

People's Daily, 1 April 2005

Removal of US nuclear threat needed to denuclearize Korean Peninsula: DPRK

The Democratic People's Republic of Korea (DPRK) on Thursday said it is necessary to remove the growing US nuclear threat to the Korean Peninsula if the region is to be denuclearized. "If the Korean Peninsula is to be denuclearized, it is necessary to put an end to the growing US nuclear threat in and around the peninsula," a spokesman for the DPRK's Foreign Ministry said in a statement. "If the peninsula is to be nuclear-free, it is necessary to clear South Korea of all nuclear weapons of the US and root out every element that can help South Korea have access to nukes," he said. The spokesman also added that "before anything else the US should roll back its hostile policy aimed at toppling the system of the DPRK through a nuclear war." He said the DPRK's consistent strategic goal is to achieve lasting peace and stability and realize the denuclearization of the Korean Peninsula.

Khaleej Times, 1 April 2005

US policy shift on Iran - weakness or ploy? (Dr N. Janardhan)

One wonders about US President George W. Bush's sudden support for European efforts to negotiate a deal under which Iran would abandon uranium enrichment in return for trade benefits and security guarantees. Is it a formula derived from a position of weakness, or is it a ploy to expose the futility of negotiating with Teheran and building a case for aggression and regime change? There are several reasons to explain why Bush changed tack and announced that 'Iran is not Iraq', putting at rest speculation about any immediate build-up to another military adventure. First, the US shift appears to be conditioned more by political, rather than military, considerations. It is hard to imagine that Washington cannot mobilise the required troops to fight another war on another front. What it doesn't have for sure is the political sanction for military action, both domestically and internationally.

The Hindu, 1 April 2005

North Korea demands nuclear talks on "equal terms"

SEOUL, Mar. 31: North Korea said on Thursday the United States should first remove all potential nuclear threats in the region before it would discuss giving up its own nuclear programme, and demanded that it be treated as an equal in disarmament talks now that it has atomic weapons. "Now that we have become a nuclear power, the six-party talks should be disarmament talks where participants can solve the issue on an equal basis," a North Korean Foreign Ministry spokesman said in a statement carried by the North's official Korean Central News Agency. The unidentified spokesman added that the nuclear crisis could no longer be resolved through discussions on a potential "reward" in return for "freezing" the nuclear programme. "If the peninsula is to be nuclear-free, it is necessary to clear South Korea of all the nuclear weapons of the U.S. and root out every element that can help South Korea have access to nukes," the spokesman said. "Of course, this should be confirmed through verification." The United States has said it has removed all its nuclear arsenal from the Korean Peninsula, and it wasn't clear exactly what the spokesman was referring to.

Daily Times, 1 April 2005

Most Americans say 'no' to nuclear weapons (Will Lester)

Even though the Soviet Union is gone, the nuclear fears that fuelled the Cold War have not gone away. A majority of people believe it is likely that terrorists or a country will use the weapons within five years. Most Americans say they do not think any country, including the United States, should have nuclear weapons. That sentiment is at odds with current efforts by some nations that are trying to develop the weapons and by terrorists seeking to add them to their arsenal. The only use of an atomic bomb - by the United States against Japan at the end of World War II - provokes sharply different reactions, depending on the age of those asked. Young adults tend to disapprove, while older Americans tend to approve, an AP-Ipsos poll found. Albert Kauzmann, a 57-year-old resident of Norcross, Georgia, said using the bomb in 1945 "was the best way they had of ending" World War II. Six in 10 people age 65 and older approve of the use of the atomic bomb at the end of World War II; the same percentage of respondents 18 to 29 disapproves.

Daily Times, 1 April 2005

US will consider 'other' options if Korean nuclear talks fail

HONG KONG: The United States will consider other options if North Korea refuses to return to six-party talks on curbing its nuclear weapons drive, a senior official reiterated on Thursday. But Christopher Hill, the new assistant secretary of state for East Asian and Pacific affairs, stressed Washington would do all it could to get the talks back on track. "If it doesn't work, obviously we will have to see what other ways (there are)," said Hill, who will head the US delegation to the stalled talks. "One option that is not available to us is to walk away from it," he told reporters. Hill, in Hong Kong at the end of a familiarisation tour, said his top priority was to get North Korea back to the talks. Meanwhile, North Korea said on Thursday that six-way talks aimed at ending a standoff over its nuclear programme should be transformed into arms reduction talks, as it has already produced nuclear

weapons. North Korea's foreign Ministry said in a statement that Pyongyang has already become a nuclear power and participants in the six-party talks should be equally positioned at any arms reduction talks.

Aljazeera, 1 April 2005

US "dead wrong" on Iraq

US intelligence agencies were "dead wrong" in assessing Iraq's weapons programmes and still know dangerously little about current nuclear and biological threats, a presidential commission has said. After a year-long inquiry, the panel on US intelligence capabilities said in a scathing report on Thursday that the decision to invade Iraq in March 2003 - based on dubious intelligence - had irreparably damaged US credibility. "We conclude that the intelligence community was dead wrong in almost all of its pre-war judgments about Iraq's weapons of mass destruction," the commission said. "We simply cannot afford failures of this magnitude". The commission warned that US intelligence on the capabilities and intentions of Iran and North Korea - both locked in nuclear disputes with the United States - may be "disturbingly" shaky.

The News, 1 April 2005

India welcomes US offers of strategic partnership

NEW DELHI: India Prime Minister Manmohan Singh has welcomed last week's offer from the United States to sell warplanes, nuclear reactors and missile systems, India's media reported on Thursday. Singh initially expressed "disappointment" in a telephone call with President George W Bush on the offer because it included a decision by the United States to resume the sale of F-16 fighter jets to Pakistan. However, speaking to reporters on Wednesday on his way to Mauritius, Singh changed his tone to one of cautious welcome. "India welcomes the development," Singh told reporters covering his visit. "The fact is that the US has expressed its willingness to engage in matters related to increased cooperation in matters related to nuclear as well as non-nuclear issues. It is a fact they (US) want the strategic relationship to grow in depth. We have to find out what they want exactly, what they have in mind," Singh added.

Daily Times, 2 April 2005

US dismisses Korea's demand

SEOUL: The main US envoy on the North Korean nuclear standoff on Friday dismissed Pyongyang's latest conditions for returning to disarmament talks and called on the communist nation to return to the stalled negotiations. His comments follow a statement by a senior North Korean diplomat who reaffirmed that his nation would abstain from talks until the United States apologises for labeling the North an "outpost of tyranny." The North on Friday also said it will convene its rubber-stamp parliament - expected to endorse an ongoing boycott of the talks - later this month. In a lecture at Seoul National University, US Ambassador to South Korea Christopher Hill said the North's latest statement "was not helpful." "Serious problems should not be dealt with ... sarcastic statements," said Hill, who has been named US assistant secretary of state for East Asian and Pacific affairs. Hill urged North Korea to "stop with these silly press announcements," and said they should bring their concerns to the arms talks. On Thursday, North Korea said it wanted to be treated as an equal at the six-nation disarmament talks, now that it claims to have nuclear weapons. It also urged the United States to verifiably remove all potential nuclear threats in the region. "Now that we have become a nuclear power, the six-party talks should be disarmament talks where participants can solve the issue on an equal basis," an unidentified North Korean Foreign Ministry spokesman said.

