

The Hindu, 1 August 2005

Two F-16s for Pakistan (B Muralidhar Reddy)

ISLAMABAD: The United States has approved an initial shipment of two F-16 fighter jets to Pakistan. According to a Washington news report in Pakistan daily The News the decision to provide Pakistan with two older but refurbished F-16s could be linked to the recent India-US defence agreement. Quoting a Congressional source on the timing of the decision the paper said, "They (Bush administration officials) didn't want to start moving F-16s to Pakistan until after the Indian Prime Minister had come and gone." The White House had announced plans in March to sell F-16s to Pakistan. The sale had been blocked for 15 years to "punish" Pakistan for its nuclear weapons programme. The single engine, multi-role F-16 is built by the Lockheed Martin Corp. Pakistan's planned purchases would boost its fleet of about 32 F-16s acquired before the US Congress cut off sales in 1990.

The Hindu, 1 August 2005

Five US soldiers killed in roadside blasts in Baghdad

BAGHDAD: Five US soldiers were killed by roadside bombs in two separate incidents in Baghdad, the U.S. military said on Sunday. In the first attack on Saturday around 1:40 p.m., a patrol hit a roadside bomb in the southern Dora neighbourhood, killing a soldier from Task Force Baghdad, a statement said. Two others were wounded in that incident. Later that evening, around 11 p.m., four Task Force Baghdad soldiers were killed when a roadside bomb exploded in south-western Baghdad.

Deccan Herald, 1 August 2005

US Congress passes energy bill (L K Sharma)

America's nuclear power industry is sought to be revived by the Bush administration through tax incentives for new plants. The industry has been starved of new reactor orders for three decades now. US Congress passed a wide-ranging energy bill that gives tax incentives worth 14.5 billion dollars to different sectors. Welcoming the passage of the bill, President George Bush said, "The bipartisan energy bill passed on Sunday will give America a comprehensive national energy strategy for the first time in more than a decade and is critically important to our long-term national and economic security."

Dawn, 1 August 2005

N-war in South Asia likely, warns US report (Anwar Iqbal)

WASHINGTON, July 31: US policy analysts consider the apparent arms race between India and Pakistan as posing perhaps the most likely prospect for the future use of nuclear weapons by states, says the latest congressional report on US-Pakistan relations. The report by the Congressional Research Service, which prepares policy papers for US legislators, is the first since July 18, 2005, when the United States and India signed an agreement for nuclear cooperation, causing a sense of heightened insecurity in Pakistan. The report highlights continued US support to Pakistan's efforts to improve its military arsenal and discloses that since 2002 Pakistan has refurbished a substantial part of its fleet of American made F-16 fighter jets with US assistance. Referring to a new US-India defence framework agreement signed on June 28, 2005, the CRS notes that Pakistan has expressed concern over this agreement because Islamabad feels that it could lead to "induction of advanced weapons systems into the region" and "the destabilization of the strategic balance" there.

Dawn, 1 August 2005

'Big change in US policy towards S. Asia'

WASHINGTON, July 31: The India-US cooperation on civilian nuclear energy while allowing New Delhi to retain its nuclear arms programme, shows a historic shift in US policy towards India, says a report published on Saturday in the Christian Science Monitor. News analyst Daniel Schorr observes: "We are witnessing a historic change in attitudes toward India and Pakistan and the administration seems ready to show the kind of favouritism to India that it had once showed to Pakistan. According to the report, the pro-Indian tilt in US policies towards South Asia became obvious when the visiting Prime Minister Manmohan Singh reached an agreement with President George W. Bush that would permit India to get international help with its peaceful nuclear programme while retaining its nuclear arms programme. "Because of our shared values, the relationship between our two countries has never been stronger," President Bush said.

Daily Times, 1 August 2005

US-India nuclear deal and NPT's future (Khalid Hasan)

WASHINGTON: The new willingness of the US to engage in cooperative activities in the civilian nuclear power field with India, a state outside the NPT raises serious questions about the future of US nuclear non-proliferation policy, according to a security expert. Baker Spring of the Heritage Foundation, one of the leading conservative think tanks in the capital, wonders if in specific terms, the US is effectively abandoning the NPT regime. He

argues that it would be reasonable to assert that the new US-India joint statement answers this question in the affirmative. "That reasonable assertion, however, is not the only plausible conclusion, and it is certainly not the intent of the Bush Administration. While the US-India joint statement does signal a change in US nuclear non-proliferation policy, it is really adapting that policy to the realities of the post-Cold War world," he adds. Spring writes that post-Cold War tensions in places like South Asia have made it increasingly clear that the US needs to open a second track in its overall nuclear non-proliferation policy. The first track constitutes the existing global nuclear non-proliferation regime defined by the NPT.

Khaleej Times, 1 August 2005

Bush has got it right on India's nuclear status (Jonathan Power)

The critics of President George W Bush's new nuclear deal with India have got it back to front. They appear to have no understanding of the history of US-Indian nuclear relations. They draw their pessimistic and sanctimonious conclusions about how this new policy of relaxing the supply of advanced nuclear materials to India will further undermine the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty as if no water had ever flowed under the bridge. Let's go back to the head of that river. The first mistake in dealing with India was for President Richard Nixon to make it unambiguously clear in the early days of his opening-to-China policy that a major reason for taking China seriously was China's possession of the bomb. The second mistake was the famous Nixon-Kissinger "tilt" towards Pakistan during the India-Pakistan war of 1971. It was at that time that the Indian prime minister, Indira Gandhi, gave the go ahead to India's scientists to develop a nuclear device. The third mistake was to say nothing, yes nothing, when India exploded its first nuclear device in 1974. In the West only the UK and Canada made a public criticism.

Daily Times, 1 September 2005

North Korea, Iran and Russia biggest violators of arms control pacts: US

WASHINGTON: Iran, North Korea and Russia still are among the world's biggest violators of international arms control agreements but Libya is a poster child for reform, according to a US State Department report on Tuesday. In an unclassified version of a "noncompliance report", the State Department urged tough action against countries violating arms control, nonproliferation and disarmament agreements. "Particularly in a post-9/11 world in which there exists a very real threat of weapons of mass destruction being used as weapons of terror, it is vital that the international community take all steps necessary to end noncompliance," the report said, referring to the attacks on Sept 11, 2001. The report, which was sent to members of Congress, did not specify what actions should be taken but a senior State Department official said the United States was discussing the report with a variety of countries that she declined to name. The report was prepared in three versions - a watered-down unclassified one for public consumption, another labeled "secret" and a third marked "top secret" for a very small number of government officials.

Reuters, 31 August 2005

China Warns Against Missile Help for Taiwan

BEIJING: China issued a veiled warning to the United States on Thursday not to help protect rival Taiwan with missiles just days before President Hu Jintao meets President Bush in Washington. "As the Taiwan question involves its core interests, China opposes the attempt by any country to provide help or protection to the Taiwan region of China in the field of missile defense by any means," the cabinet said in a policy paper. The United States offered in 2001 to sell Taiwan six batteries of Patriot Advanced Capability (PAC-3) hit-to-kill missiles, 12 P-3C Orion submarine-hunting aircraft and eight diesel-electric submarines in what would be the biggest arms package to the island in more than a decade. Taiwan's parliament has yet to approve the package. China claims Taiwan as its own and has threatened to attack if the democratic island of 23 million formally declares statehood. The United States, which recognises Beijing and not Taipei under a "one China" policy, is nevertheless Taiwan's main arms supplier and has pledged to do whatever it takes to help the island defend itself.

The Hindu, 2 August 2005

China, US hold strategic talks

BEIJING: China and the United States started their first strategic dialogue in Beijing on Monday, aiming to facilitate bilateral relations. The closed-door dialogue, first senior level meeting of its kind, was co-chaired by Chinese Vice Foreign Minister Dai Bingguo and U.S. Deputy Secretary of State Robert Zoellick, who arrived in Beijing on Sunday. Chinese Premier Wen Jiabao met Mr. Zoellick on Sunday, and exchanged views on bilateral and international issues, according to Chinese Foreign Ministry. Mr. Zoellick said in Hong Kong on Sunday he would discuss "strategic issues of common interest" like foreign policy and economics with Chinese officials in Beijing. The dialogue came as a result of the consensus reached between Chinese President Hu Jintao and his American counterpart George W. Bush during the Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation (APEC) Summit in Chile last year.

The Hindu, 2 August 2005

New opportunities for nuclear energy (M R Srinivasan)

The agreement reached between Prime Minister Manmohan Singh and President George W Bush in Washington on July 18, 2005, on nuclear matters can be truly described as epochal. In the impact it could have on India's nuclear energy development, it stands on a par with the decisions taken on the Pokhran I test of 1974 and Pokhran II tests of 1998. Countries like human beings are normally comfortable with the old order continuing, they are averse to change, especially changes perceived by some to be fundamental. True, India could have gone on with the present situation of nuclear power making steady but slow growth based on Indian pressurised heavy water reactors (PHWR), followed by development of the fast breeder reactor and the eventual use of the thorium. This path would mean a relatively small contribution of nuclear power, perhaps increasing from the present 3 per cent of total electric generation to a figure below 10 per cent, even after two or three more decades. Of course our nuclear deterrent capability would grow to a condition considered to be a 'credible minimum.' India would continue to be isolated from global developments in nuclear energy technologies, both civilian and military.

The Indian Express, 2 August 2005

Questions linger as Bush pushes India nuclear deal

WASHINGTON: A recent US-India nuclear agreement was so hastily concluded the Bush administration is only now beginning to figure out how to implement it in the face of tough questions from the US Congress and non-proliferation experts. The agreement, announced July 18 after Prime Minister Manmohan Singh met President George W. Bush at the White House, upends decades-old non-proliferation rules and will require changes in US law and international policy. US officials are optimistic the Republican-controlled Congress will approve steps to fulfil Bush's promise to sell civilian nuclear technology to India. Such sales are now prohibited under US law because India refused to sign the Nuclear Non-proliferation Treaty, or NPT, and is producing nuclear weapons banned by the pact and other agreements.

The Indian Express, 2 August 2005

India pact generates radiation in US

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The Times Of India, 2 August 2005

India, US join hands in space

NEW DELHI: India and US are poised to take their strategic relationship a notch higher. They will soon sign a crucial space launch agreement to allow India to launch US-made satellites not just from US, but from other countries that use American components in their satellites. The understanding will help the country's premier space body, Indian Space Research Organisation (ISRO), boost its earnings. It will also help the once-estranged democracies get into a tighter strategic partnership. Some last-minute refinements in the agreement are being worked out relating to pre-launch treatment of US satellites on Indian rockets. But these, say top sources, are procedural issues, which both sides expect to be sorted out at the next meeting of the space working group. India has already accepted two US payloads for the Chandrayaan mission. More such joint endeavours are now expected, and together with that, closer exchange of strategic space technologies.

