

#### CHAPTER IV

YASHWANTRAO CHAVAN : AS UNION MINISTER OF VARIOUS DEPARTMENTS AND THE LEADER OF THE OPPOSITION IN LOK SABHA .

When India suffered a serious Military defeat border war with China in 1962, Pt.Nehru thought it necessary to introduce new policies and strategies to renovate Indian economy, defence, external affairs, Home and so on. To implement his various plans he needed studied, loyal and rationalistic minded associates. In Yashwantrao Chavan he found one such person who could boost the morale of India's defence forces and efficiently gear up its defence production. In fulfilling Pt.Nehru's expectations Chavan had to face a great deal of odds. Inspite of it all, within a short span of time, this architect of modern Maharashtra by dint of his own efforts proved himself to be a worthy and ever remembered son of India. Chavan successfully shouldered the responsibility of the various portfolios of Defence, Home, Finance and External Affairs. He was equally competent as a leader of the opposition in Lok Sabha.

In this Chapter, <sup>an</sup> attempt has been made to throw light on various Ministerial responsibilities and achievements of Yashwantrao Chavan.

Yashwantrao Chavan, ~~who came of a poor farmers family~~  
was called upon by Pt. J. Nehru to take over the most challenging  
task before the country presented by the Indo-Chinese border  
conflict. (Shri) Chavan had a telephonic conversation with  
Pt. Nehru on 6th Nov. 1962 in which he was sounded by the  
Prime Minister that he would have to take over as the New  
Defence Minister of India. There were already lobby reports  
in Delhi that Yashwantrao was being considered for the post.  
Lal Bahadur Shastri had expressed an opinion that, 'possibly  
Nehru might call Chavan sahib'.<sup>1</sup> (Shri) Chavan, as a dedicated  
Congressman and a disciplined party worker had to abide by the  
decision of the leader of the party - Pandit Nehru, in whose  
leadership he had immense faith. However, before taking up  
the new responsibility, he first decided to solve the leadership  
problem in Maharashtra. He was undoubtedly the most powerful  
and popular political leader in the State at that time. Any  
person that Yashwantraoji would, have appointed as his successor  
would have been acceptable to the party as well as to the masses.

But Yashwantraoji being a true democrat, decided to have a consensus on the issue taking into confidence all the party workers and M.L.A.s and in this process (Sri) Kannamwar was elected as the Chief Minister of Maharashtra. After settling all these issues of the State which was in its infant state, in a speech of farewell (Shri) Chavan said,

" I speak to you to-night with mixed feelings in my heart. As you all know by this time, I am on <sup>the</sup> way to takeover my new office as Minister of Defence..... I am only too well aware of the stupendous nature of this task, of the problems that await me, and the heavy responsibility ahead."<sup>2</sup>

Thus, in this tiresome situation Yashwantraoji took over his new responsibility. A short review of the causes, course and consequences of the Indo-Chinese war would reveal the real magnitude of the intricate problems that Yashwantrao inherited when he took over the Defence Portfolio. The origins of the Indo-Chinese border dispute could be traced to Britain's failure to reach an agreement with China on India's Northern Border<sup>3</sup>. In March, 1961, General Thapar became the Chief of Army Staff (C.O.A.S) while Lieutenant General B.M.Kaul, became the Chief of General Staff.(CGS)

Both the Officers & were responsive to political pressure and the criticisms in the press against the Government's inaction in the face of Chinese advance<sup>4</sup>. So Pt.Nehru

decided at a high level meeting on November, 17th 1961 that

'Indian forces should fill the gaps along the Sino-Indian

Border, especially in Ladhak by setting up<sup>a</sup> forward post and this was the beginning of the much debated " forward policy".

This decision to push forward was accepted by both General

Thapar and General Kaul but with little idea and perspective

of the hazards this policy may create. Although B.N.Mullik

has said that, " it is wrong to call this policy by the name

of 'Forward Policy' at all.<sup>5</sup>" In November, 1961 itself the

Chinese Government asked their Indian Counterparts to stop

their dangerous strategy and said that the Chinese Government

would have every reason to send troops to cross the so-called

Mc Mohan Line and enter the vast area between the Crest of the

Himalayas and their Southern foot.<sup>6</sup> (Mr. Krishna Menon,

the then Defence Minister of India did not take into account

the realities of the situation. On his advice, Pt.Nehru

took the ensuing decisions which subsequently led to the actual war in the winter of 1962. Even on Krishna Menon's ~~advice~~ advice some of the senior army officers who were opposed to the setting up of the so-called forward posts were down graded or overlooked for promotion. Brigadier Dalvi later wrote that, " From the Corps Commander down to myself as the Brigade Commandar we had grave reservations about the wisdom of this policy"<sup>7</sup>. Thus, without knowing the limitations of the Indian Army - not the soldiers or their morale but the facility of Civil Supplies, Arms and Ammunitions and communication - India decided to go ahead with its policy. This was a total misjudgement on the part of Krishna Menon and his advisers. In an address to the nation Pt.Nehru declared that India has reacquired 2500 sq.miles of area out of the total of 12000 sq-miles from China<sup>8</sup>. Brigadier Dalvi from his own observations before the war actually took place and from his findings as a prisoners of war wrote, that the Chinese preparation began in earnest from May, 1962 and the Chinese moved a famous general of Korea famous to command Chinese forces

in Tibet<sup>9</sup>. In September, Pt. Nehru was away in London to attend a 'Conference of Commonwealth Prime Ministers' and at that time the Defence Minister (Mr.) Krishna Menon decided to make an aggression on Thag-La and capture it. There was no consensus among the top army officers. Lieutenant General Umrao Singh openly opposed this move. Because of that Krishna Menon changed some strategic persons in the NEFA and appointed Lieutenant General Kaul. Over ambitious General Kaul thought this to be an opportunity to reach the highest office of the COAS. With his take over of NEFA front the Indian troops were to take the Thag-La Bridge on October 10th . But the Chinese reaction to this move was a very severe one and the Indian Army ran helter skelter in a few days. General Thapar the then Chief of Army Staff eight years later stated, " Krishna Menon took the decision inspite of the misgivings which I expressed regarding the Chinese reaction and its consequences"<sup>10</sup>.

Thus, India experienced a great deal of reverses and debacle in the frontier area and the whole country was up against Krishna Menon. The Congress M.P.s complained on October, 23

that Pt.Nehru and the nation had been misled by Krishna Menon.

(Mr.) Menon was grieved and shocked by the volume of protest that poured against him and thus submitted his resignation to the Prime Minister on 30th of October. The very next day Pt.Nehru took over the Defence Portfolio<sup>11</sup>. The stress of the Chinese War was showing on **Nehru**. He was very much distressed and the age factor was also catching on. So he immediately wanted to appoint a Defence Minister who could ably handle the situation. Thus, the mantle of Defence Ministership fell on Yashwantrao though there were few more names such as T.T.Krishnamachari and Biju Pattnaik were also in consideration. But this Defence Ministry did'nt come to Yashwantrao on a silver platter but infact it was a crown of thorns.

(Shri.) Yashwantraoji was declared as the Defence Minister on 14th November, 1962. Pt.Nehru had not really made up his mind on how to organise the Defence Ministry. He had an idea of creating a new Ministry of Supplies to co-ordinate production. T.T.Krishnamachari desired Civil and Defence Production to be brought together. But after Yashwantrao's

appointment it was announced that he would be in charge of the whole defence organisation including the newly created department of Defence Production.<sup>12</sup> T.T.Krishnamachari and Mr.Raghuramayah were appointed at the same time as the Minister of Economic and Defence Production and Defence Production respectively. It was all very confusing and Shri. Chavan had two long sessions of meetings with Pt.Nehru to be clarified about the idea behind these bifurcations. Another misunderstanding had already taken place even before the swearing in of Yashwantraoji as the Defence Minister on November, 21st. On the 19th of November CASG Thapar returned from Tejpur to Delhi and immediately after his return he submitted his resignation to Prime Minister Pt.Nehru. Pt.Nehru discussed the matter with the President S.Radhakrishnan and during the discourse Dr. Radhakrishnan suggested the name of General J.N.Chaudhary<sup>13</sup>. The following day Pt. Nehru declared in Parliament that General Thapar had been bent on leave on health grounds and General Chaudhary is taking over as the Chief of Army Staff.<sup>14</sup>



(Shri.) Yashwantraoji reached Delhi by the evening of 20th November. Prior to this , as mentioned earlier the C.O.A.S. was changed and even the Secretary in the Defence Ministry was changed and P.V.R.Rao was appointed as the New Defence Secretary. (Shri.) Chavan was naturally embarrassed when he found that these two major appointments were made by Pt.Nehru without consulting him and that too only a day before he took up the office. Did it mean that Pt.Nehru did not have faith in him and wanted to forestall him in the case of these important appointments<sup>15</sup>. (Shri.) Chavan by nature was very calm and quiet and a man of patience. He was totally unruffled by the situation he faced. It was his quality of this nature which made him face such innumerable problems with courage and conviction.

The first day when he took over as the Defence Minister he had a meeting with the newly appointed Defence Secretary (Mr.) P.V.R. Rao who was a Senior Cadre Officer of the Indian Civil Service. He offered himself to be transferred to another department if the Hon'ble Defence Minister wanted him to

do so. (Shri.) Chavan very much appreciated the frankness of the Defence Secretary and he immediately took him into confidence and assured him that they both would work in total co-operation in this crucial period in the country. He also developed a quick rapport with General Chaudhary and other Senior Officers of the Army, the Air Force and the Navy.

Krishna Menon, the Former Defence Minister, was still hobnobbing with Defence Matters. He was infact making a strong lobby in the Capital to bring back General Thapar as the C.O.A.S. But

Yashwantrao was very forthright in his approach to defence

matters as soon as he took over. One fine morning (Shri.) Chavan

was called to breakfast at Teen Murti Bhavan by Pt. Nehru to

discuss some important matters. (Shri.) Chavan went to the Teen

Murti Bhavan House fully prepared with files and other documents

and fully armed with proposals he would have liked to discuss ~~with~~

with the Prime Minister. On reaching the table, he found

✓ Krishna Menon <sup>^</sup>setting by the side of Pt. Nehru. (Shri.) Chavan did

not hesitate to point out to Pt. Nehru that it would be inadvisable

to discuss defence matters in the presence of an outsider. <sup>16</sup>

Even before Shri. Chavan had taken the oath as Defence Minister China had declared an unilateral cease fire and <sup>had</sup> returned to their bases at Tibet.<sup>17</sup> The Chinese announced that ... Beginning from December 1st 1962, the Chinese frontier guards will withdraw to positions twenty Km. behind the lines of actual control, which existed between China and India on November, 7th 1959.<sup>18</sup> The war in the NEFA was a great disaster for India. Shri. Yashwantraoji never overlooked the possibility of a similar design by China in future. So even though an unilateral ceasefire was declared by China still India had to remain alert all the time and bridge the gaps which were created during the War. In the course of the fighting, one thousand three hundred eighty three Indians died, one thousand six hundred and ninety six were missing and three thousand nine hundred and sixty eight were captured. No Chinese soldiers <sup>was</sup> <sup>a</sup> taken prisoner by India<sup>19</sup>. ~~India~~ <sup>The latter</sup> in fact suffered a disastrous blow to its international standing and prestige. The responsibility of Shri. Yashwantrao was not only to reorganise the armed forces

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but also to give a moral boost to them and to enthuse the sagging spirit of people of the country. In a public meeting he said,

" If the country calls me I will resign as Chief Minister and go away,.... You kindly don't think that I am going because I got a big post of Defence Ministership. But I am going as a humble soldier at my country's call and my leader's call."<sup>20</sup>

The first thing (Shri) Chavan did in this regard was to get acquainted with the situation in NEFA and Ladakh by visiting these places which were the war fields of Indo-China War. In this context, he said,

" I went practically to all the fronts - in the NEFA, Kashmir, and Rajasthan border. I tried to understand their problems, established some sort of rapport with the men and the officers. I went to their training institutions, sat with them, talked with them and ate with them<sup>21</sup>".

He also addressed a lot of public meetings in the frontier area in order to give a healing touch to the war affected people. In one of his letters to his wife, Venutai, Yashwantraoji wrote,

" I held a public meeting in Tejpur, where <sup>a</sup>large number of spectators had gathered to see me. I have referred to these listeners as spectators because they did not understand my language nor did I understand theirs. I found out a person who knew Hindi and who could interpret my speech to them. I spoke for a short while but was

convinced and satisfied that they understood whatever I spoke<sup>22</sup>".

