

Miliband urges caution over Iran

BBC News, 1 April 2009

The international community should not consider further sanctions against Iran while the US is offering to engage with Tehran, David Miliband has said. The foreign secretary said Iran had a "once in a generation" chance to normalise relations with the US. The Obama administration says it will work with Iran, whose nuclear programme has been the source of longstanding tension, if it "unclenches its fist". Gordon Brown has said Iran faces a "clear choice" over its nuclear plans. Earlier this month, he said the international community would help Iran develop a civil nuclear capacity as long as it brought its nuclear facilities under international supervision and complied within UN regulations.

NFC receives 60 tonnes uranium fuel from France

The Hindu, 1 April 2009

Following clearance by the Nuclear Suppliers Group, first consignment of 60 tonnes of uranium ore concentrate, imported from France, has arrived at the Nuclear Fuel Complex (NFC) here for being converted into fuel for power reactors. This uranium ore would be processed and used to produce power in safeguarded pressurised heavy water reactors (PHWRs). Disclosing this at a press conference here on Tuesday, R N Jayaraj, chief executive, NFC, said that consequent to Indo-US nuclear deal, the 123 agreement and clearance by NSG to enable full civil nuclear cooperation, India and France had entered into bilateral cooperation for supplying reactors and fuel.

First consignment of natural uranium arrives from France

The Hindu, 1 April 2009

In the wake of the international nuclear market opening up for India, the first consignment of natural uranium of 60 tonnes from French nuclear supplier AREVA Inc. arrived at the Nuclear Fuel Complex (NFC) here on Tuesday. Following the 123 Agreement between India and the United States and waiver by the Nuclear Suppliers Group (NSG), India signed an agreement with France for bilateral cooperation for supply of nuclear reactors and fuel. Subsequently, Department of Atomic Energy (DAE) entered into a contract with AREVA for supply of 300 tonnes, and a part of that quantity was received by the NFC on Tuesday.

Obama to Announce Push For Nuclear Disarmament

VOA News, 3 April 2009

U.S. President Barack Obama is reaching out to the European public as well as its leaders, promising a new era in ties across the Atlantic. NATO allies gathered for summit talks on the French German border, Mr. Obama actively sought support for his new Afghanistan-Pakistan strategy, and announced plans for a push for nuclear disarmament. The president is reaching out directly to the European public. "What we thought was important was for me to have an opportunity to not only speak with you but also to hear from you, because that's ultimately how we can learn about each other," he said. At a sports arena in Strasbourg, France, the president began a dialogue with French and German students.

Russia says to start nuclear talks with U.S. in April

Reuters, 4 April 2009

Russia and the United States will start talks on a new deal to cut nuclear warheads before the end of the month, Russian Deputy Foreign Minister Sergei Ryabkov was quoted as saying on Saturday. Russian President Dmitry Medvedev and U.S. President Barack Obama agreed to pursue a new arms deal on Wednesday, making good a pledge to rebuild relations from a post-Cold War low. "We must begin consultations by the end

of April," Ryabkov told Russian news agency Interfax. "We must begin consultations by the end of April," Ryabkov told Russian news agency Interfax. Talks would be on the level of Foreign Ministry department heads, he said.

Obama launches effort to reduce nuclear arms

The Associated Press, 5 April 2009

President Barack Obama on Sunday launched an effort to rid the world of nuclear weapons, calling them "the most dangerous legacy of the Cold War" and saying the U.S. has a moral responsibility to lead as the only nation to ever use one. In a speech driven with fresh urgency by North Korea's rocket launch just hours earlier, Obama said the U.S. would "immediately and aggressively" seek ratification of a comprehensive ban on testing nuclear weapons. He said the U.S. would host a summit within the next year on reducing and eventually eliminating nuclear weapons, and he called for a global effort to secure nuclear material.

World should recognize Pak as nuclear power: Qureshi

Press Trust of India, 5 April 2009

The international community should accept Pakistan as a nuclear power as had been done in the case of India, Foreign Minister Shah Mahmood Qureshi said today. Urging the world to accept Pakistan's status as a nuclear power and to recognize it as had been done with India, Qureshi said: We are a responsible nuclear power and it will be appropriate that the world should recognize it." Pakistan also wants the resumption of the composite dialogue process with India and it is good if friends of the two countries extend help to make this happen, he told reporters in his hometown of Multan. However, the talks should resume once the general election in India is over, he added.

Indo-US chill setting in, talk of even nuclear deal for Pak

The Indian Express, 5 April 2009

Days ahead of Washington's Afghanistan-Pakistan envoy Richard Holbrooke's visit to New Delhi, a task force he set up and was a member of until he joined the Obama administration has called for a "dialogue" with Islamabad to "acknowledge its nuclear weapon status." What will ring alarm bells here is that the New York-based Asia Society's Task Force report, released on a new strategy for Afghanistan and Pakistan, was the brainchild of Holbrooke. He and current US National Security Advisor Gen James Jones were active members of this task force until they took up their current Government assignments.

N.K. faces sanctions over rocket launch

The Korea Herald, 6 April 2009

North Korea yesterday launched a multistage rocket, despite repeated warnings from South Korea and others. The North fired the rocket at around 11:30 a.m., Seoul said. The lift-off took place from the coastal Musudan-ri launch pad in the North's northeastern region. U.S. President Barack Obama said the "missile launch" calls for U.N. sanctions. Foreign Minister Yu Myung-hwan called it "a satellite," but government sources said the title of the launch is a trivial matter since Seoul and Washington are in agreement that the launch violates the U.N. Security Council Resolution 1718 regardless of what it is. The two allies also refuted North Korea's claim that it put a satellite into orbit.

Kazakhstan offers to host nuclear fuel bank

The Associated Press, 6 April 2009

Kazakhstan offered Monday to host an international nuclear fuel bank, and Iran's leader said he supported the idea. The United States initiated the project and allocated \$50

million toward it in 2007. Kazakhstan's President Nursultan Nazarbayev said Monday that his Central Asian country would be an appropriate place for such a depository, as it was giving up its own Soviet-era nuclear arsenal. If created, the global fuel bank would undermine claims by Iran and other states that they need to develop their own fuel enrichment programs. Nevertheless, Iran's leader Mahmoud Ahmadinejad said during a two-day visit to Kazakhstan that he supported the project.

Iran's Mousavi vows to push nuclear drive

Agence France-Presse, 6 April 2009

Former Iranian prime minister Mir Hossein Mousavi, who is running for the presidency in the June election, said he will push ahead with the country's controversial nuclear drive if elected. "Having nuclear technology for peaceful purposes without being a threat to the world is our strategic objective," Mousavi said in a speech to his election campaign managers on Tuesday, a copy of which was obtained by AFP on Sunday. "I do not think any government will dare to take a step back in this regard, since people will question the decision. Given the long-term interest, we are obliged not to back down on this or other similar issues."

Japan pursues plutonium-based fuel

United Press International, 6 April 2009

Japan, which currently produces about 30 percent of its electricity from nuclear power, is turning to a plutonium-based fuel to supplement its existing energy programs. For the resource-poor country, recycling reprocessed plutonium – which can also be used to produce nuclear weapons – can help reduce dependence on foreign energy supplies. There are still some issues to be resolved in implementing the program, however. The process involves burning a mixed plutonium-uranium oxide, or MOX fuel, in conventional light water reactors. MOX fuel is made by mixing plutonium extracted from nuclear spent fuel with uranium.

Nuclear arms in the developing world (Andrew Grotto)

Guardian, 6 April 2009

President Barack Obama's speech in Prague on Sunday is a potential game changer for non-proliferation diplomacy. By endorsing the goal of a world free of nuclear weapons, Obama can begin to move international debate about nuclear proliferation beyond the ideologically charged squabbles of the past to where it needs to be: changing the perception among many developing countries, perhaps even most, that nuclear proliferation does not affect them. For the past eight years, many developing countries that oppose nuclear proliferation have nevertheless resisted key measures to strengthen the global non-proliferation regime.

