

Addendum

**Observations of
National Leaders
in Meetings of
National Council/
National Executive**

National Executive

Hyderabad

11-12 January, 2004

SHRI ATAL BIHARI VAJPAYEE
(Prime Minister)

The Hyderabad meeting of the National Executive is a major landmark in the history of the BJP and India's democracy.

We have established our place in Indian politics. Now we are not unfamiliar to the world. The world has come to recognize us as a dominant and guiding constituent of Indian politics.

All the misconceptions and motivated propaganda about our Party have been belied.

Our recent victory in Assembly elections attracted the attention of the entire world.

We have strengthened India's democracy and accelerated development.

The world has become familiar with our ideas and our achievements.

The BJP is not merely a political party, but a movement for social transformation.

More and more classes of society are joining us.

There is a debate on when to hold Lok Sabha elections.

The Party has made its recommendation in an unambiguous manner, that we should seek people's renewed mandate at the earliest for completing the unaccomplished part of our mission.

It is natural to think that we should have a fresh mandate so that we can march even more confidently towards our goal of making India a Developed Nation by 2020.

The recent NDA meeting has authorized me to take a final

decision about preponing the elections.

Now, the responsibility is on me.

The NDA is ready. The BJP is ready.

The hour of deciding has come.

The decision can be only one.

I hereby direct Finance Minister Shri Jaswant Singhji to present a Vote on Account in Parliament at an early date.

I hope that a new Government would be in place by April.

A big battle lies ahead.

We have given the call for early elections to the Lok Sabha. The situation is in our favour. We have been able to win people's confidence with our performance. The recent Assembly elections show that the people are with us. The opposition is in disarray. They don't know what to do and on what issues to corner us.

My call to all Party *karyakartas* is this: There is no time for *vishram*.

Ek vijay ke baad dusari.

Hamari vijay ke saath Bharat ka bhavishya jura hua hai.

We'll seek a renewed and larger mandate to build a strong and prosperous India. I am confident that we'll get it.

Vajra sankalp ke saath hum yahan se jayenge. Aur agali baar milenge ek dusare ko vijay ki badhayi dene ke liye.

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National Council

New Delhi

6 February, 2004

SHRI LK ADVANI

With the dissolution of the 13th Lok Sabha today, the country will be all set for the 14th General Election to the Lok Sabha.

A few of us in the Party have been witness to all these thirteen elections held till now, and feel happy at what our Party has been able to do for the country through the democratic process.

The analysis of poll outcomes is not an easy task. In a country as vast and variegated as India, it is indeed a formidable job even for the best of psephologists. However, I shall attempt to briefly sum up the broad factors that have contributed to election results till date.

The Congress won the first five Lok Sabha elections, from 1952 to 1971, essentially because the opposition parties, as compared to the Congress Party, were all miniscule parties, and furthermore, were sharply fragmented.

A touchstone of possible poll outcomes in those days used to be, at a given point of time, What is the Opposition Unity Index?

In 1971, this relative superiority of the Congress Party became multiplied manifold when India triumphed over Pakistan and contributed to the liberation of Bangladesh.

Ever since 1971, it is Jana Sangh/BJP that has been setting the agenda and identifying the core issue for all elections.

In the first half of the 70s we joined hands with JP to create a synergy among Opposition Parties, and corner the Congress on

the issue of corruption.

Cornered, first by the JP movement, and then by the Allahabad High Court verdict in Mrs. Gandhi's case, the Congress resorted to a desperate game plan . Democracy was administered a near fatal blow by imposition of the Emergency.

If Indian democracy has successfully overcome this assault, it is because of the brave resistance put up by JP and the opposition parties who were part of his movement. The Jana Sangh and the RSS were in the vanguard of this struggle for the restoration of democracy.

The main issue in the 1977 Lok Sabha polls was Democracy. For the first time since Independence, the Congress Party lost a Lok Sabha election. The Congress Party did not just lose the election, it was trounced. The people punished the party for its sin of subverting democracy.

In 1980, the BJP was launched. By then our party functioning earlier as Jana Sangh, and later for a brief while as part of the Janata Party, had earned high credibility as a Party committed to national unity and integrity and probity in public life and as a Party whose leadership had an impeccable record of service to the nation.

The party's image, its leadership and its dedicated cadres have been our biggest assets.

The cutting edge for our spectacular growth in the last two decades has been provided by our success in laying down the agenda for national debate during this period.

In the eighties, the Congress Party did a shameful flip flop, first on the Shah Bano issue, and later on the Ayodhya issue. In both the cases, its behaviour was prompted by crass opportunism and vote bank politics.

At its National Executive meeting at Palanpur (HP) in early 1989, the BJP decided to support the Ayodhya movement. That decision touched off a vigorous debate in the country as to what is genuine secularism and what is pseudo-secularism.

If elections in India after 1989 are an index of public opinion, it can hardly be disputed that despite the vicious campaign carried on against the Jana Sangh/BJP for over five decades now, the country believes that the BJP is sincerely committed to secularism and those who revile the party day in and day out as communal, are motivated by considerations of vote bank politics.

In 1997, the country completed 50 years of independence. As

Party President, I undertook a 59 day *Swarna Jayanti Rath Yatra* to pay homage to thousands of freedom fighters who had sacrificed their lives or did *tapasya* to emancipate the country from foreign yoke.

The thrust of all the speeches during this period was: even after 50 years of independence India continues to be backward; we got *swaraj* in 1947, but we have failed to convert it into *suraj*.

In 1998, the people of India installed Shri Vajpayee in office. Ever since, the NDA Government led by Shri Vajpayee has focused on just one objective – *SURAJ*, Good Governance.

If the country feels good today, it is because the concrete results of *SURAJ* can be felt by every one.

The ‘feel good factor’ is because of the sustained improvement in our economy.

But I believe that even more important than the ‘feel good factor’ is the ‘feel proud factor’.

Those who interacted with the participants in the *Pravasi Bharatiya Sammelan* last month could well see how this ‘feel proud factor’ has become universal.

People of Indian origin throughout the world feel proud to be identified as Indians. India commands a level of respect in the international community as never before.

In 1971, when this feeling of pride was there because of the Bangladesh war, the entire country shared this feeling. As leader of the Jana Sangh, Shri Vajpayee was foremost in complimenting Mrs. Gandhi on the achievement.

See the contrast in the attitude of the Congress today. In fact, my assessment is that if in the government the Congress has been a dismal failure, in the opposition it has been generally irresponsible and almost always negative.

In the ten years preceding Shri Vajpayee’s assumption of office as Prime Minister, the country saw as many as seven Prime Ministers. And since 1998, we have had just one, Shri Vajpayee. And it is a universal assessment of all psephologists that the electorate will give Shri Vajpayee a clear 5 year mandate once again.

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National Executive

Goa

12 April, 2004

SHRI LK ADVANI

Last October, our Party celebrated the fiftieth year of its political *yatra*, which had commenced with the founding of the Bharatiya Jana Sangh in 1951 by Dr. Syama Prasad Mookerjee.

Just one week back, on 6 April, 2002, the BJP completed 22 years of its existence. During this half a century, we have seen many ups and downs.

There have been moments of intense exhilaration; and there have been times we have felt ourselves down in the dumps. But our track record has been such that, after every setback, we have bounced back with greater strength and vigour.

It is this unstoppable onward march which saw us win the people's mandate to serve the nation as the ruling party, at the head of the National Democratic Alliance, in 1998 and a renewed popular mandate, after a Congress-inspired conspiracy of destabilization, in 1999. On 19 March this year, we completed four years in office, a feat unequalled by any non-Congress government at the Centre. The credit for liberating India from a debilitating spell of instability, and for providing a stable and forward-looking government, goes principally to our leader Shri Atalji, to his ability to inspire confidence among all sections of our diverse society.

The Party has recently suffered a series of electoral setbacks. For the last four years that we have been in office in New Delhi, we have been proudly affirming that during our rule, communal incidents have been minimum, and that there has been no major

communal riot. After the recent happenings in Gujarat, we can no longer make this claim.

The cover story of a leading periodical bears the caption “BJP: The Party Is Over”! One can be sure that soon we shall be seeing variants of this story in other sections of the media as well.

This is not the first time we have faced a situation in which not only our adversaries but even our well wishers have been inclined to write us off.

I can recall at least three such occasions - in 1953, after the death of Dr. SP Mookerjee; in 1976, when after the passing of the 42nd amendment, democracy was virtually declared dead; and then in 1984, when out of the 228 candidates put up by the BJP for the Eighth Lok Sabha elections, only two could manage to win!

