

India in deals with Oman

On March 13, a day after the city of Bombay was rocked with bombs, the governments of India and Oman signed an agreement to set up petroleum refineries near Bombay, at an estimated cost of \$4-5 billion. The deal signifies that, despite its problems with Pakistan, India has not broken its ties to the Islamic world.

Also, a memorandum was signed between the Oman and India in February for laying a 1,400-kilometer undersea pipeline from Oman to Gujarat, India, which will supply more than 50 million cubic meters of gas to India a day. It is expected that other West Asian countries like Iran and Qatar will also supply gas through the pipeline.

And, in what will be the biggest joint venture of its kind abroad, Kribhco and RBF, two major fertilizer manufacturers in India, are working on agreements with Oman for construction of two urea fertilizer units in the Persian Gulf country. Each of the complexes will have a capacity of 1,350 tons a day; total investment is \$800 million. The Indian companies will each hold 26% equity in the ventures. The Oman government and private partners will subscribe to the rest of the capital. A buyback arrangement between Oman and the two Indian companies will likely be incorporated, with preferential prices for the urea supplied to India.

gained notoriety throughout the region in the last year. In the past six months, Pakistanis have found themselves expelled from various Arab nations on various charges. The oil-rich kingdom of Saudi Arabia reported that it had beheaded 40 drug smugglers, most of them Pakistanis. Iran has arrested 60 drug smugglers who were equipped with modern weapons; numbers of these are also known to be Pakistanis. After the Hindu assault on the Babri Mosque in Ayodhya, India on Dec. 6, the U.A.E. has deported several thousand Pakistanis for violent attacks on Hindus and Hindu temples in the country.

Some years ago, the U.A.E. was shocked to discover that senior members of Pakistan's Armed Forces, in collusion with some of their colleagues on secondment to Abu Dhabi, were using the U.A.E. President's personal aircraft to move narcotics from Lahore to the Persian Gulf.

At the end of December, Tariq Massoud, regional director of the Pakistan Narcotics Control Board at Lahore, told reporters that as many as 86 Pakistani nationals, including two women, were executed for smuggling drugs into countries where the offense carries the death penalty. In late 1992,

Thai police arrested 10 Pakistanis in Bangkok and recovered a large number of fake passports, stationery used for counterfeiting travel documents, and arms and ammunition.

In part, this expansion of Pakistani drug operations is prompted by the saturation of the Pakistani market itself since the early 1980s, when drugs began to flood the country. In one city in Punjab, for example, out of 1.3 million residents, there are 200,000 officially registered heroin addicts.

The result of the uninhibited drug trafficking out of Pakistan is the country's increasing isolation within the Muslim world. Announcing his resignation from the cabinet on April 6, Minister of State for Economic Affairs Sardar Aasef Ahmed Ali told a press conference, "I have been writing on the presence of terrorists from Muslim states in Pakistan. Nothing has been done about their presence in the country. This issue does not agitate the western countries as much as it agitates the Muslim countries. Today, we are the most isolated nation in the Organization of Islamic Conference, the Arab League, and the Gulf Cooperation Council."

However, Pakistani Prime Minister Nawaz Sharif, now in the process of being unceremoniously ousted by President Ghulam Ishaq Khan, is hardly capable of leashing the ISI, which reports not to him but to the President.

The evidence in the Bombay bombing presented so far by Indian authorities at least points to the intersection of the ISI, drug-trafficking networks, and the "Afghansi," the collection of militants brought into Peshawar, Pakistan and Afghanistan to fight against the Soviet Union. As the Pakistani daily *The Muslim* described this nexus on April 13: "When the United States trapped a willing dictator of Pakistan, that is, General Zia, into their Afghan war against its arch enemy Soviet Union, every ruffian and shady character, mercenary and petty adventurer from every dark nook and corner of the world, was welcome. The U.S. government, through its Pakistani surrogates, gave these disreputable elements money, weapons, and the freedom to kill and plunder in the name of jihad in Afghanistan.

"Military men under U.S. supervision and command turned them into fiendish terror merchants, a truly multinational community of terror-mongers. The government of General Zia had neither the inclination nor perhaps the imagination to round up these highly dangerous elements, once the war was ended. . . .

"The U.S. abandoned the Afghanistan theater as if they had never been there and had never had anything do with it. Later, the government of Ms. Benazir Bhutto was told by the powers in effective control of Afghanistan affairs [headed by President Ishaq Khan] to keep off this area. It remained with the President and his close aides who were too busy feathering their own nests. . . . Suddenly, deprived of their targets, these terrorists spread out into the wide world. The whole story is a stinking scandal, and the Americans cannot in honesty pretend that their hands are untainted. In fact, they have been the chief promoters of this brand of terrorism."