The Indian Express, 2 August 2005

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The Indian Express, 2 August 2005

India is not equal to Pak on nukes: US

Washington, July 21: Defending its decision to give aid to India on nuclear-power related issues, the Bush administration said there could be no equation between India and Pakistan on the matter and it was going to have individual ties with the two in the case of civil nuclear cooperation. "There is no reason for us to have a hyphenated strategic framework for South Asia. There are issues where the US policy intersects and there are issues where we can have individual relationships with both countries. "And certainly in the case of civil nuclear cooperation, we are going to have individual relationships," Under-Secretary of State Nicholas Burns said here yesterday. "And, the fact is that India has a record of non-proliferation, which is exceptional; very strong commitment to protection of fissile material, other nuclear materials and nuclear technology; and there is a transparency about India's programme, which has been welcomed," he said. "India has safeguarded reactors. In Tarapur, for instance, (the reactors were built long ago by American firms)," Burns said.

The Indian Express, 2 August 2005

Indo-US N-bargain, Bengal in NDA ammo for House

NEW DELHI, Aug 1: The National Democratic Alliance (NDA) has firmed up its agenda for Parliament this week. Besides the Bihar transfer controversy, the Opposition will take up the India-US deal on nuclear cooperation. Former PM A.B. Vajpayee will open the attack, with his criticism of the N-bargain when the issue comes up for debate. The NDA will also "forcefully demand" that the Nanavati Commission Report and the entire Phukan Commission Report be tabled in the House along with the action taken reports, BJP leader V.K. Malhotra said. Besides, the Opposition has decided to highlight the "rampant misuse of official machinery" by the Marxist West Bengal government to prevent free and fair elections in the state. Accusing the Left Front government in the state of tampering with the electoral rolls, Malhotra alleged that a large number of names that figured in the voter's list were of both Bangladesh and West Bengal. The voter's list will be the focus of BJP's larger campaign against infiltration from Bangladesh, he said.

Dawn. 2 August 2005

A major, new challenge (Tariq Fatemi)

Few foreign visitors to Washington have aroused as much interest and excitement as did the Indian Prime Minister during his official visit recently. Its results have not dampened speculation; they have only fuelled it further. The agreements arrived at had been in the pipeline for months, possibly years, as both sides were determined to transform their relationship. President Clinton, too, had been desirous of forging similar ties, but his wishes had been thwarted by India's nuclear tests in 1998. Bush had always favoured strengthened relations with India and in September 2001, he waived nuclear-related sanctions on India. Since then, the two have expanded their military and counter-terrorism cooperation. On January 12, 2004, the Bush administration and the Vajpayee government announced the NSSP initiative, which opened a strategic dialogue, as well as cooperation on missile defence and non-proliferation. Then in June 2004, the US allowed Boeing to begin the joint development of a communication satellite with India. Finally, when on June 28, US Defence Secretary Rumsfeld and Defence Minister Mukherjee signed the 10-year defence agreement, it was a clear signal of the political, economic and strategic direction that the two countries had decided to take, independent of US relations with any country, including Pakistan.

The Washington Post, 2 August 2005

Transcript: The U.S. and India: Sharing Nuclear Technology? (Stephen Cohen)

President Bush agreed yesterday to share nuclear technology and information with India during the visit of Indian Prime Minister Manmohan Singh to the White House. While this agreement is still subject to the consent of Congress, this marks a departure from long-standing U.S. policy against helping developing nations develop nuclear weapons. India, which has not signed on to the Non-Proliferation Treaty, has in recent years been seeking further nuclear capabilities. Proponents say this would cement India's status as an emerging power and provide balance with other regional powers, most notably China. Stephen Cohen, a senior fellow in the Foreign Policy Studies Program at The Brookings Institution and author of "India: Emerging Power," was online Tuesday, July 19, at 2:30 p.m. ET to discuss President Bush's agreement to share nuclear technology with India.

People's Daily, 2 August 2005

Six-party talks enter 8th day

Chief negotiators to the fourth round of the six-party talks on the Korean Peninsula nuclear issue will meet at Diaoyutai State Guesthouse Tuesday morning after week-long intense consultations. This round of talks that groups China, the Democratic People's Republic of Korea (DPRK), the United States, the Republic of Korea (ROK), Russia and Japan, entered the eighth day Tuesday, and it is still hard to say when it will close. A 3.5-hour deputy chief negotiators' session for the talks was held here Monday afternoon, at which no concrete result was

achieved, according to the press center with the Chinese delegation. Chief negotiators from the six nations had frequent shuttle contacts for in-depth discussions on the wording of the draft on Monday morning, the Chinese delegation said. The Russian delegation on Monday denied major differences in the ongoing negotiation and said the talks did not reach an impasse.

Daily Yomiuri, 2 August 2005

Draft: Action needed by all sides

A draft six-party joint document on North Korea's nuclear program proposed by China calls for its abolition while listing rapprochement measures to be undertaken by the other five parties in return, sources said. The draft does not mention the issues of human rights or Pyongyang's missiles--two matters that Japan and the United States have called for inclusion in the document. China has presented the draft to the other five parties to the talks--Japan, the two Koreas, Russia and the United States. According to the sources, the draft calls for North Korea to abandon its nuclear weapons and related programs in return for such measures as security guarantees, economic cooperation and normalization of diplomatic ties. The United States and North Korea have been strongly at odds, however, over the carrying out of Pyongyang's nuclear disarmament and the other five parties' measures. As a result, the draft takes a gradual approach, offering a "principle of actions" to be undertaken simultaneously, not mentioning the specific measures and procedures to be undertaken.

China Daily, 2 August 2005

China proposes new draft at nuke talks

The U.S. envoy to nuclear talks with North Korea said Monday that China has proposed a new draft of a joint statement after weekend discussions were snarled by the North's demands for what it should receive in exchange for disarming, the AP reported. The new draft, submitted late Sunday, "reflected all sides' modifications" to the first Chinese-written draft, said U.S. Assistant Secretary of State Christopher Hill. He wouldn't give any details, but said, "I think the process is going forward rather well." Deputy heads of delegations discussed the new proposal for 3 1/2 hours Monday, South Korea's No. 2 nuclear envoy said. "Some issues have been sorted out but there remain many issues that we should continue to work on," Cho Tae-yong said. "We are moving steadily forward." Chief delegates will discuss the draft Tuesday, he said. The statement of basic principles is meant to lay the basis for future talks aimed at ending the three-year-old standoff over demands that the North give up nuclear development. The talks involve the two Koreas, the United States, Japan, host China and Russia.

The Guardian, 2 August 2005 (George Monbiot)

The treaty wreckers

In just a few months, Bush and Blair have destroyed global restraint on the development of nuclear weapons. Saturday is the 60th anniversary of the bombing of Hiroshima. The nuclear powers are commemorating it in their own special way: by seeking to ensure that the experiment is repeated. As Robin Cook showed in his column last week, the British government appears to have decided to replace our Trident nuclear weapons, without consulting parliament or informing the public. It could be worse than he thinks. He pointed out that the atomic weapons establishment at Aldermaston has been re-equipped to build a new generation of bombs. But when this news was first leaked in 2002 a spokesman for the plant insisted the equipment was being installed not to replace Trident but to build either mini-nukes or warheads that could be used on cruise missiles. If this is true it means the government is replacing Trident and developing a new category of boil-in-the-bag weapons. As if to ensure we got the point, Geoff Hoon, then the defence secretary, announced before the leak that Britain would be prepared to use small nukes in a pre-emptive strike against a non-nuclear state. This put us in the hallowed company of North Korea.

People's Daily, 2 August 2005

Hill: US does not see "any breakthroughs" in Monday's document drafting

The United States did not see "any breakthroughs" in Monday's drafting process of a joint document for the six-party talks on Korean nuclear issue, said US delegation head Christopher Hill here on Monday night. "We will stay here as long as we feel we are making progress," Hill said, refusing to give any specific description of the final document. Having worked for 12 hours on Monday, Hill indicated that the talks would last for "days like this." Earlier on Monday, Hill told reporters that the process of consultations on the drafting of a joint document was "rather well" though there was "difference on language." It was reported that China presented on Sunday night the second version of the draft document to all delegations to this round of talks, and deputy heads of all parties discussed the drafting issue on Monday.

The Hindu, 3 August 2005

US will not dictate terms: Pranab

NEW DELHI: Defence Minister Pranab Mukherjee asserted in Parliament on Tuesday that the US would not dictate implementation of any of the clauses in the new framework for the Indo-US defence relationship. "It is up to us how we develop this. This will not be dictated to us. It will be decided by mutual advantage," Mr. Mukherjee said making a suo motu statement in both Houses on the framework signed during his visit to the US in June. The framework, he explained, contained only enabling provisions. There were no commitments or obligations. The document, more than anything else, signalled US willingness to enhance bilateral defence cooperation and it strengthened India's defence capabilities. "It is in our interest to see how we can exploit this change of attitude to our advantage. It provides a framework within which specific cooperation can take place."

The Indian Express, 3 August 2005

Sweeping India off its feet That won't happen given our history. But there's no denying the new shift
(Kuldip Nayar)

Whether we make the nuclear club status or not depends on India's Parliament and the US Congress. The latter will count more because it is staunchly opposed to proliferation. Yet, long before that happens, we have earned the reputation of being pro-US. The defence agreement and the nuclear deal with Washington have given the impression that India has moved towards the right (read pro-West). London's support has only underlined this. We, who were so particular about staying equidistant from both the western and eastern blocs during the Cold War, have landed ourselves in a situation where we are not seen all that independent. On the one hand, some people in the establishment argue that if we want to achieve a growth rate of 10 to 12 per cent, we have no option except to tilt towards the US to get the necessary edge. On the other, there are equally strong voices arguing that India has become the 52nd state of the US and from now on every action of ours - economic or political - will be at Washington's bidding.

