

# ALL THE PM's MEN

NILOVA ROY CHAUDHURY  
UNRAVELS THE CORE GROUP OF  
INDIVIDUALS WHO PUT THE INDO-US  
NUCLEAR DEAL TOGETHER



## The Diplomat



**RONEN SEN**  
India's Ambassador  
to the United States

**A** KEY FIGURE in the negotiations, who ensured that Mrs Gandhi's apprehensions about the Indo-US nuclear deal were assuaged, was India's Ambassador to Washington, credited as the prime mover behind the July 18, 2005 statement agreed to by President George W Bush and Manmohan Singh. Considered by many to be India's most powerful diplomat, Ronen Sen, an IFS official of the 1966 batch, could not accept the post of Foreign Secretary because of health problems and retired from service some years ago, only to be immediately appointed as our man in Washington. Sen, 62, traces his proximity to 10, Janpath from his tenure in the PMO in the mid-1980's in the Rajiv Gandhi PMO.

The only person to have served as India's Ambassador to Russia, Britain and the United States (all key political appointments in the diplomatic realm), Sen, who has served as Secretary in the Atomic Energy Commission, was on the ball when he took the DAE establishment on board, while giving shape to the separation plan. It was only after Sen arrived from Washington last week that the nuclear deal looked like getting off the ground by the time Bush was here. When the talks came down to the wire, taking advantage of Bush's "passion" for India, Sen used all his expertise to ensure that India got the best deal possible. Sen was part of the core group that spent most of last Wednesday night, almost till the summit began, thrashing out the agreement, till the deal was done.

## The Negotiator



**SHYAM SARAN**  
Indian Foreign  
Secretary

**I**F THINGS don't pan out in India's best interests, we will just walk out of the deal," said Shyam Saran some months ago, when facing intense flak for giving away too much in the July 18 agreement with the US. India's main points person in the joint working group set up to flesh out and give shape to the Indo-US civil nuclear dialogue process, Saran was chosen to lead the team of Indian negotiators heading into "entirely uncharted territory".

He ensured that members from the department of atomic energy drew "all the red lines" beyond which the negotiators could not go and came up with a formulation that has been seen as "win win" even by Indian scientists and sceptics.

Along with his American counterpart, Nicholas Burns, Saran, 60, an IFS official of the 1970 batch who superseded several other officials to become foreign secretary in August 2004, (surviving his choice for the post by the previous NDA government) has been going back and forth between Washington and Delhi to ensure a deal was in place by the time Bush arrived. What his colleagues have described as his "ability to work incredibly hard" and "stay focused on core issues", has ensured that there be "no possibility of a sell-out." His experience as a Fellow in the UN Disarmament Programme has helped him in this case, to convince the DAE of the need to bring India's nuclear programme out of the closet.

## The Advisor



**M. K. NARAYANAN**  
Indian National  
Security Advisor

**T**HE FORMER head of the Intelligence Bureau and chief of the Joint Intelligence Committee in the late 1980's and early 1990's, the 71-year-old NSA established a close rapport with Prime Minister Manmohan Singh, during the latter's tenure as Finance Minister. Narayanan retired in 1992 and was brought back by Singh as his internal security adviser before succeeding JN (Mani) Dixit as NSA. The intensely low-key Narayanan, initially dismissed as a "cop with limited vision" has grown in the job and gradually

come to occupy a crucial space in laying down vital policy, including foreign policy. Convinced of the need for this nuclear agreement and the benefits that would accrue to India's stature in the world community, he used his proximity to 10, Janpath to ensure that the UPA Chairperson Sonia Gandhi was always in the loop and would approve the deal.

His greatest asset, apart from his long service in India's domestic intelligence services, is that when he talks, the prime minister is all ears.

### KEY AIDES

**VIJAY NAMBIAR** Deputy National Security Advisor, who retired as IFS officer 2 years ago

**HAMID ALI RAO** Joint Secretary, Disarmament and Nuclear Security

**A.M.S. SUBRAMANIAM JAISHANKAR** Joint Secretary; IFS officer (1977 Batch)

**RAVI GROVER & RAGHU RAMAN** 2 DAE scientists

### WITH A LITTLE HELP FROM AMERICAN FRIENDS



**NICHOLAS BURNS**  
Under Secretary,  
Political Affairs, US  
State Department

A former US Permanent Representative to the North Atlantic Treaty Organization, Burns brought his expertise in arguing Washington's case to the nuclear table. His tenure as spokesman and personal rapport with counterpart Shyam Saran, helped ensure that the nuclear deal did not appear to be a sell-out for Washington.



**ASHLEY J. TELLIS**  
Senior Associate,  
Carnegie Endowment  
for International  
Peace

Mumbai-born Tellis, was a senior advisor to Robert Blackwill, former US Ambassador to India and for the past two months, he has served as senior advisor to Burns. Vociferously advocating India's cause, he has helped strengthen American support of various State Department activities that relate to Indo-US relations.



**PHILIP ZELIKOW**  
Counsellor, US  
State Department

Credited as one of the few who always has his eye on the 'Big Picture', Zelikow is often referred to as 'geo-political guru par excellence'. An academic by nature, he authored America's National Security Strategy in 2002. Post his induction as counsellor in 2005, he has toiled hard to strategically place India in an advantageous position on the US foreign policy map.