But the prophets of doom have invariably been proved wrong. We shall prove them wrong once again.

The NDA Government, under the leadership of Shri Atal Bihari Vajpayee, has performed well on all fronts – and against many odds. Inflation has been firmly held in check. Foreign exchange reserves have soared to an all time high. An ambitious plan for wearing and interlinking the entire country with world-class highways and rural roads – indeed, the most ambitious infrastructure project since Independence – has been going ahead at a rapid pace.

Farmers and agriculture have been the recipients of special attention from the Government throughout these four years.

Our Government has done exceedingly well in housing. As many as 36 lakh new houses have been built in rural and urban areas in the past one year alone.

We can take legitimate credit for giving a big boost to Information Technology and Telecom sectors. Thanks to the bold and progressive National Telecom Policy of 1999, India is today adding as many as 1000 new telephone subscribers, many of them in rural areas, every hour! Tariffs have fallen dramatically. In IT, India has now come to be globally recognized as a Software Superpower.

For us, *Vikas* and *Suraksha* are two sides of the same coin. A multi-faceted approach to problems of national security enabled the country to become a proud member of the Nuclear Club, defeat Pakistan in the Kargil War, contain cross-border terrorism, and revamp the management of the defence system.

In its conduct of international relations, the Vajpayee Government has acquitted itself admirably. Today India enjoys goodwill and respect throughout the world.

But the BJP needs to understand that the spectacular gains of our Party made in the last decade of the twentieth century were on the basis of the popular hope that the BJP-led government would not be just another government, not even just a better government, but a government qualitatively different – a government that would be perceived by the common citizen as one that converted *Swaraj* into *Su-raj*. “A Party with a difference” was our main slogan when the BJP was launched. It should be our mission to make our government ‘A Government with a difference’.

Let us accept that even though our Government has been better than the Congress governments, than the United Front and other Congress-supported governments, and that our ministers are acknowledged as being upright and competent, both the Government and the Party have not been able to measure up to the very high expectations of the people. Indeed, we have not been able to fully measure up to our own high ideals that inspired us to found the Jana Sangh and later the BJP.

This is the main factor responsible for the disillusionment of the people with the Party. It is also the basis of the present state of demoralization among tens of thousands of our *karyakartas*.

A coalition government comprising diverse ideological groups has necessarily to draw up a minimum common programme of governance and run the government scrupulously on that basis. Indeed, a very large area of governance has nothing to do with ideology. It has, rather, to do with the formulation of good policies and programmes and their proper implementation; it has to do with responsive and responsible administration, with a high degree of transparency and accountability, and people’s enthusiastic participation at all tiers of the democratic set-up.

Throughout these four years, the BJP has scrupulously adhered to the common programme drawn up by the NDA. But, sometimes, we betray a tendency to be rather apologetic about our Party’s ideological moorings. Here I do not refer to any specific issue as such, but to our entire guiding outlook on enlightened cultural nationalism, on positive secularism as against pseudo-secularism,

and on *samajik nyay* and *samajik samarasata*. I hold that this is yet another factor that has contributed to the people's disenchantment.

Our political opponents have an innate hesitation, on account of their ingrained calculations of vote bank politics, on issues concerning national security – both external and internal, which is why they are soft on the anti-national activities of certain organizations, on burning issues such as the ISI's conspiracy in India and the illegal infiltration in the North-East. The stance of the principal opposition party, the Congress, on Pokhran, Kargil, and POTO has been either hostile or ambivalent. Their recent opposition to POTO showed that, even on the so self-evident a threat as cross-border terrorism, they are prepared to put the considerations of vote-bank politics above those of national security.

It is this compromising and short-sighted attitude of the Congress Party on the fundamental issues of nationalism and national security, coupled with a conscious and unconscious promotion of corruption at all levels over the past many decades, that has weakened the Indian State, made it soft against the external and internal threats to national security.

I would like to make a special mention here of the Ayodhya issue. It does not figure in the common manifesto of the NDA. Nevertheless, no one can dispute that it is an issue agitating the entire country. Its speedy and amicable resolution would contribute immensely to communal harmony and national integration. We are happy that leaders like Shankaracharya of Kanchi, Shri Shri Ravi Shankar and others have taken the initiative to start a dialogue with the representatives of the Muslim community for a mutually agreeable resolution of the issue. The Government's own position, to which all constituents of the NDA have agreed, is that this issue has to be resolved peacefully either through a mutually acceptable agreement or, failing which, through a judicial verdict. The Government will remain solemnly committed to this position, and so will our Party.

Of late, there has been some speculation that the BJP could abandon the common manifesto of the NDA and go back to its own agenda. This will not happen. The BJP, which is the main component of the NDA, will remain faithful to the coalition's common agenda.

This Goa meeting of the National Executive must draw up a

plan of action which deals with the factors I have identified as being responsible for the electoral setbacks we have suffered, namely, shortcomings in delivering good governance and a needlessly apologetic posture in respect of our ideological beliefs.

For this, our plan of action must deal with the following four urgent imperatives:

1. Strengthen the Government, especially by speeding up the process of implementing our various policies and programmes. We will have to devise practical ways of energizing the bureaucracy to make it deliver what we have promised to the people.
2. Strengthen the pro-growth, pro-poor and pro-employment orientation of our economic policies.
3. Strengthen the system of information and publicity, so that the many remarkable achievements of our Government are effectively highlighted and our overall vision of Good Governance is better projected to the people.
4. Strengthen the Party at all levels, if necessary, by inducting some of our talented colleagues in the Government into Party work. We should also comprehensively strengthen the Party at the State level, especially in those States that will go to the polls next year. If necessary, there should be some deterrent action in some cases of gross indiscipline.

In short, we should return from Goa with renewed self-confidence and strengthened resolve to buck the recent setbacks and emerge, in keeping with our proud track record, as a qualitatively Stronger Party and a qualitatively Better Government.

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National Executive

Mumbai

22-24 June, 2004

SHRI LK ADVANI

1. It is said that success has many claims to parenthood, but failure is an orphan.

This may be true about other organizations. But, as far as the BJP is concerned, it is invalid. Our ethos has always been one that emphasizes that only collective efforts achieve success; in the case of failure, we believe in collective responsibility.

This meeting of the National Executive, taking place in the backdrop of the recent Parliamentary elections, has continued and further strengthened this ethos.

2. Collective responsibility, however, does not absolve any one of us of our individual accountability. As far as I am concerned, I accept that I too am responsible in some ways for the outcome of the elections. In my very first press conference in Delhi, I pointed to the shortcomings in the *Bharat Uday Yatra* that I undertook.
3. It may be appropriate to call this meeting of the National Executive a continuation of the process of introspection that has begun since the totally unexpected results of the polls stunned us on 13 May. Each one of us in our own ways is doing introspection and soul-searching, and this will continue even after we go back from Mumbai.

However, it is the first time that we have an opportunity to sit collectively and share our views. Of course, an in-

depth and comprehensive review of the election results requires a different, more systematic approach based on all the relevant facts, right up to the constituency level. That is why, we have decided to entrust this responsibility to a small committee. This committee will not only review the factors that have led to our setback in the elections, but also recommend corrective measures for the future.

I would say that the report of this committee, and further discussion on its findings and recommendations at the National Executive meeting, would mark the formal end of the process of introspection as far as the election results are concerned.

4. In this meeting, I would like to share with you my own introspective observations. You may call it 'Loud Thinking'. There is no doubt that we had a very favourable atmosphere for getting a renewed mandate.

The six years of the NDA government saw the country move forward on all fronts.

We were blessed with the leadership of Shri Atalji, who was universally hailed as one of the best Prime Ministers India has seen.

There was no mood of anti-incumbency visible anywhere in the country.

Indeed, what was visible and audible was the general mood that the people were in favour of Shri Atalji's government getting a renewed term.

It was, indeed, this mood and this atmosphere that prompted us to decide to advance the elections by six months.

Why then did we fail to win the required number of seats?

5. It is not possible, nor necessary, for me to look at the multiplicity of factors that contributed to our performance. Moreover, it is also true that the overall outcome of the elections is actually a numerical aggregation of highly non-uniform State outcomes.

6. Nevertheless, I would like to share with you one dominant question that I am grappling with. And that is: Did we

become a victim of the dichotomy between governance and politics?

Our record in governance and on the development front was very good. But perhaps our political behaviour and strategy remained poor.