The road to zero nukes (George Perkovich)

Guardian, 6 April 2009

President Barack Obama gave a landmark speech in Prague on Sunday committing the United States to the goal of a world free of nuclear weapons, and laying out realistic steps to that end. The call couldn't have come at a better time. North Korea has just tested a long-range missile that could be used to deliver a nuclear warhead. Monday and Tuesday, hundreds of public officials, experts and industry leaders from around the world will gather in Washington at the Carnegie Endowment's biannual non-proliferation conference, to discuss opportunities for controlling the most powerful – and terrible – technologies ever devised, and turning them toward peaceful uses alone.

"India will not sign NPT in present format"

The Hindu, 6 April 2009

External Affairs Minister Pranab Mukherjee has reiterated India's commitment to non-proliferation but said New Delhi would not sign the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT) in its present format as it is discriminatory and in favour of the nuclear weapon states. "Our position is very clear. We are totally in agreement that those who are signatories to the NPT, they must fulfil their treaty obligations. Because of this discriminatory nature, we are not signatories, but with the objectives of non-proliferation, we are with the rest of the world," he told journalists here on Sunday.

Controversial satellite launch by North Korea triggers alarm
The Hindu, 6 April 2009

The Democratic People's Republic of Korea on Sunday announced the "successful" launch of an indigenous communications satellite. However, scepticism about North Korea's "claim" lingered for hours after the satellite was "placed in orbit." An official spokesman in neighbouring Japan described the event as the launch of a "flying object." He was talking to The Hindu over telephone from Tokyo after Japan detected the first signs of the launch. Japan, South Korea, and the United States were already in a state of military alert against the possibility of a threatening or wayward launch. The DPRK's state news agency, as monitored in Seoul, said a home-made three-stage rocket, Unha-2 (Milky Way), carrying the satellite, lifted off the launch pad at 11.20 a.m. local time.

N.K. rocket launch (Editorial)
The Korea Herald, 7 April 2009

There are signs that North Korea's long-range rocket launch on Sunday was less than successful. Korean, U.S. and Japanese surveyors did not spot the new "communications satellite" that Pyongyang claimed to be orbiting the earth or catch any signal from such an object in space in the 24 hours after the rocket was launched. But it does not mean that Pyongyang's years of expensive efforts to develop mighty rockets in parallel with its nuclear weapons program totally failed. Kim Jong-il has at least demonstrated his country's capability to fire a rocket over the Japanese archipelago - terrifying its government and people - to a location more than 2,000 kilometers from Japan, a significant improvement from its 1998 and 2006 undertakings.

Lee restates willingness to join PSI
The Korea Herald, 7 April 2009

President Lee Myung-bak yesterday reaffirmed Seoul's willingness to fully join a U.S.-led initiative to curb the spread of weapons of mass destruction, a day after North Korea launched a long-range rocket widely condemned as a de facto missile test. Lee promised firm and stern measures against what he called an unjustifiable threat to regional and global security, while leaving the door for dialogue open. Prime Minister Han Seung-soo also indicated that the government will beef up its missile development capacity to cope with the increasing threat from its northern neighbors. North Korea fiercely opposes the South's membership in the Proliferation Security Initiative, calling it a "declaration of war."

Iran urges Russia to complete Bushehr nuclear plant rapidly
Tehran Times, 7 April 2009

Iran urged Russia to speed up work to finish the remaining parts and complete construction of the Bushehr nuclear power plant. Iran's nuclear power plant located in the southern port city of Bushehr was pre-commissioned in February in the presence of the Head of the Russian Federal Atomic Energy Agency, Sergei Kiriyenko. During the test-run, the facility was tested by virtual fuel. "The important project of Bushehr nuclear power plant that is regarded as the symbol for the two countries' cooperation by Iranian government and nation is one of the most important issues in (the two

countries') mutual cooperation," Iranian Ambassador to Moscow Seyed Reza Sajjadi said on Monday.

N Korea's satellite launch not same as missile test: China

The Times of India, 7 April 2009

Voicing its opposition to sanctions, China on Tuesday said the UN Security Council should act carefully in responding to North Korea's rocket launch, noting that there is a basic distinction between satellite launches and missile and nuclear tests. The United Nation Security Council should react cautiously to the launch activity of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea (DPRK), Foreign Ministry spokeswoman Jiang Yu said when asked to comment on Beijing's closest ally Pyongyang's recent rocket launch, defying US-led Western powers.

India calls for restraint over N Korean 'missile test

The Times of India, 7 April 2009

India's ambivalence over the alleged ballistic missile test by North Korea was further exemplified by its reaction on Monday when the foreign ministry called upon the international community to exercise restraint. This was even as it expressed concern over the possible destabilising effect of the development. In response to a question, the official spokesperson said, "We have seen reports that variously describe the missile launch by DPR Korea as a satellite launch or a ballistic missile test. The issue is presently under consideration in the UN Security Council. We are concerned at the possible destabilising effect of these events in a volatile region."

Waiting, watching Kim (Ajey Lele)

The Indian Express, 8 April 2009

Fifty years since the USSR launched Sputnik, as the world discusses "the next Space Age" North Korea has conducted a ballistic missile test - which it claims was a "satellite test" - to take the world back to the nuclear age. On 5th April North Korea launched what was probably a three-stage rocket with a satellite intended for orbit, in defiance of the pleas from the US, Japan, China and South Korea. Conflicting claims have emerged after this test. If North Korea's version is to be believed then their satellite is circling the globe and is able to transmit data - specifically, patriotic songs praising the "Dear Leader" Kim Jong-II. The US and South Korea say that the launch failed to get anything into orbit.

Iran 'using Chinese companies to buy nuclear equipment'

Guardian, 8 April 2009

Iran has dramatically stepped up covert attempts to buy nuclear equipment over the last six months, often by using Chinese companies as fronts, according to a senior German industrialist. Ralf Wirtz, whose company, Oerlikon Leybold Vacuum, makes pumps that can be used in uranium enrichment centrifuges, said that more than five years after the AQ Khan nuclear smuggling network was exposed by US and British intelligence the black market trade was on the rise again. "In the last six months I have seen a considerable increase of procurement attempts which - as we are told by government authorities - are for a nuclear programme," Wirtz told the world's leading nuclear experts gathered yesterday at a Washington conference organised by the Carnegie Endowment for International Peace.

Not A Weapon Of Choice (Ramesh Thakur)

The Times of India, 9 April 2009

On Sunday, North Korea launched a long-range missile which Pyongyang described as a success but US experts said had been a failure. Of greater historical significance was the

speech delivered the same day in Prague by US president Barack Obama. During the Democratic primary campaign last year, Hillary Clinton famously declared that both Senator John McCain and she had actual job experience to qualify to be commander-in-chief. All that Obama had done, by contrast, was to deliver one speech in Chicago opposing the Iraq war. As we know, Clinton fatally underestimated the power of speech.

Australia, US to lay path for nuclear disarmament

AFP, 9 April 2009

The United States holds high-level security talks with Australia on Thursday as the longtime allies find a new convergence of views on the need to abolish nuclear weapons. Afghanistan and North Korea's long-range missile test will also figure high on the agenda for the full-day annual meeting, which brings together the two countries' foreign affairs and defense chiefs. The session marks the first substantive talks between the Pacific nations since US President Barack Obama held a warm first summit with Australian Prime Minister Kevin Rudd at the White House two weeks ago.

Iran to decide on nuclear talks after reviewing offer

Reuters, 9 April 2009

Iran will decide on the offer of nuclear talks made by the United States and five other world powers after reviewing the details, a senior advisor to Iranian President Mahmoud Ahmadinejad told Reuters on Thursday. "We will review it and then decide about it," said Ali Akbar Javanfekr. Wednesday's invitation to direct talks marked a major policy change in Washington. The United States, Russia, China, France, Germany and Britain said in a statement on Wednesday they would ask European Union foreign policy chief Javier Solana to invite Tehran to the talks to find "a diplomatic solution to this critical issue".