Hindustan Times, 3 August 2005

Push on Indo-US nuclear deal next month (S Rajagopalan)

Washington, Aug.2: Come September and the real work begins on moving the US-India nuclear deal forward. That's when US Congress reassembles after the summer recess. And that's when Undersecretary of State Nicholas Burns is said to be contemplating a visit to New Delhi for parleys for the forward push. By that time, diplomatic circles believe that the political dust will have somewhat settled in India over the issue. It is another matter that the dust may just about be getting kicked up in Washington. But, in an indication of its earnestness, the Bush administration has already sounded Congressional leaders on the importance of the civilian nuclear agreement and the backing it will now require on Capitol Hill. The nitty-gritty aspects are expected to be gone into next month. To make it all happen, Congress will have to change a 1978 law on non-proliferation that bars nuclear energy aid and sales to a country like India that is not a signatory to the Nuclear Non-proliferation Treaty (NPT).

Deccan Herald, 3 August 2005

India a loser in nuke deal with US: BJP

The BJP on Tuesday slammed the recently concluded Indo-US nuclear agreement saying the pact had many shortcomings, and India was a "loser" in the deal as Washington had not given up anything. Addressing BJP's Parliamentary Party meeting, Leader of Opposition in Rajya Sabha and former external affairs minister Jaswant Singh said the agreement was "ambiguous and suffered from many shortcomings". The meeting was presided over by former prime minister Atal Bihari Vajpayee. According to BJP's Parliamentary Party spokesman V K Malhotra, Singh said the US has not recognised India as a nuclear state as was being projected but only acknowledged India's nuclear capabilities. He recalled Vajpayee's tenure by saying that efforts were made to improve ties with the United States. Earlier, party president L K Advani asked the MPs to be watchful as the government might try to bring through the Illegal Migrants Detection by Tribunals (IMDT) Act through the backdoor.

The Statesman, 3 August 2005

In defence of defence pact

NEW DELHI, Aug. 2: Defence minister, Mr Pranab Mukherjee, today assured Parliament that the defence framework agreement with USA did not compromise national security but strengthens it. He described as "not justified" the Opposition misgivings that the 'New Framework for the US-India Defence Relationship', would commit India to deploying troops in support of US-led coalition operations in Iraq and elsewhere. "The document, signals US willingness to enhance defence cooperation with India and strengthen our defence capabilities," he said.

The Washington Post, 3 August 2005

A Bad Deal With India (Lawrence J. Korb and Peter Ogden)

Many of the people who are made uncomfortable by President Bush's ideologically driven foreign policy have been pleasantly surprised by his recent decision to supply India with nuclear energy technology. This diplomatic agreement, its admirers eagerly point out, is not rooted in "freedom" or "values" but in a strategic calculation: that providing India with such technology will help balance China's power in the region. This does appear to be the case. But what they fail to note is that the administration's inexperience with such strategic, non-ideological calculations has caused it to mishandle the negotiations themselves and, in so doing, to damage one of our country's most strategic, effective and "realistic" agreements: the Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT). First, the Bush administration made two amateurish mistakes in the way it brought this agreement to the world's attention. One was announcing the agreement just days before the resumption of six-party talks over the fate of North Korea's nuclear arsenal. For the past few years, the United States has struggled to convince

The Times of India, 3 August 2005

Iran delays N-work by 2 days amid West alarm

ISFAHAN: Iran has agreed to a two-day delay in reopening its nuclear processing plant here after receiving a request from the head of the UN nuclear watchdog agency. Mohammed ElBaradei asked Tehran for a 'maximum of two days' to send its inspectors to Iran's nuclear facility where they can oversee the dismantling of UN seals, said Ali Agha Mohammadi, spokesman for Iran's Supreme National Security Council. Earlier, Mohammadi said Iranian technicians would break the seals and restart nuclear processing on Monday. Mohammadi said the combination of restraint and resolve toward restarting uranium processing showed the government's intention not to squander Iran's fundamental right to nuclear power, while preserving close ties to Europe. "Our people were worried that the government may have done a deal with the Europeans and given up the rights of the nation," he said.

The New York Times, 3 August 2005

Talks on North Korea's Nuclear Program May Be on Verge of Suspension (Chris Buckley)

BEIJING, Aug. 2: Six-nation talks aimed at ending North Korea's nuclear weapons programs may be suspended or even break off altogether if the participants cannot settle on a summary of principles for future disarmament talks, the chief American negotiator said Tuesday. "Whether we have a draft that everyone agrees on, whether we have a recess of some kind, I don't know yet," the negotiator, Christopher Hill, told reporters here after an eighth day of the talks, which include China, South Korea, Japan and Russia. "I think the issue is how one winds this up," he added. "That is, does it wind up with an agreement, does it wind up with parties saying, 'Well, we have to do some more substantial consultation in capitals,' or does it wind up in a flat-out disagreement." The negotiators considered the third draft of a proposed joint statement on North Korean nuclear disarmament on Tuesday, and the host country, China, then issued a fourth version for them to consider overnight, Mr. Hill said. "The Chinese side is really trying to push to resolution," Mr. Hill said.

The News, 3 August 2005

US not to give India nuclear weapons: Rocca (Hamid Mir)

ISLAMABAD: US Assistant Secretary of State Cristina Rocca has said that a ten-year defence pact with India was actually the renewal of an old pact and did not mean to provide nuclear weapons to that country. She was responding to questions from Islamabad through Satellite in Washington Tuesday. She tried to clarify that the main objective of the defence pact was to stabilise the region. A selected group of retired diplomats, defence experts and senior journalists attended the videoconference. Rocca said the US would help India generate energy through peaceful nuclear technology. "We will not help India make nuclear weapons". She said the US is also concerned about the energy needs of Pakistan and was ready to talk to it to meet its energy needs. She said our friendship with Pakistan is not terrorism-specific. "We are cooperating in other fields also".

Dawn, 3 August 2005

Unlearnt lesson of Hiroshima (Zubeida Mustafa)

Sixty years ago on August 6, 1945, President Harry Truman issued a statement in Washington saying, "Sixteen hours ago an American airplane dropped one bomb on Hiroshima, Japan and destroyed its usefulness to the enemy. That bomb had more power than 20,000 tons of TNT. It had more than two thousand times the blast power of the British "Grand Slam", which is the largest bomb ever yet used in the history of warfare." This event, which was underplayed at the time in terms of the human devastation it caused, changed the world for ever. This is what the crew of Enola Gay, the plane which dropped the atomic bomb nicknamed Little Boy, had been given to understand. The world did change but in a terrifying way. Hiroshima marked the ushering in of the atomic age. Historians dispute the American contention that the use of the atom bomb, that killed 150,000 instantly or within a few days, led to the quick Japanese surrender and saved thousands of American lives.

The Hindu, 4 August 2005

No secret agreement with US: Manmohan

The Government had not made any commitment on the ongoing negotiations on the Fissile Material Cut-off Treaty other than what had already been made by the National Democratic Alliance (NDA) regime. Nor had India's autonomy in managing the country's nuclear weapons programme been compromised. Responding to a discussion on his recent visit to Washington, the Prime Minister said while the US had a different view on supporting India's claim for a seat in the United Nations Security Council, "when the time comes, I have reason to believe that we will not be ignored." Addressing himself primarily to the observations made by the NDA and Left members, Dr. Singh in particular sought to allay Communist Party of India (Marxist) member Rupchand Pal's fear that the US had agreed to accommodate India's interests to contain China. "I want to dispel the "illusion" of any military alliance. We are not ganging up with the US against China."

The Hindu, 4 August 2005

India made a junior partner of the US'

NEW DELHI: Prime Minister Manmohan Singh faced a two-pronged attack on Wednesday in the Lok Sabha by the Left and the NDA over the July 18 India-US joint statement. They charged him with compromising the country's independent nuclear policy. India had been made a junior partner of the US which could "use India" as a "counterbalance" against China. National Democratic Alliance chairman Atal Bihari Vajpayee led the charge in the structured debate on Dr. Singh's statement on his visit to the U.S. that resulted in the joint statement by Dr. Singh and US President George Bush. Mr Vajpayee made it clear that the joint statement regarding trade, agriculture, science and technology posed no problems. The concerns were related to the nuclear policy and to some extent terrorism. Mr Vajpayee asked whether the joint statement had in any way compromised the independent nuclear policy.

The Hindu, 4 August 2005

14 US Marines killed in Iraq (Atul Aneja)

MANAMA: There has been a surge in American casualties in Iraq, with Iraqi guerillas killing 14 Marines on Wednesday, two days after another seven died in combat in an area northwest of Baghdad along the Euphrates valley. The Marines were killed after an improvised explosive device hit the vehicle in which they were travelling. One soldier was also wounded in the attack, which took place outside Haditha-a town 224 km northwest of Baghdad. The casualties have followed a major offensive by U.S. troops along the Euphrates river, with the apparent objective of blocking infiltration across the Syrian border.

The Indian Express, 4 August 2005

US to drop N-plants from entities list (Pranab Dhal Samanta)

NEW DELHI: Even as Prime Minister Manmohan Singh tackles the Opposition in Parliament over the nuclear understanding with the US, Washington is already translating intent into action. Barely weeks after Singh's visit, US has decided to remove Tarapur and Rajasthan atomic power stations from its entities list. This will open up the doors for US companies to freely trade on a range of items and material at both these plants. Earlier, this trade was difficult because being under the entities list of the US Department of Commerce meant several rounds of screening and review which discouraged companies.

Deccan Herald, 4 August 2005

CIA had prepared ground for war against Iraq

The Central Intelligence Agency, US secret service, prepared the ground for invasion of Iraq by engaging in sabotage and killings to weaken the then president Saddam Hussein's regime, a media report said on Wednesday. According to the Washington Post, even before the Iraq war, the CIA recruited and trained an Iraqi paramilitary group code-named the Scorpions, to "foment rebellion, conduct sabotage and help CIA paramilitaries who entered Baghdad and other cities to target buildings and individuals." The CIA spent millions of dollars on the Scorpions, whose existence has not been previously disclosed, even giving them former Soviet Hind helicopters, according to three current and former intelligence officials with knowledge of the unit.

Deccan Herald, 4 August 2005

US grip on internet (D Ravi Kanth)

Nothing would go right in a village without the consent of the sarpanch. It holds true even at the global stage. The only difference is the sarpanch in the international arena is called the United States. Washington's acquiescence is a must for the success of any international agreement or treaty that is under negotiation. If the US puts its foot down, the chances are that such an agreement would not fly. It has now become clear that efforts to create an information society in which all nations have an equitable stake to share the benefits from the IT revolution might

flounder on one crucial aspect - the United States is opposed to multilateralising the control over internet governance. Recently, the US spoke its mind against a report produced by 40 experts drawn from different countries on internet governance. A US senior commerce official made it clear to countries such as Brazil, India, and others that Washington would play it cool to any suggestion for bringing more stakeholders to oversee internet governance.