7. I would like to elaborate this thought in terms of our neglect of two types of constituencies. One type of constituency, of course, is the ELECTORAL CONSTITUENCY, which every MP is expected to nurse and, if chosen by the Party to re-contest, to get re-elected from that constituency. The fact that 50% of our sitting MPs lost elections shows, mostly, that they were remiss in their work. There may have been other reasons also for their defeat, but, lately, lack of proper political conduct of MPs and MLAs is emerging as a major factor causing failure in elections.

Many of these MPs perhaps did not nurse their constituencies well. They did not perhaps conduct themselves properly with different sections of the people in their constituencies. Equally important, they did not perhaps work in proper coordination with the local Party units and *karyakartas*.

This was perhaps the reason for the lack of enthusiasm and common resolve among Party workers in these constituencies to get the candidates elected.

8. However, we observed this time that there was also another critical constituency that generally lacked enthusiasm and common resolve to get our candidates and our Party re-elected. It is our IDEOLOGICAL CONSTITUENCY.

I do not call it our VOTE BANK, because we do not believe in vote bank politics.

I must also point out that, in the specific nature of Indian society, every political party has a given constituency. No party can invent an ideal constituency that it wishes to work in, in order to realize its goals in electoral politics. Every party has to necessarily work in a certain given situation, with a certain support base.

Like any other political party that wants to grow in the democratic space, the BJP too has consciously endeavoured

to expand its base over the decades. But expansion is possible **only if we are able to retain what we have - and not at the expense of what we have.**

9. Ours is an ideological Party and, over the decades, indeed since the inception of the Bharatiya Jana Sangh, there has been a definite - and steadily growing - section of our society that has been supporting us because of our beliefs and the cause of *Hindutva* that we espouse.

We have reached where we have reached because of the dedicated efforts of lakhs of workers and well-wishers of our IDEOLOGICAL PARIVAR. They have laboured hard to put us in our present position. They have done so with a certain emotional attachment to the BJP.

Somehow, our political strategy and conduct during the past six years was not oriented to strengthening and enthusing our IDEOLOGICAL PARIVAR and our IDEOLOGICAL CONSTITUENCY.

Indeed, there was a sense of alienation in our Parivar and a weakening of the emotional bond with our core constituency.

10. This does not mean that the BJP should not - or cannot - look beyond our core constituency. No. As a political party that has a national outlook, we are duty-bound to care for one and all. Our ideology does not bar us from so expanding our care and concern, because it is not a narrow and exclusivist ideology.

11. In the given situation, however, we should have balanced our focus on governance and development with an equally sustained political focus on our core constituency - through constant dialogue at various levels.

Individually, and collectively, we did not pay as much attention to our core supporters as we should have.

We were somewhat confused as to how to relate to our own ideological family.

12. As a result, a strange dichotomy emerged. Our opponents in the country called us a "*Hindutva* Government".

The rest of the world recognized us as a "*Hindutva* Government".

However, the only two entities that did not so recognize this Government were our ideological parivar and ourselves.

I would like to express my appreciation over the fact that the Mumbai meeting of the National Executive has put a lot of emphasis on rededicating ourselves to our ideology and idealism. There is also a great deal of emphasis on overcoming our organizational weaknesses and shortcomings.

We need to sustain this emphasis. We need to monitor our own follow-up action taken on the views we express and the decisions we take in this regard.

We are a PARTY WITH A LOFTY MISSION.

We are a PARTY THAT IS AN INTEGRAL PART OF A MOVEMENT.

To the extent that we are able to reflect this in our policies, political conduct, organizational activities and individual behaviour, we will be again seen as a PARTY WITH A DIFFERENCE.

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National Council

New Delhi

27 October, 2004

SHRI M. VENKAIAH NAIDU

Dear Colleagues,

I stand before you with mixed feelings today.

On the one hand, I am nostalgic, because, when a certain chapter in one's political life closes and a new chapter begins, it is natural to feel a sense of transition. This is the first and the last time I'll be addressing you as the outgoing President of the Bharatiya Janata Party.

But I am happy too—as happy as all of you—that I have passed on the baton to someone who brought me into the Party's central team and who has been as much a source of inspiration and guidance to me as he is to all of you.

People say that Shri Advaniji is 77 years old. The truth is that he still has the energy of a 37 year old. So, in terms of energy levels, Advaniji belongs to the BJP's younger generation of leaders as much as Pramodji or Sushmaji or Arunji or Rajnathji does.

Only a leader of youthful energy could have agreed to handle two major responsibilities—one as the Leader of the Opposition in the Lok Sabha and the other as President of the BJP.

Therefore, I am happy also because the reins of the Party have gone to someone who is not only more experienced, more knowledgeable and more battle-tested than me, but who is also a model to all of us for stamina, hard work and sheer determination.

When the Party had been pushed to the margins with only

two seats in 1984, it was his determination that helped the BJP to quickly undertake the journey from the status of a marginal party to that of India's main party.

Compared to 1984, we are immeasurably stronger today. Therefore, I have no doubt that, under Shri Advaniji's leadership, the BJP will once again undertake a successful journey – from No. 2 position to No. 1 position.

Friends, I wish to make it clear that the change that has taken place at the Party's helm has nothing to do with the outcome of the Lok Sabha elections or the Maharashtra elections.

I am relinquishing the office of the President for personal reasons. I am doing so also because I had been feeling for quite some time that the Party needs a senior and more experienced leader at its helm at this critical juncture.

The smooth manner in which the transition has taken place has once again established the BJP as a 'Party with a Difference'.

Everybody in the Party – from Atalji and Advaniji to all my office-bearers – persuaded me to continue. But when I stood firm, they accepted my request and showed the kind of understanding that is unthinkable in any other party.

There was never a single moment of bitterness. There was never a single scene of intrigue.

Everything was done in a collective manner, in an open and transparent manner.

I would like my Party colleagues at all levels to feel proud of this uniquely democratic – almost family-type – atmosphere in which we are meeting today.

Dear colleagues, my mind is full of memories today. It was in the same Talkatora Stadium that, just over two years ago, you made me the President of the BJP. I said in my speech then that I came into the Party as an ordinary *karyakarta*, as a soldier in service of Shri Atal Bihari Vajpayee, whom I had not yet met. Even when I was the President, I was still a *karyakarta* in my heart.

Today, as I relinquish my office, I once again go back to be a *karyakarta*.

This, again, is unique to the BJP. This again shows how we are indeed a Party with a difference.

This is a Party in which one does not have to belong to a

dynasty to become its President. Even an ordinary *karyakarta* can get the highest responsibility in the Party.

This is another reason for my happiness today. The Party gave me everything. And, in turn, I tried to give my best to the Party.

All that I am today is because of the Party.

Therefore, my parting message to all of you is to always keep in mind one principle:

DO NOT COMPLAIN ABOUT WHAT THE PARTY HAS GIVEN YOU.

ASK WHAT YOU HAVE GIVEN TO THE PARTY.

Today, I want to express my sincere appreciation and thanks to all my colleagues who worked with me during the past 27 months. I carry happy memories of many important initiatives and programmes that we together launched for the expansion and development of the Party.

The '*Gaon Chalo Abhiyan*' helped us to strengthen the Party's rural orientation. The several Zonal Conferences that we organised provided a good platform for inner-party interaction. Together, my colleagues and I tried to improve dialogue and coordination with all the nationalist organisations. I am happy that these efforts yielded good results.

I am especially satisfied at our efforts to catalyse serious *chintan* at all levels in the Party on both the long-term and immediate challenges before the BJP. I am convinced that the 'TASKS AHEAD' document, which has been circulated to all of you, can be a very useful basis for inner-party brainstorming and corrective action at all levels in the Party.

On the electoral front, there were ups and downs. Our victories in the Assembly elections in Madhya Pradesh, Rajasthan and Chhattisgarh considerably increased the BJP's strength.

In Orissa, we were successful in returning to power in alliance with the BJD.

In Karnataka, we emerged as the Number 1 Party in the Assembly.

In Arunachal Pradesh, although the government is no longer in our hands, it is a matter of pride for our Party that, for the first time, we have won as many as nine seats by contesting the recent Assembly elections on our own.

We have also succeeded in the by-elections in Gujarat and Goa.

However, as I said, along with these ups, we have faced some downs too. The outcome of the Parliamentary elections was completely against our expectations. The outcome of the recent Assembly elections in Maharashtra has also disappointed us.

I am sure that all of you are engaged in *atma-manthan* in your own way. But the one lesson that I have learnt from these elections is that GOOD GOVERNANCE DOES NOT AUTOMATICALLY RESULT IN RE-ELECTION.