Russia delivers first batch of nuclear fuel to India

The Economic Times, 10 April 2009

Russia's TVEL, a subsidiary of state-controlled nuclear power company Atomenergoprom, has delivered its first shipment of nuclear fuel for Indian heavy-water reactors, the company said on Friday. "Thirty metric tonnes of pellets were delivered to the nuclear fuel complex in Hyderabad (in India) for further conversion into fuel for the Rajasthan nuclear power plant," the company said. In line with a \$700 million contract signed Feb 11 with New Delhi on fuel supplies to Indian nuclear power plants, Russia is to supply India with 2,000 metric tonnes of uranium pellets. The fuel contract is another step in burgeoning nuclear cooperation between Russia and India.

Russia considers Pakistan its principal nuclear threat: Expert

Press Trust of India, 11 April 2009

Describing Pakistan as the "principal" nuclear threat to Russia, an eminent foreign policy and security expert has claimed that Moscow would support any US endeavour to take away Islamabad's atomic weapons in case of any destabilisation in the Islamic nation. "Russian authorities for many years have been indicating that Pakistan was a much more serious problem, both for nuclear proliferation and for nuclear terrorism, than Iran," Alexei Arbatov, Chairman of the Non-Proliferation Programme of Carnegie Moscow Centre, said at a recent seminar here.

N-deal: India is becoming sanctions-proof (Swaminathan Aiyar)

The Times of India, 12 April 2009

The manifestos of the BJP and Communist Party (Marxist) accuse the Congress of bartering away India's security in the nuclear deal with the US. They worry that India will be dragooned into signing other treaties that limit its nuclear options, and open it to nuclear sanctions if it ever tests a bomb again. This is a needless fear. Current

developments suggest that, in a decade or so, India itself will become a major nuclear equipment supplier to the whole world. The multinationals of France, US and Japan want to manufacture nuclear equipment in India to meet not just Indian but global demand. Once India becomes part of the global supply chain, it will become effectively sanctions-proof.

Iran's parliament to supervise future nuclear talks

Xinhua News, 12 April 2009

Iran's Majlis Speaker Ali Larijani said on Sunday that his parliament would supervise the country's nuclear negotiations in the future, the local Press TV website reported. The parliament would exercise supervision over the country's upcoming nuclear talks and it would only authorize those talks to be carried out "within the legislative body's framework," Larijani was quoted as saying. He added that "future nuclear negotiations are possible only if they are conducted within the framework of the Majlis resolutions." Larijani, however, did not elaborate on the spirit and content of "framework of legislative body" and "Majlis resolutions" which the negotiations are to be based on.

Pak to construct two nuclear power plants with Chinese help

Press Trust of India, 13 April 2009

Pakistan has given a go ahead for construction of two more nuclear power plants of 340 MW each with the Chinese help at the Chashma complex at a cost of USD 2.37 billion, a media report said today. The two plants, to be supplied by China, will involve a foreign exchange component of USD 1.75 billion, the Business Recorder newspaper quoted its sources as saying. The government has approved the proposal, but it was not made part of the formal agenda of a recent meeting of the Executive Committee of the National Economic Council and was distributed among members of the panel and provincial officials at the end of the meeting without necessary details, the sources were quoted as saying.

Sweden wants in on India's nuclear

United Press International, 13 April 2009

Sweden's ambassador to India, Lars-Olof Lindgren, is leading an industrial delegation to India to discuss nuclear risk management. Sweden is already a leader in providing nuclear risk-management services and has shown interest in cooperating with India on nuclear power, the Hindustan Times reports. Swedish companies like Sandvik, Sweco, SKB International AB and Relcon Scandpower AB will join France's Areva and U.S.-based Westinghouse and General Electric Co. on the list of international companies interested in investing in India's nuclear-power industry. Areva and GE Hitachi will supply nuclear reactors to India, and now the Swedish companies will offer engineering and construction services as well as risk management, nuclear-waste disposal management, and research and development.

Setbacks in India's nuclear power plans

United Press International, 13 April 2009

It was touted as a deal that would change the global energy landscape, opening new vistas for global as well as Indian power companies. Yet just six months after the historic India-U.S. nuclear deal was signed, unshackling India's nuclear power generation sector, analysts are predicting hurdles for the "huge opportunities" this sector was expected to open. A plethora of challenges – including national security, regulatory risks, high costs, lack of clarity in policies, and above all the global economic meltdown – suggest that India's nuclear renaissance will be a long, drawn-out process that could try the patience of utilities and equipment manufacturers, analysts say.

India working on ratification procedures

The Hindu, 13 April 2009

India is working on the ratification procedures of the India Specific Safeguards Agreement (ISSA), signed with the International Atomic Energy Agency on February 2 in Vienna, to place its civilian nuclear power plants for international inspection. "We are working on the ratification procedures of the ISSA. Ratification is a legal step and is expected to be completed soon," Atomic Energy Commission Chairman Anil Kakodkar told PTI on Sunday. "We will catch up with the schedule mentioned in the agreement and place reactors classified as civilian as per the Separation Plan under a single umbrella. We will place first the newly constructed plants at the Rajasthan Atomic Power Station (RAPS) Units 5 and 6 this year under the IAEA."

Japan signs nuclear energy deal with Jordan

Agence France-Presse, 14 April 2009

Japan agreed to provide Jordan with support for its nuclear energy programme as the Middle East state plans to launch its first atomic power plant in 2017, officials said. The five-year accord was signed in Tokyo as Jordan's King Abdullah II was making a three-day trip to the Japanese capital, said an official of Japan's energy agency. Under the deal, which can be extended for another five years, Japan would help Jordan draft a development programme for construction of nuclear power plants and help develop necessary infrastructure, the official said. Japan would also help Jordan train nuclear power plant workers and introduce safety measures and regulations, he said.

Bumpy road ahead of Russia-U.S. arms reduction

China View, 14 April 2009

With bilateral relations apparently on a positive track under U.S. President Barack Obama's administration, Russia and the United States are expected to begin the first round of consultations on a new strategic arms reduction treaty by the end of April. Though the Obama administration regards the arms reduction talks as its first practical step toward a nuclear-free world, Russia remains cautious on the actual outcome of the talks. While addressing nearly 30,000 people at Hradcany Square in downtown Prague on April 5, Obama called for reducing the world's nuclear arsenal and finally eliminating all nuclear threat in the world. He said that "to put an end to Cold War thinking, we will reduce the role of nuclear weapons in our national security strategy and urge others to do the same."

US may ease nuclear demands on Iran: report

Agence France-Presse, 14 April 2009

The United States could be set to scrap its demand that Iran stop enriching uranium in the early stages of talks on the Islamic Republic's nuclear program, local media reported Tuesday. The New York Times said US and European diplomats have considered allowing Iran to continue enriching uranium for some period while talks get off the ground, a sharp shift in policy. The administration of former president George W. Bush had insisted that Iran mothball its enrichment program before talks begin, amid fears that the activities may be part of a nuclear weapons program. Tehran had rejected that proposal, arguing that it had a legitimate right to run a civil nuclear program -- including the enrichment of uranium -- under international law.

NKorea to quit talks, reopen nuclear plants

AFP, 14 April 2009

North Korea announced Tuesday it would quit six-nation nuclear disarmament talks and restart its atomic weapons programme in protest at the UN's condemnation of its rocket launch. The communist nation said Security Council discussion of the launch, which it

insists sent a satellite into orbit, was "an unbearable insult" to its people. Hours later, the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) said its inspectors had been ordered to leave the country as Pyongyang prepared to reactivate its nuclear facilities. "The Democratic People's Republic of Korea (DPRK) has today informed IAEA inspectors in the Yongbyon facility that it is immediately ceasing all cooperation with the IAEA," said Marc Vidricaire, spokesman for the UN nuclear watchdog.

Turkey pushes for nuclear arms-free Middle East

Reuters, 15 April 2009

Turkish President Abdullah Gul called on Wednesday for a Middle East free of weapons of mass destruction, hoping that a U.S.-Russian pledge to join forces to eradicate nuclear weapons will encourage the region. U.S. President Barack Obama and Russian President Dmitry Medvedev have pledged to seek a deal by July on cutting their nuclear arsenals, work for a nuclear-free world and coordinate policy on Iran and North Korea. Gul, in a speech to Bahrain's parliament, said: "The Middle East should be a zone free of weapons of mass destruction. "We are going through times where hopes for multilateral diplomacy to weigh in once again are on the rise. That is why I take the new U.S. administration's statements on disarmament and the joint statement by presidents Obama and Medvedev early this month very seriously."

