

West didn't supply arms, Russia helped: Jaishankar

They chose a military dictatorship in the region as preferred partner: Minister

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India has a substantial inventory of Soviet and Russian-origin weapons because the Western countries opted a military dictatorship in the region as its preferred partner and did not supply weapons to New Delhi for decades, External Affairs Minister S Jaishankar said on Monday, in an apparent reference to Pakistan.

During a joint press meet with his Australian counterpart Penny Wong here, Jaishankar also said that India and Russia have a long-standing relationship that has certainly served New Delhi's interests well.

"We have a substantial inventory of Soviet and Russian-origin weapons. And that inventory actually grew for a variety of reasons. You know, the merits of the weapons systems themselves, but also because for multiple decades, Western countries did not supply weapons to India, and in fact, saw a military dictatorship next to us as the preferred partner," Jaishankar said, in an apparent reference to Pakistan, which was a close ally of the US-led West during the Cold War.

Pakistan has been ruled by the Army Generals for more than half of its 73 plus years of existence.

"We all in international politics deal with what we have, we make judgments,



External Affairs Minister S Jaishankar with Australian Deputy Prime Minister and Defence Minister Richard Marles during a meeting on Monday PHOTO: PTI

judgments which are reflective of both our future interests as well as our current situation. And my sense is, in terms of this current conflict, like every military conflict, there are learnings from it, and I am sure my very professional colleagues in the military would be studying it very carefully," Jaishankar said.

He was asked by an Australian reporter whether India should reduce its reliance on Russian weapons systems and rethink its relationship with Russia, given what is going on in Ukraine.

Avoid non-essential travel to and within Ukraine: Embassy

The Indian embassy in Ukraine on Monday advised Indian nationals to avoid all non-essential travel to and within Ukraine in view of the conflict escalation. The embassy also asked Indians in that country to keep the mission informed about the status of their presence in Ukraine. India has called for immediate cessation of hostilities and urgent return to the path of "diplomacy and dialogue". AGENCIES

India declines to disclose upcoming UN vote on Ukraine

India doesn't want to say in advance how it will vote at the United Nations General Assembly on a likely draft resolution condemning Russia's proclaimed annexation of parts of Ukraine, Foreign Minister S Jaishankar said on Monday. "As a matter of prudence and policy, we don't predict our votes in advance," Jaishankar said during a joint media briefing along with Australia's foreign minister Penny Wong in Canberra. AGENCIES