Similarly, BAD GOVERNANCE DOES NOT NECESSARILY MEAN THAT THE PARTY OR THE COALITION IN POWER LOSES THE ELECTION.

This does not mean that Good Governance and Focus on Development are not necessary. But they are not sufficient. They alone cannot ensure victory.

From the point of view of good governance and development, the six years of the NDA Government, led by our beloved leader Shri Atal Bihari Vajpayee, constitute one of the best periods in independent India's history. Shri Atalji was one of the best Prime Ministers this country has had.

I earnestly appeal to all of you and all workers of the Party to take pride in the unique achievements and initiatives of the Vajpayee Government and continuously propagate them among the people.

Yes, our Government was very good. Yet, when the Lok Sabha elections were held, we suffered in several crucial states on account of some totally different factors.

Similarly, on the criteria of good governance and development, the Congress-NCP Government in Maharashtra ought to have been rejected outright. It was one of the worst governments, most non-performing governments the state has seen.

Yet, our opponents won. Several factors are responsible for this unexpected outcome, but good performance by the government is certainly not one of them.

Bihar and West Bengal are the other two examples of the disconnect between good governance and electoral performance.

Friends, our Party has to think about this aspect very seriously. At the Mumbai meeting of the National Executive, Shri Advaniji said that we need to combine GOOD GOVERNANCE with PRUDENT

POLITICS.

I will add one more element. We need a combination of GOOD GOVERNANCE, PRUDENT POLITICS and STRONG, FIGHTING-FIT ORGANISATION.

I have been an organisation man for most of my political life. Therefore, I consider strengthening of the organisation to be one of the most important tasks before the Party.

How do we strengthen the organisation?

The answer is contained in four words: BACK TO THE BASICS, which I said in my speech at the Mumbai National Executive Meeting.

It means, DISCIPLINE.

It means, COLLECTIVITY AND TEAM WORK.

It means, CLOSE INTERACTION WITH THE KARYAKARTAS.

It means, CONSTANT TRAVEL AND REACHING OUT BY OUR LEADERS.

It means, TAKING UP PEOPLE'S ISSUES, especially of the kisans, rural people and all the deprived people.

It means, as I have often said, adoption of the *mantra*: NATION FIRST, PARTY NEXT, AND SELF LAST.

Friends, I have no doubt that the future of the Party is bright. But, we will have to strive within ourselves and struggle among the people to regain the brightness.

In this effort, I am always ready to do my duty as a soldier of the Party.

Friends, we now have the stewardship of Shri Advaniji. We will continue to have the guidance of our beloved leader, Shri Atalji. We have many able and talented leaders at the Centre and in different states. We have lakhs of dedicated *karyakartas*. Above all, we have the trust and goodwill of millions of people in this great nation of ours.

Therefore, I have no doubt that the future is bright for the BJP.

I have no doubt that our Party will come back.

Thank you!



National Executive

Indore

4-5 April, 2003

SHRI LK ADVANI
(Dy. Prime Minister)

Our National Executive is meeting at a unique high-point in the Party's history. The completion of five years of Shri Atal Bihari Vajpayee's prime ministership is no doubt a proud landmark in the history of independent India, a point that was very well brought out in the President's address yesterday. But it also holds a very significant place in our Party's history.

Tomorrow, we celebrate the Party's 23rd Founding Day. The founding of the Bharatiya Janata Party had taken place at a time that was decidedly a low point in the history of our ideological-political journey dating back to the birth of the Bharatiya Jana Sangh in 1951. The Janata Party Government had collapsed. Indeed, those of us from the Jana Sangh background, who had voluntarily merged our Party into the Janata Party, had been forced to go out on the issue of dual membership. Within four years, our newly formed Party met with yet another low point - the worst ever electoral setback in the Parliamentary elections in 1984. We could secure only 2 seats in the Lok Sabha.

From that low watermark in our history, we have today arrived at a point where our leader has become the third longest serving Prime Minister and is set to lead the BJP, and the National Democratic Alliance, to yet another victory in the next general elections.

It is necessary for all of us to seriously ponder over how this change has come about. What were the external and objective factors

that contributed to this change? And what have been the factors internal to our Party that have enabled us to make this transition?

Three Eras in Indian Political History

As I look back, national politics in India has passed through three main phases.

The first two decades (1947-67) following Independence can be described as the Era of Congress Dominance. The year 1967 saw a round of elections in which strong disenchantment with the Congress manifested itself in several States.

The next two decades (1967-80) add up to an Era of Anti-Congressism. The Congress suffered a series of setbacks, not only at the State levels, but also at the Centre (1977).

In 1980, the BJP was born. This proved to be a turning point in the political history of India. The two decades since then constitute the third phase - the Era of a Stable Bi-polar Polity. The BJP and the Congress have emerged as the principal poles of national politics.

The transformation of a situation of Congress hegemony into a balanced bi-polar polity has come about because of two factors:

1. Deep disenchantment with the Congress
2. High hopes from the BJP.

The talisman that people judge us by

The people at large trusted us when we affirmed, at our founding conference in Mumbai, that the BJP would prove itself 'A Party with a Difference'. By projecting this slogan we have given to the people - and also to ourselves - a very strong talisman to judge us by.

We have, no doubt, proved ourselves different from others in several respects, such as:

1. Hard work and pace of growth;
2. Ability to adapt to changing situations;
3. Ability to win the confidence of regional parties;
4. Commitment to national interests and capacity to overcome the temptation of vote bank politics; and
5. Performance in government.

All this has strengthened the Government's capacity in the

field of delivering better governance.

But the BJP is still to inspire confidence in the people that even in respect of idealism and values, our activists are absolutely different from their counterparts in other parties. We have still to prove that we have the ability to overcome the weaknesses which power politics breeds.

Government performance is important, but even more important is the behaviour and conduct of the BJP's ministers, MPs, MLAs, office-bearers, etc.

Why do I place such overriding importance on this requirement? The answer should be evident to those who know the initial part of our ideological-political history. For as long as the Jana Sangh was in existence – and that is over a quarter of a century – our activists were nowhere near power. What sustained them in politics? What made them bear hardships and yet have a smile on their faces, self-confidence in their hearts, discipline in our ranks, and bonds of brotherhood and camaraderie among the Party's leaders and workers?

Our Distinctive Tradition is Our Sustaining Force

It was idealism. It was the conviction that we were striving for a goal higher than our individual selves, a goal for which it was proper and necessary to shun everything that had to do with oneself – home, comforts, security of a job or profession – and do everything that concerned the nation.

This was not just preached by our leaders; it was practised. Pandit Deendayal Upadhyay led and guided us by his personal example. And that became our Party's culture, our tradition, our distinctive identity in Indian politics. Everybody knew that we were a small Party, a marginal Party. But everybody also knew that we were a Party of disciplined, idealistic and hard-working activists. People did not vote for the Jana Sangh in large and winning numbers. Nevertheless, they admired our Party. They said, "*Yeh achchhe log hain, nihswarth log hain.*"

If the Jana Sangh had not been like that, if we too were like other parties, our subsequent political journey after 1980 would have been very different. Most certainly, we would not have been where we are today.

Therefore, our culture of selflessness, our distinctive tradition of idealism must be understood as our greatest strength. Ideology is important, and we are distinctive in that respect too. But ordinary people do not judge a political worker by his ideology, by what he preaches. They judge us by our conduct in public life.

The question I ask myself – and I would like all of us to ask ourselves – is: Why should something that has been our strength, our sustaining force, get diluted now when we are in power? Does this mean that idealism and power politics cannot go together? There are many who think so. We have to prove them wrong. And we have to remind ourselves, that without that distinctive strength we risk ourselves to be rejected by the people in the same way that they rejected the Congress from 1967 onwards. Without this unique aspect of being ‘A Party with a Difference’, the BJP will be seen as a party like any other.

Because the people have high hopes from the BJP, they have made us the principal pole in Indian politics. They expect us to play this role for the coming several decades. Because their cherished goal of seeing India become a Developed Nation by 2020 – free, at last, of poverty and unemployment, free of all traces of underdevelopment and backwardness, strong in national security, strong in internal security, peaceful and harmonious – is realisable only with a Party of resurgent nationalism leading the nation.

Therefore, we must remind ourselves that we are not in power for the sake of power, and all that it entails. Rather, we are in power, and we want to be in power for a long time to come, because we want to be instruments for the realisation of a high national ideal – an ideal in whose light our individual ‘Self’ counts for nothing, but our collective ‘Self’ as the Party counts for a lot.