The Hindu, 5 August 2005

India took a calculated risk, says Manmohan Singh

NEW DELHI: India took a "calculated risk" by agreeing to open its civilian nuclear energy sector to inspections in return for nuclear fuel supplies and technology. "But it was a risk worth taking" in order to "take advantage of those who would take India to a higher growth path," Prime Minister Manmohan Singh told the Rajya Sabha on Thursday about his recent US visit. Though US President George Bush had promised to influence the US Congress and other countries to make concessions in India's favour, it was difficult to predict whether nuclear non-proliferation laws would be changed to India's satisfaction. "If there is no action by the US Government, we are completely free to stay where we are," he said. If Mr Bush implemented his promise, India would be able to widen its developmental options by accessing commercial energy that is environmental-friendly.

The Hindu, 5 August 2005

US-China move on UN Council expansion

United Nations: United States and China have agreed to work together to block a plan to expand the powerful UN Security Council backed by Brazil, Germany, India and Japan, China's U.N. Ambassador said on Wednesday. Wang Guangya said he reached the agreement with John Bolton during a meeting on Tuesday, which was the new US Ambassador's first full day in his new post, because both believe the proposal by the so-called Group of Four would divide the UN's 191 memberstates. Washington and Beijing are already on record as opposing the G-4 resolution for different reasons, but the agreement would mark a new joint effort to prevent its approval by the UN General Assembly, which requires a two-thirds "yes" vote.

The Hindu, 5 August 2005

Not the right time to invest in Iran gas, says Christina Rocca (B Muralidhar Reddy)

ISLAMABAD: US Assistant Secretary of State Christina Rocca has said that America was conscious of Pakistan's energy needs and would begin a dialogue to assist Islamabad meet its growing energy requirements. In a videoconferencing session with a group of Pakistani journalists here from Washington, Ms. Rocca, however, evaded a direct reply if the US would extend the same kind of facilities it had made available to India for cooperation in civilian nuclear energy. "Will Pakistan get exactly the same deal? I don't think the issue comes up in that format because we are not into mirror imaging," she remarked.

The Hindu, 6 August 2005

US spreading lies, says Chavez

CARACAS: Venezuelan President Hugo Chavez strongly denied US charges that he is supporting Colombian rebels or trying to destabilise other South American countries, accusing the United States of spreading lies and of being a "terrorist state." Mr Chavez lashed out at what he called the "US empire" on Thursday night as he responded to statements by State Department officials who accused Venezuela of backing Colombian guerillas with weapons and funding "antidemocratic groups" in Bolivia, Ecuador and elsewhere. "They accuse us of buying arms to give them to the guerillas - no, they're for our troops," Mr Chavez said. "They are a terrorist state, but they accuse us of being terrorists." Venezuela has signed a deal to buy 100,000 Kalashnikov rifles from Russia, and Mr Chavez said the guns were due to arrive soon.

The Times Of India, WOT Was That?

Bush won't budge on semantics of terror

Someone who witnessed the destruction of the Twin Towers at close quarters could be forgiven for thinking that America was at war, although even at the time many had wondered whether war was the correct description for the campaign against terror that must follow. Despite such reservations the global war on terror, with the ugly acronym GWOT, came into being, and brought in its train considerable neoconservative baggage, such as the idea that only unilateral American supremacy could secure the world from terror. 'War' suggests a predisposition towards using military means rather than a campaign to win hearts and minds. That was precisely the sequence of events that unfolded. American forces, helped by the Northern Alliance, ousted the Taliban from power, which was necessary as the Taliban sheltered Al-Qaida and Osama bin Laden on its territory. But then the Americans were disinclined to stay and assist in the nation-building efforts needed to make Afghanistan safe for democracy. This has ensured that the Taliban is now resurgent, while Al-Qaida's top leaders are still holed out somewhere in

the region. Instead, the Americans invaded Iraq, looking for setpiece battles where they could destroy President Saddam Hussein's decrepit military. But in the ruthless war that has exploded since the guerrilla resistance resorted to nonconventional tactics, and may have finally buried dreams of unilateral dominance in Iraq's desert sands. Washington has become a victim of its own success - precisely because American military power is now unchallenged, the opposition has also evolved, seeking asymmetrical methods to disrupt it.

Deccan Herald, 6 August 2005

Myth or reality? (Arvind Kumar)

The joint statement signed by Prime Minister Manmohan Singh and US President George Bush in Washington has raised a debate on the possible civilian nuclear cooperation. There are conflicting perspectives on the whole debate. Some opine India should not have committed so much in the joint statement as it would only maximise risks and minimise benefits. Others say the joint statement is an example of transformation in the Indo-US relationship. The joint statement says: "The President told the Prime Minister that he will work to achieve full civil nuclear energy cooperation with India as it realises its goals of promoting nuclear power and achieving energy security. The President would also seek agreement from Congress to adjust US laws and policies, and the US will work with friends and allies to adjust international regimes to enable full civil nuclear energy cooperation and trade with India, including but not limited to expeditious consideration of fuel supplies for safeguarded nuclear reactors at Tarapur."

Deccan Chronicle, 6 August 2005

Congress cites anti-pact Talbott

NEW DELHI: External affairs minister Natwar Singh's contribution to the debate in Parliament on Prime Minister Manmohan Singh's visit to the United States was to circulate copies of former US official Strobe Talbott's book, which carries some details about his meetings with former foreign minister Jaswant Singh. Congress MPs faithfully referred to the book although their minister was either not aware, or just forgot, to inform them that Mr Talbott is leading the campaign against the nuclear deal between India and the US. In an recent article, Mr Talbott, who is the president of the Brookings Institution, said the "short sighted" nuclear deal between India and the US would make the world more dangerous. The former deputy secretary of state in the Clinton administration is now amongst those actively working to scuttle the nuclear deal. He said the deal could make the US and India "natural allies", but it would certainly make them both "face a more dangerous world".

The New York Times, 6 August 2005

U.S. Supports European Offer to Iran on Its Nuclear Program (Steven R. Weisman)

WASHINGTON, Aug. 5: The United States gave its explicit support on Friday to a European proposal to defuse the West's confrontation with Iran over what is suspected of being its nuclear weapons program, while in Tehran the Iranian government received the proposal and said it would study its contents before commenting. "I can say that we very much support the E.U. 3's negotiating effort," said R. Nicholas Burns, under secretary of state for political affairs, referring to the proposal put together by Britain, France and Germany under the auspices of the European Union. "We hope that this diplomatic process will continue. We hope that Iran will look at this proposal seriously." The proposal offers Iran the possibility of acquiring nuclear reactors and fuel, and of establishing broad political and economic ties with the West, in return for ending uranium conversion and enrichment activities that the West suspects are part of a nuclear weapons program. Iran insists that its nuclear activities are intended for energy production, which it says is its right to pursue.

The New York Times, 6 August 2005

Editorial: A Glimmer of Hope

It may be only a few more days before the world finds out whether Iran and North Korea are willing to give up nuclear weapons in exchange for broad economic incentives and firm security guarantees. The Bush administration, in a welcome change from the days when John Bolton ran its nonproliferation policies, is now making a serious diplomatic effort to achieve fair and realistic deals with both countries. It is time for Tehran and Pyongyang to show diplomatic seriousness as well, by recognizing that any agreement must apply not just to the making of nuclear bombs, but also to the capacity to produce weapons-grade uranium or plutonium. Both countries protest that they want to engage in such activities only for purposes of civilian power generation or scientific research, and they point out that international law permits this. Such arguments are quite beside the point. A country that can produce bomb-grade uranium or plutonium is a country that can produce nuclear bombs. The point of these talks is to remove that danger, not to perpetuate it.

International Herald Tribune, 6 August 2005

Atomic weapons: To what end? (Bennett Ramberg)

LOS ANGELES What are nuclear weapons good for?

Reflecting on the atomic bombing of Japan in World War II, Harry Truman gave this answer: "I regarded the bomb as a military weapon and never had any doubt that it should be used," adding, "When I talked to Churchill he unhesitatingly told me that he favored the use of the atomic bomb if it might aid to end the war." Nonetheless, since the bombing of Hiroshima 60 years ago on Saturday, the United States and other nuclear-armed nations have demonstrated considerable resistance to repeating Truman's decision, despite the many crises and conflicts of the Cold War and beyond. Each president, however, continued to build, modernize or otherwise maintain weapons that would dwarf the explosive power of the devices that obliterated Hiroshima, and three days later, Nagasaki. But to what end? This anniversary should be a time of public reflection.

The Guardian, 6 August 2005

The bomb didn't win it (Dominick Jenkins)

The idea that it was militarily necessary to drop the atomic bomb in 1945 is now discredited. The first exhaustive examination of Japanese, Soviet and US archives, by Tsuyoshi Hasegawa, confirms the argument that Truman went ahead in order to get Japan to end the war quickly before the Soviet Union came into the Pacific war and demanded a say in Asia. The use of atomic weapons against Hiroshima and Nagasaki did not provide the US with the free hand it had wanted and has proved disastrous for the world. It did not bring about surrender. With 62 Japanese cities destroyed by firebombs and napalm, Japan was not overwhelmed by the destruction of one more. The army minister, General Korechika Anami, told the supreme war council that he would fight on. What actually brought about surrender was the combination of the Soviet Union's entry into the war on August 8 and the US decision to let Japan retain the emperor.

Daily Times, 6 August 2005

Indian Left and the nuclear programme (V Krishna Ananth)

Our own media and our public policy 'experts' are celebrating the Bush-Manmohan Singh agreement. It does not matter to anyone that Bush is responsible for the crimes against the people of Iraq. And it does not matter to the media barons and public policy experts that the deal could spell disaster for India. The discourse on the nuclear question in India has always been skewed. Parties ranging across the spectrum have shown a rare unity on the issue since independence and the political establishment in India has succeeded in branding as unpatriotic, even traitors, those who saw the nuclear programme in general and the weapons programme in particular as a misadventure. Consequently, the peace movement in India has remained on the fringes of the political discourse.