Russia offers India role in uranium centre project

The Hindu Business Line, 15 April 2009

Russia has offered India the option of participating in its International Uranium Enrichment Centre (IUEC) at Angarsk, Siberia as a means of securing guaranteed fuel supplies in the future. This was communicated to a visiting Indian delegation to Russia, headed by the Atomic Energy Commission Chairman, Dr Anil Kakodkar, on April 9. The offer, made during deliberations between the two sides, includes investment possibilities for India in the IUEC, which is being set up under International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) supervision, sources said. The investments could be considered in lieu of India paying for nuclear fuel to be supplied to the Russian-built Koodankulam Light Water Reactor units and to existing Indian pressurised heavy water reactor units that are to be fuelled by Russian firm TVEL under a bilateral pact.

BJP changes tack on nuclear deal

The Hindu, 15 April 2009

Changing tack on the India-United States nuclear deal, the Bharatiya Janata Party now says that, if voted to power, a BJP-led government will try and change it "to accommodate our concerns." Just before the start of the election process, senior BJP leader Jaswant Singh suggested, during a visit to Singapore, that given that the nuclear deal was a done thing, the party was aware of India's international commitments. The party admitted that this was a far cry from the initial stand, taken by senior leaders Yashwant Sinha and Arun Shourie, that the BJP would rescind the deal when it came to power. That was before the deal was signed and sealed.

Iran softens nuclear line

The Australian, 15 April 2009

IRAN has made a surprise change in hardline rhetoric about its nuclear program, saying it is prepared to engage in "constructive co-operation" with six world powers. The apparent change in tone from Iran's chief nuclear negotiator, Saeed Jalili, was reported on state television in Iran yesterday. "The Islamic Republic of Iran welcomes discussion with the group of six for a constructive co-operation," Mr Jalili was reported as saying. The comment came as The New York Times reported that the Obama administration and its European allies were preparing proposals that would shift strategy towards Iran by

dropping a long-standing US insistence that Tehran rapidly shut down nuclear facilities during the early phases of negotiations over its atomic program.

US, Russia nuclear talks to begin April 24 in Rome: Moscow
The Times of India, 16 April 2009

Russia and the United States will begin talks next week in Rome aimed at replacing a landmark Cold War-era nuclear arms control treaty, a Russian foreign ministry spokesman said on Thursday. Earlier this month US President Barack Obama and his Russian counterpart Dmitry Medvedev pledged to seek a successor agreement to the Strategic Arms Reduction Treaty (START) by the time it expires in December. Talks on the treaty - seen as a cornerstone of strategic arms control - made little progress under former US president George W Bush. "The first official contact on this subject will take place on April 24 in Rome," foreign ministry spokesman Andrei Nesterenko told reporters.

Over 50 nations want to build nuclear plants: Report
The Times of India, 16 April 2009

More than 50 nations are in talks with the UN atomic watchdog to build nuclear power plants, a twofold increase over the last four years, a top agency official said in an interview released on Thursday. "The IAEA is talking with 50-60 countries about the construction of nuclear power plants," Hans-Holger Rogner, head of planning and economic studies at the International Atomic Energy Agency, said in an interview with the German newsletter VDI Nachrichten. "There were only half as many just four years ago. That's a sign of where the journey is headed," he said. Rogner said the key factor would be to make credible assurances that the nuclear technology could not be misused for military purposes. "The core problem is international control of the fuel cycle," he said.

Gates warns against Israeli strike on Iran's nuclear facilities
Los Angeles Times, 16 April 2009

Amid increasing suggestions that Israel might attack Iran's nuclear facilities, Defense Secretary Robert M. Gates warned this week that such a strike would have dangerous consequences, and asserted that Tehran's acquisition of a bomb can be prevented only if "Iranians themselves decide it's too costly." Using his strongest language on the subject to date, Gates told a group of Marine Corps students that a strike would probably delay Tehran's nuclear program from one to three years. A strike, however, would unify Iran, "cement their determination to have a nuclear program, and also build into the whole country an undying hatred of whoever hits them," he said. Israeli officials fear that the Islamic Republic may gain the know-how to build a bomb as early as this year.

Nuclear-capable Prithvi-II clears user trial test
The Times of India, 16 April 2009

India tested an advanced version of the nuclear-capable Prithvi-II ballistic missile, with a strike range of 350 km, from the Chandipur integrated test range off the Orissa coast on Wednesday. "The launch of the surface-to-surface missile from a mobile launcher was successful but it will take some time to analyse the entire telemetry data before it can be called a complete success or not," said a senior defence ministry official. The significant aspect about this test was that it was conducted as "a user or training trial" by the tri-service Strategic Forces Command (SFC), created in January 2003 to manage the country's nuclear arsenal.

UN nuclear inspectors quit NKorea
AFP, 16 April 2009

UN nuclear inspectors left North Korea Thursday after the hardline communist state ordered them out and announced plans to restart production of weapons-grade plutonium. The inspectors from the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) arrived in Beijing but declined to comment to reporters. A separate four-member US team which had been monitoring the North's disablement of its Yongbyon nuclear complex was also preparing to leave after being ordered out, the State Department said. The complex produced enough plutonium for a 2006 nuclear test and for several other bombs until it was shut down in 2007 under a six-nation disarmament deal.

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Indo-Canadian N-deal soon: Montek

The Indian Express, 17 April 2009

After sealing nuclear fuel supply deals with Russia and France, India is 'very close' to inking a similar agreement with Canada. With New Delhi planning to import reactors upto 20,000 MW of capacity in next 10 years, it has laid down a road map for strategic partnership with Ottawa and is 'very close' to signing a nuclear cooperation agreement, Montek Singh Ahluwalia, Deputy Chairman of Planning Commission said. "This offers a major market opportunity to Canadian firms to sell nuclear reactors, fuel and technology for safeguarded nuclear reactors but they have to compete with France, the US, Russia and Australia," Ahluwalia said at a three-day Indo-Canada Energy Conference.

Ahmadinejad to fix nuclear impasse

The Sydney Morning Herald, 17 April 2009

Iran's hard-line president has promised to unveil proposals to resolve the international impasse over his country's nuclear program and offered a fresh start with the West, an announcement that comes as he struggles to shore up domestic support before presidential elections in June. "We are preparing a new package to be presented and we will hold talks based on that package, which includes peace and justice across the globe, respecting the rights of all nations and participation of all nations and countries in resolving international issues," Mahmoud Ahmadinejad told supporters gathered in the oasis city of Kerman on Wednesday. Mr Ahmadinejad gave no details about the proposals. The United States said it would study any proposals and expressed hope that they would address international concerns.

Pakistan calls for equitable approach to accomplish nuclear disarmament

Daily Times, 17 April 2009

The objective of nuclear disarmament should be achieved through an equitable approach and genuine empathy for the security concerns of all countries, Pakistan told a United Nation (UN) panel on Wednesday. "At the same time, we have to avoid discriminatory application of non-proliferation norms and the resort to military and coercive means to counter proliferation," said Ambassador Farukh Amil, acting permanent representative of Pakistan to the UN. Amil said the cherished goal of "equal security for all", as advocated by the 1978 Special Session of the General Assembly, had been eclipsed by

unilateralism, narrow geographical groupings and inadequate attention to the developing countries' security concerns.

Indian nuclear firms told to keep options open

Reuters, 17 April 2009

Indian firms should not sign deals with foreign nuclear power firms that restrict their ability to supply to others as the government wants a thriving domestic industry, the country's atomic energy head said. Anil Kakodkar said there was huge potential for Indian companies to expand in the equipment supply and construction segment, given India's experience in developing technologies for its reactors. "Don't compromise on your IPRs (intellectual property rights)," Kakodkar, chairman of India's Atomic Energy Commission, said at an industry conference on Friday. "In setting up agreements, you should not forego opportunities for making equipment for other segments of the nuclear market."