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National Executive

New Delhi

24 December, 2002

SHRI ATAL BIHARI VAJPAYEE
(Prime Minister)

Prime Minister Shri Atal Bihari Vajpayee has said that the Bharatiya Janata Party bears the historic responsibility of protecting India's national unity, strengthening national security and ensuring all-round national development. "The Congress Party is incapable of discharging this responsibility," he observed while delivering his concluding remarks at the two-day meeting of the BJP's National Executive here today.

He called upon the Party to rise to the occasion by successfully meeting the immediate political challenges before the Party and, at the same time, focusing on the long-term issues of nation-building.

"This is not a game of winning a few more seats or winning the elections in this or that State. The Party must always be guided by the lofty goal for whose attainment we plunged into electoral politics," he exhorted.

In this context, he stressed the need to make it the BJP's special endeavour "to carry all sections of our diverse society with us". He urged the countrymen to be vigilant against India's enemies abroad who are trying to divide our society on religious lines and "make brother fight brother". Recalling the long period of externally inspired terrorism in Punjab, the Prime Minister said, "We foiled their design by maintaining unity. We should learn from this example and maintain peace and tranquility in the face of the gravest provocation anywhere in the country."

Shri Vajpayee congratulated the people of Gujarat on giving

a renewed mandate to the BJP in the just-concluded Assembly elections. He attributed this victory to “the many decades of *tapasya* of our workers and the good work done by our Governments”. He expressed confidence that the new Government under the chief ministership of Shri Narendra Modi would fulfil the expectations of the people of Gujarat.

Shri Vajpayee called upon the Party to get ready for the forthcoming electoral battles in many States in 2003. “While taking up State-specific Issues, we should also highlight the achievements of the NDA Government in the various spheres of development. It takes time for the issue of development to yield electoral benefit, but with sustained and effective communication of the work on the ground, it certainly does,” the Prime Minister said.

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National Executive

New Delhi

24 December, 2002

SHRI ATAL BIHARI VAJPAYEE
(Prime Minister)

The year 2002 is about to end. For the BJP, it has been an unforgettable year. It started with a series of electoral setbacks. We lost Punjab, Uttaranchal as well as Uttar Pradesh.

The year has, however, ended with an electoral triumph – Narendra Modi's victory in Gujarat – which has left our political opponents stunned and stupefied, unable even to comprehend what exactly has floored them !

If the year opened with our supporters sunk in a mood of despair and demoralisation, the year is winding up with the BJP activists verily on top of the world, all set to face the coming battles with confidence and determination.

The BJP Government in Gujarat under Shri Keshubhai Patel and later under Shri Narendra Modi has been an honest government, and a caring government. These last five years have seen Gujarat face a series of grave natural calamities – cyclones, floods, drought and a terrible earthquake. The State Government succeeded in galvanising the people against these calamities and everyone from within the country and from abroad, who has visited Gujarat during these years, has had nothing but praise and plaudits for the State Government.

The State Government's performance in respect of the Narmada, and generally speaking, on the water front, had particularly endeared it to the people.

Even if there had been no Godhra, Narendra Modi's

Government would have secured a renewed mandate because of these achievements.

It is, however, the campaign of calumny and hatred unleashed by our adversaries in the wake of Godhra and its aftermath against the Gujarat police, the Gujarat administration, the BJP Government in the State and personally against Shri Narendra Modi which made the Gujarat electorate really angry and which has given us this landslide victory.

I do not know if our opponents realise this. At least from the reactions we have been hearing after the results have been announced, it does not appear so. "You have won because of *Hindutva*" is the common refrain. Let them realise that if they continue to talk derisively about *Hindutva* thus, it will continue to cost them dearly. Party President, Shri Venkaiah, has rightly said that *Hindutva* is a noble concept, and the people are not going to let secularism become just a cover for Hindubashing. Nor should it become a euphemism for 'minoritism'.

In 1980, Prime Minister, Mrs. Gandhi appointed Dr. Gopal Singh as Chairman of a high-powered Commission on Minorities. It is he who coined the word minoritism and warned:

"All history is witness to the fact that both Minoritism and Communalism are the deadliest enemies of those who practise them. One would hate to live and participate in a society where one is condemned to the status of a permanent, statutory minority for reasons only of birth, and all that goes with it – religion, sex, caste, colour or place of birth – within the same national home!"

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National Executive

New Delhi

24 March, 2001

SHRI LK ADVANI

The situation arising out of the publication of the Tehelka tapes clearly shows that there is a sinister conspiracy to destabilise the Vajpayee Government by anti-democratic means. The true purpose of the campaign of lies and slander against the BJP and the NDA government launched by the Congress Party, using the Tehelka tapes as a pretext, is now out in the open. The Congress leadership, not reconciled to a BJP-led non-Congress government at the Centre, is frustrated at the NDA government's success in providing a stable and effective governance and earning the goodwill of the Indian people and enhancing our country's prestige abroad.

The Congress Party's refusal to have a debate in Parliament and its demand for the Government's resignation are a pointer to its utter frustration. Its frustration is also rooted in the fact that the BJP has not only emerged as the dominant political party but has also succeeded in winning the support of more and more allies. In 1996, the Vajpayee government lasted only 13 days because only one party joined us in the government and only one more party supported it from outside. But, by 1998, the BJP succeeded in returning to power in alliance with a large number of parties, who inspite of not sharing our ideology, joined us on the basis of a common agenda.

The Congress could not stomach the BJP's success and hatched a conspiracy to topple the Vajpayee government. The plot worked, but the people undid the Congress conspiracy by giving their mandate to Shri Vajpayee's leadership.

Shri Advaniji said that the conspiracy to destabilise the Vajpayee government this time should be seen in the context of the Congress Party's failure in the past.

Shri Advaniji also told members of the National Executive that the Tehelka episode has served to remind the Party to look within and counter the negative influences that have gained ground within the organisation. He drew attention to the fact that, whereas the people would ignore the wrong doings of the Congress and other parties, they are deeply dismayed at seeing the image of the BJP being sullied.

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National Executive (Emergency Meeting)

New Delhi 29 December, 2001

SHRI ATAL BIHARI VAJPAYEE
(Prime Minister)

The terrorist attack on our Parliament on 13 December has created a situation in the country which is truly without a precedent. No self-respecting nation that values its freedom can take it lying down.

This development has made our decisive fight against terrorism the most important issue on the nation's agenda. Everything else is now secondary.

Our objective is to put an end to Pakistan-sponsored cross-border terrorism in Jammu & Kashmir and in the rest of the country. We shall use all the means and resources at India's command to achieve this objective. No means will be spared, although we shall do our utmost to avoid war with Pakistan.

I have said it before, and I say it again: We do not want war, but a war in the form of cross-border terrorism has already been thrust on India. We would like the world community, which had earlier remained indifferent to this proxy war against India for close to two decades, to bring pressure on Pakistan to give up its policy of cross-border terrorism.

The terrorist attacks on the United States on September 11 have changed the world's outlook towards the issue of terrorism. More and more countries now agree that India was right when we were alerting the world community about this menace.

The success in Afghanistan was principally due to the unprecedented global unity against terrorism. India urges the

international community to show similar resolve in the struggle against terrorism aimed at India, since the genesis of terrorism, fuelled by religious extremism, in Afghanistan and in our country is one and the same.

We welcome the understanding and support extended to India by the international community in our struggle against terrorism. We shall intensify our diplomatic efforts in the days to come to secure a concrete dimension to this understanding and support.

At the same time, I would like one and all to know that, if necessary, India shall fight this battle on its own to achieve our objective.

We have won the battle against terrorism in Punjab on our own strength. We shall similarly triumph against terrorism in Jammu & Kashmir and defend our national unity at all costs.

I would like to make it clear that India will not come under any external pressure to dilute our struggle against terrorism. This is our firm resolve.

At this juncture, I appeal to my countrymen to be prepared to face any eventuality - with unity, with courage and with supreme confidence in the justness of our struggle.

In Afghanistan, the outward signs of terrorism have disappeared. Taliban has lost power, which is a welcome development. However, the basic ideology of terrorism is yet to be defeated.

We in India are happy that our policy on Afghanistan has worked. Our support to the Northern Alliance, even at a time when the end of Taliban was not in sight, has demonstrated our principled stand.

In contrast, Pakistan's stand on terrorism has been exposed to be opportunistic. General Musharraf has hinted that he chose to join the international coalition against Taliban with the sole purpose of getting Kashmir. We accept this challenge.