Deccan Herald, 6 August 2005

Myth or reality? (Arvind Kumar)

From experience India should know that the United States will not do anything unless it is in its own interest. The joint statement signed by Prime Minister Manmohan Singh and US President George Bush in Washington has raised a debate on the possible civilian nuclear cooperation. There are conflicting perspectives on the whole debate. Some opine India should not have committed so much in the joint statement as it would only maximise risks and minimise benefits. Others say the joint statement is an example of transformation in the Indo-US relationship. The joint statement says: "The President told the Prime Minister that he will work to achieve full civil nuclear energy cooperation with India as it realises its goals of promoting nuclear power and achieving energy security. The President would also seek agreement from Congress to adjust US laws and policies, and the US will work with friends and allies to adjust international regimes to enable full civil nuclear energy cooperation and trade with India, including but not limited to expeditious consideration of fuel supplies for safeguarded nuclear reactors at Tarapur."

Khaleej Times, 7 August 2005

The Bomb and US (Praful Bidwai)

Going by the US State Department's definition of 'terrorism' as the indiscriminate killing of innocent civilians, usually for a political cause, the atomic bombing of Hiroshima this very week 60 years ago must be regarded as history's worst terrorist act. It resulted in the death of 140,000 non-combatant civilians, more than 40 times the number killed in the Twin Towers attack in 2001. The bombing of Nagasaki three days later, where the death-toll exceeded 70,000, was the world's second greatest terrorist episode. It's not just the scale of the mega-death visited upon the two cities that deserves recalling. Equally relevant is the quality of the human suffering, caused first by savage heat and blast effects of the nuclear weapons which flattened the two cities within seconds, and then by the release of radiation which took a slow, painful, excruciating toll through cancer and leukaemia.

The Associated Press, 7 August 2005

6 Nations' Stances in N. Korea Nuke Talks

A look at each country's stance in six-nation North Korean disarmament talks in Beijing. --UNITED STATES: Wants the "complete, verifiable and irreversible dismantlement" of North Korea's nuclear programs, both plutonium- and uranium-based. Has offered aid and other concessions in exchange, but says they will be given only after the programs are dismantled.

--NORTH KOREA: Wants economic and energy aid, a peace treaty and normalized political relations with Washington, as well as an end to economic sanctions and removal from a U.S. list of countries that sponsor terrorism. Wants aid in exchange for first freezing its nuclear programs and then more for dismantling them.

--SOUTH KOREA: Wants nuclear-free Korean Peninsula. Wants to build better ties with North while maintaining strong relations with United States, its biggest ally. Has offered energy aid if North freezes nuclear programs and begins dismantling them.

--CHINA: Wants nuclear-free Korean Peninsula. Worries that a nuclear North Korea might prompt South Korea or Japan to acquire weapons in response, upsetting regional military balance. Worries that social unrest in neighboring North could send thousands of migrants across border. Already provides food and energy aid.

--JAPAN: Site of only atomic bomb attacks wants nuclear-free Korean Peninsula but also wants Pyongyang to release relatives of five Japanese nationals abducted decades ago. Says Pyongyang must "fully and unconditionally" account for all citizens it believes were abducted by North in 1970s and 1980s.

--RUSSIA: Says it would join China and South Korea to compensate North Korea if it agrees to disarm. Says a final settlement should include normalized political relations between Pyongyang and Washington.

The News, 7 August 2005

US split on N-energy for Iran, North Korea

WASHINGTON: Confronting brewing nuclear crises with Iran and North Korea, the United States has taken opposite positions in each case over the question of peaceful atomic energy. The Bush administration has endorsed a European Union proposal, rejected on Saturday by Tehran that includes a guarantee of civilian nuclear power for Iran in return for scuttling its alleged weapons programme. Meanwhile, Washington would deny North Korea the same capability, contributing to an the impasse at six-party negotiations in Beijing. The seemingly contradictory approaches derive from considerations including US distrust of North Korea's ability to keep a commitment, and Iran's growing regional power, but they could make it harder to strike a deal with either side. "If the approach we took with the North Koreans gave the impression to the Iranians that the European proposal is unworkable because of a lack of American support, that could be a problem," said Robert Einhorn, a senior non-proliferation official in the Clinton administration. He spoke before Iran rejected the EU offer, but knowing that was a possibility.

Dawn, 7 August 2005

Singh's US visit and after (A.B. Shahid)

The variety of negative reactions to the statements he made during his visit to the US must have shocked Indian Prime Minister Manmohan Singh. He is an economist par excellence but, may be, not nearly as good a politician. Dr Singh is the builder of modern India that is significantly different from what was bequeathed to the nation by Jawaharlal Nehru and Indira Gandhi. Beginning with the reforms initiated by the 1991 budget presented by him, India has travelled a great distance and is now an economic power to be reckoned with. In spite of the BJP's mismanagement of the economy, it remains on course, which is a tribute to the strong foundations laid by Dr. Singh. As prime minister, he now wants to consolidate India's economy in accordance with his dreams that were left unfulfilled by the unceremonious exit of the Congress government in the mid-1990s. In this context, quite understandably, he worries about the expanding gap between India's rising energy needs and the paucity of domestic resources to cope with these needs. He also worries about the fact that, along with China and the US, India is now labelled as one of the main polluters of the planet's environment.

The Asian Age, 7 August 2005

Remember the tritium (Bharat Karnad)

Washington's powerful "cap-freeze-eliminate" school cutting across party lines may moderate their opposition to the deal US President George W. Bush cut with Prime Minister Manmohan Singh once they are reassured that the core concept of separating the civilian and military facilities in the country's nuclear programme will effectively hamper India's acquisition of reliable hydrogen bombs and, as Atal Behari Vajpayee said in Parliament, hurt "India's capability to decide what kind of credible minimum nuclear deterrent it wants." Separating the military and civilian streams is easy if the government decides that the national deterrent ought to stay stuck at the low-yield fission weapons level. It becomes a more complex and risky business if the strategic forces are expected to secure thermonuclear heft. This is so for several reasons. The most important material for a thermonuclear arsenal is tritium. Tritium is produced in two ways. It is a byproduct of running CANDU/INDU pressurised heavy water reactors (PHWRs), 11 of which type presently generate electricity in the country. And it is available by irradiating Lithium compounds in the PHWRs. While weapons-grade plutonium once produced can stay on the

shelf for a long time and can be stockpiled, tritium has shelf-life of only 12 and a half years and has to be periodically replaced in each "boosted" fission and thermonuclear weapon in the inventory for which reason it has to be continually outputted.

Aljazeera, 6 August 2005

Hiroshima and Nagasaki: The worst terror attacks

Since 1945, tens of thousands more citizens of both cities have continued to suffer and die. On the 60th anniversary of the U.S. nuclear attacks on the Japanese cities of Hiroshima and Nagasaki, new questions are being asked about whether it was really necessary to use the atomic weapons? About 80,000 people were killed in a split second in Hiroshima. Five months later, more than 70,000 others died from radiation and injuries. Three days after Hiroshima's attack, the U.S. dropped another nuclear bomb on Nagasaki, killing more than 70,000 people before the year end. Since 1945, tens of thousands more citizens of both cities continue to suffer and die from radiation-induced cancers, birth defects and still births. A small group of U.S. leaders met secretly in Washington and ordered this horrible attack on civilian populations. They gave no explicit warnings, and they refused all options, preferring to cause the most extreme human carnage possible. They decided to carry out the worst two terror attacks in human history.

The Tribune, 8 August 2005

Questions raised on India's nuclear deal with US (Ashish Kumar Sen)

In a sign of the hurdles that await the realisation of U.S.-India civilian nuclear cooperation, a new report indicates some observers believe the steps India has promised to take to separate its civilian and military facilities are "insufficient." The Congressional Research Service report says there are no measures in the agreement reached between President George W. Bush and Prime Minister Manmohan Singh in Washington last month to restrain India's nuclear weapons programme. India agreed to identify and separate its civilian and military nuclear facilities and programmes; declare its civilian facilities to the International Atomic Energy Agency; voluntarily place civilian facilities under IAEA safeguards; sign an additional protocol for civilian facilities; continue its unilateral nuclear test moratorium; work with the United States to conclude a Fissile Material Cut Off Treaty (FMCT); refrain from transferring enrichment and reprocessing technologies to states that do not have them, as well as support international efforts to limit their spread; secure its nuclear materials and technology through comprehensive export control legislation and through harmonisation and adherence to the Missile Technology Control Regime (MTCR) and Nuclear Suppliers Group (NSG) guidelines.

Hindustan times, 8 August 2005

Indo-US N-pact: Bush holds the key (Ela Dutt)

If he makes it a priority, then US President George W Bush will have little opposition in getting through Congress legislation to favour civilian nuclear cooperation with India, says US foreign policy expert Robert Hathaway. Hathaway, director of the Asia Programme at the Woodrow Wilson Centre for International Scholars here, said in an interview that Prime Minister Manmohan Singh's visit to the US in July was "highly successful". However, he cautioned not to view the nuclear agreement signed during the visit as a "milestone" or a "turning point" because it remains to be seen how it gets translated into action. "We are likely not to know about that probably for years to come," Hathaway said in an interview. He said: "I believe India has already taken some steps (towards the agreement). And I further believe that Delhi is fully committed to doing the other things it has promised to do... What's less clear to me is what President Bush intends." Although many Democrats and some Republicans have serious reservations about the wisdom of this agreement, Hathaway is "absolutely convinced that the President can get the required legislative action...if he makes it a priority" and expends a bit of political capital.

The Times of India, 8 August 2005

Benefits Of Coming Clean (T P Sreenivasan)

US nuclear deal will improve India's global standing. India's deal with the US for transfer of nuclear technology will help it in a big way. As non-NPT states, or non-nuclear weapons states with nuclear weapons, India, Pakistan and Israel - a strange trio, indeed - have much to defend against the rest of the world. They have no choice but to stick together whenever questions of comprehensive safeguards come up. There was even an occasion when Pakistan changed its vote to join India and Israel. When the Arab world gangs up every year to call upon states to accept comprehensive safeguards, essentially to focus attention on Israel, it has to contend with Indian diplomatic skills as Israel hides behind us. These strange manoeuvres could stop if the India-US nuclear deal gets through the US Congress and the Nuclear Suppliers Group and comes to fruition. India will cross from the group of nuclear mavericks to join the designated nuclear weapon states in its new capacity as a responsible state with advanced nuclear technology.