Lehman Brothers sitting on nuclear stockpile

The Times of India, 17 April 2009

Failed investment bank Lehman Brothers sits not only on toxic sub-prime mortgage loans but also toxic nuclear stockpile. According to reports, the bankrupt bank holds up to 450,000 pounds of uranium — called yellowcake — which can be upgraded to run nuclear plants and make nuclear weapons. The stockpile is a hangover from a commodities trading contract undertaken before the Wall Street bank collapsed last year. Lehman filed for bankruptcy after the Bush administration refused to bail it out last September. After bankruptcy, it managed to sell its brokerage business to Barclays, leaving it saddled with \$200 billion worth of sub-prime loans and yellowcake worth \$20 million.

'Pak was ready to launch air assault on India in 1998'

Press Trust of India, 18 April 2009

Pakistan was ready to launch a full-fledged air assault on "pre-selected targets" in India in 1998 had New Delhi tried to disrupt its nuclear tests, former foreign minister Gohar Ayub Khan reveals in a new book. In his book titled 'Testing Times as Foreign Minister', Khan reveals that in the event of an attack on the test site at Chagai by India, attack by the Pakistan Air Force would have been launched on pre-selected targets in India. "Pakistan had information and blueprints of the Indian nuclear projects given gratis after the 1984 attack on the Golden Temple," The News daily quoted the book as saying. Once the decision that Pakistan would test, Five Punjab Sherdil left for Quetta to secure the Chagai test site.

China for 'constructive role' in Iranian nuclear talks

The Hindu, 18 April 2009

China has expressed its willingness to play a "constructive role" in the negotiations on the Iranian nuclear crisis. Chinese Premier Wen Jiabao said his country respects Iran's nuclear programme meant for peaceful purposes and is willing to play a mediator's role in the talks to resolve the standoff. "China respects Iran's nuclear programme for peaceful purposes, resolutely safeguards the international non-proliferation system and advocates that the Iranian nuclear issue should be peacefully resolved through negotiation," Wen said while meeting Parviz Davoodi, Iran's first vice president, Friday in this southern Chinese city in Hainan province. Wen also called on the parties involved in the Iranian nuclear issue to seize the current favourable opportunity and make positive efforts to restart negotiations as soon as possible.

N.Korea renews threat to 'bolster nuclear deterrent'

AFP, 19 April 2009

North Korea on Sunday renewed a threat to "bolster its nuclear deterrent" while lashing out at the UN Security Council for condemning the communist state's April 5 rocket launch. Rodong Sinmun, the North's ruling communist party-published newspaper, denounced the UN action as a double-standard contrary to the universal right to use space peacefully. "(North Korea) will bolster its nuclear deterrent for self-defence, guarantee for the protection of the country's sovereignty, right to existence and supreme interests," Rodong said in a commentary. "The day will surely come when those resorting to partiality, double-standards and arbitrary practices meet the punishment of the history."

China starts building 3G nuclear power reactors**China View, 19 April 2009**

China on Sunday started the construction of its first third-generation pressurized water reactors using AP 1000 technologies developed by U.S.-based Westinghouse. The reactors, located in Sanmen of east China's Zhejiang Province, will also be the first in the world using such technologies. The Sanmen Nuclear Power Plant will be built in three phases, with an investment of more than 40 billion yuan (5.88 billion U.S. dollars) injected in the first phase. The first phase project will include two units each with a generating capacity of 1.25 million kw. The first generating unit will be put into operation in 2013, and the second, in 2014. The plant will eventually have six such units.

North 'missile factory' used Japan parts**The Japan Times, 19 April 2009**

Japanese precision tools and steel were found in missile-making equipment taken from a North Korean freighter detained at an Indian port in June 1999 while en route to Pakistan, a former senior Indian official said Saturday. While North Korea is known to have provided missile knowhow to Pakistan in return for nuclear weapons technology, this is the first concrete example of how Japanese equipment has played a part in North Korea's proliferation of missile technology. K. Santhanam, a senior official in India's Defense Research and Development Organization, told Kyodo News that the North Korean cargo contained a device for three-dimensional measuring, a numerically controlled machine tool, maraging steel and other Japanese high-tech products.

Pakistan had alerted US to its nuclear tests: Gohar Ayub Khan**Hindustan Times, 19 April 2009**

Pakistan had with a "heavy heart" informed the US of its May 1998 nuclear tests that it had conducted in retaliation to India's tests the same month, former foreign minister Gohar Ayub Khan says in his new book. "Having exhausted all options and left with no choice, we have in our supreme national interest decided to exercise the nuclear option. This decision, which I have taken with a heavy heart, was necessitated by the imperatives of self-defence and to deter aggression against sovereignty, independence and territorial integrity of our country," then prime minister Nawaz Sharif said in his letter to then US president Bill Clinton. The letter is reproduced in Khan's book "Testing Times as Foreign Minister", The News said Saturday.

Pak's nukes in safe hands for now, says PM**The Times of India, 20 April 2009**

Even as concern mounts around the world about the growing anarchy in nuclear armed-Pakistan, prime minister Manmohan Singh on Sunday said India has been assured that Pakistan's nuclear weapons are in safe hands "as of now". The PM did not specify where the assurance had come from. But his comment clearly signified that India has been

worried enough to seek reassurance on that count. Significantly, there have been a series of high-level exchanges between India and the US of late. The PM recently met US President Barack Obama at the G20 meet in London, and the problem of terror in Af-Pak (Afghanistan-Pakistan) figured in their discussions.

'1.9 lakh killed in China's nuclear tests'

The Times of India, 20 April 2009

The nuclear test grounds in the wastes of the Gobi desert have fallen silent but veterans of those lonely places are speaking out for the first time about the terrible price exacted by China's zealous pursuit of the atomic bomb. They talk of picking up radioactive debris with their bare hands, of sluicing down bombers that had flown through mushroom clouds, of soldiers dying before their time of rare diseases, and children born with mysterious cancers. These were the men and women of Unit 8023, a special detachment charged with conducting atomic tests at Lop Nur in Xinjiang province, a place of utter desolation and — until now — complete secrecy. "I was a member of Unit 8023 for 23 years," said one old soldier in an interview.

Nakagawa floats sobering option: going nuclear

The Japan Times, 20 April 2009

Japan should consider possessing nuclear weapons as a deterrent to a neighboring threat, former Finance Minister Shoichi Nakagawa suggested Sunday. In a speech in Obihiro, Hokkaido, in reference to North Korea's rocket launch earlier this month that many believe was a ballistic missile test, the hawkish lawmaker said: "It is common sense worldwide that in pure military terms, nuclear counters nuclear." In Sunday's speech, Nakagawa said he believes North Korea has many Rodong medium-range missiles that could reach almost any part of Japan and also has small nuclear warheads. "North Korea has taken a step toward a system whereby it can shoot without prior notice," he said. "We have to discuss countermeasures."

Head of UN nuclear watchdog optimistic over Iran

Agence France-Presse, 20 April 2009

The head of the United Nations atomic watchdog said Monday he was optimistic about efforts to end a stand-off over Iran's nuclear drive, following positive moves from Tehran and Washington. "I am extremely pleased with the reversal in the policy of the United States from one of confrontation to one of dialogue and mutual respect," International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) chief Mohamed ElBaradei told reporters. "I have been telling my Iranian colleagues that you must reciprocate and also put (out) your hand, and what we have been hearing from Iran is also quite different. There is a much more moderate tone. "I am very optimistic of this totally new approach and I hope it will work."

Russia gives cautious response to Obama nuclear plan

Reuters, 20 April 2009

Russia responded cautiously on Monday to U.S. President Barack Obama's plans for a nuclear-free world, saying a number of conditions would need to be met for the vision to become reality. Obama pledged earlier this month in the Czech Republic to cut the U.S. nuclear arsenal, bring the Comprehensive Test Ban Treaty into force and seek tough penalties for those that broke rules on non-proliferation. On the first day of a two-day official visit to Finland, Russian President Dmitry Medvedev said in a speech at Helsinki University that the topic of nuclear disarmament had become one of "high hopes". "We noted what was said by the U.S. president in Prague that (disarmament) can be reached under a number of conditions," Medvedev said.

