

help forge unity in the ranks of Muslim *Ummah*. . . . “Our enemy is united; so we also need to work in unity.”

## Next Stop, India

Musharraf will not have to wait long, to see whether the hopes placed in Khatami’s diplomacy are well-founded, as the Iranian President is scheduled to make a state visit to India. The Indian government officially announced that Khatami would visit New Delhi and would be the guest of honor on Jan. 26, India’s Republic Day.

The visit is important, not only because of Pakistani-Indian relations, but, more broadly, because of Iran’s growing association with the “Strategic Triangle” of Russia, China, and India. Due to its vigorous foreign policy, since the fall of the Soviet Union in 1991, based on developing transportation infrastructure links through Central Asia and into China, Iran has established itself as the “second pillar,” after China, of the Eurasian Land-Bridge. Recently, with the agreements for a North-South transportation corridor, Iran has become a link between Russia and India. Thus, it is to be expected that during his visit to New Delhi, Khatami’s discussions will reflect a broader geographical and strategic context.

In India, too, the emphasis will be on economic cooperation as the basis for regional stability. It was no coincidence, that as the Indian government officially announced Khatami’s

visit, a first major contract was signed between the two countries for oil exploration. The deal, signed on Dec. 25, in Tehran, is for exploration in the Iranian oil field Fars Bloc. The contract, worth \$27 million, was clinched by a consortium including ONGC Videsh Ltd (OVL), Indian Oil Corporation (IOC), and Oil India Ltd (OIL), which signed with the National Iranian Oil Company (NIOC). In the Fars oil field, OVL and IOC will hold 40% each, while OIL will have 20%. It is expected that over 500 million barrels will be found.

The managing director of the Gas Authority of India Ltd (GAIL), Prasanto Banerjee, outlined the immense potential for further cooperation with Iran, telling IRNA on Jan. 1 that since Iran has the second largest gas reserves in the world, and India is one of the largest gas consumers in Asia, the possibilities are unlimited. He announced that GAIL, which controls the total distribution network of gas in India, was negotiating with a petrochemical marketing agency in Iran, to handle global marketing of its petrochemicals.

An Indian Foreign Ministry official said that the upcoming Iranian state visit would strengthen the two countries’ strategic relations, and mentioned the Iran-Pakistan-India pipeline: “The security of the said pipeline, and our troubled relations with Islamabad, are the main obstacles in finalizing that project.” Another ministry official said India hopes to expand trade with Iran through Chabahar Port, and thence

## Khatami Hails Role for Pakistan’s National Poet

Pakistan’s *Daily Times* editorialized on Dec. 28:

“Visiting Iranian president Seyed Muhammad Khatami has leaned on the legacy of Allama [Muhammad] Iqbal to express his ‘unorthodox’ views on Western civilization. He told an audience in Islamabad that ‘Western culture is a conveyor of spiritual, artistic and philosophical creations; we, therefore, cannot and must not deprive ourselves of it, simply because of our dislike of the oppressive political and economic measures taken by the Westerners against the non-Western world—a fact which the fair and judicious political and economic thinkers and politicians of the West candidly confirm. Nor, of course, can we reject or discard our own cultural and spiritual heritage in the name of facilitating our scientific and cultural development.’ President Khatami thought that the shallow-minded among us were those who neglected the intellectual tradition of the West and focused merely on Western politics; he was equally against those who embraced the superficialities of the West and rejected their own Islamic values.

“Allama Muhammad Iqbal was an Islamic genius whose writings readily lend themselves to the kind of

thoughts that President Khatami wanted to express. . . . After Ali Shariati, Khatami’s view is the first really frank admission of the greatness of Iqbal as a thinker of Islam’s modern age. He has wisely taken recourse to Iqbal’s dialogue with the West to push forward his own policy of establishing communication with those centers of learning in the West that disagree with policies of Western ‘discrimination’ against the Islamic world.”

After Khatami’s departure from Pakistan, a seminar dedicated to the work of Iqbal was held on Dec. 28 in Islamabad, under the auspices of Allama Open University and the Cultural Consulate of Iran, featuring speakers from Iran, Pakistan, and Bangladesh.

One of Iqbal’s admirers, Prof. Annemarie Schimmel, in her book *Islam—An Introduction*, describes his thought in these terms: “The philosophy of the Ego, of the continuous unfolding of the individual’s creative powers, as preached by Iqbal, is not only the basis for his thoughts about the individual human being, but also for his political philosophy. The community too has to utilize and unfold all its inherent possibilities. Only by doing so can it be tolerant . . . for tolerance is the attitude of the strong who respect the other’s personality.”

But Iqbal—himself an Indian—also conceived of a separate state for India’s Muslims, which was realized as Pakistan after his 1938 death.—*David Cherry*