I urge the Party - indeed, all political parties - to launch a *Jan Jagaran* (mass awareness campaign) to educate our people about the developing situation. Our endeavour should be to take every section of our diverse society with us on this issue. As a matter of fact, the nation is already united. We need to strengthen this unity.

I thank the Opposition parties for the support they have extended to the Government in this hour of crisis. This is in keeping with our proud national tradition.

We should take special care to ensure that no divisive issues are raised by anybody at this juncture. It is our prime duty to see to it that communal peace and harmony remains undisturbed throughout the country.

In conclusion, I have just this appeal to make to each and every worker of the Party:

“Prepare the nation, in close cooperation with all other parties – ruling or opposition – to face any eventuality and march as one. Our victory is certain.”

I am confident that our Party will rise to the occasion.

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National Executive

New Delhi

15-17 April, 2000

SHRI ATAL BIHARI VAJPAYEE

The BJP has reached its present strength as a result of our collective efforts. We have seen many joys which have been preceded by many a tear, sweat and, at times, even blood of our cadres. We have entered a crucial stage of our journey. Our acceptability has improved. It will improve further. This is because we are different and we speak a language which strikes a cord with the people. We must endeavour to maintain our distinctiveness as a party. Our political behaviour will determine this.

The crucial question we face is: 'What after this political success?' We are in power at the Centre and in several States. We have to concentrate on improving the quality of governance. The governance must concentrate on serving the people and keeping national interests paramount.

Our success has resulted in our opponents' adopting an unpredictable behaviour. We have also been in opposition for a very long time, but we have never stooped so low. The kind and quality of the language used by some leaders on the issue of Constitution review has acquired a new low. But we must maintain a dignified posture. We must endeavour to raise the level of debate on this issue. The debate must be constitutional and not provocative as some opposition leaders are indulging in.

The Congress has adopted political negativism from Pokharan to Kargil. What the Congress Party delegation told President Clinton was misinformed to the nation. The Congress Party delegation told President Clinton that India needed a minimum nuclear deterrent.

The Congress spokesman informed the media of this. Later the party denied having ever said this. Petty political considerations resulted in this political somersault.

But we should not allow ourselves to be bogged down by these unnecessary controversies. We have to look ahead and deliver results to the people and the nation. This is a joint responsibility of all NDA partners. All the NDA allies have a very co-operative attitude. I am getting the best of co-operation from our allies. We must be very careful about all our statements to the press. We must resist the temptation of speaking out too frequently. I have read some report on cricket betting. The Government has no proposal to legalise betting. We are all for eliminating this menace.

All functionaries in the Government and the party must be particularly careful and sensitive when we speak on issues relating to the minorities.

We must ensure that the programmes get the support of the Party and we endeavour to carry all sections of the society with us in this task which we have undertaken.

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National Executive

New Delhi

15-17 April, 2000

SHRI LK ADVANI

The last twenty years have indeed been a very happy journey. The turning point in this journey was 1996. The BJP in 1996 displaced the Congress as the principal party in India. We occupied the centre stage and the Congress was pushed to political negativism. Support to Shri HD Deve Gowda, Shri IK Gujral and now even to RJD in Bihar is a result of this negativism, the only object of which is to keep the BJP out. Even during the Pokharan tests and the Kargil conflict, issues which related to national security, the Congress adopted this approach. Even in relation to strengthening the Constitution through a review process, the Congress has adopted a politically negative attitude. The Congress President's shrill noises on Constitutional review are devoid of substance. It is an empty slogan. "Did the Congress Party show disrespect to Dr. Ambedkar by amending the Constitution over seventy times?"

In this twenty year journey, we have been guided by our ideology. We have aligned with many parties on the strength of our idealism. All the NDA partners subscribe to the ideals of good governance. Each one of us has kept aside some of our specific issues to subscribe to the common ideals of good governance.

We have reached this milestone on the strength of our ideals, ideology and commitment of our cadres. We have been fortunate to have had the leadership of Dr. Shyama Prasad Mukherjee and Pandit Deendayal Updhyaya when we were young. As we

have grown, we have in Shri Atal Bihari Vajpayee, a leader with a vision, who has the widest national acceptability and who is going to lead India into one of the most powerful and developed nations of the world.



National Council

Nagpur

27-28 August, 2000

SHRI M. VENKAI AH NAIDU
(General Secretary)

After the National Council session of the Bharatiya Janata Party at Parivartan Nagar in Gandhingar, Gujarat on 3-4 May, 1998, when Shri Kushabhau Thakre took over as the President of the Party from Shri Lal Krishna Advani, there have been many notable and historic events.

Just one week after that National Council session, nuclear tests were conducted in Pokhran on 11 and 13 May, 1998. It revealed to the world that Indian scientists are second to none. They made India proud.

The BJP, which had been actively involved in agitations for the creation of Uttaranchal, Jharkhand and Chhattisgarh States is happy that both the Houses of Parliament have approved the creation of these States. They will come into being shortly.

Orissa faced an unprecedented Super Cyclone in October 1999. The Bharatiya Janata Party rose to the occasion valiantly. Beside all BJP MLAs, MLCs and MPs contributing one month's salary to the Cyclone Relief Fund, the Party collected donations and other useful articles for rendering relief and rehabilitation to the affected persons.

On the Political Front

The party had to weather another kind of storm, a political one, when Shri Atal Bihari Vajpayee, who headed a coalition government when the National Council met in Gandhinagar,

was forced to demit office after being in office for 13 months, on 17 April, 1999. This step had to be taken after the AIADMK, prompted by the Congress, withdrew its support on 9 April, 1999. The Congress, which boasted that it would form an alternative government within a few hours, failed to muster enough support, even though that party was given more than sufficient time to prove that it could form a government. Consequently, the 12th Lok Sabha had to be dissolved and fresh elections ordered.

Shri Vajpayee is back as Prime Minister – he was sworn in as Prime Minister for the third time on 13 October, 1999 – and continues to head the Union government. He leads a more stable National Democratic Alliance Government now.

The Indian voters have decided that the BJP-led NDA is most suited for providing a stable government and good governance. They have realised that the Congress and some other parties, in order to gain the support of the people, make promises which they cannot and would not keep.

The BJP led government has restored the relaxation in qualifying marks and standards of evaluation in matters of reservation in promotions for SCs and STs which the Congress-backed United Front Government had taken away through five Office Memoranda in 1997.

It is noteworthy that as many as 21 Scheduled Tribe and 25 Scheduled Caste candidates have been returned to the Lok Sabha on the BJP ticket. We are happy that the BJP has the largest number of MPs from the Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes.

Responsive Party

Thanks to the selfless service, hard work, dedication and sacrifice of all our members and sympathisers, the Bharatiya Janata Party is today the largest political party in the country. From being a responsible opposition party in the past, the Bharatiya Janata Party has come to be regarded as a responsive party.

At a time when we are heading the Union government and are the ruling party in some other states, it would be appropriate to remember what Dr. Syama Prasad Mukherjee, the Founder-President of the Bharatiya Jana Sangh, said on 21 October, 1951: “Elections have, no doubt, an importance of their own. (but)

whatever may be the result of the elections, our party must continue to function thereafter, carrying the message of hope and goodwill to all classes in rebuilding a happier and more prosperous India." We should never forget this sane advice.

Political Alignments

With Selvi J. Jayalalitha's AIADMK aligning with the Congress and bringing down the BJP-led Government by a single vote, the Indian electorate was forced to go to the polls for the third time in four years.

Despite the Congress making a strong plea for a single party rule, the people reposed confidence in the NDA—a coalition of political parties committed to common interests. The parties were prepared to put the country's requirements ahead of their organisations' interests. The alliance partners decided to promote all significant interests and to set aside differences for the sake of achieving common goals.

The BJP has, thus, ushered in a new political culture, i.e., the politics of consensus, replacing the politics of confrontation. As we have been telling repeatedly, development is our mantra and consensus our approach.

Faced with another General Election, the third in four years, there was a fresh regrouping of parties and a new alliance was formed – the National Democratic Alliance. The people reposed faith in the BJP-led NDA and approved its agenda by giving the BJP alone 182 seats in the 13th Lok Sabha.

This time, the Dravida Munnetra Kazhagam, led by Thiru M. Karunanidhi, Chief Minister of Tamil Nadu, joined the NDA and the Telugu Desam Party, led by Shri Chandrababu Naidu, Chief Minister of Andhra Pradesh, supported the Alliance. While there were thirteen partners in the alliance in 1998, more political parties came together under the NDA umbrella in 1999. While the BJP had its own manifesto in the earlier elections, it fought the 1999 General Elections under an agenda prepared by the NDA.