This shows Yashwantraoji's sincere efforts and simple methods

to reach ~~to~~ the masses and make them understand the necessity

to rebuild the Indian defences. The total condition in the

North Eastern sector was in shambles and in a very fluid state.

India was still very much apprehensive about China's future

steps. China had already accomplished a number of military

and political objectives. So India's need of the hour was

to expand its military power, to modernise the army with the

latest equipment and to avail the army better facilities of

communication and these were the basis things Yashwantraoji

had to perform as the Defence Minister which he took up

immediately.<sup>23</sup> Shri. Y.B. Chavan also insisted on improving the

system of command. He wanted a sort of co-ordination between

them. He explained the idea of the War operation thus:

"Even the largest and best equipped armies need to be given proper policy guidance and major directives by the Government whose instrument it is. These must bear a reasonable relation to the size of the army and the State of its equipments

from time to time. An increase in the size or improvement in the equipments of the army, costs not only money but also needs time. " <sup>24</sup> ~~Shri.~~ Chavan also planned several welfare measures for the armed forces. He presented a detailed picture of the requirements of the armed forces to the Parliament. The Five Year Plan prepared by the Defence Ministry was to cost Rs. 5000 crores on an average of Rs. 1000 Crores per year. Shri. Chavan's reply in the Lok Sabha in March 1964 to the debate on demands for the funds for Defence Ministry was well appreciated by the people and the media. In this regard, the Indian Express dt. 26th March, 1964 read,

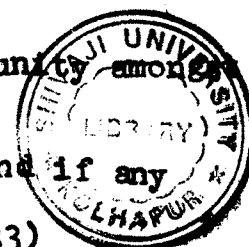
" Such details as Mr. Chavan revealed ..... and he must be commended for taking Parliament and the people more into confidence than his predecessors, shows that the Ministry is on the right path. It is facing realistically the requirements of defence".

In this context, another frontier Newspaper front line reads,

"Yashwantrao had broken an irksome precedent when he gave a much fuller picture of the country's defences than the House has had for many years<sup>25</sup>".

He also took the Parliament and the people into confidence as regards the defence problems which none of his predecessors had attempted to do<sup>26</sup> .

In the meanwhile an Inquiry Commission was appointed consisting of Brigadier P.S.Bhagat and Major General Hinderson Brookes to inquire into the details of India's debacle in the Indo-China War. The Government particularly wanted this commission to inquire into the cause of the debacle and the circumstances which led to it and the persona and officers who were responsible for it. Later the report of the commission was placed before the Government but it could never come in the public because of the fact that it was the Government's secret Government's documents<sup>27</sup> . But the Defence Ministry started to work on the lines of the report under the leadership of the Defence Minister. He reiterated the basic thing that in order to keep have a strong nation, to intact its sovereignty it must have a strong army and besides that the people of the country should also contribute to their efforts. The feeling of the unity among the people of the country is the most basic factor and if any



cracks develop in this feeling, it will hamper the defences of the country.<sup>28</sup>

Soon after Yashwantrao's take over several committees were set up to examine in depth the problems of the Defence Department. The purpose of many of these committees was to stimulate thought on defence problems and establish a mechanism for effective public relations for the armed forces which was completing ~~is~~ lacking till then. He thought that,

" the strategy of the defence of a country is never exclusively a military affair but is some sort of a military - cum - political - cum - economic affair<sup>29</sup>."

In this respect he said,

" We must remember that the true meaning of the preparation of defence is the economic and technical progress of the country.<sup>30</sup>"

Defence is not an academic subject and that it could be mastered by reading briefs or notes prepared by the Secretary or other bureaucrats or by any departmental heads. It was in fact a thoroughly technical and practical affair and required knowledge of the cost and capability of aircrafts, guns, ships and military



techniques. But Yashwantraoji was always a willing learner.

He was very <sup>a</sup> cautious in his approach and as observed earlier

'patience' was the key note of his character. But all the

same Yashwantraoji was always wide awake and never easily

caught napping nor was he easily rattled. Thus, after

studying the country's defence problems in his true perspective

and creating a proper climatic condition for increased defence

production and side by side uplifting the sagging morale of

the country's people Yashwantraoji turned his attention for

acquiring defence material and technical know-how from abroad.

He had a long standing invitation from Robert Macnamara the

Defence Secretary of the U.S. Government. So (Shri) Chavan visited

U.S. to finalise deals in defence supplies. Before his visit

some experts of both the Governments had met several times

and a congenial atmosphere for defence aid to India was already

created. India's Defence Secretary P.V.R. Rao and Air Chief

Marshal Arjun Singh had already reached U.S. before Yashwantrao's

arrival in that country. India had already commissioned a

highly sophisticated bomber plane HF-24 indigenously made in

the Hindustan Aeronautic Limited, Bangalore, which was as efficient and effective as any other jet made in the world.

In this context, Yashwantraoji observed,

" The completion of HF-24 with speed of sound was a remarkable achievement which showed that Indian technicians and workers were the equals of any in the world<sup>31</sup>".

However, Yashwantraoji visited U.S. which was not quite fruitful as he had expected it to be. As per his analysis U.S. wanted to keep India as much dependent on her as possible and was not happy about India's agreement with the Soviet Union for the production of MiG in India. After Yashwantraoji's forth-right expression of annoyance at the U.S. attitude, it was decided that Yashwantraoji should have a meeting with the President Johnson. A meeting was fixed for 28th May, 1964<sup>32</sup>. But unfortunately on the previous day of the scheduled meeting i.e. on 27th May, 1964 Pt. Nehru expired and Shri. Chavan had to come back <sup>to</sup> India immediately. Subsequently after discussions at various levels in the U.S.A. and later in India between

ambassador Chester Boules and Shri. Chavan, the U.S.A. finally agreed to give India - 1) immediate credit of ten million dollars for the purchase of Defence articles and services, especially for modernisation of plants and equipments in ordinance factories, 2) Military assistance during July 1964 - June 1965 at the same level as in the previous years for such items as equipment for mountain divisions, communication, transport, aircrafts and road buildings equipments, all of which were to be given in kind and 3) a further credit of fifty million dollars during 1965-66.

After August, 28th 1964 Yashwantraoji paid a visit to Soviet Union. Russia's approach to the Indian Defence problems and their remedies was quite optimistic and they wished to co-operate as far as possible. But Shri. Chavan's brief was not to make any sort of a commitment as a policy matter and that is why he only opted to take some patrolships from Russia. His main discussion was held with his counterpart

Mr. Malinovsky . He also had meetings with other Russian

Officers from the departments of Economics and Industries.

Shri. Chavan had three meetings with the then Russian head Mr.

Khrushchev which according to Yashwantrao were quite fruitful.

Shri. Y.B. Chavan reported to the Indian Cabinet

about his negotiations in Russia and the agreement signed

on September 11th 1964 between India and the Soviet Union<sup>33</sup>.

But the Government of India policy under the leadership of

Prime Minister Lal Bahadur Shastri was in a formulative period

and thus unsure as to the extent of the aid they should get

from the Soviet Union. So Yashwantraoji went to U.K. In

Nov. 1964 just after the Labour Party with Mr. Harold Wilson

as Prime Minister came to power. He had a number of meeting

at various levels but found that the British Policy was not

a very responsive one towards India's defence needs. In this

particular period three important events took place which

Shri. Chavan had referred to in one of his speeches at a

public meeting held at Kamgar Maidan in Bombay on 4th Nov. 1964,

" To mention a few important things: in England labour party came to power, Khrushchev was purged from the Government and China made a nuclear explosion<sup>34</sup>. According to him these things had a repercussion as regard to India's Defence and Foreign Policies.

On ~~XXX~~ his return from U.K., the Indian Government realised that it will not get any sort of tangible help from either U.S.A. or U.K. and that is why he decided to reopen negotiation with the Soviet Union. Russia agreed to give India among other things, three squadrons of MiG -21 aircrafts, 170 Light Tanks and 20 helicopters. The purchases were to be paid for in rupees over ten years at two percent interest. The Soviet Union also gave India two surface - to - air Missiles( SAM) to protect major cities. In all till the end of 1965 Russia helped India to the tune of Rs. 100 crores in Defence Projects. Out of this rupees 60 crores were for MiG 21 project.<sup>35</sup>

In the meantime Pakistan had started building up pressure on the Western frontier and had also acquired defence equipments from various sources. It had particularly developed

a very good rapport with China which was of a greater concern to India. Besides this the U.S.Govt. had provided Pakistan with Pattern Tanks which were supposed to be most sophisticated and devastating war tanks in the world. In fact, under the inspiration of United States, Secretary of States, Mr. John Foster Dullas, U.S. gave massive military aid to Pakistan from 1954 onwards. Pakistan had already desired to somehow or the other annex Kashmir to Pakistan and Kashmir was an obsession with them which is a fact even today- Pakistan's aggressive attitude was quite evident right from the days of partition and independence. So the main concern of the Indian Defence strategists was a threat of war from Pakistan on the Kashmir pretext.

It became clear to the Government of India early in 1965 that Pakistan was itching for a fight. In January, India discovered that the Pakistanis had encroached about 36 mile and a half on the Indian territory in the Rann of Kutch. Pakistan already tried to enter Kashmir by breaking the ceasefire line. On 24th April, Pakistan attacked the Rann of Kutch again with a great Military force. The Pakistan Army in Brigade strength - supported by Pattern Tanks and hundred pounder guns launched a multipronged attack in the run. This was a

sort of ' undeclared War' started by Pakistan<sup>37</sup>. After these incidences, Yashwantraoji ordered the Indian Armed Forces to be prepared for any kind of eventuality. On April, 28th Lal Bahadur Shastri and Yashwantraoji gave a strong warning to Pakistan in the Parliament and made it clear to them that if Pakistan continues their notorious attitude then India will have no option but to resort to offensive measures. Prime Minister Shastri stated,

" If Pakistan continues to discard reason and persists in its aggressions, our army will defend the country and it will decide its own strategy and the employment of its man power and equipment in the manner in which it deems best ".<sup>38</sup>

Pakistan had planned to fight an undeclared war through insurgency and guerilla type warfare. From 1st of August, 1965, it had started their activities in Kashmir with the ultimate plan of cutting it off from the rest of India and finally making the dream of Azad Kashmir a reality. A secret Radio Station, Sada-e-Kashmir (Voice of Kashmir) was set up by Pakistan and it broadcast appeals to Kashmiris to assist the guerillas. It also appealed to the South Indians, the Sikhs and Rajputs as all of them were groaning under the caste -Hindu oppressive rule<sup>39</sup>. In the first week of August, (Shri. Chhavan

had gone to Vizagapattanam to visit the naval centre there. But soon after his arrival there, he was asked by the Prime Minister to return to Delhi immediately. On his return, the Cabinet met at Prime Minister's residence to discuss the possible actions India should undertake in the face of the threat of war. On the lines of their discussion Yashwantraoji started his manoeuvres against the Pakistanis. A big force of regular Pakistani Army had already crossed the cease-fire line and entered Bhimbar in Jammu. Reacting to this poser of Pakistan the Indian Army attacked the Tithwal Sector and captured two strategic Pakistani posts and sealed off the main invasion routes of the infiltrators. In this context the Hon'ble Defence Minister Shri. Chavan stated in the Lok Sabha,

" A notable feature of the operation in Jammu and Kashmir has been the strong support given by the Pakistani regular forces to the infiltrators on our side of the ceasefire line. .... the result of the battle has not been according to Pakistan desire. All the attacks of Pakistan have been repulsed. A heavy casualties have been inflicted on them and we have maintained our position along the crease fire line.<sup>40</sup>"

On the 1st September, 1965 Pakistan attacked India in the South Kashmir area along the Bhimbar and Chamb sector with



full force of pattern tanks. This attack was so forcefull that two Pakistani Brigades, each brigade consisting of three thousand soldiers, along with the hundred tanks out of which seventy were U.S.Made powerful pattern tanks attached Jammu<sup>41</sup> . It. Genl. Harbaksh Singh was the GOC of Western Command. He contacted General Choudhury and told him about the deteriorating situation in the Chhamb Sector. When General Singh's message came to General Chaudhury, the chief of the Air Force was also present there. Later they both met Yashwantraoji and all the three after taking pragmatic view of the ~~situaat~~ situation decided to make use of the Air Force to curb the onslaught of the Pakistani Forces. To start an air attack meant that India had started the International war. This was a very grave decision to be taken urgently. As per the protocols and conventions, Yashwantraoji should have consulted the Prime Minister regarding the use of Air Force in the War. But since there was no time for discussions and deliberations, Yashwantrao wisely took the decision immediately to use the Air force and counter attack the Pakistanis in the Jammu and Chamb Sector. He informed the Prime Minister regarding his decision after half an hour of the Air Force operation started. Even before the sunset the Indian Air Force had demolished several Pakistani Tanks and the Pakistani army was

was running helter skelter while the Indian Air Force was successful in stopping the Pakistani Army marching towards Jammu. This quick decision of Shri. Chavan to make use of the Air Force at this particular juncture proved to be very vital in the ensuing days of the war. The Prime Minister Shastri also fully supported Yashwantraoji in this decision. Chavan's decision was quite justifiable because even a few hours of indecision and delay would have been disastrous from the Indian point of view.

