

U.S. wants India to cut ties with North Korea

It was the second time in two months that the U.S. conveyed such a message. *The Hindu* had reported in July that a senior U.S. diplomat had visited New Delhi with the same communication.

The American insistence that India reduce ties with North Korea is an important move as it aims to draw New Delhi more strongly into the East Asian crisis.

Pakistan's role

The message also reflects recent Indian arguments about North Korea as stated by a high-level diplomat who recounted Pakistan's role in arming it with nuclear knowhow as a reason for India's continued concern.

In line with this thought the joint statement stated that those countries that supported the North Korean nuclear programme should be held "accountable."

Reports indicated that during last week's trip to India, Mr. Abe also discussed the role of Pakistan's A.Q. Khan network in supporting the clandestine nuclear programme of North Korea.

India has repeatedly deplored the recent missile and nuclear tests by Pyongyang though bilateral ties with the government of Kim Jong-un have remained more or less undisturbed.

India played a key role in the resolution of the Korean war during the early 1950s and has maintained diplomatic ties with Pyongyang.

In recent years, senior public representatives have been spotted in the company of North Korean diplomats in Delhi.

However, Prime Minister Narendra Modi has repeatedly taken up the issue of North Korea during his tours including his latest trip to Spain earlier this year.

In April this year, India supported the U.N. in banning trade with North Korea though the Ministry of External Affairs has maintained that Indian trade has consisted of humanitarian ingredients like food items and medicines.

However, a report in 2016 had revealed that the Dehradun-based Centre for Space Science and Technology Education in Asia and the Pacific (CSSTEAP) was one of the institutes that trained North Korean scientists, in violation of U.N. sanctions.

However, past collaboration, said a highly placed Indian diplomat, is likely to be discontinued indicating that ties with North Korea is part of the vestiges of the NAM-era diplomacy.

The official also indicated that India would like to play a proactive role in the Far East if the need arises.

An official source from the MEA, however, said he was not aware of such pressure from the U.S.

END