The Associated Press, 2 April 2005

N Korea Wants Japan Out of Nuclear Talks (Bo-Mi Lim)

SEOUL: North Korea said Saturday it remains committed to international negotiations on ending its nuclear weapons program, but demanded Japan withdraw from the six-nation talks. The comment came a day after the communist regime repeated that it would stay away from the stalled talks until the United States apologized for Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice calling North Korea one of the world's "outposts of tyranny." International efforts to resume the negotiations gained urgency after North Korea claimed in February that it has nuclear weapons. The talks, which also involve China, Russia and South Korea, have been suspended since June after three rounds of inconclusive meetings. On Saturday, North Korea said the Japanese government should not be a part of the talks because of what it called Japan's "cunning and vulgar" intention to exploit the process for its self-interest. "Japan's participation in the six-party talks only complicates the problem more and leads to a failure of coming to a resolution," the North's state-run Minju Joson newspaper said in a commentary carried by the country's official Korean Central News Agency. "There is no longer any need to include Japan in the six-party talks."

The New York Times, 2 April 2005

E-Mails Reveal Fraud in Nuclear Site Study (Matthew L. Wald)

WASHINGTON, Apr. 1: Government employees studying whether Yucca Mountain in Nevada would be a suitable place to bury nuclear waste acknowledged in e-mail messages to each other that they had made up details about how they had done their research in order to appear to meet quality standards, according to some of the messages made public on Friday. Some of the frank exchanges included instructions to erase them. The Energy Department, which is trying to open a waste repository at the mountain, 100 miles northwest of Las Vegas, disclosed the existence of the e-mail messages two weeks ago. On Friday, a subcommittee of the House Committee on Government Reform released dozens of pages of the messages. One analyst wrote that a computer program had generated data he could not explain, so he withheld it from the quality assurance department, known as QA.

The News, 2 April 2005

North Korea asserts nukes parity with US

SEOUL: Hopes for a speedy resumption of six-party talks aimed at ending North Korea's nuclear weapons drive faded on Friday after Pyongyang declared itself a nuclear power at par with Washington and said its new goal was regional disarmament. Analysts said that the North Korean statement injected doubt into an already complicated search for a resolution to a standoff that dates back to October 2002. North Korea said on Thursday that six-way talks were no longer adequate, because while the talks had been going on, it had developed from a country seeking nuclear weapons to a full-fledged nuclear power. Three rounds of talks bringing together the two Koreas, China, Japan, Russia and the United States have been held, with the first round in August 2003 and the last taking place in June last year in Beijing. North Korea failed to show up for a fourth round, scheduled for September 2004. "Now that the DPRK (North Korea) has become a full-fledged nuclear weapons state, the six-party talks should be disarmament talks where the participating countries negotiate the issue on an equal footing," North Korea said in a foreign ministry statement released by its official Korean Central News Agency. At the core of the crisis is Washington's own arsenal of nuclear weapons, according to the North Koreans, arguing that it was because of the threat of pre-emptive nuclear attack from Washington that North Korea was driven to go nuclear in the first place.

People's Daily, 2 April 2005

US says DPRK should abandon nuclear ambitions

The United States reiterated on Friday that the Democratic People's Republic of Korea (DPRK) should abandon its nuclear ambitions. "We have a proposal that we put forward at the last round of talks... it's important for North Korea to come back to the six-party talks so that we can talk about how we move forward on that proposal," White House spokesman Scott McClellan told reporters. "We have no preconditions for the talks," McClellan said. "North Korea needs to make a strategic decision, and that decision is to abandon their nuclear weapons ambitions. And they need to come back to the six-party talks so we can talk about how we move forward on the proposal we have put on the table. It's a proposal that we believe addresses the concerns of all parties," McClellan said. The six-party talks, involving the United States, the DPRK, the Republic of Korea, China, Japan and Russia, have been stalled since June 2004.

International Herald Tribune, 2 April 2005

N. Korea offers to widen nuke talks

PYONGYANG: North Korea says six-party talks aimed at ending a standoff over its nuclear program should be transformed into wider arms reduction talks. It says the negotiations should look at the nuclear threat posed by the United States on the Korean Peninsula. The statement issued through North Korea's official news agency says the six-party dialogue can only "bear fruit" if it seeks ways to root out the threat that the U.S. poses. North Korea in February acknowledged it had already produced nuclear weapons before withdrawing from the talks indefinitely. However, North Korean Premier Pak Pong-Ju last week held talks in Beijing with China's top leaders and reiterated that his country was ready to resume negotiations on its nuclear programs, but only when conditions were right. The U.S. says North Korea should return without preconditions to the six-party talks, which involve the U.S., North and South Korea, China, Japan and Russia. North Korea boycotted the talks last year after attending three rounds, blaming U.S. "insincerity."

The New York Times, 3 April 2005

A Fierce Debate on Atom Bombs From Cold War (William J. Broad)

For over two decades, a compact, powerful warhead called the W-76 has been the centerpiece of the nation's nuclear arsenal, carried aboard the fleet of nuclear submarines that prowl the Atlantic and Pacific Oceans. But in recent months it has become the subject of a fierce debate among experts inside and outside the government over its reliability and its place in the nuclear arsenal. The government is readying a plan to spend more than \$2 billion on a routine 10-year overhaul to extend the life of the aging warheads. At the same time, some weapons

scientists say the warheads have a fundamental design flaw that could cause them to explode with far less force than intended. Although the government has denied that assertion, officials have disclosed that Washington is nevertheless considering replacing the W-76 altogether. "This is the one we worry about the most," said Everet H. Beckner, who oversees the arsenal as director of defense programs at the National Nuclear Security Administration.

Aljazeera.com, 3 April 2005

U.S. says Israel must renounce nuclear weapons

Israel is thought to have about 200 nuclear warheads at Dimona. U.S. State Department has called on Israel to forswear nuclear weapons and accept (IAEA) international Atomic Energy Agency safeguards on all nuclear activities. Officials at the Bush administration have called on India, Pakistan and Israel to act like Ukraine and South Africa, which in the last decade renounced their nuclear weapons. The officials refer to Israel's military nuclear capability, as distinct from "nuclear option," which must be rolled back, although not necessarily in the "foreseeable future." Those remarks contradict the custom of senior administration officials who always avoid any possible confirming reference to Israel's nuclear weapons. The officials, who hold middle-level and lower ranks, are Jackie Wolcott Sanders, ambassador, Conference on Disarmament and special representative of the president for the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons, and Mark Fitzpatrick, acting deputy assistant secretary for nonproliferation.

The News, 4 April 2005

Fuel for South Asia's arms race

The United States has far better ways to reward Pakistan for its helpful but selective pressure on Al Qaeda and the Taliban than President Bush's decision last week to break with 15 years of policy and sell Pakistan high-performance fighters whose only plausible use is to threaten India. Balancing those sales by offering New Delhi the chance to purchase, and perhaps build, similar planes doesn't lessen the damage of the Pakistan sale. It compounds it. The worst thing for these two nuclear powers, which have fought three wars against each other since 1947, is to encourage them to engage in a new, American-fuelled arms race. The United States does have a compelling strategic interest in helping Pakistan. But the right kind of help does not consist of selling Pakistan's armed forces, led by the country's military dictator, President Pervez Musharraf, prestigious, expensive and dangerous weapons systems. Decades of swollen military budgets have virtually bankrupted Pakistan, leaving its government unable to afford adequate spending on education and job-creating economic modernization. Instead, its leaders have fed the Pakistani people a diet of belligerent nationalism and projects like nuclear weapons that are designed to enhance a sense of prestige.