In consultation with General Chaudhury, the Chief of the Air Staff and other top Army officials (Shri) Chavan decided to make immediate thrusts towards Sialkot and Lahore. On Sept. 6th 1965, the Defence Minister came before the Parliament to make an announcement. It was the 6th day of the Indo-Pak War.<sup>42</sup> On that day the Indian Army had struck with the support of tanks and the Air Force, a three pronged offensive towards Lahore. In this context (Shri) Chavan stated in the Parliament,

" In order to forestall the opening of another front by Pakistan, our troops in the Punjab moved across the border in Lahore Sector for the protection of the Indian Border<sup>43</sup>".

His announcement was received with thunderous applause in the Parliament and that echoed throughout the country.

In the second week of September, the Indian Army did show real heroism in the battlefield of Khemkaran Sector. Pakistan had attacked this sector with 225 (pattern) tanks at their disposal. The Pakistani tanks had occupied an area of 30 sq.miles. India's ratio of tanks to that of Pakistan was 4:1. Yet the Indian Army with the combination of Air Force destroyed this strong attack and actually captured 97 (pattern) tanks besides destroying many of them. As a result of this Khemkaran was called " The graveyard of (Pattern) Tanks <sup>44</sup> ". By the third week of September the war was in its ~~maxi~~ decisive state. But there was still a threat of China through their postures and deployment along the Northern Borders. Yashwantraoji was unruffled. He told the country,

" We are resolved to maintain the sovereignty and territorial integrity of India and we will meet the new threat <sup>45</sup> s with valour and courage ".

In the meantime strong political pressures were put on India and Pakistan by U.S.A. and U.K. and U.S.S.R. The Secretary General of U.N.O. visited both the countries from September, 12<sup>th</sup> to 14<sup>th</sup> and pressed the leaders of both the countries to accept a ceasefire. Prime Minister Lal Bahadur Shastri accepted the proposal with the pre-condition that Pakistan must stop instantly and withdraw its

forces. Pakistan's loss in the war was considerably higher than those of India. Pakistan's Military might was truly shattered and their Generals mauled<sup>ed</sup> so much so that Pakistan's President Ayubkhan gave compulsory retirement to eleven generals and thirty Colonels of Pakistani Army. So in fact the cease fire came as a blessing to Pakistan and they too agreed to the ceasefire. Lastly, with the good offices of the Soviet Premier Mr. Kosygin, a summit meeting between Lal Bahadur Shastri and Ayubkhan took place at Tashkent in U.S.S.R. On January, 4th 1966 the negotiation between the two leaders began and was finally concluded on 10th January, 1966. Shri. Chavan had accompanied Shastriji to Tashkent in order to advise him on the military aspects of the agreement and was deeply involved in all the deliberation and talks. He was close to Shri. Shastri during the peace talks as he was during the war times. On January, 11th 1966 a day after the Tashkent Declaration was signed Shastri died of heart attack in his room in Tashkent. Shri. Chavan flew back to New Delhi with the Late Prime Minister's body.

Shri. Chavan emerged out of the war with his image and prestige enhanced. His leadership qualities during the difficult period of war were acclaimed by one and all. There was a kind of disparity between the three wings of the armed forces.

In fact there was a sort of a cold war between them. But after the advent of (Shri) Chavan as the Defence Minister he had brought about complete co-ordination and parity between the three wings of the armed forces. It is the opinion of the Military experts that during the 1965 Indo Pak War the co-ordination between the Army and the Air force were so excellent that it could be termed as one of the greatest one in the <sup>history</sup> ~~history~~ of world armed forces.<sup>46</sup>

Yashwantraoji on the call of Pt. Nehru had joined as Defence Minister. He was considered a novice in the field of defence. He himself told Pandit Nehru that he had no qualifications for the post of the office of the Defence Minister except his patriotism. But by the year 1966 he had proved himself to be an expert in military affairs, an able administrator and a military leader par excellence.

In the mid-sixties some rightist and sectionist movements as well as extremist movement like Naxalities had started taking deep roots in the country. Hence the internal affairs of the country had become very sensitive and needed to be dealt with a strong hand and determination. So in November 1966 Yashwantrao was appointed the Home Minister of India by the then Prime Minister

(Mrs.) Indira Gandhi.

During Chavan's tenure as Defence Minister from 1962 to his appointment as Home Minister in 1966 he was in the thick and thin of the political activities pertaining to the issues of succession after the demise of Nehru and then again after the sudden demise of Lal Bahadur Shastri. (Pt) Nehru's death brought up the question of succession with all its <sup>47</sup>prignance. Upto now it was only an academic question, after Nehru who ? Nehru was not keeping well after the X Bhubaneshwar Session of the Congress held on 8th January, 1964 where he suffered a paralytic attack. After that an adhoc cabinet committee which included Gulzarilal Nanda, T.T.Krishnamachary, Yashwantrao Chavan and Swaran Singh was formed. The committee was to help Nehru in political and administrative affairs. Later on, Shastri who had resigned from the cabinet under the Kamraj Plan (according to which some of the ministers had to resign from their posts, voluntarily and work for the party organisation) was reinducted in the cabinet as a Minister without portfolio and he began to act as an assistant to the Prime Minister.

Subsequently After Nehru's death, Gulzarilal Nanda became the acting Prime Minister due to his seniority in the cabinet. This was a kind of interim arrangement till the next political heir to Nehru was chosen in a democratic process.

(Shri.) Morarji Desai was out of the Union Cabinet under the Kamraj Plan but he was a serious contender for the Prime Ministership and he announced his candidature even while Nehru's body was lying in State at the Teen Murti Bhavan.

(Mrs.) Indira Gandhi was not in a mental state to accept the responsibility. Kamraj as the Congress President threw his weight behind Lal Bahadur Shastri. So in this act of succession finally Shastri and Desai were the two major contenders left. Chavan was the major factor to be considered by both the factions because he had a solid vote-bank of Maharashtra behind him. When Yashwantraoji was asked, in <sup>his</sup> opinion he was almost prophetic in his pronouncement. He said,

" The world expects you to behave with dignity. So we must do everything possible to reach a consensus, to achieve unanimity.... my commitment is to the goal of unanimity<sup>48</sup>".

This political stand of Chavan was devoid of any diplomacy and his theory of ' consensus' always prevailed over personal consideration. Speaking before the Congress Working Committee, he said,

" The whole world is looking forward to India as to how we select our next leader

and that is why we must forget all our differences of opinion and must select our leader with majority consensus<sup>49</sup>".

There was a line of thinking in the Congress Party that Yashwantrao would support Morarji Desai for the Prime Ministership because Yashwantrao was some way or the other indebted to Morarji in his earlier political career. But contrary to all these expectations Chavan categorically stated that he always stood for the party and not any personality. The situation was then such that if Chavan and D.P. Mishra had supported Morarji then there would surely be an election between Shastri and Desai. Chavan's conscience didn't allow him to tread this path of factionalism. Thus his non-commitment to Morarji (were) responsible for avoiding a confrontation between these stalwarts and subsequently Morarji Desai opted out of the race for Prime Ministership and Lal Bahadur Shastri became the Prime Minister of India. As mentioned earlier Shastri's tenure as Prime Minister was only of eighteen months and after his sad demise in (Tashkand), the question of succession again raised its head and became a focal point on the political scene of India.

In this case also history was repeating itself.

Gulzarilal Nanda as (a (Senior Most) cabinet member was again



called upon by the President to take up the post of Acting Prime Minister. This was the second time Nanda was assuming this coveted office and his expectations were that he would be retained this time as the ~~mainly~~ duly elected Prime Minister. He and his followers started lobbying for his Prime Ministership even before Shastri's mortal remains had reached New Delhi. Morarji Desai was also in the race again and this time he did not rely much on his supporters to carry on the propaganda of his candidature but he took on himself the mantle of his own propaganda. Kamraj as the Congress Party President was the most powerful figure on whom <sup>a</sup> lot of things were depending (upon). One of the senior Congress leaders (Shri. Atulya Ghosh from West Bengal also suggested the name of Kamraj for the Prime Ministership. Even Chavan's name was in consideration for this post in the political circles and Nijlingappa the then Chief Minister of Mysore supported his candidature with a condition that other leaders should agree to the proposal. Yashwantrao's image right after the war was very high and indeed he was a serious contender of this post <sup>50</sup>. But this time Morarji Desai was bent upon to force an election because he had a feeling that last time he was cheated by the theory of consensus and this time he wanted a secret ballot in the

Congress Parliamentary Party. The Congress Working Committee, however, decided to seek a consensus to be sought by (Shri. Kamraj). Thus there were three contenders for the post - Indira Gandhi, Morarji Desai and Yashwantrao Chavan. Some leaders namely S.K. Patil, a stalwart Congress man from Bombay opposed the name of Chavan and declared that 'if Chavan is a candidate, I am a candidate too.'<sup>51</sup> Chavan no doubt was interested in the proposal but he was very cautious in this matter. Vasantrao Naik, the then Chief Minister of Maharashtra was leading his campaign and interestingly Chavan did not take any active part in his campaign. In fact Vasantrao Naik played a stellar role in the ensuing strategies. When Yashwantrao and his followers saw that the anti-Morarji faction of the party was gathering round Indira Gandhi, Chavan had a free and frank discussion with her and equivocally stated to her that if she wished to become the Prime Minister then he and his followers would support her fully if the other leaders of the party are co-operating with her. He will positively remain outside the race of Prime Ministership. In this context he said,

" If you wish to be the Prime Minister and you have the backing of other leaders, I will withdraw ~~my~~ and my candidature will go to you<sup>52</sup>."

(Shri) Chavan and his followers were a deciding factor in this matter. After Yashwantrao's unconditional support, Indira Gandhi was quite sure of the victory because she had already got the support of Kamraj, Jagjiwan Ram and D.P. Mishra. Morarjibhai was still trying to woo back Yashwantrao to his own camp. But Yashwantrao told him,

" On principle, I am (more) nearer to Indira Gandhi. I think that in the election of the leader I should give more importance to ideology. I have deep gratitude for you but I cannot vote for you.<sup>53</sup>".

Chavan's stand on this matter almost clinched the issue for Indira Gandhi. The election was unavoidable this time due to the stubborn attitude of Morarji Desai and the elections were held in which Indira Gandhi won with an overwhelming majority. The Congress Parliamentary Party Meeting was held on Wednesday the 19th of January, 1966. A total of 526 Congress M.P.s were present in the Central Hall for the first ever contested election to the Prime Ministership. A total of 524 votes were cast with the two candidates - Morarji Desai and Indira Gandhi opting out of voting. Eventually the returning Officer announced at 3.00 p.m., " I declare Mrs. Gandhi elected.....," The rest of his words were drowned in the applause. The vote was 355 to 169<sup>54</sup>. Morarji Bhai joined the Indira Gandhi

Cabinet as Dy.Prime Minister and Finance Minister and Yashwantrao was entrusted with the Home Portfolio. Indira Gandhi also made some changes in the cabinet like Sardar Swaran Singh was made Defence Minister and M.C.Chagala was made the Foreign Minister, Fakir-ud-din Ali Ahmed was made the Education~~a~~ Minister.

As soon as Y.B.Chavan took over as Home Minister on November, 1966 he had to face manifold problems which required proper dealing. Though <sup>the</sup> majority of the leaders and media acclaimed the choice of Yashwantrao as the Home Minister and deemed him to be the right person to tackle the internal problems of the country, still it was not an easy job. It required a great deal of courage, patience and strong will on the part of the man who would be tackling these complicated problems.