Dawn, 8 August 2005

'Indo-US deal may harm anti-nuke drive' (Anwar Iqbal)

WASHINGTON, Aug. 7: A research paper prepared for US lawmakers backs academics and non-proliferation activists who warn that the July 18 nuclear deal between the US and India could jeopardize international efforts to prevent the spread of nuclear weapons. "US-India cooperation could prompt other suppliers, like China, to justify supplying other non-nuclear-weapon states, like Pakistan," warns the Congressional Research Service (CRS). CRS reports on foreign policy issues are keenly read by US lawmakers and this report is particularly important because the proposed deal has to be approved by both houses of the US Congress before it becomes effective. Until 2004, China was not a member of the Nuclear Suppliers Group, which forbids cooperation with states that have not yet signed the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty. Russia, an NSG member, exported nuclear fuel, citing a safety exception, but NSG members opposed the move so strongly that Russia suspended supply in 2004.

The New York Times, August 8, 2005

U.S. and North Korea Blame Each Other for Stalemate in Talks (Jim Yardley)

BEIJING, Aug. 7: North Korea and the United States on Sunday each blamed the other after nearly two weeks of six-nation negotiations deadlocked over the issue of "peaceful use" nuclear programs. But both sides also said an agreement remained possible and confirmed that they would have "contacts" during the three-week break in the talks that was announced Sunday. Negotiators from the six countries taking part are scheduled to reconvene in Beijing during the week of Aug. 29. Hours before he was scheduled to fly back to Washington, Christopher R. Hill, the top American envoy, said North Korea had derailed the process by unexpectedly making a late demand for the right to operate light-water nuclear reactors. American officials believe the North Koreans could use such reactors to secretly make material for nuclear weapons. Meanwhile, the chief North Korean negotiator, Vice Foreign Minister Kim Kye Gwan, said the United States had been unwilling to compromise on North Korea's desire for a peaceful nuclear program and needed to acknowledge its right as a sovereign nation for such a program.

International Herald Tribune, 8 August 2005

India's raw deal with the United States (Brahma Chellaney)

When President George W. Bush last month announced his support for a deal allowing civilian nuclear technology sales to India, a storm of protests arose. Nonproliferation advocates around the globe were angered that Bush had implicitly legitimized New Delhi's nuclear arsenal, but what has been less noted is that Indian voices were raised also. Why? Because the technology deal involves an unequal bargain in which India gains few benefits even as it agrees to many restrictions - including a limit on its ability to deter its nuclear-armed neighbor China. India claims that under the deal it will assume the same duties and rights as the other nuclear powers, "no more and no less." The truth, however, is different. Indeed, China's welcome and Pakistan's lack of protest indicate their glee over a deal that employs the lure of commercial nuclear power assistance to help constrain the growth of India's nuclear military capacity. The deal has advantages for America. If approved by the U.S. Congress and the other nuclear powers, it would lift a sales ban that dates back to the first Indian nuclear explosion in 1974. The ban has been a major stumbling block to the forging of a true U.S.-Indian strategic partnership. Another advantage for Washington is that the deal opens the way to tens of billions of dollars worth of contracts for U.S. technology.

The News, 8 August 2005

Where will it stop?

Reflecting on the atomic bombing of Japan in World War II, Harry Truman said, "I regarded the bomb as a military weapon and never had any doubt that it should be used." Each president continued to build, modernise or otherwise maintain weapons that would dwarf the explosive power of the devices that obliterated Hiroshima, and three days later, Nagasaki. In its Nuclear-Posture Review of December 2001, the administration of George W. Bush called nuclear weapons an adjunct to conventional forces. The Pentagon said that the arsenal functioned to assure allies, while it dissuades, deters and, if necessary, defeats adversaries. With the hindsight of decades, we now are able to test whether the Pentagon's first three objectives make sense. "Assurance" seeks to prevent America's allies from going nuclear. The strategy: Military alliances backed by a U.S. atomic commitment. The premise: Any proliferation -- even among allies -- increases the risk of nuclear war.

Dawn, 8 August 2005

Keeping effective check on proliferation (Dr Moonis Ahmar & Ishtiaq Ali Mehkri)

The recent U.S-India defence pact signed in Washington, apart from other things, would allow New Delhi to join the multilateral Proliferation Security Initiative (PSI). Earlier, the chief of the Indian naval staff, Admiral Arun Prakash, in an interview given to The Hindu, had expressed New Delhi's reservations about joining the PSI unless India was given a proper role in the decision-making mechanism of that initiative. What is the PSI and how it

intends to prevent the illegal proliferation of nuclear, chemical and biological weapons are the questions which are raised by those interested in knowing about rationale and capability of the US-led Proliferation Security Initiative. Furthermore, it has also been asked why the PSI is restricted to a handful of core member countries and why the initiative has been launched outside the ambit of the United Nations. The Proliferation Security Initiative is a global plan aimed at stopping shipments of weapons of mass destruction (MWD), their delivery systems, and related materials worldwide.

The Hindu, 9 August 2005

Iran defies U.S., E.U. on nuclear plan (Atul Aneja)

MANAMA: After a gap of nine months, Iran has resumed work at its nuclear conversion facility at Isfahan, signalling its intent to pursue uranium enrichment despite opposition by the European Union and the United States. At the Isfahan plant, two masked workers wearing white overalls and hard hats emptied a barrel full of uranium yellow cake into the processing line. "The uranium conversion facility in Isfahan has started its activities under International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) supervision," Mohammad Saeedi, deputy head of Iran's Atomic Energy Organisation, told reporters at the plant. While resuming work at Isfahan, Iranian officials have stressed that only preliminary steps were underway and uranium enrichment per se was not being undertaken. Enriched uranium can be used for generating electricity, and when refined to a high degree of purity, it can be used for making bombs.

The Indian Express, 9 August 2005

There's a world out there (C. Raja Mohan)

The Left has little to offer in addressing India's foreign policy challenges. The utterly predictable reaction of the Left parties against the Indo-US defence and nuclear pacts confirms that the CPI(M) and CPI are very clear about what India should not do. But do they know what India ought to be doing, for example in its own neighbourhood? If the Left parties want to be taken seriously on foreign policy, there are many things they could accomplish by exercising their unprecedented clout with the Centre. Let's take just two areas where the Left could make a big difference - relations with China and Bangladesh. All of Left rhetoric on Indo-US defence and nuclear pacts boils down to just one simple proposition. "Don't get entangled in an alliance with the US against China." Few in the country would disagree with the proposition.

Deccan Herald, 9 August 2005

US willing to help India become energy-efficient: Bush

The United States is willing to help growing economies like India and China become less dependent on hydrocarbons as a source of energy so that it would take pressure off global supply and American consumers, President George W Bush has said. "As we work to solve our energy dependency, we've got to remember that the market for energy is global and America is not the only large consumer of hydrocarbons. As the economies of nations like India and China grow rapidly, their demand for energy is growing rapidly, as well," Bush said after signing a national energy bill yesterday. "It's in our interest to help these expanding energy users become more efficient, less dependent on hydrocarbons. ...By helping them achieve these goals, it will take pressure off the global supply and it will help take pressure off price for American consumers," he said in a speech at the Sandia National Laboratory.

The News Today, 9 August 2005

The Bomb and US (Praful Bidwai)

Going by the US State Department's definition of 'terrorism' as the indiscriminate killing of innocent civilians, usually for a political cause, the atomic bombing of Hiroshima this very week 60 years ago must be regarded as history's worst terrorist act. It resulted in the death of 140,000 non-combatant civilians, more than 40 times the number killed in the Twin Towers attack in 2001. The bombing of Nagasaki three days later, where the death-toll exceeded 70,000, was the world's second greatest terrorist episode. It's not just the scale of the mega-death visited upon the two cities that deserves recalling. Equally relevant is the quality of the human suffering, caused first by savage heat and blast effects of the nuclear weapons which flattened the two cities within seconds, and then by the release of radiation which took a slow, painful, excruciating toll through cancer and leukaemia.

Khaleej Times, 9 August 2005

Ex-PM says Dutch let Pakistani nuclear scientist go at CIA's request

Hague: At the request of the CIA, the Netherlands let go the father of Pakistan's nuclear program Abdul Qadeer Khan who worked in the country between 1975 and 1986, former Dutch prime minister Ruud Lubbers told Dutch public radio on Tuesday. Khan, who admitted in 2004 that he had leaked nuclear secrets to Iran, North Korea and Libya, worked as an engineer in the Netherlands at Urenco, an uranium enrichment plant. In 1975, Lubbers the

then minister of economy, received information that Khan was stealing nuclear secrets about the enrichment of uranium. He was never indicted for his activities because the CIA had asked the Netherlands to let him go, Lubbers told VPRO radio. "The American intelligence services preferred not to arrest the man but to let him go. They thought: 'give us all the information but do not hold that man. Let him go, we will follow him and get more information'," Lubbers said.

Xinhua, 9 August 2005

US should change policy on Korean nuclear issue: DPRK

PYONGYANG, Aug. 9: Kim Gye-gwan, head of the the Democratic People's Republic of Korea (DPRK)'s delegation to the six-party talks, said on Tuesday that the United States should change its policy of forbidding the DPRK's peaceful nuclear development. "The crux of resolving the nuclear issue is the differences between the policies of the DPRK and the US...The US hasn't decided to accept the DPRK's peaceful nuclear program." Kim, who arrived back after the 13-day first phase of the forth round of six-party talks in Beijing, told Xinhua at Pyongyang Sunan Airport. "If the US really wants to make substantial progress in the Korean Peninsula's nuclear issue, it had better make up its mind to change its policy," Kim affirmed. That is the key for possible achievements in future talks, he added. It is the DPRK's "strategic decision" to abandon nuclear weapons, he said, adding that his country has rights "to develop peaceful nuclear programs."

Reuters, 9 August 2005

N.Korea Insists on 'Peaceful' Nuclear Development

BEIJING: North Korea put the onus on the United States on Tuesday to resolve the stalemate over its atomic ambitions, saying Washington should allow it to retain nuclear programs for peaceful purposes. Vice Foreign Minister Kim Kye-gwan, speaking on his return from Beijing, reiterated remarks he made on Sunday after the two Koreas, the United States, Japan, Russia and China adjourned marathon talks aimed at ending the crisis over the North's nuclear programs. Speaking to the Chinese news agency Xinhua, however, Pyongyang's chief delegate to the six-way talks had unusually positive things to say about the process so far. "The crux of resolving the nuclear issue is the differences between the policies of the DPRK and the United States ... The U.S. hasn't decided to accept the DPRK's peaceful nuclear program," Kim told Xinhua at Pyongyang airport.