Lok Sabha Elections

The BJP, which had only 2 seats in 1984, emerged as the single largest party in 1996. Contesting from 471 constituencies, it won 161 seats that year pushing the Congress (140 seats) to the

second place. The Party increased its tally to 180 seats in 1998 though it contested from only 384 constituencies. In 1999, the BJP further increased its total to 182, contesting for much lesser number of seats (339). This shows that the people have great confidence in the Party.

Assembly Elections

Elections to eleven State Assemblies – Delhi, Andhra Pradesh, Arunachal Pradesh, Goa, Karnataka, Maharashtra, Sikkim, Bihar, Haryana, Manipur and Orissa – were held after the BJP's National Convention in 1998.

In Andhra Pradesh, the BJP secured 12 seats (as against 3 held earlier). In Goa, the BJP bagged 10 seats (4 earlier). In Karnataka, the BJP won 44 seats as against 40 it had held earlier. In Bihar, our party obtained 67 seats as against 41 it had won earlier.

In Haryana, the BJP had a slight setback. We secured 6 seats as against the 10 earlier.

In Delhi also, we had a setback, but we recovered during the Lok Sabha elections, winning all the seven seats.

In Maharashtra, the BJP in alliance with the Shiv Sena was running the government. In that State also, the party did not perform up to the expectations. We could secure only 55 seats as against 64 held in 1995. However, our performance in the elections to the Lok Sabha was much better than in 1998. As against 4 seats in 1998, we won 13 seats in 1999.

In Manipur, the BJP made a good start, winning six seats. In Orissa, the BJP contested 63 seats and won 38 of them. Its alliance with the BJD, which won 68 seats, helped to trounce the Congress (26) which ruled the State during the earlier five years.

The BJP is in power in Gujarat and Himachal Pradesh on its own strength. In Uttar Pradesh, the BJP is leading a coalition government. It is a partner in the governments in Orissa, Meghalaya, Goa and Punjab.

Municipal Elections

The Bharatiya Janata Party's candidate was elected as Mayor in one Corporation in Andhra Pradesh. In addition, the Party was successful in ten Municipalities in the State. Thirteen Vice-Chairmen,

264 Municipal Councillors and 21 Corporators in five Municipal Corporations are also from the BJP.

In Madhya Pradesh

The BJP won 65 per cent of Municipalities for which elections were held in Madhya Pradesh this year. The Party won in nine of the eighteen Corporations. The BJP had only three Corporations with it earlier.

Of the 93 Municipalities for which elections were held, the BJP claimed 41. The Party was successful in 108 of the 262 Nagar Panchayats.

While the BJP held only two Zilla Parishads last time, it was successful in 18 of the 61 Zilla Parishads for which direct elections were held. BJP supported candidates won in three other Zilla Parishads.

The BJP was successful in 210 of the 467 Janapada Panchayats and in 115 of the 298 Krishi Upaj Mandis.

In Rajasthan

The BJP won in 978 of the 2729 wards in the Municipal Elections in Rajasthan. The Congress could secure only 967 wards. BJP candidates have been returned as Municipal Chairmen in 58 Municipalities as against 59 from the Congress. Considering the fact that the Congress is the ruling party in Rajasthan, BJP's performance is very heartening.

In Chandigarh

The BJP-Shiromani Akali Dal alliance won the posts of Mayor, Senior Deputy Mayor and Deputy Mayor in the elections to the Chandigarh Municipal Corporation in December 1999.

Last month, the BJP-sponsored candidate won the election to the post of Chairman of the Chandigarh Zilla Parishad.

Party's Growth

The BJP had 1.81 crore Primary members in 1998. Today, there are nearly 3 crore Primary members. As against 98,000 Active members in 1998, we have 2.43 lakh Active members now.

More than 1.5 lakh elected Local Committees were constituted in addition to thousands of Mandal Committees. Organisational

elections were completed in all the States except Orissa, before the election of the National President. Most of these elections were held on consensus basis, without any friction.

We greatly appreciate the efforts of the Chief Electoral Officer, and all State, District and Mandal Level Election Officers for the excellent work they have accomplished.

Aajiwan Sahayog Nidhi

With a view to making the Party financially self-sufficient, the *Aajiwan Sahayog Nidhi* was launched in 1997. Under this scheme, workers and sympathisers of the Party make an annual contribution of Rs. 1000 or Rs. 5000 or Rs. 10,000, depending on their capacity.

The idea is to have sufficient number of supporters so that the Party is not dependent on commercial and business interests for its funds and is free of pressures from them. This open funding of the Party will have a healthy influence in making political parties dependent on themselves for their financial needs. The *Nidhi* will be a permanent source of funding for the Party. The funds are audited and submitted to the Income Tax authorities.

It is heartening to note that because of the efforts of all of us, the number of contributors are increasing year after year. The names of *Aajiwan Sahayogis* are published from time to time in the Party's journals, *BJP Today* (English) and *Bhajapa Samachar* (Hindi).

We must renew our endeavour to increase the number of such contributors. We must resolve that all our organisational needs for funds are met by the *Aajiwan Sahayogi Nidhi*.

Sthapana Divas

6 April is observed every year as *Sthapana Divas* (Foundation Day). This year's *Sthapana Divas* was celebrated with added enthusiasm throughout the country and with a difference. At the national capital, there was a huge gathering of our members from Delhi which was addressed by the Party President, the Prime Minister and the Home Minister. Their inspiring speeches and messages to our members were printed in Hindi and English and sent to all our Units.

In the rest of the country, the *Sthapana Divas* was observed from 1-10 April in as many *Sthaneeya samithis* as possible. This is

the first time when such a national programme was observed at the local committee levels. More such programmes at the *sthaneeya* level should be planned by the State Units as that will involve our ground level members in party activities.

Organisational Matters

The President of the Party, Shri Kushabhau Thakre, met the elected Lok Sabha and Rajya Sabha Members of Parliament on 25-28 October, 1999 at the Party Headquarters to interact with them.

The National Executive Committee, which met in Chennai on 27 December, 1999, considered the Party's Constitution as amended by a Committee under the Chairmanship of Shri K. Jana Krishnamurthy and the National Council meeting on the next two days adopted the amendments after extensive discussions. According to the new constitution, the term of the President will be for one term of three years as against the earlier tenure of two terms of two years each.

It is under the new rules that organisational elections have been held in the States and for the post of National President. Shri Bangaru Laxman, who has been elected unanimously the National President, will hold office for three years.

There were contests only in Madhya Pradesh and West Bengal States for the election of the State President. In all the other State Units, including Pondicherry where a BJP State Unit was formed for the first time recently, the Presidents were elected unanimously. Elections are an integral part of democracy in a political party. While one cannot be against contests, the contestants should remember that there can be only one winner in a contest. The loser should be sportive enough to offer full co-operation to the winner. It is only then that a political party can survive.

Chennai Declaration

As the need to assess the changing political scenario, to reiterate our basic commitments and to refix our priorities was felt, the National Council of the Bharatiya Janata Party, which met in Chennai on 28-29 December, 1999 adopted a historic document called the 'Chennai Declaration'.

The Declaration acts as a guide for all the members of the

Party to rededicate themselves to the BJP's commitment to value-based politics, to broaden the Party's mass base and to make it an effective instrument to deliver good governance. It also calls on the members to faithfully implement the National Democratic Alliance's Common Manifesto without any dilution or deviation.

The Declaration also contains a clarion call to all the members and supporters of the Party, indeed to all our countrymen, to participate in the new resolve to make the 21st Century India's century—“*Nayi Shatabdi, Naya Sankalp*” and “*Ikkeesvin Shatabdi Bharat ki Shatabdi.*”

The Party will have to deeply study this and all the Party Units must follow the guidelines.

Training Camps

The BJP is a Party with a difference, a fact well-recognised by one and all. It is cadre based and mass oriented. For those in the Party, the inculcation of ideology and idealism is important. For this purpose, the workers need orientation training on a regular and scientific basis.

In September and October 1998, District level *sammelans* were held to educate participants on social combinations, political scenerio and organisational matters. Central and State leaders and Union Ministers participated in these *sammelans*. The idea was to propagate the real image of the Party and highlight the achievements of the government and to counter the vicious propaganda launched by the Congress and other parties.