The very first problem he faced as the Home Minister was on 18th November, 1966, just after four days of his assuming office. There was a massive agitation planned by the youth wing of the Samy<sup>u</sup>ikta Socialist Party to be held before the Parliament on the aforesaid day. Students from all over the country, were supposed to join the agitation. To face this crisis with determination, the Government decided

(....154)

to enforce section 144 of Criminal Procedure Code and banned all meetings and processions. Dr. Ram Manohar Lohia was arrested and put behind the bars on 17th November, itself<sup>55</sup>. New Delhi was cut off from the rest of the main land. There was a strict vigil on railway stations, bus stations and the premises of the Parliament. Even the schools and colleges in New Delhi were kept closed and police took over the premises of the Delhi University. Yashwantraoji tackled this problem very efficiently and stalled the opposition effort to destabilise the Government. In the Parliament, Madhu Limaye, and Kisan Pattnaik, two leaders of the S.S.P., thundered against Chavan. Both of them said,

" the students will one day bury the rulers".

Chavan replying to the threat calmly said,

" I can tell him that I can digest him and his threat also. I am not afraid of them<sup>56</sup>".

So, the way in which Chavan tackled the students agitation enhanced his image as an able administrator and a man of crisis.

But Yashwantrao's main concern was the root cause of the students' grievances and he wished to divert these students' power towards more constructive and nation building work. He wanted that there should be continuous dialogue between the students and

and leaders of the country.<sup>57</sup>

Just after a week of the students agitation Jagadguru Shankaracharya of Puri went on an indefinite fast at Dharam Sangh at Kashmir Gate in Delhi on the issue of banning cow slaughter. The Government detained him under Section III of the Preventive Detention Act and there was a lot of hue and cry raised over the arrest of the Jagadguru. Chavan was of the view that the Janasangha political party which had its base in the Hindu fundamentalism was using this agitation as a political instrument, as the next general elections were to be held in 1967. He commented,

"The Janasangha naturally led the movement. They wanted to create communal tension in the country before the General Elections".

"I have no doubt about it. As a matter of fact the agitation for the ban acted as a spur to communal troubles. But the way the agitation for the ban was conducted and allowed to grow showed there were deeper designs behind it. The movement was communal."<sup>58</sup>

Shri. Chavan and the other leaders of the Congress were averse to the idea of putting the whole country under the cloud of communalism. So Shri. Chavan after having a thorough discussion with the Prime Minister Mrs. Indira Gandhi and considering the possibility of an emotional outburst, decided

to remove the Jagadguru to an unidentified destination.

Shankaracharya was taken to Pondicherry and from there to Puri.

(Shri.) Yashwantraoji was fervently attacked by the opposition benches for his act of arresting the Jagadguru, particularly the orthodox Hindu opinion was more than outraged. He fully accepted the responsibility for this action and explained to the Parliament that the action had to be initiated by the concerned administration on consideration of the situation that existed. He ordered action to be taken in order to avoid excitement and breach of public order throughout the country. To give a long term solution to this problem, the Government decided to appoint a commission to make recommendations to the Government with particular emphasis on the economic and political implications of a total ban from various angles and decided on a policy that was consistent with the secular nature of India.<sup>59</sup> However, the commission worked almost defunct because some of its members (were) like (Shri.) Golwalkar, the head of the Rashtriya Swayam Sevak Sangh (R.S.S.) did not <sup>co-operate</sup> ~~operate~~ with it. According to (Shri.) Chavan the Commission remained in suspended animation. After the general elections in 1967, the issue was

totally forgotten but the Janasangha received lot of benefits due to communal votings ~~through~~ over this issue. It improved its strength considerably.

An other important issue (Shri.) Chavan had to tackle within a month of his becoming the Home Minister was the fast and threat of self immolation by Sant Fateh Singh, the Akali leader over the Chandigarh issue and annexation of Punjabi speaking area in Hariyana. (Mrs.) Indira Gandhi and the Home Minister (Shri.) Chavan inspite of numerous appeals had to settle the issue by peaceful negotiations but Sant Fateh Singh decided to go on fast. He started his fast on 17th December, and also announced that he would (also) burn himself to death on 27th December if the issue was not decided before the date.<sup>60</sup> Sant Fateh Singh's demands were that all common links between Hariyana and Punjab be snapped; that Chandigarh, their joint capital, be made the exclusive of Punjab, and that the Punjabi speaking areas in Hariyana be merged with the Punjab State. As announced (by) (Shri.) Sant Fateh Singh (he) went on a fast on December, 17th and started preparing (to) self immolation in the Agnikunda. Prior to him seven other Akali leaders had to take to self immolation on the previous day at 3.30 p.m. inspite of all persuation and negotiations. In the meanwhile Sardar Hukumsingh the then Speaker of the Loksabha, dashed



that to Amritsar for a last minute compromise bid. He met (Shri. Chavan before leaving for Amritsar. (Shri. Chavan was non-committal because he thought that any solution under the threat of past and self immolation would be unreasonable. But Sardar Hukumsingh after discussing the matter with Giani Gurmukh Singh Musafir, the then Chief Minister of Punjab at Amritsar Circuit House, told the Akali leaders that the Government had agreed to the demands of Sant Fateeh Singh and that he was to break his fast and give up the idea of self-immolation. Thus the fast was broken and the idea of self-immolation given up. But the fact remained that Chavan had not committed anything of that sort even on the telephone just before the announcement. He had in retrospect what Musafir did was perhaps the only thing he could have done. In this respect he said,

" I don't hold Hukum Singh responsible. Musafir told him the Government had accepted the demands.  
61  
The responsibility was his ".

Musafir later apologized to (Shri. Y.B.Chavan for this and (Shri. Chavan as magnanimous as ever accepted his apology. Thus a commission was appointed to look into the demands and the issue of the Chadigarh and the Bhakranangal complex were handed over to the Prime Minister for arbitration. Thus Shri. Chavan was marginally successful in defusing the political aspects of the

problem to some extent but completely successful in defusing tense and explosive situation in Punjab.

Another major problem Shri. Chavan faced in his tenure was the 'Police Revolt' of 1967/. The policemen were agitating for better service conditions even before Shri. Chavan took over as Home Minister. He was well aware of this ~~pre~~ and this problem of Police indiscipline was quite fresh in his mind when he took over the portfolio. There were a series of processions and fastings going on in the country.<sup>62</sup>

It had become rather difficult for the Government to ascertain whether at times the Policemen were going to put down the agitations or start one against the Government. Shri. Chavan observed that the situation as regards the Policemen was further deteriorating and hence he decided to remove the Policemen on guard-duty from sensitive places like Rashtrapati Bhavan and Prime Minister's residence. This caused provocation to the Policemen and they decided to form a procession and go to Shri. Chavan's House to stage a 'Dharana'. Shri. Chavan had an emergency consultation with the top police officers who assured him that they would try their level best in stopping the policemen to gather and form a procession. But the Policemen

were in an outrageous mood and they formed a procession thwarting the efforts of the officers and finally conveyed at (Shri.) Chavan's residence. Unruffled as ever he came out and met them at his gate. He advised them to report back to their respective police stations within two hours otherwise the Government would take stern measures, against them. But with provocation of the leaders of the agitators the demonstration continued. Since the Prime Minister was out of the capital, (Shri.) Chavan after consulting a few of his cabinet colleagues called in the army and then informed the Prime Minister. In this context, he stated:

" That evening, before sunset, the Army was called in and some 800 policemen were rounded up in front of my house. ....I had to take a tough decision without losing the human touch. Later on I looked into the demand and gave them immediate relief. We appointed a Commission to examine the policemen's working conditions and connected issues. We met some of their demands<sup>63</sup>".

However, (Shri.) Chavan sternly condemned the trade unionism amongst the policemen. But on humanitarian grounds he allowed a " Police Karmachari Sangha" to look after their welfare. He sanctioned Rs. 50 lakhs for the construction of quarters for the policemen.

In such a provocative condition the country went into its fourth General Elections in February, 1957. As observed earlier the Janasangha with its slogan of Hindu revivalism and the Swatantra Party, a rightist, political party with the ex-Maharajas<sup>a</sup> and few industrialists<sup>^</sup> who were at the helm of the party had gone from strength to strength with their communal overtures. The election results<sup>a</sup> was<sup>^</sup> shock to the Congress Party. The Congress party secured majority only in seven out of the sixteen existing states then. Five cabinet ministers and Shri Kamraj, the President of the Congress party lost their seats. Four Chief Ministers from the States lost the election. In Bengal and Kerala non-congress left oriented united front Ministries came into power. In other states some regional parties like Dravida Munetra Kalagham came into power in Madras state and Swatantra Party in Orissa. People were in general angry with the Congress Party. Both the leftist and rightist parties<sup>^</sup> gained at the expense of the Congress Party. The Congress could get only 283 seats out of the total of 520. The analysis of the Congress debacle brought forth a couple of reasons for their depression, notable amongst them being, 1) defeat at the hands of China, during the Indo-China conflict, 2) Introduction of compulsory deposit scheme, 3) death of Pt. Nehru, the most

popular leader of the Congress in 1964, 4) increase in communal and reactionary party activities as well as activities of regional parties such as the D.M.K. and the Akali Dal etc. 5) Incidences of violence that engulfed the whole nation with the feeling of despair and uncertainty.

However, as compared to other states in India, Congress's performance in Maharashtra was quite heartening under the able leadership of (Shri) Chavan, (Shri) V.P.Naik and their associates. The Congress secured 37 out of 45 seats to the Parliament with rightist parties making no impact whatsoever. The partywise position in Maharashtra was as follows : total seats 45, Congress -37, CPI -2, PSP-1, SSP-2, PWP-2 and independant -1. The Swatantra party and Bharatiya Jansangh drew a blank in the state<sup>64</sup>. This only shows how effective the progressive path was that was shown to the State of Maharashtra by (Shri) Chavan. The Indian Express (has) <sup>ad</sup>commended the performance of the congress in Maharashtra state ~~under~~<sup>the</sup> leadership of (Shri) Chavan. It ~~has~~ observed, ' a good deal of credit for keeping Maharashtra safe for the Congress must necessarily go to (Shri) Chavan - Naik leadership at the political level.<sup>65</sup> (Shri) Chavan was elected from the Satara constituency, polling 207, 895, votes out of 317,231.

(Shri. Y.B. Chavan was again made the Home Minister in the new cabinet formed by (Mrs). Indira Gandhi. The situation he faced now was (for) more complicated and adverse as far as the political situation in the country was concerned. The <sup>C</sup>ongress was facing a far more grave situation in the Parliament due to the fact that it had a very thin majority or a workable one to be precise, compared to the vast majority in the previous three Lok Sabhas. And to add to their agony (it) had lost its power in as many as seven states and in U.P. and Bihar their position was not very strong. The U.P. and Bihar Governments fell in a couple of months after the election. In this context Chavan had observed,

" Politically, the democratic Parliamentary system has shown remarkable flexibility in adjusting itself to the changes produced by the fourth general elections.<sup>66</sup>"

Till the year 1967 almost all the states were ruled by the Congress and the same party ruled in the Centre also but after the fourth general elections many diverse ideologies started ruling in different parts of the country. And this

necessitated a fresh thought to the State and Centre relationship. Shri. Chavan had to face many problems and issues including constitutional tangles as regards to the power of Governors and the functioning of State legislatures. The role of the Home Minister dealing in all these matters had to be defined and determined at every point and he had to tread upon unknown paths to the Indian political culture. Although the Chief Minister of Kerala Shri. E.M.S. Nambudripad stated that the Congress Government at the centre <sup>and</sup> the Non-congress Governments at the States should function in a ' Spirit of Co-existence' <sup>e</sup>. The Congress leaders at the centre were also ready to co-operate but the diverse political ideology soon brought to surface the problem of the centre and state relationship.