The News, 9 August 2005

US, North Korea urge each other to make concessions

BEIJING: The United States and North Korea urged each other to make concessions as deadlocked disarmament talks entered a three-week recess, with one envoy warning that an agreement could still be out of reach when talks resume. The adjournment came after 13 days of talks failed to produce a statement of principles to guide renewed negotiations aimed at persuading North Korea to renounce nuclear weapons. The delegations said the six-nation talks would resume the week of Aug. 29. The US envoy, Assistant Secretary of State Christopher Hill, said talks stalled over the North's demand for the statement to include a promise that it be given a nuclear reactor. He said all five other delegations rejected that. "We decided it was time to end it and go to recess, with the idea that they can go back and think about what they've been told, which is, they're not going to get a light-water reactor," Hill told reporters Sunday.

The Tribune, 10 August 2005

Nuclear accord with US (K. Subrahmanyam)

It has nothing to do with weapons. Following the Indo-US joint statement of July 18, 2005, not only were there accusations in India that Dr Manmohan Singh sold off India to the Americans, there were also equally vehement charges in the US by the non-proliferation fundamentalists that India got all it wanted and President Bush made all the concessions and got very little in return. If both sides feel that their leaderships did not get a fair bargain, then who gained out of it? Perhaps the Chinese. This is a very legitimate question because the Americans, who are attempting to mount a crusade against India on the issue, are those who during the time they were in office looked away as the Chinese proliferated to Pakistan and through Pakistan to other countries such as Iran, Libya and yet another Arab country. Even while lamenting President Bush's concessions to India (which has an impeccable record on proliferation), they had nothing to say on the Chinese nuclear proliferation in the early eighties and the continuing sustenance of it till today.

The Tribune, 10 August 2005

Indo-US security ties on a new high (Maj Gen Himmat Singh Gill (retd))

At the face of it, the Manmohan Singh-Bush agreement augurs well for the country. For the first time Americans rightly understanding our peaceful nuclear track record. What will be an enduring and stable defence strategy for India in the present times? Safeguarding the international borders and ensuring adequate internal security of the

Indian landmass will, of course, be the primary task, but ensuring that we have as few enemies or adversaries as possible should actually form the bulwark of our grand strategy. The US can help in equipping our forces better, provide us with better night-vision devices and the latest in radar surveillance systems for deployment along the LoC. On the recent nuclear pact with the US, I feel that we are in a win-win situation. The difference today in the US approach is starkly vivid. In the earlier days the US was insistent that India join the NPT regime. Now without being a part of this set-up, the opening up of the latest nuclear technology transfers for peaceful purposes stands assured.

The Tribune, 10 August 2005

Iran ignores US warnings (Dafna Linzer)

Iran resumed uranium work at a key nuclear facility on Monday, ignoring warnings from Washington and European capitals that such a move could land the issue of Tehran's nuclear efforts in the UN Security Council, which has the authority to impose economic sanctions or an oil embargo. In a strongly worded letter to the governments of Britain, France and Germany, Iranian officials also formally rejected a European offer that held out promises of better relations with the West in exchange for Iran's decision to dismantle much of its nuclear program. The letter and the decision to restart a uranium conversion facility in the town of Isfahan came ahead of an emergency meeting of the 35-member board of the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) Tuesday in Vienna to discuss Iran's program. It also threw into turmoil more than two years of negotiations between Tehran and the three European countries aimed at resolving suspicions about Iran's nuclear energy program, which includes technologies that could be diverted to atomic weapons work.

The Nation, 10 August 2005

India ups the ante (S.M. Hali)

Indian psyche has long been one to behave in an ostentatious and haughty manner whenever it has been in a position of strength; and to be meek and humble when it has met its match. Is it not a pity that Indian leadership has neither matured over the years nor has it learnt any lessons from history? After negotiating for peace with Pakistan for the past 19 months, India's recent defence and nuclear cooperation agreement with the USA, has caused a rush of adrenaline, prompting it to start accusing Pakistan of cross-border terrorism. As if that were not enough, Indian Air Chief, S P Tyagi had the gall to announce that the IAF will be conducting joint air exercises with its US and British counterparts in November and early next year in Held Kashmir. Rhetoric aside, it must be understood that it is an illegal and unlawful act to use a territory accepted by the UN as disputed, to conduct wargames. What is not clear so far is whether the IAF's announcement is a result of a formal understanding with the US and British governments. Our Foreign Office should determine the veracity of the IAF's claim and if confirmed, lodge a strong protest with both Washington and London and demand that they retract their decision as far as the location of exercises are concerned.

Dawn, 10 August 2005

Indo-US nuclear agreement (Najmuddin A. Shaikh)

Much has already been written and said on the nuclear agreement reached between the United States and India in the Pakistani, Indian and international media. In each case, the focus has been different. Our media comment has focused on what this would mean for the strategic balance in South Asia and why this favourable treatment being accorded to India when Pakistan was a key partner in the battle against terrorism etc. The Indian coverage has focused on the one hand on what concessions the Indians made in other spheres to get this deal and what sort of controls the US and the IAEA would be able to exercise on what had hitherto been a wholly untrammelled nuclear programme and on the other has offered a stout defence of what Prime Minister Manmohan Singh had been able to get from the US without compromising the essential independence of India's nuclear programme. The western media coverage has focused on the fact that the Bush administration has with this decision driven a coach and four through the non-proliferation regime, particularly the NPT and pointed out the adverse consequences for the current negotiations with Iran and North Korea.

The New York Times, 10 August 2005

North Korea Says U.S. Alone Is Holding Up 6-Nation Nuclear Talks (Joel Brinkley)

WASHINGTON, Aug. 9: North Korea put the onus squarely on the United States on Tuesday to resolve the standoff in nuclear disarmament negotiations, saying Washington must drop its insistence that the North abandon plans for a nuclear power plant. Kim Kye Gwan, the North's chief negotiator in the six-nation disarmament talks, which began a recess on Sunday, made no mention of the other four nations in the negotiations and suggested no further flexibility on his part. North Korea's "stand on the nuclear issue is very clear," the New China News Agency quoted him as saying Tuesday in Pyongyang, the North Korean capital. "Now it's up to the U.S. to change its policy." His remarks suggested that three days of reflection and consultation had only hardened North Korea's stance. A standoff over North Korea's demand that it be allowed to use nuclear power for peaceful means

prevented negotiators from reaching agreement on a statement of principles, which was the goal of the talks.

South Asia Tribune, 11 August 2005

Cheney Covered up Pakistan's Nuclear Black Market (Jason Leopold)

LOS ANGELES, Aug. 12: When news last year of Pakistan's clandestine nuclear program showed how the country's top nuclear scientist was secretly selling atomic bomb blueprints to Iran and North Korea, the so-called "Axis of Evil" (along with Iraq), world leaders waited to see how President Bush would punish Pakistan's President Pervez Musharraf. Bush has, after all, spent his entire time in office talking tough about countries and dictators that conceal weapons of mass destruction, and even tougher about individuals who supply rogue nations and terrorists with the means to build WMDs. For all intents and purposes, Pakistan and Musharraf fit that description. Bush, Vice President Cheney and top members of the administration reacted with shock when they found out that Abdul Qadeer Khan, Pakistan's top nuclear scientist, spent the past 15 years selling outlaw nations nuclear technology and equipment. So it was sort of a surprise when Bush, upon finding out about Khan's proliferation of nuclear technology, let Pakistan off with a slap on the wrist.

The Indian Express, 11 August 2005

Iran breaks all IAEA seals at Isfahan N-plant (Louis Charbonneau & Francois Murphy)

VIENNA, Aug 10: Iran broke UN seals at a uranium processing plant on Wednesday, escalating a confrontation with Western nations, which fear it may develop nuclear weapons. As Iranian officials reopened sensitive areas of the Isfahan plant in central Iran, Britain, France and Germany-the EU3-struggled in Vienna to rally international pressure for a motion urging Tehran to go back to the voluntary freeze it broke on Monday. "The removal of seals has been completed. The plant is fully operational now," Mohammad Saeedi, deputy head of Iran's Atomic Energy Organisation, said in a telephone interview. Melissa Fleming, spokeswoman for the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) confirmed that the Iranians had removed all seals on machines at Isfahan, although she said there were still some seals on stockpiled materials.

Daily Times, 11 August 2005

Editorial: Are we facing an Iran-US showdown?

Iran says it is going to restart enriching uranium "for peaceful purposes" and break the agreement it had reached with the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) last year to keep the seals on its enrichment plants. Upon hearing this, the IAEA held a crisis meeting on Tuesday to try to stop Iran from doing so. The European countries who have been trying to make a deal with Tehran over the whole enrichment imbroglio have therefore broken off talks. They say Iran might have to face UN Security Council sanctions if it does not stop. America has warned Iran to desist or there will be trouble. Russia, which has given Iran one of its nuclear plants, has told Iran to take it easy. As a signatory of the Non Proliferation Treaty (NPT), Iran can enrich uranium for peaceful purposes under full-scope safeguards of the IAEA.

The News, 11 August 2005

US hopes for North Korea nuclear deal by September

WASHINGTON: The United States said on Wednesday a deal to end the North Korea showdown could come as early as September, but warned Pyongyang had to make the key decision to "get out of this nuclear weapons business." Christopher Hill, US envoy to the six party negotiations due to resume in Beijing at the end of the month, also rebuffed North Korea's demand for the right to maintain a civilian nuclear programme. A fourth round of six-party talks which recessed Sunday after stretching 13 days in Beijing, had tried to work towards an agreement of principles to speed the way to a permanent deal, Hill said. "We are hoping that if we can get through these principles, we can get going with an actual agreement in September, or the latest in October and see if we can finally put this terrible problem to bed," Hill told reporters.

The News, 11 August 2005

The US-India nexus (Burhanuddin Hasan)

A National Security strategy paper issued by the US government in 2002 defines its future policies vis-a-vis India in the following words: "The United States has undertaken a transformation in its bilateral relationship with India based on a conviction that U.S. interests require a strong relationship with India. We are the two largest democracies, committed to political freedom protected by representative governments. India is moving towards greater economic freedom as well. We have a common interest in the free flow of commerce, including through the vital sea lanes of the Indian Ocean. Finally, we share an interest in fighting terrorism and in creating a strategically stable Asia. Differences remain, including over the development of India's nuclear and missile programmes, and the pace of India's economic reforms.

