iran is being put through the horror of an economic policy little different than that implemented in Kampuchea several years ago. The crisis in the area is being used by both Washington and Peking to strengthen military and political ties to the government in Pakistan.

To the north, the Chinese are using the crisis in the area to build up troops on its border with India, while the United States is beefing up naval deployments in the Indian Ocean, to the south of India.

However, it is the eastern flank of India which is the most immediate concern to political circles in India. There, in the northeast section of the country, China is fully backing a political rebellion and secessionist movement against the central government.

The northeast area consists of one full-fledged state,

Assam, and six semi-autonomous regions closely affiliated with the central government. All seven areas are largely made up of people from a different ethnic and cultural background than the rest of India.

Assam has been the principle focus of attention, as students are demanding that all "foreigners" (Muslims and other "non-Assamese") who entered the state after 1951 be immediately expelled. There has been widespread violence and economic dislocation wrought in the state, including the shutdown of oil refineries in the area that provide thirty percent of India's entire domestic oil production.

Backing up the Assam agitation are the demands for "independence" from the more tribal-based areas, such as Nagaland and Mizoram, where violence has also taken place. In all seven areas, brutal killings are reported every day.

Chinese backing for these political rebellions is so well documented that it is now common knowledge throughout India. Even radio broadcasts from China have expressed support for the rebels against the "repression" of the Gandhi government. Arms and money are also flowing into the area.

Recently a new element was introduced to the northeast situation when the Gandhi government revealed that the fanatical Hindu chauvinist organization RSS has become involved in the anti-government agitation. RSS was the leading constituent organization in the Janata Party government that came to power in 1977 in India, but which was routed in the national elections last year that returned Mrs. Gandhi to power. Nominally a "super-nationalist" organization, the RSS-dominated Janata government is known to have had extensive talks with China, Israel and South Africa while in power. All three of these nations worked together to develop nuclear weapons.

The northeast crisis has since December been a tremendous drain on the energies of the Gandhi government, due to both the economic impact and the danger to national unity and security. Following the recent elections, Mrs. Gandhi is expected to renew efforts for a negotiated settlement, all of which have been rejected up to now.

### **Strong economy needed**

Overall, there is a widespread recognition throughout India that a strengthening of the national economy, nearly brought to its knees by the policies of the previous Janata government, is vital to counter the threats to India at this time. Short-term measures to get the economy moving are an immediate necessity. However, a long-term economic development plan to modernize the entire country is also an immediate priority, as this will enable India to become both a political and economic superpower for the cause of peace.

## **Exclusive Interview**

# **Indira Gandhi talks to EIR about peace and development**

*On June 5, Indira Gandhi, the Prime Minister of India, granted this interview to Daniel Sneider, EIR Editor-in-Chief, in New Delhi.*

**Q:** I would like to start with the situation in Assam because it is very difficult to get an accurate image from the press as to what exactly is going on. I would like your assessment of the situation now and what the government's policy is.

**A:** Well, there is an agitation there against the so-called foreigners. Ostensibly they say it is against those people who have come into India from Bangladesh or from Nepal, but in actual fact it is working against some Indian citizens who have come from other states as well, and citizens of Assam who are completely Assamese, who have lived in Assam for generations. It is one of those chauvinistic things that come up every now and then.

India is a developing country, and development has been rather uneven. It is obvious that where there is industry it is much easier for that area to grow and for people to get more jobs. We have a program for developing backward areas and we have made progress in it. But nevertheless we don't reach all places, and business people don't like putting up an industry where it is going to cost them more, either by way of transport, or other things.

Certain areas that have remained backward have benefited less from our scientific advances and Assam is one of them. But it is not the only one. Eastern Uttar