The first confrontation took place with the United front Government in Bengal which was dominated by Marxist Communists. The first clash was over the issue of Gherao. Shri. U.B. Chavan was highly critical of this attitude. According to him Gherao was not a legitimate activity. Rather it is an

obstructionist activity. In the Eastern Zonal Council Meeting he further remarked that in order to ensure industrial peace the Government should treat the Gherao as a cognizable offence. (Mr. Jyoti Basu, the then Dy. Chief Minister of West Bengal and a noted C.P.I. (M) leader vehemently criticised (Shri. Chavan for this. (Shri. Chavan was always firm in his views regarding Gherao, procession, fast and violence. In this context he said,

" When violence takes place and is suppressed by the counter violence of the State, the result is the diminution in the stature of the political institutions where opinions are offered and decisions are taken on the basis of rational debate. " <sup>67</sup>

Regarding Jyoti Basu's objection, (Shri. Chavan said that he had advised the State Governments and appealed to them to uphold law and order and this was within his constitutional competence. Finally the decision of the bench of the Calcutta High Court viewing the Gherao as illegal for the time being put the curtain on the issue for the time being.

During the same time the Naxalbari Movement was taking deep roots in some parts of West Bengal and the State



Chief Minister (Mr.) Ajay Mukherji, blamed the CPI(M) a constituent of his own United Front Government ~~was~~ for starting this uprising of armed (agrarian) involving forceable occupation of land. After consulting the Chief Minister (Shri.) Chavan issued a notification banning the ~~issue of~~ use of bows, arrows and spears in the Naxalbari area and posted men of Border Security forces on the order of West Bengal to prevent the agitators slipping into Pakistan<sup>68</sup>. (Shri.) Chavan maintained that his action was absolutely legitimate and it never accounted for the interference of the centre in the State affairs. But the CPI(M) condemned (Shri.) Chavan and turned his actions as an act of gross interference in the state affairs. In the meantime the relationship between the constituents of the United Front Government became sour (and sour) ~~over the days~~. The CPI official paper the New Age wrote, "Unfortunately, some of the methods adopted by the C.P.I.(M) in relation to other parties in the United front had engendered clashes and created tension in the United Front."<sup>69</sup> On November, 21st, 1967, the nine month old Ajay Mukherji Ministry was dismissed by the Governor and in its place a Congress supported Ministry headed by (Dr.) P.C.Ghosh, a defector from the United Front Govt., took over as the Chief Minister. But the speaker of the Bengal Legislative Assembly (Shri.) Bijay Kumar Banerjee thought that the

appointment of the New Chief Minister was unconstitutional and adjourned the Assembly sine die. On November, 30th the Home Minister, (Shri) Chavan justified in the Lok Sabha the Governor's action in ~~this~~ dismissing Ajay Mukherji's Ministry and maintained that the Ministry of Ghosh was constituted lawfully<sup>70</sup>. Contrary to this view on (February, 14th 1968) when the then Governor Dharmaveer was supposed to deliver his address to the legislators, the speaker again adjourned the Assembly and there was a constitutional tangle which was ~~subsequently~~ subsequently solved by the President ~~desolving~~ the Assembly and clamping President's rule over the State. Mid term polls were held in the state and the United Front Government under Ajay Mukherjee came to power once again. But ~~soon after~~ within a year or so, there was again a show-down between the Chief Minister and the Dy.Chief Minister Jyoti Basu of C.P.I.(M) resulting in Ajay Mukherjee resigning in protest and President's rule was clamped on West Bengal for the second time on (19th March, 1970.) All through this (Shri) Chavan as the Home Minister maintained a consistent and balanced stand in all constitutional crisis in (the) different states. He was quite clear in his mind about the constitutional sanctions given to the Centre and the States. His emphasis was on political stability and public

welfare and not on political lables. It is with that broad liberal outlook that he conducted the affairs of the Ministry in his charge<sup>71</sup>.

Between March 1967 and June, 1968, Sixteen State Governments were dislodged due to political defections. Defection had become a way of life in the Indian politics. Referring to defections (Shri. Chavan commented,

" Democracy was made a farce and the administration brought to a stand still..... The phenomenon of the defection of legislators was a challenge not only to the Government at the Centre but also the very function of democracy<sup>72</sup>".

He was frank enough to admit (even) the share of the Congress in the act of defection. He prepared a detailed report on the defection which he felt was an important document of interests to all the students of Indian Politics.

Another problem he had to tackle was that of reorganisation of Assam. The people (residing in the hill district of Khasi, Jaintia, Garo and Mizo were utterly disappointed as their interests were grossly overlooked and they demanded a separate autonomous state. Their grievances were that the people of the plains completely neglected the social, cultural and economic wellbeing of the hill people. The All

Party, Hill Leaders Conference (APHLC) founded in 1960 led the struggle for separation<sup>73</sup>. Their agitation for a separate state was still continuing till 1967. They always thought their demand to be legitimate and were unwilling to accept Shri. Chavan's suggestion of softening their stand on the issue of a separate State. In December, 1967 the APHLC took a decision to launch a direct action movement if the Government failed to reorganise the Assam State in the budget session of the Parliament. In the 1st week of January 1968, Shri. Chavan held discussions with the leaders of the State and chalked out a plan for greater autonomy to the hilly areas. The APHLC provisionally accepted the proposal of Shri. Chavan and called off the agitation for the time being. In this context the Statesman observed,

" Chavan has shown undoubted courage in formulating a new Federal Plan in the Hill District of Assam where existing arrangements are obviously <sup>74</sup> unacceptable to a large section of the population ".

But in the 3rd week of January the APHLC changed its stand and denied to accept the federal plan. The Assam Pradesh Congress committee totally rejected the proposal. Shri. Chavan did not loose heart, He started fresh negotiations and discussions with the leaders of Assam. He was quite clear in his mind regarding the necessity to form a separate Hill State because he thought that the hill region due to its geographical condition

was a different political entity and needed to be treated as such. Finally, after months of negotiations and discussions a new political entity ~~named~~ Meghalaya was formed with two of the Hill Region Districts. And thus Shri Chavan was successful in settling the complicated issue peacefully.

He also tackled the issue of the demand of a separate Telengana State in Andhra Pradesh- There was a demand for a separate ~~Telangana~~ <sup>Telengana</sup> State consisting of nine districts from the mid fifties itself. By the time Shri Chavan came on the scene the agitation was at its height. Konda Laxman Bapuji, a Senior Cabinet Member of the Andhra Pradesh Cabinet was spear heading the movement for a greater autonomy for the Telengana region. Shri. Chavan had a dialogue with the leaders of the movement but initially failed in his bid to compromise. The Chief Minister, in his resignation but the Congress Parliamentary Board withheld it and advised him to reconstitute his cabinet. So abiding by the advice the Chief Minister reformed his cabinet with a Dy.Chief Minister from the Telengana Region. But the Telengana Praja Samiti continued its agitation. A parallel counter agitation by Non-Telengana students evoked a lot of violence in the State. Finally with Shri Chavan astute diplomacy the State Government made some

adjustments about the allocation of cabinet posts, development funds and opportunities for employment<sup>75</sup>. Thus the Telengana Movement was shelved off for some time.

The years between 1967-69 were also marked for the violent communal riots all over the country. (Shri.) Chavan faced a great deal of problem in maintaining law and order situation in the country. In August, 1967 there was a communal riot in Ranchi which continued for a week in which 155 people lost their lives. (Shri.) Chavan personally visited the towns and went to the riot affected areas and gave of sense of confidence to the people of the area. He made strict arrangements to deal with riot situations and sought to subside the riot. It is a fact that in 1967 in Andhra, Bihar and Uttar Pradesh, the communal riots had reached their heights<sup>76</sup>. In 1968 also communal riots took place in Meerut, Karimgaon, Allahabad and in some parts of Kerala and Mysore. September 1969 saw the climax of the communal riots. When riots continued for 10 days in Ahmedabad as many as 503 persons were killed and assets worth Rs. 4 to 5 lakhs went burnt to ashes. (Shri.) Y.B.Chavan handled the situation firmly and great determination but was very much pained when major communal riots took place in

his own State of Maharashtra at Bhiwandi and Jalgaon. He  
loured the affected areas giving succour to the victims and  
openly condemned the Shiv Seena for its communal behaviour.  
In a blistering attack on Mr. Bal Thakare, the Shiv Sena Chief,  
Shri. Chavan commented,

" Mr. Thakare was polluting the atmosphere in  
Maharashtra with his vicious propaganda. As  
the representative of the people of Maharashtra  
it is my duty to check the spread of the poison.<sup>??</sup>"

He thoroughly analysed practically all the aspects of the  
root cause of the communal riot in accordance with the  
constitutional frame work and not only treated these problems  
as the question of law and order but also gave a deep thought  
to their social implications. He fixed his policies to deal  
with these problems with the socio-economic aspects of these  
problems in his mind and implemented them as such.

Another important legislative measure he  
undertook during his Home Minister ship was the Official  
Language (Amendment) bill which was eluding the Parliament  
for a long time. He presented the bill before the Parliament on  
7th December, 1967 on which the debate lasted for 8 days.  
He argued that there is no doubt that India is a multi lingual  
country. But he emphasised a need for a national language

to help the channels of communication between state and centre, and State and State. In the Bill he suggested (for) 1) Study of modern Indian languages besides Hindi and English, preferably one of the Southern languages in the Hindi speaking areas, 2) Study of Hindi along with English and regional language in the Non-Hindi speaking area. In one of his speeches he said,

" I have been working in the Government for more than a decade and a half. In this period I have faced many situations in which I had to give thought to the question of National Languages..... I have come to the conclusion that some day or the other Hindi must be given the status of the Official Language." <sup>78</sup>

But the Bill presented was sort of a compromise for the pro-Hindi and anti-Hindi factions. There was a lot of furore over it. There was a sort of anti-English wave because the bill had the words ' Compulsory knowledge of Hindi is not required.....' Thus Shri. Chavan had to change this portion and add that Hindi or English should be compulsory for the recruitment to the Government of India. Thus, this bill was finally passed with some parties like Janasangha, the D.M.K. and the S.S.P. walking out for their own different reservations against the bill.

In June, 1967, the A.I.C.C. <sup>had</sup> met in New Delhi (to postmortem) the debacle of the Congress in the General election and



and in that Session the A.I.C. C. adopted a 10 point economic programme to boost (up) the sagging image of the Congress. One of the points in this programme was the abolition of the Privy Purses paid by the Government to the Ex-Rulers (Maharajas). The erstwhile royal descendants had kept off the body politics of the country. But in 1967, elections, quite a number of Ex-Rulers were returned to the Parliament and in many State Legislatures and in this (has) put the radical elements in the Congress on their guard.<sup>79</sup> Shri. Y.B. Chavan initiated in getting the amendment passed at the A.I.E.C. Session. (Shri. Rajendra Puri wrote in his column,

" The strategist who so skillfully master minded the move to abolish the privy purses, of course is Mr. Chavan".<sup>80</sup>

There is no exaggeration in it. The PRIVY PURSES ABOLITION BILL was actually presented to both the Houses in 1970 after the Congress split. In the Parliament all the Leftist elements supported it. It was a testimony of (Shri. Chavan's skill as a great Parliamentarian and a forthright speaker. The Lok Sabha passed it by 339 votes against 154 thereby giving it more than the 2/3 majority required; the Communists, PSP, SSP, DMK and some independents in addition to (Mrs. Gandhi's Party voted in its favour.<sup>81</sup> The Congress(0) along with the reactionary parties like the Janasangha and the Swatantra Party voted against the

Bill. However, in the Rajya Sabha the Bill failed by one Vote to get the required 2/3 majority in the House (149 against 75). Thus, this Progressive Bill had to face a tragic defeat in the Rajya Sabha on account of its not getting a 2/3 majority. In the meantime Mrs. Indira Gandhi had also obtained the opinion of Attorney General of India Mr. Niren De, who advised that the Government could abolish Privy Purses through an executive order<sup>82</sup>.

By this time, Shri. Chavan was already moved to the Finance Dept. though still a member of the Cabinet's Political Affairs Committee. He remarked that the Government took the decision to issue the Executive Order because it was the only logical step open to it. If the Government had not brought in executive action, the right reactionary forces in the country would have had the satisfaction of having thrown over board a progressive measure. But the Ex-Rulers went to the Supreme Court which after hearing to both the sides, struck down the Executive Order by a majority of 9:2 and held the President's order to be ultra vires. "The President proposes, the Supreme Court disposes. This is how the drama centering on the privy purses of the Princes has ended for the moment<sup>83</sup>". However, Mrs. Gandhi and Shri. Chavan whose brain-child was this Bill had no doubt that this measure had the sanction of the common people of the country and the verdict of the

Supreme Court was not the last word on the issue. And their views proved to be right subsequently after the mid-term poll.