Hindustan Times, 5 April 2005

India, Pak, Israel must renounce nukes to join NPT: US (S. Rajagopalan)

Sticking to its rigid stand, the United States wants the upcoming review conference on the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT) to reaffirm that India, Pakistan and Israel could join the treaty only as non-nuclear weapon states. "Just as South Africa and Ukraine did in the early 1990s, these states would have to forswear nuclear weapons and accept IAEA safeguards on all nuclear activities to join the treaty," says US Ambassador for Disarmament Jackie Wolcott Sanders. The 35-year-old NPT, a treaty that India regards as discriminatory, comes up for a review every five years. The seventh in the series, to be a month-long affair, gets under way in New York on May 2. Writing in the State Department's Electronic Journal, President George W Bush has hailed the NPT as a key legal barrier to nuclear weapons proliferation. The US, he avers, will carry out its treaty commitments and work to ensure its continuance in the interest of world peace and security. Sanders, however, did not sound optimistic on the prospects of India, Pakistan and Israel joining the treaty by renouncing nuclear weapons. "We recognize that progress toward universal adherence (to NPT) is not likely in the foreseeable future," she noted in a companion piece on strengthening the NPT.

Dawn, 5 April 2005

Iran made its own centrifuges: US

WASHINGTON, April 4: Iran was quietly making gas centrifuges at a site in Tehran that was later detected by international inspectors, a Washington-based anti-nuclear proliferation group says. The new study by the Institute for Science and International Security goes beyond the initial US claim that the network allegedly headed by Dr Abdul Qadeer Khan had supplied Iran with centrifuges needed for enriching uranium. It also contradicts media reports that Iran was using nuclear fuel supplied by the Khan network and instead says that Tehran used imported Chinese uranium fuel gas to test its centrifuges. The Iranian centrifuge-making facility is identified as Kalaye Electric, which was established near Tehran in 1995, and in Persian it simply means 'electric goods'. Corey Hinderstein, a deputy director at the institute who researched the Iranian site, claimed: "The Iranians have been using the site to research, develop and manufacture gas centrifuges for uranium enrichment." She said Iran

had to reveal the real purpose of the site when international pressure forced them to allow inspectors from the UN nuclear watchdog, the International Atomic Energy Agency, to visit Kalaye Electric in May 2003.

The International Herald Tribune, 6 April 2005

Nuclear Iran I: The principle is set, now what's the price? (Stanley A. Weiss)

LONDON Since Iran's 1979 Islamic revolution, Washington has made much of its self-righteous principles. No negotiations. No lifting of the U.S. economic embargo. No diplomatic relations. At least not until Tehran stops supporting terrorism and pursuing weapons of mass destruction. But these high principles yielded low returns. Washington's do-nothing, say-nothing stance toward Shiite Iran failed to change Tehran's behavior yet succeeded in depriving the United States of a valuable partner, from combating the Sunni terrorism of Al Qaeda to stabilizing Iraq. So now that Tehran is perhaps three years away from having a nuclear weapon, Washington has wisely decided it has other principles. With the recent decision to join the European Union in offering Iran economic incentives to give up its nuclear program, the Bush administration is now negotiating with the Islamic Republic, with Europe as the middleman.

The Times of India, 6 April 2005

'US may build new nuclear warhead'

WASHINGTON: The US agency overseeing nuclear programmes has asked Congress to approve funds to study the feasibility of a new nuclear warhead that could be deployed in less than 10 years without testing, Xinhua reports. Linton F Brooks, administrator of the National Nuclear Security Administration, was quoted by the Washington Post on Tuesday as telling the Senate Armed Services subcommittee on strategic forces that the current Cold War stockpile of nuclear warheads is inadequate technically and militarily. "We want to explore whether there is a better way to sustain existing military capabilities in our stockpile without nuclear testing," Brooks said. The yields of most nuclear warheads in the current stockpiles "are probably too high" and as their casings are not designed to penetrate earth, "we have no capability against hardened, deeply buried targets", he said. The new warheads would be designed to be less sensitive to ageing and would be easier to certify as safe and reliable, Brooks said.

Hindustan Times, 6 April 2005

Iran can't be allowed to have nuke weapons: US

WASHINGTON, Apr. 6: Inability to prevent India and Pakistan from going nuclear is not an excuse for Iran to be allowed to do the same, US Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice has said, without directly naming the two de facto nuclear weapon powers. Answering a reporter, who asked at the National Conference of Editorial Writers why Iran can't have a nuclear programme when Pakistan and India have one, Rice on Monday said, "The Iranian nuclear programme is a very serious matter. "We would have preferred that the NPT had constrained other states (obviously an allusion to India and Pakistan) as well, but because you were not able to constrain states in the past does not mean that you have to stop trying to constrain states in the future, particularly one like Iran that has a very long history and rap sheet when it comes to terrorism. This is, after all, probably the most important supporter of terrorist rejectionist organisations, for instance, in the Middle East."

China Daily, 7 April 2005

US nuclear plants vulnerable to terrorist attacks

Fuel storage pools at nuclear power plants in 31 states of the USA may be vulnerable to terrorist attacks that could unleash raging fires and deadly radiation, scientists advised the US government on Wednesday. The group of nuclear experts said neither the government nor the nuclear industry "adequately understands the vulnerabilities and consequences of such an event." They recommended undertaking a plant-by-plant examination of fuel storage security as soon as possible. In the meantime, plant operators promptly should reconfigure used fuel rods in the storage pools to lower decay-heat intensity and install spray devices to reduce the risk of a fire should a storage facility be attacked, the scientists said. Congress sought the study by a National Academy of Science panel because of the heightened concerns that terrorists might seek to target nuclear power plants. The release Wednesday of a declassified version of the report followed months of debate with the Nuclear Regulatory Commission over how much of the findings should remain secret, and therefore, unavailable to potential terrorists.

The New York Times, 7 April 2005

Study Finds Vulnerabilities in Pools of Spent Nuclear Fuel (Matthew L. Wald)

WASHINGTON, Apr. 6: Terrorists could plausibly mount a successful attack on the pool of spent fuel at a nuclear power reactor, according to a study done for Congress by the National Academy of Sciences. The scientists said federal regulators should evaluate each plant to determine if some of the fuel should be moved into dry casks to

lower the risks. The report contradicts the position of the Nuclear Regulatory Commission, which says that the pools, maintained at more than 100 reactors, are as safe as casks, which reactor owners have turned to only as their pools have reached capacity. An attack would be difficult but "certainly no more difficult than the Sept. 11 attacks," Kevin Crowley, the study director at the National Academy, said in a conference call with reporters. Louis J. Lanzerotti, the chairman of the committee that issued the report and a professor of physics at the New Jersey Institute of Technology, said the study group "identified several scenarios that could have serious consequences at some plants." The report was finished last summer as a classified document, but release of an unrestricted version was delayed until Wednesday by arguments between the academy and the Nuclear Regulatory Commission over what could be made public.