IAEA: Obama good for solving NKorea nuclear issue

The Associated Press, 21 April 2009

The head of the U.N.'s atomic watchdog expressed confidence that President Barack Obama's approach to North Korea and Iran will eventually help resolve international disputes over their nuclear programs. "While I am distressed because, of course, what has happened in North Korea is a setback, I am optimistic about the new environment," International Atomic Energy Agency chief Mohamed ElBaradei said Monday in Beijing. ElBaradei spoke after Pyongyang last week vowed to quit six-nation nuclear negotiations and restart its atomic program in anger over the U.N. Security Council's criticism of its April 5 rocket launch. It also kicked out all international monitors of its nuclear facilities.

China to start building 5 nuclear power plants

China Daily, 21 April 2009

China will start constructing five nuclear power plants (NPPs) this year, part of an effort to dramatically expand its nuclear power capacity by 2020, officials said Monday. The five NPPs will be located in Sanmen in Zhejiang province, Haiyang and Rongcheng in Shandong province, Taishan in Guangdong province, and Changjiang in Hainan province, Sun Qin, vice-minister of the National Energy Administration, said, without revealing the total costs. "The first unit of Sanmen NPP started construction on Sunday and signaled China's nuclear power industry has sped up," Sun said. The Sanmen and Haiyang NPPs use Generation III AP-1000 technologies imported from American firm Westinghouse, which is safer than the previous generation reactors, Sun said.

If voted to power, BJP will honour nuke deal with US: Advani

Hindustan Times, 21 April 2009

In a major shift of stand, BJP's prime minister candidate L K Advani has said for the first time that his party will not abrogate the civilian nuclear deal with the US if it is voted to power. In an exclusive interview with The Hindustan Times in the course of his election tour, the 81-year-old leader said, "We realise it's not easy to do so. After all it's an international agreement, and one signed between two countries and their governments. We will have to look into all aspects." He conceded that his party had vowed to turn the clock on the deal during the heat of the controversy in July last year when the Manmohan government was in trouble in Parliament after the Left withdrew support. Senior BJP leaders including Yashwant Sinha and Arun Shourie had called for cancellation of the deal.

U.S. to Signal "Positive Trajectory" at NPT Preparatory Conference

Global Security Newswire, 21 April 2009

The Obama administration plans to outline a "positive trajectory" for curbing nuclear weapons during a key U.N. meeting next month on the Nuclear Nonproliferation Treaty, a senior U.S. State Department official said last week. Diplomats from around the world are set to meet May 4-15 in New York at the "preparatory committee" meeting to lay the groundwork for the 2010 NPT review conference. The event comes on the heels of President Barack Obama's April 5 speech in Prague, where he laid out a nonproliferation agenda that includes efforts to conclude a new arms reduction treaty with Moscow before year's end, ratify the Comprehensive Nuclear Test Ban Treaty and strengthen initiatives to curb the spread of atomic arms.

Iran wants 'constructive' talks on nuclear program

The Associated Press, 22 April 2009

Iran says it welcomes a "constructive" dialogue with world powers over its nuclear program but is refusing to halt its nuclear activities. Quoting an official government statement, the IRNA news agency reported Wednesday that Iran is preparing to present

a modified package of proposals aimed at ending the standoff with the West over its disputed nuclear program. The agency didn't elaborate. Last week, President Mahmoud Ahmadinejad said Iran was preparing a new package of proposals and was willing build a new relationship with the U.S. The U.S., European countries and China have invited Iran to a new round of nuclear talks. The U.S. and some allies believe Iran is secretly trying to develop atomic weapons — an allegation Iran denies.

Delay in developing nuclear power dangerous: India
Press Trust of India, 22 April 2009

India today indicated that nuclear power generation was at "crossroads" and said any further delay in its development could prove dangerous to humanity on account of non-availability of other energy resources. "Now the only practical way would be to rapidly bring in technology-based solutions that provide an integrated answer to all these issues," Atomic Energy Commission Chairman Anil Kakodkar said at an IAEA conference at Beijing. "We are at crossroads. On one hand we have to address the challenge of rapidly depleting fossil energy resources and the threats of climate change and on the other hand we are grappling with fears relating to safety, security and proliferation. With every passing day, these issues are likely to assume increasingly alarming proportions," Kakodkar said.

DCNS to supply heat exchangers for Chinese civil nuclear powerplant
Frontier India Defence and Strategic News, 22 April 2009

DCNS has signed a major contract with China Nuclear Power Engineering Co. Ltd. (CNPEC) to supply 14 heat exchangers for two latest-generation EPR (European Pressurised Reactor is the third-generation nuclear powerplant designed and developed by Areva.) -type nuclear powerplants in China. DCNS has won a number of contracts to supply equipment for nuclear powerplants. This latest contract is a further endorsement of the Group's strategic choices and its commitment to pursue development by promoting its industrial know-how and resources in the fast-growing civil nuclear sector. DCNS has made its capabilities available to major companies in this sector, including Alstom, Areva, EDF, French atomic energy commission CEA and now CNPEC, part of China Guangdong Nuclear Power Group (CGNPC).

India Criticizes IAEA Over N-Tech Transfer
RTT News, 22 April 2009

India has criticized the role being played by the United Nations nuclear watchdog over its limited effort to encourage the transfer of technology from advanced nations to support the need of developing and less developed countries for nuclear power, reports say. Speaking at a conference in Beijing, Dr Anil Kakodkar, chairman of the Indian Atomic Energy Commission (AEC) said Tuesday the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) spent 55 per cent of its resources on nuclear verification and administration, and devoting much less on issues relating to the transfer of technology through technical co-operation among nations and issues relating to the fuel cycle.

L&T ties up with two more global N-reactor makers
Business Standard, 23 April 2009

Larsen & Toubro (L&T) is ready for its foray into the nuclear power plant construction business. The largest engineering and construction company in the country will sign cooperation agreements with General Electric Hitachi of the US and Areva of France, two of the largest vendors of reactors, within three to four weeks. L&T has already signed cooperation agreements with the other three major reactor makers - Atomstroyexport (ASE), which is part of Rosatom of Russia, Toshiba Westinghouse of the US and Atomic Energy of Canada (AEC). "We are close to signing cooperation deals with Areva and GE,"

a top company official told Business Standard. A spokesperson declined comment.

AQ Khan world's greatest proliferator: US
Hindustan Times, 23 April 2009

The United States has branded disgraced Pakistani nuclear scientist as "probably the world's greatest proliferator" but appears reluctant to link aid to Islamabad with getting information from him about his activities. "We do think that there need to be the right kind of conditions," Secretary of State Hillary Clinton said in an appearance before the House Foreign Affairs Committee responding to a question from Republican Michael McCaul. "You know, it's a little bit like the Goldilocks story. I mean, if they're too weak, we don't get changes. If they're too strong, we get a backlash. So we're trying to figure out sort of what is the area that will influence behaviour and produce results," she said.

Iran works on new proposals for more nuclear talks
The Associated Press, 23 April 2009

Iran is preparing a set of new proposals aimed at restarting talks on the country's nuclear program, the country's foreign minister said Thursday. European Union and French officials said Thursday they are working to set up the new talks, which would be the first international discussion on Iran's nuclear program since President Barack Obama took office in January. The United States and some of its allies accuse Iran of secretly seeking to develop atomic weapons. Iran denies the allegation, saying its nuclear program is geared toward generating electricity not bombs. "We do believe that this new proposed package would be a very good base for mutual cooperation on the international level," Iranian Foreign Minister Manouchehr Mottaki told reporters.

