

course, pay serious attention to any negotiated multilateral initiatives in the course of the FMCT negotiations.'

On foreign technology-denial regimes in relation to our missile development programme, the PM revealed the on-going development of an extended-range *Agni*, and said:

'We have expressed our reservations about provisions of certain export control regimes that ostensibly seek to promote non-proliferation objectives, but are discriminatory in application. India's missile development programme is an indigenous programme, that was launched almost 15 years ago. This programme is regularly reviewed, taking into account our security environment, particularly missile acquisi-

tions and deployments in our regions. We have announced that a new version of the *Agni*, with an extended range is under development. Flight-testing of such an enhanced range *Agni* will be conducted fully in accordance with established international practice. While our decision is to maintain the deployment of a deterrent which is both minimum but credible, I would like to re-affirm to this House that the Government will not accept any restraints on the development of India's R&D capabilities. Such activity is an integral of any country's defence preparedness and essential for coping with new threat perceptions that may emerge in the years ahead. This Government remains unequivocally opposed to any suggestions that seek to

place India at a technological disadvantage through intrusive or sovereignty violative measures.

At the same time, we will continue to take initiatives in the international fora towards fulfilling the objective of complete elimination of all nuclear weapons. At this year's UN General Assembly, we had taken the initiative for what could be an important first step, through a resolution on "Reducing Nuclear Danger". This initiative was intended to urge countries to move back from the nuclear hair-trigger response postures of the Cold War. If such initiatives are multilaterally accepted by other nuclear weapon states, they will, of course, be accordingly reflected in our own positions, too.'

NASA selects new name and sets new launch date for advanced space X-ray telescope

NASA set a new launch date for the Advanced X-ray Astrophysics Facility, and announced that it will be renamed the Chandra X-ray Observatory in honour of the late Indian-American Nobel Laureate Subrahmanyan Chandrasekhar. The Chandra X-ray Observatory will be shipped to NASA's Kennedy Space Centre, Florida, on or before 28 January and launched no earlier than 8 April 1999. The launch date will be subject to the actual shipping date and the results of a mid-February independent review of the progress towards preparing the operations centre in Cambridge, Massachusetts for launch.

Chandra will be carried to space aboard the Space Shuttle Columbia on mission STS-93, commanded by astronaut Eileen Collins. The shipment of the spacecraft was delayed in mid-October so the prime contractor, TRW Space and Electronics Group, Redondo Beach, California, could complete testing on flight software.

'Chandra', a shortened version of Chandrasekhar's name, which he pre-

ferred among friends and colleagues, was chosen in a contest to rename the X-ray telescope. 'Chandra' also means 'moon' or 'luminous' in Sanskrit. The winners are a high school student in Laclede, Idaho, and a teacher in Camarillo, California. In all, 59 people submitted the name 'Chandra'. Altogether, the contest drew more than 6,000 entries from all 50 states and 61 countries.

'Chandrasekhar made fundamental contributions to the theory of black holes and other phenomena that the Chandra X-ray Observatory will study. His life and work exemplify the excellence that we can hope to achieve with this great observatory', said NASA Administrator Daniel Goldin.

'Chandra probably thought longer and deeper about our universe than anyone since Einstein', said Martin Rees, Great Britain's Astronomer Royal.

Chandrasekhar, widely regarded as one of the foremost astrophysicists of the 20th century, won the Nobel Prize in 1983 for his theoretical studies of physical processes important to the structure and

evolution of stars. He and his wife emigrated from India to the US in 1935. He served on the faculty of the University of Chicago until his death in 1995.

The Chandra X-ray Observatory will help astronomers world-wide better understand the structure and evolution of the universe by studying powerful sources of X-rays such as exploding stars, matter falling into black holes and other exotic celestial objects. X-ray astronomy can only be done from space because earth's atmosphere blocks X-ray from reaching the surface. Chandra will provide images that are fifty times more detailed than previous X-ray missions. At more than 45 feet in length and weighing more than five tons, it will be one of the largest objects ever placed in earth's orbit by the Space Shuttle.

For information about S. Chandrasekhar, or comments from his Chicago colleagues, including those who will use the Chandra X-ray Observatory, contact Steve Koppes, University of Chicago, 773/702-8366, or via email at: s-koppes@uchicago.edu.