People's Daily, 7 April 2005

US urges DPRK to return to six-party talks

The United States on Wednesday renewed its call for the Democratic People's Republic of Korea (DPRK) to return to the six-party talks. "We have no indication that North Korea has yet agreed to return to the table," State Department spokesman Richard Boucher said at a news briefing. "We reiterate we remain prepared to hold the talks with no preconditions, and we urge North Korea to return to the table for serious discussions so that international concerns about its nuclear programs can be resolved and so that North Korea can end its international isolation," Boucher said. The United States has said it remains committed to the six-party talks even though the DPRK declared on Feb. 10 to withdraw from the talks. Three rounds of the six-party talks have been held to try to resolve the nuclear confrontation between the United States and the DPRK. The six-party talks have been stalled since June last year as the DPRK accused the United States of adopting a hostile policy towards DPRK.

The Washington Post, 8 April 2005

Editorial: Nuclear Freeze

With both parties furiously mobilizing their bases, the war over judicial nominations seems headed for an apocalyptic showdown. Republicans, incensed at Democratic obstruction, threaten the "nuclear option": a procedural trick to abolish the filibuster for nominations. Democrats threaten to retaliate by bringing the Senate to a standstill. Were President Bush and Senate Majority Leader Bill Frist (R-Tenn.) inclined toward statesmanship, they could tamp down the crisis. They have shown little such inclination, though this week has seen encouraging signs from Mr. Frist. As a rule we are not fans of tactics, such as the filibuster, that are intended to prevent up-or-down votes on judicial nominees. Decency demands that nominees receive reasonable and prompt consideration; the Senate owes the presidency and the judiciary timely votes as well. But Republicans are wrong to single out the filibuster as an abomination that must be placed out of bounds in all circumstances.

The Associated Press, 8 April 2005

U.S. Envoy: N. Korea Nukes Went to Libya

SEOUL: Stung by the lapses of intelligence on Iraq's weapons programs, a top U.S. diplomat insisted Thursday that Washington has concrete evidence North Korean nuclear material went to Libya's since shuttered atomic arms operation. He warned that North Korea's cash-strapped communist regime could still be a risk for a further spread of atomic arms technology and materials. Christopher Hill, the main U.S. envoy on the North Korea nuclear standoff, told The Associated Press that even though Libya got the nuclear material from a Pakistani black market nuclear network, the North Koreans must have known where their material would end up. Hill, U.S. ambassador to South Korea who leaves next week to become assistant secretary of state for East Asian and Pacific affairs, said there is "physical evidence that the material that arrived in Libya had started its journey" in North Korea. He said the evidence was "beyond my reasonable doubt." It was the strongest on-the-record claim by a U.S. official that such evidence exists.

The Indian Express, 9 April 2005

Pakistani charged with exporting nuclear equipment: US

A Pakistani businessman, Humayun A. Khan, was charged with arranging the shipment to his homeland of equipment used in nuclear weapons development in violation of US export restrictions, the Homeland Security Department said today. A federal grand jury in Washington this week indicted Khan, 47, on charges of conspiracy and violating the International Emergency Economic Powers Act. If convicted, he faces a maximum sentence of 35 years in prison, according to a news release from Homeland Security's Bureau of Immigration and Customs Enforcement. Khan is believed to be at large in Pakistan, said Dean Boyd, a Homeland Security spokesman. As part of the case, US authorities unsealed a guilty plea by Asher Karni, 51, an Israeli national who lived in Cape Town, South Africa, before his arrest in 2004. He admitted making unlawful exports to Pakistan and India. The indictment says Khan is owner and chief executive of Pakland PME Corp in Islamabad, Pakistan. Sometime around August 2002 he asked Karni, owner of Top-Cape Technology in Cape Town, to help him acquire certain

models of oscilloscopes made by Tektronix Inc of Beaverton, Oregon, according to the news release. Khan was an authorized distributor for Tektronix in Pakistan.

The News, 9 April 2005

North Koreans asked to get combat-ready against US invasion

SEOUL: North Korea's army chief on Friday ordered all citizens to be combat-ready for a US invasion and said the communist country would increase its nuclear deterrent unless Washington drops its alleged hostile policy. Vice Marshal Kim Young Chun, chief of the Korean People's Army, said "all servicepersons and citizens should firmly arm themselves" and "keep themselves in full combat readiness to deal sternly with the US imperialists' new scheme to wage war," according to a report by Pyongyang's official Korean Central News Agency. "The more the United States stubbornly pursues its hostile policy ... we will continue increasing our nuclear deterrent for self-defence," Kim said at a national meeting commemorating the 12th anniversary of North Korean leader Kim Jong Il's becoming chairman of the National Defense Commission. The remarks Friday, echoing similar recent rhetoric, comes amid international efforts to lure North Korea back to talks aimed at convincing it to give up its nuclear weapons programmes.

China Daily, 9 April 2005

DPRK warns to strengthen nuclear deterrent

A senior military official of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea (DPRK) on Friday warned that his country will strengthen its self-defensive nuclear deterrent in face of the US moves to stifle it. "The US persistent hostile policy toward the DPRK will only prompt Pyongyang to bolster its self-defensive nuclear deterrent," said Kim Yong-chun, Chief of the General Staff of the Korean People's Army, at a national meeting marking the 12th anniversary of Kim Jong-il's election as chairman of the National Defense Committee. He accused that the United States should be chiefly blamed for the present deadlock of the six-party talks, saying that the United States is working hard to bring down the system in the DPRK and is staging large-scale war exercises aimed at invading the DPRK. "If the US imperialists dare to launch a war of aggression on the peninsula, the army and people of the DPRK will turn out as one in a just war and mercilessly wipe out the aggressors and win a final victory in the stand-off with the US," he said.

Daily Times, 9 April 2005

Controlling the world's most dangerous weapons (Stephen G Rademaker)

In this new century, let us rise to the challenge of our time: preventing the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction and thwarting terrorists' deadly aims. If we work together, I have no doubt that we shall prevail. A new world emerged on September 11, 2001 - a world more uncertain and dangerous than the one we knew before. In countries around the world, innocents are the target of a new type of war. Terrorists, including Al Qaeda, are trying to acquire weapons of mass destruction. Terrorists demonstrated their willingness to use these devastating weapons even before September 11 with the use of poison gas in Tokyo's subway. These weapons have become the terrorists' weapons of choice precisely because they seek to destroy innocent life on an indiscriminate, mass scale. The greatest threat before humanity today is the nexus of terrorism and weapons of mass destruction proliferation.

The Guardian, 9 April 2005

US nuclear warhead plan under fire (Julian Borger)

Washington: Democrats and American arms control groups warned yesterday that a new Bush administration scheme to replace ageing nuclear warheads could be used as a cover for the eventual construction of a "black arsenal" of new weapons. The plan, known as the reliable replacement warhead programme (RRW), was unveiled this week by Linton Brooks, the head of the National Nuclear Security Administration. Instead of maintaining the old stockpile by monitoring the warheads and replacing occasional spare parts, RRW would entail the design, production and deployment of a new generation of warheads. These would not require testing, and therefore would not break the US moratorium on nuclear tests. Mr Brooks said the new warheads would be used in existing cold war era weapons. The construction of a warhead production facility would also maintain the expertise and infrastructure for the US to respond flexibly to new threats. "We need to maintain the capability to respond to potential future requirements," he said.