France seals nuclear, aid deals with Tunisia
Reuters, 23 April 2009

France concluded a nuclear cooperation deal and an 80 million-euro (\$104.2 million) aid package for Tunisia during a visit by its prime minister to the country, the two governments said on Thursday. The deal to help Tunisia develop civil nuclear technology was struck a year ago during a visit by French President Nicolas Sarkozy and was accompanied by agreements on industrial cooperation and transport, Tunisian state news agency TAP said. It follows similar atomic energy deals with Algeria, Libya and Morocco and will help Tunisia develop its first nuclear power station by 2020, producing 900 megawatts of electricity, the equivalent of 20 percent of the country's energy needs.

Russia and US discuss reducing nuclear weapons
Telegraph, 24 April 2009

The first serious arms reduction negotiations in over seven years are taking place against a backdrop of mutual reconciliation, with Barack Obama, the US President, making a concerted effort to woo the Kremlin after a prolonged period of East-West tension. Under an agreement signed in 2002, Russia and the United States pledged to reduce their deployed warheads to between 1,700 and 2,200. Both countries are believed to have met those obligations. The talks in Rome, attended by midlevel officials from both sides, will see work begin on a new pact to replace the 1991 Strategic Arms Reduction Treaty (START), which is due to expire at the end of the year.

Experts: North Korea a Fully Fledged Nuclear Power
Fox News, 24 April 2009

The world's intelligence agencies and defense experts are quietly acknowledging that North Korea has become a fully fledged nuclear power with the capacity to wipe out

entire cities in Japan and South Korea, the Times of London reported. The new reality has emerged in off-hand remarks and in single sentences buried in lengthy reports. Increasing numbers of authoritative experts — from the head of the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) to the U.S. Defense Secretary — are admitting that North Korea has miniaturized nuclear warheads to the extent that they can be launched on medium-range missiles, according to intelligence briefings.

"At Kudankulam, third reactor construction can begin by year-end"

The Hindu, 24 April 2009

India could start construction of the third reactor at Kudankulam in Tamil Nadu by year-end provided India and Russia wrap up the signing of the techno-commercial agreements in the next couple of months. Both sides are already collaborating in the construction of two reactors and have expressed their desire to work jointly in building four more at the same site. While the first two units are of 1000 MWe capacity, the others could be of 1200 Mwe, Sudhindra Thakur, senior official of the Nuclear Power Corporation of India said here on Thursday. He was participating in a videoconference on the Russian and Indian experience in ensuring nuclear safety. However, sources ruled out construction of the seventh and eighth reactors at the same time because of space constraints at Kudankulam.

Why search for a new nuclear treaty?

BBC News, 24 April 2009

In some ways it is like a reprise of the Cold War: US and Russian officials meeting in a European capital to discuss the arcane and complex details of a new arms control treaty. The goal is to have the new agreement ready by the end of 2009 when the first Strategic Arms Reduction Treaty (Start), that dates from 1991, expires. Start negotiations began at the height of the Cold War and the treaty was eventually signed just months before the Soviet Union's collapse. It was, for its time, a remarkable document, cutting back the superpowers' huge nuclear arsenals to fewer than 6,000 nuclear warheads apiece, deployable on some 1,600 strategic delivery vehicles.

Obama's Nuclear Realism (Christopher Chyba)

The Huffington Post, 24 April 2009

In a major foreign policy address in Prague, President Obama declared America's commitment "to seek the peace and security of a world without nuclear weapons." The president warned that this goal would not be reached quickly, "perhaps not in my lifetime." Nevertheless, some critics have charged that Obama is caught up in a nuclear disarmament fantasy. In fact, the president's approach is one of steely-eyed realism. Nuclear weapons present us with a set of bad choices. Obama's choice -- to take nuclear arms control and nonproliferation seriously -- is the one most likely to lead to a secure future. In one sense, there isn't a choice at all. Article 6 of the U.S. Constitution declares that ratified treaties are the "supreme law of the land," and the Nuclear Nonproliferation Treaty (NPT), ratified by the United States almost 40 years ago, commits us to pursue nuclear disarmament.

NDA to provide "constructive solution" to nuclear deal:Shourie

Press Trust of India, 24 April 2009

Senior BJP leader Arun Shourie, who has been consistently vocal about the nuclear deal inked by the UPA government with US, said that NDA will provide "constructive solution" to the issue.

Shourie was interacting with media ahead of Lok Sabha polls in the state for which voting will take place on April 30 for 26 Parliamentary seats. When asked about whether

and how the NDA government, if voted to power, would go about renegotiating the nuclear deal, he said that their government would examine certain clauses which they are apprehensive about. "We will examine the clauses which are apprehensive and can have impact on our national security," he said, adding that the government would find ways to get around renegotiating those clauses.

N. Korea "resumes" nuclear process

The Hindu, 25 April 2009

North Korea on Saturday announced the reactivation of its reprocessing plant at the Yongbyon nuclear complex. This marked a step towards the resumption of the North Korean nuclear weapons programme. The announcement came as a sequel to the expulsion of International Atomic Energy Agency's inspectors and United States monitors from the complex several days ago. Those steps followed the United Nations Security Council's condemnation of North Korea's controversial April 5 launch of a "satellite." Glossing over whether or not Pyongyang had actually put a communications satellite in orbit around the Earth, the Council emphasised the need to reinforce the implementation of the existing sanctions against North Korea.

'Pakistan building third nuclear reactor at Khushab'

Express Buzz, 25 April 2009

Even as the US remains focused on concerns over the Taliban's relentless advance towards Islamabad, Pakistan is increasing its capacity to produce plutonium at its Khushab nuclear facility, a Washington-based science think tank has reported. Citing new satellite images of the facility, the Institute for Science and International Security (ISIS) said the imagery suggests construction of the second Khushab reactor is "likely finished and that the roof beams are being placed on top of the third Khushab reactor hall". "The operational status of the second reactor is unknown, but it could start in the near future," said the report put together by ISIS president David Albright and senior research analyst Paul Brannan.

US worried about Pakistan's nukes

Daily Times, 26 April 2009

The Taliban situation in Pakistan is particularly concerning, CNN said on Saturday because Pakistan is a nuclear-armed state. The International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA), the UN nuclear watchdog, it said, believes that Pakistan has 30-40 nuclear warheads. These, however, are unassembled and scattered about Pakistan. Earlier this week, US Secretary of State Hillary Clinton warned that Pakistan was in danger of falling into terrorist hands. Pakistan's ambassador to the United States, Husain Haqqani, however told CNN the situation was not so dire. "Yes, we have a challenge," he said. "But, no, we do not have a situation in which the government or the country of Pakistan is about to fall to the Taliban."

US not to accept DPRK as nuclear-weapons state

China Daily, 26 April 2009

The United States will not accept the Democratic People's Republic of Korea (DPRK) as a nuclear-armed country, State Department spokeswoman Megan Mattson said here on Saturday. "We will not accept North Korea as a nuclear-weapons state," Mattson told reporters hours after Pyongyang announced it had reactivated facilities to harvest plutonium. "The United States remains committed to the six-party goal of the complete and verifiable denuclearization of the Korean Peninsula in a peaceful manner through the six-party talks," the spokeswoman said. The United States will "seek full implementation of the Sept. 19, 2005 Joint Statement under which North Korea committed to abandon all nuclear weapons and existing nuclear programs and return, at an early date, to the

Treaty on Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons and to IAEA safeguards," she added.

MoD guilty of repeated nuclear safety breaches
Guardian, 27 April 2009

Britain's nuclear submarine fleet has been hit by a series of serious safety breaches involving repeated leaks of radioactive waste, broken pipes and waste tanks at its home base on the Clyde, the Ministry of Defence has disclosed. In a confidential report released under the Freedom of Information Act, the MoD has admitted that safety failings at the UK's main nuclear submarine base at Faslane, near Glasgow, are a "recurring theme" and ingrained in the base's culture. The worst breaches include three leaks of radioactive coolant from nuclear submarines in 2004, 2007 and 2008 into the Firth of Clyde, while last year a radioactive waste plant manager was replaced. It emerged he had no qualifications in radioactive waste management.