Shri. Y.B. Chavan's three years and eight months tenure in the Home Ministry was thus, very eventful as well as rewarding. Eventful in the sense that he had to deal with the numerous problems from the students agitation, boundry problems, language problems to communal riots and violence in the political arena of the country. Rewarding in the sense, that he dealt with all these polemic problems with his astute political mind and his able administrative hand. He wielded a vast power but he used it to accomplish progressive socio-economic goals. Even his role in the split of the Congress in 1969 though criticised by some political observers and people still if one looks deeply into the split then one realises that it was his commitment towards creating a socialist and secular state of India.

By this time the Congress was having two major groups within it. Shri. K.Kamraj, Nijlingappa, S.K.Patil, Atulya Ghosh and Morarji Desai had formed the group which later came to be known as 'The Syndicate' and the other group had in its fold Jagjivan Ram, Fakiruddin Ali Ahmed, and young turks like Chandrashekhar, Mohan Dharja and others. There was already pulls and pressures in the party forum on various issues.

Chavan who was never committed to any of these groups ~~and~~ was always advocating for a concensus in these two groups. On economic group, and the ideological problems he differed fundamentally with the 'syndicate'.<sup>84</sup> But Shri. Chavan's relation with both the groups were cordial as far as organisational matters were concerned. He was often called a 'Fence Sitter' because of his attitude of this nature. But one would easily acknowledge his sense of party discipline as a measure of his attitude to have cordial relations with both the factions.

Dr. Zakir Hussain, the President of India, died on 3rd May, 1969, a week after the Faridabad Session of the AICC. On his death the question of succession to the Presidentship was fervent in the minds of all the politicians of the country. At the Faridabad Session discussion were held on the Congress debacle of 1967, General Elections and the subsequent mid-term election to some states in 1969. Some leaders of the Congress were ~~do~~ disheartened by the situation ~~at~~ that they were talking in terms of having a coalition with the like minded parties. Some were also of the view that the Congress should have political links with the Swatantra Party and the Janasangh. While others <sup>were</sup> of the view that the Congress should have a coalition with the leftist parties viz. the SSP, PSP and the CPI. The political observers and thinkers

were envisaging a type of polarisation which could bring into existence something broadly equivalent to a two party system. This would involve the creation of reasonably stable left of Centre and right of Centre alliances.<sup>85</sup>

Chvan spoke at length on this subject as the Chairman of the Political Affairs Committee. His report on the political situation of the country was very much to the point and he still advocated for compromise and concensus. He pointed out that inspite of all its reverses, the Congress Party had still the (packing) of the people and it had an organisational capacity as well as an (ideology) which would sustain it against all opposition. He (want) the party men against any complacency on (their) part. Gradually in the session itself there emerged the talk of polORIZATION (between) the right and the left forces in the country.<sup>86</sup> The issue ~~was~~ of Presidential Election brought this problem to the forefront. On ideological issues (Shri) Chavan was with (Mrs) Indira Gandhi. He supported her economic programme outlined in the ' Stray Thoughts' which he placed before the Working Committee. He very much appreciated her thoughts and said,

" Social control short of Nationalisation was meaningless and nationalisation without social control would just be deception of people 87".

(Shri.) V.V.Giri had taken charge as the Acting President on (Dr.) Hussein's demise. His views were that as precedent followed earlier the Vice-President should be the President. <sup>88</sup> Some section of the party, a formidable one at that which included Mrs. Indira Gandhi, D.P.Mishra, S.C.Shukla, and few others thought that Babu Jagjivan Ram should be made the President of India. Because they thought that it being the birth centenary celebration of Mahatma Gandhi, it would be <sup>a</sup> fitting tribute to the father of the nation by making a Harijan the Head of the State. The third view in the party which included the opinions of Kamraj, Nijalingappa, S.K.Patil, Atulya Ghosh, Morarji Desai, the Syndicate as they came to be known (popularly or unpopularly) was that Sanjeev Reddy should be the candidate for the Presidentship. (Shri.) Chavan as a party loyalist was of the view that he will propogate for the candidate which the party decides to put up.

Ultimately the Congress Parliamentary Board the Highest decision making body of the party was supposed to select the Presidential candidate of the party. The Congress Working Committee met on June 19 to 21st in New Delhi. In these meetings the Congress President did not call the meeting of the CPB and the postponment of the selection of the party candidate was gladly accepted by everyone. Thereafter (Mrs.) Indira Gandhi went to Japan on (June 23rd).

Most of the Syndicate members by then had crystalised their stand in favour of Sanjiva Reddy. In this respect, the Editor <sup>the</sup> of Hindu observed,

" The key to the final outcome seemed to lie in the hands of Kamraj at party level and Chavan at the Cabinet level, since neither of them had till then<sup>89</sup> taken up an irrevocable stand ".

A three day session of the All India Congress Committee started in Bangalore on July 10th. Mrs. Indira Gandhi did not attend the session on the 1st day of the Session, on account of her disposition. The note prepared by her was termed as an outline for national economic policies pertaining to nationalisation of a few ~~major~~ banks, radical change in the industrial licensing policy, strict implementation of land reforms and profit sharing by workers, was introduced by Shri. Chavan. His draft resolution was unanimously passed by the Congress Working Committee. The CPB Meeting was scheduled to be held at 1.00 p.m. on 12th July. By this time Shri. Yashwantraoji had no clear cut idea about Mrs. Indhi's intentions regarding the Presidential candidate. He was always under the impressions that all will abide by collective decisions of the party. In a last minute efforts, Fakiruddin Ali Ahmed conveyed to Shri. Chavan about Jagjivan Ram's candidature

supported by Indira Gandhi. Chavan was not averse to this idea. He suggested that if the Prime Minister wishes so he has no objection but the CPB Meeting should be postponed to take further decision<sup>90</sup>. But the subject came before the CPB on the same day. Morarji Desai suggested the name (Mr. Sanjeev Reddy and S.K. Patil seconded it. Jagjivan Ram's name was suggested by Fakhruddin Ali Ahmed. So the members of the CPB decided on the Congress nominee, by raising of hands. Kamraj, Patil, Chavan and Desai voted for Reddy, while Indira Gandhi and Fakhruddin Ali Ahmed voted for Jagjivan Ram. Nijalingappa and Jagjivan Ram did not vote. Thus the issue was clinched in favour of Reddy in the CPB and his name was announced for the Presidentship. (Indira Gandhi immediately retaliated by supporting V.V. Giri who had filed this nomination in Delhi as an Independent candidate for the post. Both the factions fervently propagated for their respective candidates. (Mrs. Indira Gandhi on her return to Delhi, immediately relieved Morarji of the Finance portfolio which made him resign in protest. On July, 18th Mrs. Gandhi nationalised fourteen major banks and (Shri. Chavan welcomed it whole-heartedly. He was of the view that this measure would certainly give a new momentum to her economic programme and that it was a bold and dynamic policy



of the Prime Minister. But as a party discipline he worked for the election of Sanjeev Reddy and he clearly indicated his stand to Mrs. Gandhi. After accusations and counter-accusations by both the factions the conflict within the Congress resulted in its candidate (Mr) Sanjeev Reddy looking the presidential election. V.V.Giri won the election by a narrow margin. As the Congress President, Nijlingappa demanded an explanation from (Jagjivram, Fakruddin Ali Ahmed, Kamalapati Tripathi - PCC Chief of Uttar Pradesh, A.P.Sharma - PCC Chief of Bihar and Zail Singh - PCC Chief of Punjab about their conduct in the election<sup>91</sup>. With all the compromise bid failing to materialise, the Congress High Command of the party bosses decided to expel (Indira Gandhi and her supporters from the party as a disciplinary measure. There was nothing left except to pick up the pieces. Both groups met separately to assess their respective strength particularly in Lok Sabha. At the meeting of the Congress Parliamentary party which Mrs. Gandhi conveyed the presence of 330 members (260 of them from the Lok Sabha) out of the party's total strength of 429) was claimed.<sup>92</sup> The C.P.P.Meeting convened by the Syndicate was attended by 70 M.Ps.(60 out of them from the Lok Sabha). Mrs. Gandhi's actual strength turned out to be 297 MPs. out of them 220 were from the Lok Sabha. But she was confident of the support of 46 communist MPs. Thus the Congress finally split into two

groups. One was called the Congress (O) - O for the organisation, and other was known as Congress (R) - R for the ruling. (Shri) Yashwantraoji Chavan remained with Indira Gandhi and in the Congress(R), He had remained with the Syndicate during the Presidential Election but went to the other side of the Camp only due to ideological reasons. He did not want to be cast in a conservative mould. To some extent as a follower of M.N.Roy, he was liberal in his leanings and wanted to sustain that image. His home state, Maharashtra, had a smattering of liberal congressman, they also pressed him to stand with the progressive forces<sup>93</sup>.

The Prime Minister was holding the finance ministry after she eased out Morarji and she herself presented the 1970 Budget in April and the Budget Session ended in May 1970. After the Budget Session she wanted to have a major reshuffle in the Cabinet. There were even rumours that (Shri) Chavan may be dropped from the Cabinet. But instead she offered the Finance Portfolio to him keeping in mind that there was none more capable than (Shri) Chavan to take over. Many of his political friends as well as detractors thought that this was a demotion of (Shri) Chavan in political as well as administrative hierarchy. But his character was such that he never made it a point of ego of any

matter as far as politics was concerned and always considered any job he was doing as the service to the nation and due to this reason he took upon himself the challenging task of dealing with the finance portfolio entrusted to him by Mrs. Indira Gandhi on June 26th 1970. But contrary to the view of all the critics many people appreciated the shifting of Shri. Chavan to the finance ministry. In this context the National Herald observed,

" May be no more a financial wizard than the Churchills..... the economic programme is the substance of finance and he can be expected to master economic strategy..... Mr. Chavan was the best possible person to answer the economic challenge which he has often answered in Congress debates..... He remains important whatever his portfolio<sup>94</sup>".

The Indian economy was in its very crucial stage of planning and development. As the later years proved Shri. Chavan gave a ~~xxx~~ right kind of direction to it. In fact he was involved in advocating the economic policies of the Congress party since the Faridabad Session itself. As observed earlier, he had piloted the economic revolution in the Bangalore session of the A.I.C.C. in 1969. In 1970, also he had moved the economic resolution in the Patana Session of the AICC.

He had manifold problems ahead of him such as holding back price ~~raisex~~ rise, self reliance in industrial and agricultural sectors, rural and urban unemployment and the social control of some of the financial institutions of the country. Asked about his basic approach to economic problems, he said,

"My economic philosophy is an integrated one and  
is tied up with social and political implication. " <sup>95</sup>

The Fourth Five Year Plan had not only placed emphasises on the above objectives but also indicated the instruments of public policies to achieve the goals of a socialistic society in broad terms as :

1) economic planning for rapid economic development, (2) Growth of the public sector, (3) Nationalisation, (4) Land Reforms and (5) egalitarian policy <sup>to</sup> redistribute income and wealth. <sup>96</sup> This

theme was in accordance with the Ten Point Programme adopted by the AICC at its New Delhi Session held in 1967. Many steps were taken in this direction during the last couple of years and Shri. Chavan further consolidated them. He always thought that the process of development might lead, in the absense of purposeful intervention by the state, to greater concentration of wealth and income, over the growth of metropolitan centres and uneven regional developments, technological unemployment and rural under employment. Therefore, the attainment of objectives

of equality and social justice requires more comprehensive planning and greater command of Government over resources than has been attempted so far. We have to reach the social and economic objectives through more rapid growth of economy, greater defusion of enterprise and of the ownership of the means of production and increased productivity. The purposeful policies of public financial institutions, the impending monopolies legislation and the social control of banking were expected to play a significant role in the regard. In the Fourth Five year Plan(draft) it was clearly mentioned. Reference may be made at stage of social control of Banking. This is expected to help progress in the direction of (social) economic democracy. It can do so by ensuring that availability of credit for various types of small producers and other business units is adequate and on reasonable terms. This will require not so much diverting large sources for the purpose of creating appropriate institutions, spreading them through all areas and evoking suitable producers<sup>97</sup>.