The New York Times, 9 April 2005

U.S. Says Banned Nuclear Technology Went to Pakistan and India (David S. Cloud)

WASHINGTON, April 8: Federal prosecutors investigating the smuggling of nuclear technology disclosed Friday that a South African businessman had pleaded guilty to arranging illegal exports of American-made equipment both to Pakistan and its regional rival, India. Asher Karni, an Israeli who lives in South Africa, entered the guilty

plea last September and has been cooperating with investigators, prosecutors said. The prosecutors, however, kept the proceeding secret until Friday, when they unsealed the plea agreement and charges brought against Humayun Khan, an Islamabad businessman with longstanding ties to Pakistan's military. Mr. Khan is said to be Mr. Karni's partner. As part of Mr. Karni's plea agreement, he acknowledged that he also was involved in 2002 in selling sophisticated electronic equipment to government agencies in India, some of which are involved in nuclear weapons and missile research. It is not clear whether the goods he sold were useful for making nuclear weapons.

The New York Times, 9 April 2005

EDITORIAL: Terrorist Attacks on Reactor Pools

A report just released by the National Academy of Sciences bears two disturbing revelations. The cooling pools for nuclear waste at some reactor sites may be far more vulnerable to a devastating attack by terrorists than federal regulators are willing to admit. And the Nuclear Regulatory Commission is operating in a hermetically sealed cocoon that makes it difficult for anyone - even the academy, armed with a Congressional mandate - to tell whether the public is adequately protected. The academy was brought into the fray after a group of scientists, analyzing reports published by the regulatory commission itself, issued a report suggesting that a terrorist attack could crack the pools that hold used nuclear fuel at reactor sites, thereby causing a leak of cooling water and setting off fires that could unleash radioactive plumes worse than those at Chernobyl.

The New York Times, 9 April 2005

Nukes Are Green (Nicholas D. Kristof)

If there was one thing that used to be crystal clear to any environmentalist, it was that nuclear energy was the deadliest threat this planet faced. That's why Dick Gregory pledged at a huge anti-nuke demonstration in 1979 that he would eat no solid food until all nuclear plants in the U.S. were shut down. Mr. Gregory may be getting hungry. But it's time for the rest of us to drop that hostility to nuclear power. It's increasingly clear that the biggest environmental threat we face is actually global warming, and that leads to a corollary: nuclear energy is green. Nuclear power, in contrast with other sources, produces no greenhouse gases. So President Bush's overall environmental policy gives me the shivers, but he's right to push ahead for nuclear energy. There haven't been any successful orders for new nuclear plants since 1973, but several proposals for new plants are now moving ahead - and that's good for the world we live in. Global energy demand will rise 60 percent over the next 25 years, according to the International Energy Agency, and nuclear power is the cleanest and best bet to fill that gap.

Daily Times, 10 April 2005

Time running out to get North Korea to talks, says US expert

BEIJING: North Korea is taking an increasingly hardline stance on talks on its nuclear ambitions, a US expert said on Saturday, after five days of talks with leaders of the isolated regime. Selig Harrison, of the Washington-based Centre for International Policy, said Pyongyang was ready to return to six-party talks, but that the opportunity to persuade it to dismantle its nuclear programmes had been lost. The best that the US, Japan, Russia, South Korea and China could now hope for at talks that have been stalled since last June was a freeze of existing programmes, and time was running short even for that, Harrison said. "There has been a major policy shift in Pyongyang in recent weeks. The hardline elements there are riding high, the army has increasingly asserted its control over nuclear policy," Harrison told reporters in Beijing. "Now North Korea is not prepared to discuss dismantling its nuclear weapons until complete normalisation of all economic and diplomatic relations with the US," he said.

Daily Times, 10 April 2005

Expert says North Korea changing policy on six-party talks

BEIJING: North Korea has undergone a major policy shift in its approach to the six party talks on its nuclear arsenal and is now only willing to dismantle its weapons after the United States grants it full diplomatic relations, a leading North Korean expert said Saturday. The new policy, instituted by hardliners in the Stalinist government, was detailed in talks in recent days between high level leaders like Kim Yong Nam, North Korea's number two leader, and Selig Harrison, head of the Asia Program at the Washington-based Center of International Policy, Harrison said. "North Korea is not prepared to discuss dismantling its nuclear weapons until the complete normalization of all economic and diplomatic relations with the United States," Harrison told journalists. "However, they did make clear that they are ready to freeze their nuclear arsenals at present levels, specifically they are prepared to freeze activities at the five megawatt Yongbyon reactor in respects to the six party talks and direct bilateral talks with the US." Without a freeze, North Korea could extract spent fuel rods at the reactor and reprocess enough plutonium to build an additional six nuclear bombs, he said.

The Hindu, 10 April 2005

U.S. nuclear warheads plan under fire (Julian Borger)

WASHINGTON, Apr. 9: Democrats and American arms control groups warned yesterday that a new Bush administration scheme to replace ageing nuclear warheads could be used as a cover for the eventual construction of a "black arsenal" of new weapons. The plan, known as the reliable replacement warhead programme (RRW), was unveiled this week by Linton Brooks, the head of the National Nuclear Security Administration. Instead of maintaining the old stockpile by monitoring the warheads and replacing occasional spare parts, RRW would entail the design, production and deployment of a new generation of warheads. These would not require testing, and therefore would not break the U.S. moratorium on nuclear tests. Mr. Brooks said the new warheads would be used in existing cold war era weapons. The construction of a warhead production facility would also maintain the expertise and infrastructure for the U.S. to respond flexibly to new threats.

The New York Times, 11 April 2005

North Korea Deals a Blow to Arms Talks (Joseph Kahn)

BEIJING, Apr. 10: The North Korean government has disavowed a commitment to negotiate a step-by-step elimination of its nuclear weapons program with the Bush administration but may freeze the production of nuclear bombs under strict conditions, said an American specialist on North Korea who completed a visit there this weekend. The specialist, Selig S. Harrison of the Center for International Policy in Washington, said in an interview that he had been informed by several top-ranking North Korean leaders that the United States must pledge to respect the country's sovereignty and territorial integrity before any freeze could be discussed. The Bush administration has rejected conditions for resuming negotiations. "We have lost the opportunity to negotiate a step-by-step agreement that would lead to the eventual dismantling of their nuclear program," Mr. Harrison said in Beijing after returning from Pyongyang, North Korea's capital. "They are no longer willing to discuss that possibility."

Reuters , 11 April 2005

US Says No Deadline, Concessions for North Korea

SEOUL: The United States has not set a deadline for North Korea to return to stalled nuclear talks and will not offer concessions to bring it back to the table, the chief U.S. negotiator said on Monday. U.S. Assistant Secretary of State for East Asian Affairs Christopher Hill said in an interview he was reluctant to put a deadline on North Korea's return to the talks but that options were being considered in case they fell through. "A time will come when we have to decide whether this is the right option and whether we have to look at other options," Hill said. "One option we don't have is to walk away. We have got to figure out how to solve this problem." "I am really reluctant to put a deadline out there, especially an artificial deadline," Hill told Reuters at the U.S. embassy in Seoul, where he has been ambassador for less than a year. It was his first interview in his new role.