A National Media training camp for those in the BJP looking after the Media was held in Delhi from May 1999. A similar camp was held in July 1999 in Calcutta for the benefit of those from Assam, Bengal, Orissa and North-Eastern States.

The *Kendriya Prashikshan Sansthan* of the BJP organised a meeting of *Prashikshan Prabharis* and *Sah-prabharis* in Jhinjouli in Haryana on 18-19 December, 1999.

A training camp for Members of Parliament was organised in Jhinjouli on 29 April, 2000. Shri LKAdvani, Union Home Minister, inaugurating the camp said that members who underwent training definitely did better on the floor of both the Houses of Parliament. Because of the training given to its cadre, the BJP stood tall among

the political parties.

As part of the training programme, a number of publications, educative and informative, were brought out.

The BJP Today, in English, and *Bhajapa Samachar*, in Hindi, the official organs of the Party have been well received. We must strive to increase their circulation by enrolling more subscribers.

Other Activities

A nation-wide campaign to highlight the performance of the BJP-led government was held from 11 February to 19 March, 1999.

Anti-betrayal Day was observed on 23 April, 1999 to demonstrate against the betrayal of the people's mandate by the AIADMK and the Congress.

Publications

A booklet on "Bihar Situation" was released before the State Assembly elections in Bihar to draw the attention of the people to the "Jungle Raj" prevailing in that State.

A document - *Constitutional Study & Review: Let Facts Speak for Themselves* - was released by the BJP on 14 April, 2000. It shows that the Congress has no moral right to talk about keeping Dr. Ambedkar's Constitution "intact". Successive Congress Governments amended the Constitution so many times in the past that its slogan "Save Constitution" rang hollow. The Congress went far beyond amending the Constitution. It altered its basic structure itself during the dreaded Emergency Rule.

The booklet was brought out by the BJP with a view to educating the people about the "what" and "why" of the National Democratic Alliance Government's decision to set up a Constitution Review Commission. It sought to counter the deceitful and diabolical propaganda by the Congress and its allies. It exposed the hypocrisy and dishonesty of the Congress and Communist Parties, by shedding light on their own brazen attempts in the past to mar the basic structure and principles of the Indian Constitution.

The Party has also brought out this year, in Hindi and English, a compilation of all the resolutions passed by it in various fora and the Presidential Addresses by its Presidents during the past 20 years. We have been bringing out periodically booklets and folders on

the Party's political programme. All these are of educative value to our cadre. We must make necessary sales arrangements in all District Centres so that the workers benefit by these publications. For this purpose, special drive is a must.

Emergency Remembered

The Bharatiya Janata Party brought out two booklets – “*Remember The Emergency and Strengthen Democracy*” and “*Darkness At Noon*” – on 25 June, 2000 to mark the 25th anniversary of the imposition of Emergency by the Congress Government, led by Smt. Indira Gandhi, in 1975. The booklets point out that for nineteen months, India – the world's largest democracy, reeled under a draconian regime which ran roughshod over the Constitution and every institution of our Parliamentary system of governance. The Congress has not yet apologised to the nation for imposing Emergency and inflicting untold sufferings on the people.

The imposition of Emergency was recalled so that the people could learn the right lessons from the dark phase in the history of free India and strengthen democratic systems.

Largely attended meetings were held throughout the country. MISA and DIR detainees were felicitated at public functions. Almost all the newspapers published special stories on 25 June and continued to carry articles on the dark period of Indian history for several days.

Dr. Syama Prasad Mookerjee's Centenary

Glowing tributes were paid to late Dr. Syama Prasad Mookerjee by the Bharatiya Janata Party leaders on the occasion of the start of his birth centenary on 5 July, 2000 at a function at the Party Headquarters. Similar programmes were held in different parts of the country.

The Party has decided to observe the next one year as Shri Syama Prasad Mookerjee Year, this being his centenary year. At Delhi, our efforts are to put up a suitable memorial building to perpetuate and propagate his ideals.

Kargil Day

The Bharatiya Janata Party observed 'Kargil Day' at the Party office here on 26 July, 2000. Lt Gen Candeth was the Guest of Honour.

Our Morchas' Activities

The Bharatiya Janata Party's Minority Morcha organised a nation-wide campaign/agitation to create awareness among the people about the terrorism sponsored by Pakistan. Seminars were also organised. On 20 January this year, thousands of people marched to the Pakistan High Commissioner's office in New Delhi and staged a demonstration.

The Morcha co-ordinated with the Mahila Morcha in organising a Muslim Youth and Muslim Women's Convention in Delhi.

Minorities Conferences were also conducted in Hyderabad, Bangalore, Patna, Delhi and some other places in the country. Large numbers of minorities participated in these conferences.

The BJP's Scheduled Castes Morcha organised a massive Dalit rally on 11-12 December, 1999 in Delhi. It was addressed by the Prime Minister. Meetings and rallies were also held by the State Units on 14 April to celebrate Dr. Babasaheb's birthday and to congratulate the Union Government for serving the interests of Scheduled Castes.

The Scheduled Tribes' Morcha of the BJP took steps to create awareness among tribals, even in far flung areas, about the various government schemes meant to benefit the Scheduled Tribes. A rally was organised in Dhahanu in Maharashtra. The Death Anniversary of the tribal leader, Birsa Munda, was observed.

The Yuva Morcha organised a *Yuva Sankalpa Sammelan* throughout the country on 26 February, 1999 with the inaugural programme being held in the Cellular Jail in Andaman. The 'Atal Sandesh' Yatra, to inform the people about the achievements of Shri Vajpayee-led government, was organised over a period of one month from 15 June, 1999.

A Village Reconstruction Army was constituted by the Bharatiya Janata Yuva Morcha in October-November 1999 to provide relief and rehabilitation to the victims of the Super Cyclone in Orissa. Rice, blankets and clothes collected throughout the country were made available to the sufferers.

A *Seema Suraksha Jagran Yatra*, which started in Dwaraka in Gujarat and ended in Guwahati in Assam, and which covered 7500 kms. in 48 districts of eight states, was organised by the Yuva Morcha to warn the people against the increased ISI activities in states adjoining the international border and threats to internal security. The President of the Yuva Morcha, Shri Ramashish Rai and Shri G. Kishen Reddy, Secretary, led the Yatra which received good response throughout.

A *Yuva Jagaran Padayatra*, in connection with *Yuva Chetna Varsh*, covering 616 kms from Calcutta to Cuttack was conducted from 12 January to 9 February, 2000. Not only were the achievements of the BJP-led government explained, but the work done by Netaji Subhas Chandra Bose and Swami Vivekananda was also brought to the notice of the people.

The Yuva Morcha launched in July a *Jana Jagriti Abhiyan* throughout the country to highlight the need to review the Constitution as also the threats from Pakistan's ISI. A large number of seminars and symposia were held.

The Mahila Morcha organised training camps in all the States. It conducted a number of seminars to seek 33 per cent reservation for women in legislatures. An All India Convention of Muslim women was held. Over 4000 Muslim women attended the convention which was addressed by the Prime Minister, Shri Atal Bihari Vajpayee.

Women's conventions were also organised in Hyderabad with over 30,000 women participating in them. In Shimoga of Karnataka, nearly 50,000 women attended the convention and in Himachal Pradesh, 10,000 women took part in the deliberations.

The Kisan Morcha is very active, too. The President and Secretary of the Morcha visited the districts in all States urging the kisans to strengthen the Party. The Morcha has been educating the kisans on the various schemes that would benefit them.

Teams of the Morcha visited Andhra Pradesh and Punjab and submitted reports about the suicides committed by farmers. It held '*Gram Gaurav*' *Sammelan* in Bihar and *dharnas* in Punjab which motivated the kisans to join the Morcha.

The State Units

It is gratifying to note that all the State Units of the Bharatiya Janata Party have been active and have been making steady progress.

Besides carrying out the programmes chalked out by the Party at the national level, they all organised agitational programmes, whenever necessary, and undertook programmes to highlight the achievements of the BJP-led government.

All the State Units rose to the occasion when the Super Cyclone struck Orissa. They collected not only funds but also useful articles for distribution to the affected persons.

Conclusion

We must spare no effort and leave no stone unturned not merely to maintain and retain our hold but to consolidate and increase the people's support. We have been gaining footholds in states where we had held a blank before. We must strive to increase our base.

In the end, I thank all our cadre, the Active Members, the Office-Bearers of all the State Units, the President of the Party, Shri Kushabhau Thakre, and other Office Members for the co-operation extended all these years.

Vande Mataram!

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