(Shri.) Chavan was well aware of these facts and (new) that when he took over the finance portfolio, the Nationalised Banks were severely (criticised) for they were not able to be (fulfill) the aspirations and hopes of the common masses. But he took a more pragmatic approach and observed that a period of one year

was too short to judge the long term effect of the nationalisation of the Banks. In this context he observed,

" The first few months were spent in preparatory work and later the matter was before the Supreme Court for many more months. I will judge the success of the measure by applying two tests : First, have we succeeded in providing credit facilities to the small man in agriculture and in the Small Scale Industries - the neglected sectors, and Second, have we succeeded in creating the Banking habit among the rural folk and in mopping up the surplus savings of the rural people ? I realise this is no easy task. When the Banks reach the new area and start operating there, they do not get results over night. We have to spread the infrastructure of the Banking System in such a way that Banking goes to the aid of the people and in Britain the Banks themselves get benefited. We have to give the Banks (the) few years time to show measurable results<sup>98</sup>".

Within a month of his take over as the Finance Minister he called the meeting of the Chief Executives and (Chairman) of the Boards of the nationalised banks and spoke at length about this further plans of action and the role of Banks in (changing) the Indian Society in which there was a growing gap between economic aspirations and achievements. In this meeting

he spelt out four things which were to be a guideline to the Nationalised Banks in the coming years. In this context, he said,

" Our primary aim will have to be to reach areas which have so far remained unbanked or underbanked..... Secondly, our propaganda and advertising for deposit mobilisation in rural areas will have to be considerably different from those in the urban areas..... Thirdly, the orientation and approach of the development or extension staff of the Banks, who work in the rural areas will have to be radically different..... Fourthly, it will be necessary to involve the local revenue and developmental agencies of the State Government in this gigantic effort for concerted campaign to open new accounts and to increase the deposits in the nationalised banks<sup>99</sup>".

The results of his guidelines (are) quite obvious in 1970. According to R.Srinivasan, Chairman of Indian Banks Association, " the deposits at present have gone up to Rs. 1,66,000/- crores from Rs. 4,665/- crores at the time of nationalisation. The number of branches have expanded to over 60 thousand and the population per branch has come down from 65,000~~XX~~ at the time of nationalisation to 12,000 today. The total credit has gone up from 3,609 crores to Rs. 10,000 crores today while the total

number of accounts today have gone up from 18 million to 350 million <sup>100</sup> million ~~MM~~ ". (This few year time as observed by Chavan earlier in 1970) have shown the measurable results as forecasted by him and he had to play a major role in the preliminary stages of the Bank ~~nationalisation~~ nationalisation.

On 27th December, 1970, the President, (Shri. V.V.Giri on Cabinet's advice dissolved the Lok Sabha and ordered a mid term poll. As a reason for the dissolution of the House, Mrs. Indira Gandhi stated,

The House has been dissolved to enable the Government to seek a fresh mandate, to effectively implement socialistic and secular programmes and policies which were being blocked by vested interest".

The preceeding events had convinced her and her colleagues like (Shri. Chavan, Jagjiwan Ram and Mishra that they should go to the people for a renewal of their mandate. <sup>101</sup> The mid-term poll were held in the 1st week of March and the Congress (R) won as many as 352 seats to the Lok Sabha out of the total 515 seats. The CPI (M) got 25 seats and the CPI got 23. Almost all the rightist parties were badly placed in this election. (Shri. Y.B. Chavan was returned from the Satara constituency in Maharashtra with a huge margin. The Congress party's slogan this time was ' Garibi Hatao' and the party had



fought the election on Socio-Economic grounds with a promise to the people that they wish to come to power to ensure a better life to the vast majority of our people and to satisfy their aspirations for a just socio-economic order. Hence as the Finance Minister Chavan's responsibility had become more heavier after the elections.

Immediately after the election, Shri. Chavan presented the general budget to the Lok Sabha, in which he provided for the increase in outlay on development and social welfare. He thought that the Indian Economy was now far better poised to tackle the task ahead than at any other time in the recent years and he believed that the mandate the Government had received in the mid term poll was the mandate for socialism and for rapid economic growth matched by increased social justice. The total anticipated revenue of that budget was Rs. 3,562 crores and total expenditure Rs. 3,587 crores. The overall budget deficit was Rs. 397 crores. To cover up the deficit he introduced new levies and taxes on many items particularly the luxurious goods. In this regard he said that it was hardly possible to claim that a new social and economic order can be ushered in through a budgetary policy alone, much less through a single budget. But he believed that he had not flinched from the

duty of trying to meet the immediate and urgent requirements while pursuing the accepted objectives of a truly socialistic society.

His next immediate concern was to hold the escalating price line of essential commodities especially after the Bangla Desh War. There was no doubt about some basic imbalance between the demand and supply of some major commodities. He however, saw to it that adequate efforts (are) made to meet the shortage by increasing indigenous production and restoring to imports to meet the immediate requirements. In this context he said,

"The technological break-through in agriculture (e) and so called green revolution has as yet touched only a fringe of our agricultural sector. The new frontiers are still to extend to the production of pulses, cotton and oil seeds..... To meet the immediate shortages we have resorted to substantial imports of raw cotton and groundnut oil. Similarly, imports of steel and Soda ash <sup>102</sup> have been increased in recent months".

He also pursued a fairly cautious and restrictive credit policy, the supply of credit for speculative and hoarding activities were reduced drastically. To hold the sugar prices the sale of sugar there arranged through registered <sup>20</sup>dealers and  
(....192)

and the stocking of sugar by traders was also restricted. To meet the shortage of cloth, the textile mills were asked to step their production and check mal-practices in the price factor. They were asked to stamp consumer price on every meter length of the cloth. As for the food grain problem a buffer stock of food grains was built up and major food grains were sold at fixed prices through a network of fair prices and ration shops in the country. The States were also advised to strengthen the ~~public~~ public distributive system. In some cases, steps were also taken to initiate action against profiteers, hoarders and speculators under the provision of the Internal Security Act of 1971.

Shri. Y.B. Chavan as <sup>the</sup> finance Minister, tried his best to cope up with the resources made available to him to achieve stability and progress towards self reliance in agricultura and Industrial sector. During the period, 1969-74 the National Income increased on an average at the rate of 3.3% per annum. The food grain production had gone up to 103.6 million tons and the industrial growth rate though little lower than anticipated was 3% per annum.

Shri. Chavan in <sup>his</sup> capacity of the Finance Minister of India, visited numerous countries between June 1970 and October,

for 1974 to attend various International Conferences. In the second week of September, he had gone to Nikosia - Cyprus to attend the meeting of Commonwealth Finance Ministers. From there he went to Copenhagen to attend the Annual Meeting of the World Bank which was held on (21st Sept. 1970). There he not only spoke about India's Problems but was also a spokesman of the developing countries of the world. He greatly appreciated the views of McNamara, the then President of the World Bank and Mr. Switzer the Managing Director of the International Monetary Fund. He thought that McNamara's speech was indeed an evidence of his policy to give a new direction in the working of the World Bank <sup>104</sup>. He also attended the Commonwealth Finance Ministers' Annual Conference (in NASO) - Bahama on 25th September, 1971. There he strongly advocated India's case <sup>he</sup> in context of 90-lakhs Bangla Desh Refugees in India who had sought refuge in India after the Bangla Desh War.

(On 20th April, 1972), he represented India at the meeting of Asian Development Bank. There also he clearly advocated the case of the developing nations and had a detailed discussion with Mr. Watenby, the then President of the Asian Development Bank and discussed various problems with him.

On September, 24th 1972, he headed the Indian  
(....194)

delegation to Washington for the meeting of G-24 (and Inter Government Group of 24) followed by the Meeting of International Monetary Fund on 25th. He again attended the INF and World Bank Annual Meetings in Nairobi on 25th September, 1973. This was his fourth consecutive attendance at the INF and the World Bank Annual Meetings.

In January 1974, he attended the meetings of C-20 and G-24 in Rome. He was the Chairman of the Asian Development Bank in 1974 and attended its annual meeting at Kuala Lumpur in April, 1974.

Thus till October, 1974, (Shri.) Y.B. Chavan handled the Finance Portfolio to the best of his capability and came to be known as a great statesman and a pragmatic politician and a down to earth economist throughout the world. On 11th October, 1974, he was entrusted with a new assignment of foreign affairs by (Smt.) Indira Gandhi. The political observers had again started criticising it as a political degradation of Yashwantraoji due to his (opposite stance) in 1969, Presidential Election. But contrary to this, he has written to his wife (Sou.) Venutai, that (Smt.) Gandhi has never behaved with me in a vindictive manner in the last six years. Rather she was fare towards (me) <sup>105</sup>. Hence he took this responsibility with



the faith and dedication to serve the nation in whatever capacity the circumstance demanded for.

The essence of India's foreign policy was laid down by Mahatma Gandhi during the freedom struggle itself. Peace, co-operation and friendship with all and anti-colonial, and anti-racial stance was to be the essence of independent India's foreign policy and was cherished by Mahatma Gandhi. ~~and~~ Pt. Nehru crystallised the ideas of Gandhiji into a reality and was indeed an architect of free India's foreign policy. Lal Bahadur Shastri and Mrs. Indira Gandhi continued with the same line of thinking and Shri. Y.B. Chavan as the Foreign Minister during 1974-77 toed the same line unequivocally. The nucleus of India's foreign policy was non-alignment, peaceful co-existence, self-reliance and co-operation with all its neighbours. The non-aligned Movement was essentially against all sorts of colonialism and rationalism-

Shri. Y.B. Chavan as a Foreign Minister tried thought out his tenure to translate into action the ideas and principles mentioned above by taking into account the then prevailing situation, in the world and interpret and implement them as per our nation's basic principles. He always considered

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that India's attitude to bilateral and international questions were shaped through consensus and with the realisation that India's problems were (ultimately) the problems of the developing world. He strongly believed that the content of the foreign relations in the modern age was strongly linked with economic affairs.<sup>106</sup> Hence his experience in the Finance Ministry was quite helpful to him in dealing with matters of foreign affairs.

Just after his take over (Dr.) Henry Kissinger, the U.S. Secretary of States and the most shrewd diplomat of his times came to visit India on 28th October, and stayed till 31st October, 1974. India's relations with the U.S. then after the Bangla Desh War in 1971 and the strong ties with the U.S.S.R. thereafter was more strained. (Shri.) Chavan had a free and frank discussion with (Dr.) Kissinger and regarding the outcome of the discussion he later on said in an interview,

"A perceptible improvement in normalisation of Indo-U.S. relations came about after Kissenger's visit to India. We established joint committees to enlarge areas of co-operation between the two countries<sup>107</sup>".

After that from 18th (November) to 20th November, 1974 he visited Sri Lanka, and the visit went off very well. This was the first time he was meeting Mrs. Bandarnaike, the then Prime Minister of Sri Lanka who was also the Foreign Minister of that

country. He also had discussions with the Sri Lanka citizens of Indian origin to get acquainted with their problems.

From 7th to 10th December, 1974 he visited Bangla Desh. The main purpose of his visit (to Bangla Desh) was to see and discuss the ~~lake~~ lay of land for the Farakka Barrage negotiations. He returned (home) with the awareness of the major difficulties inherent in the problem. In this regard he (has) said,

" I returned home with optimism and felt that with good will the difficulties were not insurmountable. <sup>108</sup> ".

From April, 29th to 6th May, 1975 he went with the Indian Delegation to Kingston, Jamaica to attend the Commonwealth Summit. Mr. Man~~lie~~ was the Chairman of the summit. From India's point of view the major discussions were held on the point of Nuclear explosions. In this context in one of (this) letters to Venutai from Kingston he wrote,

" Canada's Prime Minister tried to bring forth the issue of Nuclear explosion on moral grounds and advocated that nuclear explosion for peaceful and constructive work and Nuclear explosion for Nuclear weapons is not difficult and on this ground he tried to change the decision of the summit. But I calmly stated about the difference in these



two matters and quoted the scientists for the same. <sup>109</sup> " Besides this hitch the Common Wealth Summit at Kingston was a successful one. It was an interesting one where some of the developing countries of all the continents and a few developed countries like Canada and U.K. participated. Through out the talks in the summit, the developing countries got the priority for the discussions. A talk of a new economic order prominently figured at the Kingston Conference of the Commonwealth.