Dawn, 13 April 2005

F-16 deal, N-issue not linked: US (Anwar Iqbal)

WASHINGTON, April 12: The United States has refused to link the F-16 deal with Pakistan to the indictment of a Pakistani businessman for allegedly trying to buy nuclear-capable equipment from this country. At a Monday afternoon briefing in Washington, State Department spokesman Richard Boucher refused to be dragged into a media debate that started on Friday when US prosecutors unsealed an indictment before a federal jury. The jury was told that a Pakistani businessman, Humayun A. Khan, had tried to buy equipment from the United States that had both military and medical use. Since then several US newspapers have stipulated that the indictment could jeopardize the US offer to sell F-16 fighter jets to Pakistan. Pakistan has already rejected the allegations as "malicious and unfounded," saying that the Pakistani government never tried to purchase such equipment in the United States, "directly or indirectly."

The New York Times, 13 April 2005

Sharon Asks U.S. to Pressure Iran to Give Up Its Nuclear Program (David E. Sanger)

WASHINGTON, April 12: Spreading photographs of Iranian nuclear sites over a lunch table at the Bush ranch in Texas on Monday, Prime Minister Ariel Sharon of Israel urged President Bush to step up pressure on Iran to give up all elements of its nuclear program, according to senior American and Israeli officials. Mr. Sharon said Israeli intelligence showed Iran was near "a point of no return" in learning how to develop a weapon, the officials said. However, Mr. Sharon gave no indication that Israel was preparing to act alone to attack Iranian nuclear facilities, a prospect that Vice President Dick Cheney, who was at the lunch, raised publicly three months ago. In a conversation lasting more than an hour, Mr. Sharon argued that European nations negotiating with Iran were softening their position and may be willing to allow it to hold on to technology to enrich uranium. American officials said the evidence Mr. Sharon presented, including aerial photographs of sites in Iran, was neither startling nor new to Mr. Bush. But they said the prime minister was clearly pressuring Mr. Bush not to allow the European negotiations with Iran to drag on.

Reuters, 14 April 2005

Rice Plays Down Iran Nuclear Threat

NEW YORK: The United States will decide this summer whether to pursue a tougher stance on Iran's nuclear program at the United Nations Security Council, Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice told The Wall Street Journal in an interview published on Thursday. Rice said Washington has faith in European-led negotiations aimed at ensuring that Iran's nuclear program remains non-military, and that what matters most is "a unity of purpose" among all the nations involved. Her remarks come shortly after Israeli Prime Minister Ariel Sharon urged President Bush to take a tougher line on Iran and said the country was approaching a point of no return in its quest for nuclear weapons. Rice, however, told the newspaper the Israelis had provided "no new revelation" on Iran's alleged nuclear program. She also played down the immediate urgency of nuclear threats from North Korea. She dismissed as a bid for attention Pyongyang's recent declaration that it has nuclear weapons as well as its decision to walk away from multi-party talks on eliminating its nuclear program.

China Daily, 15 April 2005

North Korea to increase nuclear deterrent

North Korea's No. 2 leader said Thursday the nation will increase its nuclear deterrent to defend against the alleged threat of a U.S. invasion, and ordered citizens to defend the country "at the cost of their lives." The United States has repeatedly said it has no intention to invade despite an ongoing standoff over North Korea's nuclear weapons program. The nation claimed in February to possess atomic weapons and said it would boycott international disarmament talks. Last month, it said it had bolstered its nuclear arsenal. "We will continue increasing our self-defensive nuclear deterrent against the enemies' policy to isolate and stifle the republic," Kim Yong Nam, head of the North's legislature, said at a meeting honoring the birthday of founding President Kim Il Sung. "If the U.S. imperialists recklessly set the fire of war on the Korean Peninsula despite our repeated warnings ... we will mercilessly and completely destroy the invaders so they won't live again," Kim was quoted as saying by the North's official Korean Central News Agency.

The Hindu, 16 April 2005

U.S. cannot sell nuclear power technology: Rice (Sridhar Krishnaswami)

WASHINGTON: The United States has said that it cannot sell nuclear power technology to India yet because of Non-Proliferation Treaty implications. In an interview to The Wall Street Journal, the U.S. Secretary of State, Condoleezza Rice, was asked if Washington was prepared to sell nuclear reactor technology to India and work out a safeguard deal. "No, no, we're not there, that is not the case. We are having, as you know, with the Chinese civil nuclear discussions. We have agreed with the Indians that we can talk about a variety of energy sources but obviously there are NPT implications that are quite serious about civilian nuclear power in India," she said. The State Department has carried the full text of the interview on its website. "We do need to recognise and to help countries deal with the energy demands that they are facing. And if you look at China or India...there is a demand for stable energy sources. It's one reason...that we have energy dialogues that are popping up all over the place because we are going to take a look at what we can do because it's going to continue to happen that oil-rich troublesome states will have leverage if you can't help people find alternative means to meet their energy demands," she said to a question on India dealing with Iran.

The Korean Herald, 16 April 2005

Seoul rebuffs U.S. military plan on N.K.

South Korea has rejected a U.S. move to draft a scenario of military operations that deals with possible internal turmoil in North Korea because the plan undermines Seoul's sovereignty. The presidential National Security Council said it decided in January put a stop to the operational plan after it was informed of the plan by Joint Chiefs of Staff office. "According to our review, the plan's contents are inappropriate ... and (we) concluded that several points could limit the Republic of Korea's exercise of sovereign rights," the council said in a statement. The council said the Defense Ministry notified the Korea-U.S. Combined Forces Command of its decision and the two allies will discuss the issue through proper channels. The plan, codenamed OPLAN 5029-05, lists details on military actions in stages, according to the level of North Korea's internal troubles, including massive North Korean defection, regime change and military coups. Defense Ministry spokesman Brig. Gen. Shin Hyun-don said working-level officials at the combined command have been discussing the issue since last year.

People's Daily, 17 April 2005

Iran sees no need of US participation in nuclear talks

A top Iranian nuclear negotiator said on Saturday that Iran saw no need for the United States to participate in the talks over Iran's disputed nuclear program despite Washington's support for Europe's diplomatic efforts to find a solution. "Washington seems lately to be taking a more down-to-earth approach towards Iran's nuclear program, closer to that of the Europeans," Sirous Nasserli said in an interview with the official IRNA news agency. However,

Nasseri played down US engagement in the talks between Tehran and the three EU member states including Britain, France and Germany who are trying to persuade Tehran to give up uranium enrichment in return for economic incentives. "I personally do not see any need for the presence of the Americans at the negotiations and even don't believe it could be helpful," Nasseri said. He indicated that the US seemed to have started abandoning its threats against Iran, realizing the country's weight in the Middle East.