Taliban finger on Pak N-switch has US worried
The Times of India, 27 April 2009

US secretary of state Hillary Clinton raised the ultimate scare this weekend saying the "unthinkable" could actually happen in Pakistan — that the Taliban and Al Qaeda could topple the government, giving them "the keys to the nuclear arsenal". In an interview in Baghdad, she said the US would not "let this go on any further, which is why we're pushing so hard for the Pakistanis to come together around a strategy to take their country back". Clinton's statement raised eyebrows in India, because it came just a few days after Prime Minister Manmohan Singh declared, at an election rally, that he had been "assured" that Pakistan's nuclear weapons were safe. Singh's announcement came as a response to BJP's concerns on the issue.

Zardari says Pakistan's nuclear weapons are safe
Reuters, 27 April 2009

Pakistani President Asif Ali Zardari on Monday ruled out the possibility of his country's nuclear weapons falling into the hands of the Taliban. "I want to assure the world that the nuclear capability of Pakistan is under safe hands," he told a panel interview with Reuters and other international media. The Taliban's creeping advances towards the Pakistani capital of Islamabad in recent weeks heightened fears in the United States about the stability of its nuclear-armed ally. Western allies that need Pakistan's support to defeat al Qaeda and succeed in stabilising Afghanistan, dread the idea of any threat to the security of Pakistan's nuclear weapons.

EU reaffirms full support for long-term solution to Iranian nuclear issue
China View, 27 April 2009

The European Union (EU) on Monday reaffirmed its "full and unequivocal" support for a negotiated long-term solution to the Iranian nuclear issue within the framework of U.N. Security Council resolutions. It also emphasized its support for the dual-track strategy of "carrots and sticks," in a statement issued at the ongoing EU foreign ministers' meeting in Luxembourg. "The EU warmly supports the new direction of the United State's policy toward Iran, which opens a window of opportunity for negotiations on all aspects of Iran's nuclear program and more broadly for engagement with Iran," the statement says. The EU has welcomed the U.S. decision to fully participate in negotiations of Britain, China, France, Germany, and Russia with Iran.

India Completes Chemical Weapons Disposal; Iraq Declares Stockpile
Global Security Newswire, 27 April 2009

India has become the third nation to eliminate its known stockpile of chemical weapons, the organization that monitors adherence to the Chemical Weapons Convention

announced last week. India on March 26 notified the Technical Secretariat to the Organization for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons that it had completed operations, according to OPCW Director General Rogelio Pfirter. "I wish to sincerely, warmly, and emphatically congratulate India on this laudable achievement, which is the result of a consistent and unwavering commitment shown by India since entry into force of the convention," he told the agency's Executive Council. "This attainment further strengthens the convention as an effective instrument for promoting the objectives of peace and security."

Japan chides China on lack of nuclear transparency

Reuters, 27 April 2009

Japan's foreign minister chided Beijing on Monday for a lack of transparency about its nuclear arsenal ahead of Prime Minister Taro Aso's visit to China this week. In a speech outlining an 11-point initiative for global nuclear disarmament, Foreign Minister Hirofumi Nakasone backed U.S. President Barack Obama's recent call for a nuclear-free world. He also said North Korea's ballistic missile development was a source of suspicion and tension around the world. "China continues to modernise its nuclear arsenals and has not undertaken any nuclear arms reductions," Nakasone said. "Nor does the country disclose any information on its nuclear arsenal."

First round of US-Russia arms treaty talks in May

Agence France-Presse, 28 April 2009

Russian and US officials will meet in Moscow next month for the first round of negotiations to replace a Cold War-era nuclear arms control treaty, the Russian foreign ministry said Monday. The two sides "agreed to organise the first round of negotiations of the two full delegations between May 18 and May 20," the ministry said in a statement. Earlier this month US President Barack Obama and his Russian counterpart Dmitry Medvedev pledged to seek a successor agreement to the Strategic Arms Reduction Treaty (START) by the time it expires in December. The dates for the talks were set during the first official contact in Rome on Friday which aimed to pave the way for opening negotiations following instructions from the US and Russian leaders.

Japan unveils 11-point initiative to push global disarmament

Japan Today, 28 April 2009

Japan unveiled an 11-point initiative Monday to achieve a nuclear-free world, including a call for the imposition of "effective global restrictions" on North Korea's ballistic missile development and a plan to hold an international conference in Japan early next year on global nuclear disarmament. In a speech titled "Conditions towards Zero—11 Benchmarks for Global Nuclear Disarmament," Foreign Minister Hirofumi Nakasone urged China and other nuclear powers to reduce their stockpiles of nuclear weapons and to ensure transparency regarding their arsenals, which he described as "vital" for advancing global nuclear disarmament. "Without transparency in its strategic direction, China is continuing to modernize its nuclear arsenals and has undertaken no nuclear arms reduction until today," Nakasone said.

Watchdog warns arms transfers to Mideast rising

The Associated Press, 28 April 2009

The volume of weapons exported to the Middle East has risen sharply in the last four years, threatening to destabilize the volatile region further, a leading Swedish think tank warned Monday. The Stockholm International Peace Research Institute said arms exports to the Middle East increased 38 percent in the period 2004 to 2008, compared with 1999 to 2003. The United States supplied most of the arms although major shipments also came from France. The United Arab Emirates was the biggest importer of

weapons in the region — and the third biggest in the world, after China and India, SIPRI said in a report on global arms transfers. In the 2004-2008 period, the UAE bought 80 F-16E combat aircraft from the U.S. and 50 Mirage 2000-9 fighters from France, it said.

N Korea threatens nuclear tests

BBC News, 29 April 2009

North Korea has threatened to carry out nuclear missile tests unless the UN Security Council apologises for its condemnation of a recent rocket launch. Pyongyang said it would be compelled to take self-defence measures "including nuclear and intercontinental ballistic missile tests" if no apology was made. When North Korea launched its rocket on 5 April, the launch was seen by the US and others as a disguised missile test. The UN denounced North Korea's actions and called for tighter sanctions. Pyongyang has insisted it put a communications satellite in orbit, and said it would ignore the sanctions, describing them as "a wanton violation of the UN charter". North Korea conducted its first and only nuclear test in October 2006.

Kazakhstan, China sign major nuclear power deal

Agence France-Presse, 29 April 2009

Kazakhstan on Wednesday signed a deal that would see it build nuclear power plants for China, as well as provide its energy-hungry neighbour with more than 24,000 tonnes of uranium. The deal between state nuclear agency Kazatomprom and the China Guangdong Nuclear Power Group (CGNPG) calls for the creation of a joint venture to build power plants for energy-hungry China, the Kazakh firm said in a statement. "National atomic energy agency Kazatomprom and CGNPC signed a memorandum regarding the creation of a joint enterprise to build atomic energy stations in China," Kazatomprom said. Zhou Zhenxing, general manager of the uranium subsidiary of CGNPC, said that under the terms of the deal the Chinese company would receive the uranium shipments over the next decade.

Obama says Pakistan nukes in safe hands

Financial Times, 29 April 2009

US president Barack Obama on Wednesday has backed assurances from Pakistan's military, saying he believed the country's nuclear arsenal of as many as 100 warheads was in safe hands. Speaking at a White House news conference late Wednesday night, Mr Obama said while he was "gravely concerned" about the overall situation in Pakistan, he added that Pakistan's military recognised the hazard of the country's nuclear weapons "falling in to the wrong hands". The US has a "huge national security interests in making sure that Pakistan is stable and that you don't end up having a nuclear-armed militant state", Mr Obama said. Pakistan is currently locked in a struggle with Taliban militants who last week advanced to within 100km of the capital Islamabad.

Ending the Nuclear-Weapons Threat (Hirofumi Nakasone)

The Wall Street Journal, 30 April 2009

After World War II -- although it became an economic power -- Japan, as the country that experienced nuclear devastation firsthand, has been steadfast in its commitment to stopping the spread of nuclear weapons. We have adhered to three principles: no possession, no production and no introduction of nuclear weapons. We also recognize that the threat of nuclear weapons is bigger than any one country's ability to solve it. International action is needed, now more than ever. To that end, Japan has actively advanced nuclear disarmament diplomacy. Last year marked the 15th anniversary of the United Nations resolution on nuclear disarmament, which was sponsored by Japan.