From 22nd August, to 29th August, (Shri.) Chavan headed the delegation of the Non-aligned Foreign Ministers Conference at Lima-Peru. But there was an interesting situation when he arrived there- In the Conference Hall, (Shri.) Chavan received a note <sup>which</sup> ~~withheld~~ read : Mr. Chavan, we have just been informed that there is a ~~sample~~ coup d'etat here in Lima. We would like to know - 1) whether there is any reaction among ministers here 2) whether you and your colleagues are likely

<sup>110</sup> to stay or not. Thank you. Shri. Chavan reacted very coolly to it and took the incidence in his stride. At 9 a.m. the conference commenced its working right earnestly. He was entrusted with the work of thanks giving to all the delegates of the different countries.

The Indo-Soviet Relations which were on the

better side from the mid-sixties were further strengthened in in the mid -seventies during Yashwantraoji's period of Foreign Ministry. <sup>had</sup> India<sup>N</sup> signed a treaty of peace, friendship and co-operation with the U.S.S.R. in August, 1971. In this context Shri. Chavan had stated,

" The U.S.S.R. has invariably supported India's vital National interests and whenever we have run into heavy weather they have stood by us. In turn, we have also co-operated with them in many areas of world problems where we have an independent view. But this mutual friendship and co-operation was in the context of peace and never at the expense of relations with any other country." 171.

The Indo-Soviet Treaty of 1971 provided a legal and political basis for further strengthening Indo-Soviet Co-operation in political, economic, cultural, technical and scientific fields.

<sup>and</sup> The Indo-Soviet relation during Shri. Chavan's tenure had widened at the same time deepened. Consequently India launched its first artificial satellite, Aryabhata from the Soviet Union on 19th April, 1975. This was according to the term of agreement with the Soviet Union Academy of Sciences and the Indian Space Research Organisation, for furthering co-operation in the explorati-<sup>7</sup> and use of outer space for peaceful purpose signed in 1971<sup>112</sup>.

The 15 year economic and trade co-operation agreement and an agreement<sup>on the</sup> launching <sup>N</sup>up of the second Indian Satellite with

the help of Soviet Rocket Carrier in 1977-78 was signed in 1975 during (Shri.) Chavan's tenure.

As for the Indo-Chinese relationship it was unfortunate that there was no tangible break-through in the diplomacy since the 1962 war. The Chinese media had continued hostile propaganda against India on many occasions. But fortunately there were some ~~xi~~ indications towards normalisation of relation between the two countries during Shri. Chavan's tenure. A Chinese table-tennis team came to India in February 1975 and participated in the World Table Tennis Championship. This visit later came to be known as ' Ping-Pong-Diplomacy'. Both the Governments also agreed to instal general telex link on a reciprocal basis. India also supported China's candidature in the International Organisations like Asian Development Bank.<sup>113</sup> Thus a congenial atmosphere was created by (Shri.) Chavan to restore relations atleast on diplomatic level with China. It was in this backdrop that (External affairs Minister, (Shri. Y.B. Chavan announced in Lok Sabha on 15th April 1976, India's decision to restore the level of the diplomatic representation in Peking to the status of an Ambassador<sup>114</sup> . Immediately after the announcement the Ambassadors of the respective countries were announced and they took their charge soon after in Peking and

New Delhi. In his address to the World Affairs Conference,

(Shri.) Chavan stated,

Our relations with China have also shown improvement and in recent months the two countries have up-graded the relationship to the Ambassador Level. This too is a part of our policy of good neighbourly relations. We believe that large countries like India and China cannot afford to ignore each other for long or maintain a posture of hostility. ~~There~~ common interests <sup>(as)</sup> that of other nations, lies in promoting peaceful coexistence and friendly co-operation in Asia <sup>115</sup> ".

As far as Indo-Pakistan relations goes it is quite unfortunate that since the partition of India in 1947, Pakistan has kept the Indo-Pak relations tense. India has always taken initiative on many occasions in order to have peaceful relations with Pakistan. After 1971 Indo-Pak War, India took the initiative for Simla Agreement and immediately after the agreement was signed, India withdrew its forces from the Pakistan territory and released about 100000 prisoners of war. The Simla Agreement also emphasized that Indo-Pak problems be tackled in future only on bilateral basis, i.e. to the exclusion of all third parties and <sup>117</sup> (external) powers.

(Shri.) Chavan all along worked on the same guideline and stated,

" A state of peace and tranquility in Asia would be the greatest achievement of this ancient continent and its message of peace, like the message of its earlier

philosophers and religious leaders, would reverberate<sup>118</sup> through out the rest of the world ". Thus (Shri.)

(Y.B.) Chavan was quite successful in keeping a normal state of relationship with Pakistan at least during his tenure as the foreign affairs minister of India.

Besides these achievements Shri. Chavan had also an exceptional stint as the Foreign Minister in the International Conferences such as Commonwealth Summits, Non-Aligned Conferences, U.N. General Assembly Meetings and many other successful goodwill visits to numerous countries all over the world. He had to relinquish his office after the Congress Party was severely defeated at the General Election of 1977.

By the mid-1970s the political situation in the country had changed a great deal since the independence and a new breed of politicians had emerged in the political (scene). By this time (Mrs.) Indira Gandhi had also consolidated her position as the undisputed leader of the Congress Party and she had more or less started the personal cult in Indian politics. (He) was owing to her personal charisma and some progressive economic measures she had promised to the country in the last couple of years. But the situation within the country was very delicately and intricately poised due to numerous social

and economic problems. In these circumstances <sup>h</sup> (Shri.) Jayaprakas Narayan's movement which almost spelt out a nationwide disobedience and non-cooperation was taking deep roots and posing a challenge to the Government. (In the <sup>on</sup> meanwhile on 12th June 1975, (Mr.) Justice Jagmohan Lal Sinha of the Allahabad High Court delivered a judgement on the petition file<sup>d</sup> by (Mr.) Rajnarayan against the election of the Prime Minister (Mrs.) Indira Gandhi in the 1971 mid-term Lok Sabha Poll. <sup>119</sup>

Resultantly all the opposition parties demanded the immediate resignation of the Prime Minister. However, (Mrs.) Indira Gandhi did not budge and on 26th June 1975 she proclaimed emergency under the pretext of internal disturbances threatening the security of the country. <sup>120</sup> All the Opposition leaders were put behind bars and there was a kind of political hush in the country. (Mrs.) Indira Gandhi announced a 20 point economic programme as she had taken economic measures during the political crisis of 1969.

The decision to proclaim emergency was certainly her own. She alone took it and informed the cabinet after the 'fait accompli' and not before. <sup>121</sup> Some times later her senior colleagues like (Shri.) Y.B. Chavan and Babu Jagjivan Ram confirmed this. There is no doubt that there were some

economic gains accrued, after the proclamation of emergency. But most of the political observers all over the world thought that this was a subversion of democracy. The excess of family planning measures and gagging of the press and absolute mis-use of power by some of Indira Gandhi's coterie send a wave of silent anger through out the country. The state of emergency remained for two years.

In a Broadcast to the nation on 18th January, 1977, Mrs. Indira Gandhi announced the dissolution of the Lok Sabha and fresh election to it.<sup>122</sup> Shri. Chavan was then at Bucharest where he received the message of the Prime Minister regarding the elections. Shri. Chavan<sup>He</sup> was very happy on hearing this because he thought that it would restart the democratic process in the country. In this context in his letter to his wife Sou. Venutai he wrote,

" The election will be held. I am happy. I think it should have been held last year. I had<sup>a</sup> talk with the Prime Minister regarding this but her mood was different then. Emergency will remain but most of the political prisoners will be freed and an atmosphere for election will be created. This is the gain. The atmosphere will be free. I am happy to-day.<sup>123</sup>"

Immediately after the announcement of the elections, majority of the political leaders were freed from the

jail. They formed the Janata Party. People's mute anger gave vent to itself through the elections and the Congress Party was severelly defeated in the general elections for the first time in independant<sup>t</sup> India. (Mrs.) Indira Gandhi lost the election from her Rai Bareli constituency. (Shri. Y.B.) Chavan won from the Satara Constituency with a<sup>^</sup> overwhelming majority as usual. However, the Congress could secure only 20 seats out of the total 48 in Maharashtra (Shri.) Morarji Desai became the Prime Minister of Janata Party Government in the country.

During this time the Congress had a strength of 150 members in the Parliament<sup>124</sup>. The Congress Party was facing a great dilemma and going through a low ebb in its political history. In these tiring circumstances (Shri.) Chavan was elected by the Congress Parliamentary Party as the leader of the Party and as the Congress was second largest party in the Lok Sabha he started his unique responsibility as the leader of the Opposition. As he had done previously, to accept any responsibility, when in power with his unflinching faith in the democratic process and an urge to serve the nation, he also took his responsibility philosophically. In this context he (has) stated,



" Recently when I got adjusted to my present and novel experience in the political career of being in the opposition party after an uninterrupted period of nearly 14 years on the Treasury benches of Indian Parliamentary<sup>125</sup> ".

This adjustment on his part was <sup>not</sup> only political but it also needed the factor of mental adjustment immensely. In the meantime Mr. Brahmanand Reddy had taken over as the Congress Party President. They both started to analyse in the party forum the debacle in the elections and came to the conclusion that personalised politics was the main cause of the Congress debacle. Reestablishment of collective leadership in the party and inter-party democracy to resurrect the party was the only solution according to their analysis. <sup>126</sup> Mrs. Indira Gandhi did not like their approach. She and her followers mounted a frontal attack on Shri. Chavan and Reddy, so much so that one of her 'Kitchen Cabinet' members Mr. Mohammed Yunus wrote, " This political light-weights like K. Brahmanand Reddy and Chavan got elevated to Congress Presidentship and opposition leaders in the Lok Sabha respectively. This could not have been achieved without her tacit approval. But soon after assuming office, both of them mounted a malicious campaign against her.". However, this was not true in the

least. Hailing Yashwantrao as a light-weight politician was not only foolhardy but also a figment of imagination on the part of Mohammad Yunus and other coterie members of (Mrs) Indira Gandhi. Finally Mrs. Gandhi split the Congress for the second time and gave rise to the Congress(I). Shri. Y.B.Chavan remained the opposition leader as (90) MPs. remained with the Congress led by (Shri) Chavan and Reddy.

As the leader of the Opposition, (Shri) Chavan acted as a true democrat. He did not (assort) to any sort of opposition for opposition sake. His approach was constructive and his debates in the Parliament shone him in the light of the great Parliamentarian that he was. In his speech which he made during the debate on the budget demand of the Ministry of External Affairs, then managed by (Sri) Atalbihari Vajpayee is quite eloquent in this regard. He stated,

" After watching Vajpayee perform in the Lok Sabha during the last two years I must say I have found he has a flexible attitude and an elastic mind that would justify him to have the legacy of Nehru's policy. While, what I have said goes to the credit of Vajpayee, it also is a credit to Nehru's policy. <sup>127</sup> "

In this case he did not oppose the Janata Government's foreign policy but he (praised) it for continuing in the

right path. He also emphasised the need of thinking in future about the foreign policy in the same speech. His observations in this speech were most (studious) and befitting the notion of a responsible leader of the opposition.

When the squabbling in the Janata Party reached its height (Shri) Chavan as the leader of the opposition in a tacital move, moved a no-confidence motion in the Parliament against the Janata Government<sup>128</sup>. It brought to an end the Janata Party rule in India as the President dismissed the Morarji Desai Government. (Shri. Y.B. Chavan as the Leader of the Opposition was called in by the President to form the Government but unfortunately he could not muster the requisite support. So the President called in (Mr) Charan Singh to form the Government which he did with (Shri. Y.B. Chavan as the Dy. Prime Minister of India. The Ministry could never prove its majority on the floor of the House within the prescribed time limit and subsequently the Parliament was dissolved and fresh elections were held in 1980.

Thus (Shri. Y.B. Chavan as the Defence Minister, as the Home Minister, as the Finance Minister and as the Foreign Minister tried his best to preserve and conserve the democratic values. He made the most of his different ministerial posts

to safeguard India's freedom and sovereignty, to boost (up) the morals<sup>y</sup> of the defence forces as well as to make them self reliant. He solved amicably various knotty internal problems. He also helped to some extent, to strengthen the socialistic and secular set-up of the nation. He tried to tone up the Indian economy by undertaking various welfare measures. As a foreign Minister he tried to enhance the image of India in International field. When he found that the Janata Party Government had done some constructive work he open-heartedly praised it. And when he found that the Janata Government was proving itself ineffective he moved a no-confidence motion against it which struck a death-knell to the Janata Government. The foregone pages also makes it amply clear that late Shri. Y.B.Chavan was a great philosopher politician as well as a foresighted and cultured statesman.

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