Dawn, 17 April 2005

Sharon gave Bush photos of Iran's N-plants: radio

RIYADH, Apr. 16: Israel reportedly handed over documents and aerial photos of Iranian nuclear installations to President Bush during the Texas summit earlier this week, Israeli public radio reported on Saturday. Ariel Sharon's military adviser General Yoav Gallan Gallan, who accompanied the Israeli premier to the summit, presented the photos together with information the Israeli intelligence services claim to have gathered on Tehran's nuclear programme, the Israeli radio added, without mentioning how the photos were taken. It just said that the images showed the Iranian nuclear programme was at a "very advanced" stage. This stance apparently differed from the US version that Iran was at least five years away from making a nuclear device. "Our intelligence community has used in the past an estimate that said Iran is not likely to acquire a nuclear weapon before the beginning of the next decade. That remains the case," he said.

The Associated Press, 18 April 2005

North Korea Nuke Shutdown Raises Concerns

WASHINGTON: The apparent shutdown of a nuclear reactor in North Korea is raising concerns among Bush administration officials that Pyongyang has finished producing spent fuel rods laced with weapons-grade plutonium. A U.S. official familiar with the situation said there could be at least two other possibilities, neither of which was troubling: that the reactor had run into mechanical trouble or that North Korea was bluffing to raise anxieties. In the past, North Korea has claimed to have taken major steps in its pursuit of a nuclear weapons arsenal, but U.S. analysts say only some of those claims are genuine. Even so, North Korea is believed to have already produced at least one atom bomb, and the United States, China, Japan, South Korea and Russia are trying through so-called six-nation talks to negotiate elimination of the nuclear weapons program. North Korea had agreed to return to the bargaining table last September after a three-month hiatus but since then has refused to resume the talks.

Daily Times, 18 April 2005

'North Korea may boost its N-arsenal'

TOKYO: North Korea has halted operations at a nuclear power reactor at the centre of an international row, a move that could let Pyongyang reprocess spent fuel to retract plutonium and boost its nuclear arsenal, a press report said on Sunday. The United States will shortly send Christopher Hill, the assistant secretary of state for East Asian and Pacific affairs, to South Korea, Japan and China for talks to cope with the new development in the nuclear standoff, the Japanese newspaper Asahi Shimbun said. Washington has verified that operations at the five-megawatt reactor in Yongbyon were suspended in April, the influential daily said in a report from Washington quoting sources including US government officials. The US administration reached the conclusion by analysing satellite pictures and estimating temperatures on the walls of nuclear facilities and amounts of steam coming from boilers at Yongbyon, north of Pyongyang, the report said.

Daily Times, 18 April 2005

Pyongyang says US lying

SEOUL: North Korea on Sunday accused the United States of fabricating information, citing a US news report which said the American government wrongly claimed the communist nation had exported nuclear material to Libya. The North was reacting to a Washington Post report last month that said the Bush administration told its Asian allies earlier this year that North Korea had sold nuclear material to Libya, when the shipment in fact went first to Pakistan. The Washington Post said that North Korea, according to intelligence, had supplied uranium hexafluoride which can be enriched to weapons-grade uranium - to Pakistan. It was Pakistan, a key US ally with its own nuclear arsenal, that sold the material to Libya, it said. The US government had no evidence that North Korea knew of the second transaction, according to officials quoted by the Post. "The US is gravely mistaken if it thinks that its clumsy fabrication of fraud information may work everywhere," the North's state-run newspaper Rodong Sinmun said in a commentary carried by its official Korean Central News Agency.

China Daily, 19 April 2005

US sees possible UN action on North Korea

The United States said that it may try to take North Korea to the UN Security Council for possible sanctions if

Pyongyang refuses to resume international talks on its nuclear program. "If North Korea refuses to come back to the six-party talks, then I fully expect we would consult with our partners in the region about the next steps, and that's certainly one possibility," said White House spokesman Scott McClellan. The six-nation talks involving the North Korea and South Korea, China, Russia, the United States and Japan aimed at ending Pyongyang's nuclear arms ambitions stalled after three inconclusive rounds. North Korea did not show up for a fourth round set for September 2004, and declared in February that it had nuclear weapons for self-defense. "North Korea previously made a commitment to come back to the six-party talks," McClellan said as US President George W. Bush traveled here. "North Korea's failure to follow through on that commitment and its provocative words and actions only further isolate it," the spokesman said.

People's Daily, 19 April 2005

US calls on DPRK to return to talks

The United States said on Monday that it is prepared to resume the six-party talks with the Democratic People's Republic of Korea (DPRK) without preconditions and urged the DPRK to return to the talks. "Once again (I) reiterate, the United States and others are prepared to hold the talks without preconditions," State Department spokesman Richard Boucher said at a briefing. "The most important thing is how we are going to solve this problem. And the way to solve this problem is to go back to talks. The way to solve the problem for the North Koreans is to go back to talks," Boucher said.

The News, 19 April 2005

WMD commission 'absolves' Bush of rigging Iraq intelligence (Kaleem Omar)

KARACHI: Talk about snow jobs! When the expletive-deleted hit the fan early last year with the admission by the chief US weapons inspector that there were no weapons of mass destruction in Iraq, US President George W Bush had to do something to try to repair the damage to his credibility in the eyes of the American people. Repairing his credibility in the eyes of the rest of the world was a lost cause, since he had no credibility in their eyes anyway. But Bush didn't really care what the rest of the world thought. They could go jump in a lake as far as he was concerned. For domestic political reasons in a US presidential year, he did, however, care what the American people thought of his Iraq policy, all the more so since he was seeing his popularity rating plunging to an all-time low. So, in order to shift the blame for the WMD fiasco away from his administration, Bush decided to make US intelligence agencies the fall guy. In this connection, his first move - back in June last year - was to sack CIA chief George Tenet, a Clinton appointee.

The Korean Herald, 21 April 2005

U.S. stresses focus still on six-way talks

The United States shrugged off talk that it is looking at other options than dialogue to stop North Korea from pursuing its nuclear weapons development, stressing the focus is to get the North back to the six-party negotiating table. Two and a half years into the dispute, there is persistent speculation Washington's patience is wearing thin and is open to other options, including referring North Korea to the Security Council for possible sanctions if Pyongyang refuses to return to the stalled six-way talks. South Korea has made clear that it is firmly opposed to any Security Council option. The White House and the State Department on Wednesday echoed each other by saying the U.S. priority is a resumption of the six-way talks, which involve the two Koreas, the United States, China, Japan and Russia. The North has shunned the talks since the end of the third round in June. "Our focus is on getting North Korea back to the talks. I think that's the focus of all parties in the region," White House spokesman Scott Mcllellan said.

Daily Times, 21 April 2005

US inspections of Russian nuclear facilities not being considered

MOSCOW: Russian Defence Minister Sergei Ivanov said Wednesday that Moscow was not considering the possibility of American inspectors visiting Russian nuclear installations, the Interfax news agency reported. The report followed US Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice's statement to the contrary just hours earlier during an interview with the Ekho Moskvyy radio station. She said that she and Ivanov had discussed the issue over dinner Tuesday night, and that she had won assurances of some improved access. She added her hope, however, that more progress would be made before the Moscow meeting next month between US President George W Bush and Russian President Vladimir Putin.

Reuters, 22 April 2004

U.S. Sees Nothing Definitive on N. Korea Nuke Tests

WASHINGTON: The United States has not seen evidence that North Korea is preparing for a nuclear weapons test, although it has seen "lots of stuff suggesting interesting activity," a senior administration official said on

Friday. The official, who spoke on condition of anonymity, was responding to a Wall Street Journal Online story, which said the United States warned China that "North Korea could be preparing for a nuclear-weapons test and asked the Chinese to urge Pyongyang to desist." "We've seen something that suggests they are talking about (a nuclear test). There has been lots of stuff suggesting interesting activity the official said. "As far as I can tell, it's not definitive. "The official did not know of any warning to China about a possible North Korean test but said the recent activity had "raised some interest within the Bush administration." The State Department does not have any new assessments to offer regarding its long-standing concern over North Korea's nuclear weapons program, a spokeswoman told Reuters.

The Associated Press, 22 April 2005

U.S. Cites Concerns Over N. Korea Comments

WASHINGTON: The United States has told China and its other negotiating partners that it has serious concerns about "recent provocative statements" by North Korea on its nuclear weapons intentions, a State Department spokesman said Friday. In the message, conveyed through diplomatic channels, the United States said North Korea's statements could only keep the reclusive regime in isolation, spokesman Tom Casey said. During three rounds of negotiations, North Korea has asserted it has a nuclear capability and the potential to demonstrate it. In February and again last month, North Korea claimed to have nuclear weapons and said it would not return to the six-nation talks. American analysts said this week they believe at least some of the claims are genuine. U.S. intelligence analysts estimate North Korea has produced at least two nuclear bombs. The diplomatic message to U.S. partners did not suggest that North Korea is about to conduct a nuclear test or take any immediate action along those lines, said a U.S. official speaking on condition of anonymity.

Daily Times, 22 April 2005

Gorbachev criticises US on large nuclear arsenal

UNITED NATIONS: Former Soviet President Mikhail Gorbachev warned the United States on Wednesday "to cure itself" of hypocrisy over nuclear arms and be prepared to cut its atomic arsenal and take it off "hair-trigger" alert. Addressing a news conference with Ted Turner, the founder of CNN, Gorbachev said the United States should not suggest other nations disarm and make no move to do so itself. "I think the United States is sick. It suffers from the sickness, the disease of being the victor and it needs to cure itself from this disease," Gorbachev said. "I think Russia is ready to cooperate. Now the question is, is the United States - which is the only remaining superpower - is the United States ready to do this? I think not," he added. There are an estimated 34,000 nuclear warheads in silos in Russia and the United States. About 5,000 are on hair-trigger alert, in which they could be fired on 15 minutes' notice.

The Korean Herald, 23 April 2005

Roh, Bush may hold June summit on N. Korea nukes (Joo Sang-min)

The government is pushing for a summit between President Roh Moo-hyun and U.S. President George W. Bush in the United States around June amid signs of escalating tensions over the North Korean nuclear standoff and signs of strains in the time-honored alliance between Seoul and Washington. Officials in Seoul said yesterday that the two governments have held working-level talks to draw up a specific outline for a summit meeting. "Although nothing has been fixed, we see high chances of the summit meeting. A specific schedule will come out after further consultation," Yonhap news agency quoted an unidentified official as saying. Word of the push for a summit coincides with a planned Washington visit in April 26-28 by Lee Jong-seok, deputy head of the National Security Council and a key adviser to Roh on national security. Presidential spokesman Kim Man-soo refused to confirm the summit bid. "A cordial trust exists between Korea and the United States to discuss mutual concerns at any time when needed," he said.

People's Daily, 23 April 2005

L. America states urged to strengthen cooperation against chemical weapons

Experts from the Organization for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons (OPCW) Friday urged the governments and firms of Latin American and the Caribbean countries to step up their cooperation against chemical arms. "A good opportunity to contribute to world peace and security is to get rid of chemical arms," said Guillermo Fernandez de Soto, a member of the OPCW peace council and Colombia's ambassador to The Netherlands. Noting that Latin America spearheads the worldwide campaign for non-proliferation of chemical arms, Fernandez de Soto, speaking at the 6th meeting of National Authorities of Latin America and the Caribbean in Cartagena, Colombia, also asked the governments and firms of those countries to intensify measures against substances possibly to be used in making chemical arms. OPCW Director General Rogelio Pflirter also warned that no country in the world could consider itself free from the possibility that terrorist groups may secretly enter their territories with chemical arms for evil use.

The Hindu, 28 April 2005

How far can India travel with the U.S.? (S. Nihal Singh)

THERE ARE defining moments in a country's foreign policy, and the George W. Bush presidency after 9/11 is undoubtedly one of them. The debate on the kind of world dominance the United States is seeking - whether it is in search of building a Second Roman Empire, as American academics would have it, or it is exercising power through sheriffs or both - is still raging. But one thing is clear: the U.S. establishment believes that it is in the unique position of reshaping the world. What the American interests are have been amply spelled out, through Washington's strategic doctrine and otherwise. The U.S. wants to remain the supreme power and will repel any contestation by one or a combination of countries. It also reserves the right to invade a nation of its choice, unilaterally or with a 'coalition of the willing.' The Iraq invasion was carried out on the basis of strategic doctrine. The Bush administration is very much on the learning curve in promoting this policy. The difficulties of occupying Iraq have tempered its language. Washington is more civil to Europeans and it is not averse to asking for the help of the United Nations if it serves its interests. But the bedrock of American policy remains what the strategic doctrine states. To begin with, the watchword is the spread of democracy in West Asia.

The Hindu, 30 April 2005

India an important ally in war against terrorism: U.S. (Sridhar Krishnaswami)

WASHINGTON: India suffered "hundreds" of attacks from both domestic and foreign terrorists in 2004 but security forces were becoming increasingly effective, especially in Kashmir, "where the level of terrorist violence declined," says the U.S. State Department's Country Terrorism Report. The annual report mandated by law says that India joined the U.S. "in a renewed commitment to cooperate in broadening the range of counter-terrorism measures." Stressing that India "remains an important ally" in the global war on terrorism, the report takes note of the expanded cooperative counter-terrorism training of the U.S. with the Indian military during 2004 and the various Defence and State Department training programmes dealing with law enforcement. The report also takes note of bilateral developments in counter-terrorism that includes cyber security.

The Nation, 30 April 2005

US says amicable Kashmir solution very near

WASHINGTON: Mike Green, Senior Director and Special Assistant to President Bush at NSC White House, Thursday said Pak-US relations were broad-based, multi-faceted and multi-year, and that 'we are in for a long haul'. He said this at the White House briefings held at the Old Executive Building for the delegates of Association of Pakistani Physicians of North America (APPNA) Executive Council, which is now in Washington for spring meetings. Green cited the close Pak-US cooperation in the ongoing war on terror. He was speaking on 'Impact of India-Pakistan Relations on the Future of Sub-Continent and Asia'. Referring to the 9/11 Committee Report, he said the Capitol Hill demonstrated that very commitment, and added, "today, there is a bipartisan commitment with Pakistan." He said cooperation in the war on terror was continuing, and the close personal understanding existing between President Bush and President Musharraf was an important element, which lends strength to this bilaterally fruitful relationship.