Dawn, 11 August 2005

US plays down A.Q. Khan report

WASHINGTON, Aug 10: The United States has sought to play down a former Dutch prime minister's revelation that his country did not prosecute Dr Abdul Qadeer Khan for passing atomic secrets to Pakistan in 1979 at the instance of the Central Intelligence Agency. "It is not something that I feel we really have anything to say about because it deals with events long in the past," State Department Deputy Spokesman Adam Ereli said on Tuesday. Former Dutch prime minister Ruud Lubbers had said on Tuesday that the Dutch government let Dr Khan go, who worked in the Netherlands between 1975 and 1986, even after they received information that the scientist was involved in stealing secrets about enrichment of uranium. He was never indicted for his activities because the CIA had asked the Netherlands to let him go, Mr Lubbers, who was minister of economy in 1975, told VPRO radio.

Dawn, 11 August 2005

US referral of Iran to UN may be difficult

UNITED NATIONS, Aug 10: The United States may find it difficult to win support for punitive sanctions against Iran if the regime refuses to back down over its nuclear programme, analysts said. With its plentiful oil resources and sensitive geographic position next to Iraq and Afghanistan, Iran enjoys a strong negotiating position despite US warnings that the issue may be referred to the UN Security Council. Iran drew sharp criticism in Western capitals following its decision this week to restart its nuclear programme after talks with Britain, France and Germany apparently reached an impasse. But Iran appears to be gambling that US military action is unlikely and that Europe, Russia and China are anxious to avoid jeopardising their access to oil and lucrative trade. "This is a very tough move designed to change the leverage in negotiations, to change the equation of the negotiations," said Shibley Telhami, professor at the University of Maryland and a member of the Council on Foreign Relations, a Washington-based think-tank.

Dawn, 11 August 2005

Responding to Indo-US defence pact (Mirza Aslam Beg)

A significant geo-political shift is likely to occur, with the signing of the Indo-US defence pact. In fact, not only the interest of Pakistan, but of other Asian nations too will be subverted by this strategic partnership, as it points towards very specific directions, where the intent is to use power to achieve the objective. The US will be outsourcing its imperial outreach, through India as a 'competent military power' to respond rapidly to regional crises. Together, they will fight the war on terror against "the evil ideology, which hates freedom, rejects tolerance and is determined to destroy our way of life." The US and India would jointly endeavour 'to curb and counter the increasing military and economic power of China, and fight terrorism emanating from the Muslim world.'

The Nation, 11 August 2005

The riposte to Indo-US Defence Pact (Gen (Retd) Mirza Aslam Beg)

A significant geo-political shift is likely to occur, with the signing of the Indo-US Defence Pact. In fact, not only Pakistan, but the Asian nations' interests will be subverted by this strategic partnership, as it points towards very specific directions, with intent to use power to achieve the objectives. US will be outsourcing its imperial outreach, through India as a "competent military power to respond rapidly to regional crises." Together, they will fight the war on terror against "the evil ideology, which hates freedom, rejects tolerance and is determined to destroy our way of life". USA and India would jointly endeavour "to curb and counter the increasing military and economic power of China, and fight terrorism emanating from the Muslim World." Joint air exercises will be held in occupied Kashmir to validate Indian claim over the territory and project power and influence beyond. US primacy, considered vital for the governance of the world will be maintained to consolidate control over energy resources, the fulcrum of economic power.

International Herald Tribune, 11 August 2005

U.S. optimistic about nuclear agreement with North Korea (Brian Knowlton)

WASHINGTON The U.S. envoy to the six-party talks with North Korea brushed aside on Wednesday the North's complaints that Washington was blocking efforts for a nuclear agreement, saying that North Korean negotiators had shown a "seriousness of intent" that left him hopeful that an agreement might be reached as soon as next month. The envoy, Assistant Secretary of State Christopher Hill, said that the parties had begun, in talks in Beijing, to hammer out basic principles as a first step toward a possible breakthrough. "We are hoping that if we can get through these principles, we can get going with an actual agreement in September, or the latest in October, and see if we can finally put this terrible problem to bed," he said. Emphasizing a seriousness in the North Korean approach, he appeared to discount a comment Tuesday by Kim Kye Gwan, the chief North Korean negotiator, that it was "up to the U.S. to change its policy" and drop its insistence that the North give up its nuclear ambitions. Hill made his comments in a briefing before a group of mainly Asian reporters at the Foreign Press

Center in Washington. They appeared slightly more upbeat than comments made a day earlier to mostly American reporters.

Hindustan Times, 11 August 2005

No agreement with N Korea unless it gives up N-prog: US

Washington, Aug. 11: The United States has said that no agreement is possible with North Korea unless it gives up all nuclear programmes, including nuclear power. White House spokesman Trent Duffy and Assistant Secretary of State Christopher Hill, who is US representative in the six party talks over Pyongyang's nuclear programme said they were "trying very hard" to reach an agreement on the issue. "As far as the North Korean talks, Christopher Hill, our representative there, has said repeatedly that the United States, as well as the entire five nations, are trying very hard to reach a conclusion and agreement there, and we continue to hold out hope that the North Koreans will join us in that agreement," Duffy said here. "We're obviously backing Mr Hill and we're hopeful that they can find some agreement. But North Korea needs to make a strategic decision to set aside its ambition for nuclear weapons, that the five nations are in consensus that there must be a nuclear free Korean peninsula."

The Times Of India, 11 August 2005

ifs and buts of nuclear pact (P R Chari)

The Manmohan Singh-George Bush joint statement makes radical commitments by both sides on the nuclear issue. The question is whether Singh and Bush can deliver on these commitments? A related question is: What are India's current vulnerabilities in the nuclear arena and whether it can maintain its strategic autonomy? No consensus was forged on the broad outlines of a nuclear deal before Singh left for Washington. This was difficult but unavoidable given the dependence of the UPA government on its Left partners. The hope was that pulling a nuclear rabbit out of the American hat would silence Opposition, which has not happened. A bruising national debate can be expected. Inter alia, the United States accepts India to be a "responsible state with advanced nuclear techno-logy", which apparently is its euphemism for recognising India as a "nuclear weapon state". Bush will seek approval from the US Congress to adjust American laws and policies and also work with friends and allies to adjust international regimes to enable full nuclear energy cooperation and trade with India.

The Times Of India, 11 August 2005

9/11 panel to probe ex-official's claim

WASHINGTON: The September 11 commission will look into a claim that US defence intelligence officials identified the ringleader and three other hijackers as probable members of an al-Qaida cell more than a year before the hijackings but didn't tell law enforcers. The commission investigated the performance of security and intelligence services before the September 11, 2001, hijackings of four airplanes and attacks against New York's World Trade Center and the Pentagon outside Washington. In a report last year, the panel outlined numerous mistakes that allowed the attackers to succeed, including failure to share intelligence within and among agencies. Republican Curt Weldon of Pennsylvania, where one of hijacked planes crashed in a field, who is vice chairman of the House Armed Services and Homeland Security committees, said Tuesday the men were identified in 1999 by a classified military intelligence unit known as Able Danger. If true, that's an earlier link to al-Qaida than any previously disclosed intelligence about Mohammed Atta, the attackers' leader.

The Times Of India, 11 August 2005

Pak's N-father bailed out by CIA (Chidanand Rajghatta)

WASHINGTON: The Bush administration on Tuesday ducked for cover from stunning new revelations that the CIA prevailed upon the Dutch government to let Pakistan's nuclear smuggler AQ Khan escape Netherlands in the 1970s. Washington said the case was old and it could not comment on intelligence matters. "It's not something that I feel we really have anything to say about...because (a) it deals with events long in the past; (b) it deals with intelligence matters," State Department spokesman Adam Ereli said at his daily briefing. Ereli did not deny disclosures by former Dutch Prime Minister Ruud Lubbers that Dutch intelligence had Khan on its radar and wanted to prosecute him but CIA asked that he be allowed to walk, ostensibly so that it could follow him to get more information.

The Times Of India, 11 August 2005

Approval for Bush hits an all-time low

NEW DELHI: Only about 45 per cent Americans approve President George W Bush's handling of his job, while 51 per cent say they are dissatisfied. According to a new CNN/USA Today/Gallup poll released on Monday, Bush's approval rating remains among the lowest of his presidency, with some Americans growing increasingly dissatisfied with the Iraq war. The rating is up just slightly - 1 percentage point - from a poll late last month when

Bush had a 44 per cent approval rating, the lowest of his presidency. Twice before he hit the 45 per cent mark in the poll, in June and March of this year. Bush has seen his approval rating plummet since he was sworn in for a second term in January, when 57 per cent approved of his handling of the job.

The Times Of India, 11 August 2005

Osama fled due to US failure

NEW YORK: Terrorist mastermind Osama bin Laden may have escaped from the Tora Bora mountainous region in Afghanistan because of US failure to provide enough resources in the final hours of the campaign by American forces in the area, a former CIA official has claimed. In his book 'Jawbreaker', Gary Berntsen, the CIA's field commander for the agency's team at Tora Bora, says he and other US commanders did know that Laden was among the hundreds of fleeing Qaeda and Taliban members. This contradicts the statement made by US President George Bush during the election campaign for his second term, that field commanders did not know whether Laden was in the mountainous hideout on the border of Pakistan, according to Newsweek magazine. Berntsen says he had "definitive intelligence" that Laden was holed up at Tora Bora - intelligence operatives had tracked him and he could have been caught, the report said.

Deccan Herald, 11 August 2005

Rivals join hands to kill G-4 initiative (D Ravi Kanth)

China and the United States joined hands last week to block a plan to expand the powerful United Nations Security Council as suggested by the so-called G-4 comprising Brazil, Germany, India, and Japan. These four countries are not asking for the same rights and privileges that are currently enjoyed by the so-called P5 - the United States, Russia, France, Britain, and China - in the UN Security Council. If anything, the four new aspirants have made it known that they would forego the right to use veto for the next 15 years. Such an assurance should have clinched the issue of the expanded membership to the Security Council once and for all. After all, the G-4 are reconciled to the view that even if they were admitted to the expanded club, they would only remain as second-class citizens.

The Nation, 12 August 2005

Mediating in Iran

AS was being predicted, both the US and EU have reacted sharply to Iran breaking the IAEA seals on its uranium conversion plant at Isfahan. The US has called the action "a sign of Iran's disregard for international concerns," while a draft put forward to the IAEA by the EU urges Iran to cease all activities related to nuclear enrichment. Iran has argued, and with reason, that it has the right to develop peaceful nuclear power as an alternate energy resource to meet its rising electricity needs while preserving its oil and gas reserves for export. Further it has categorically denied that it has any plan to produce nuclear weapons. It is no secret that the US opposes Iran's nuclear programme because the latter does not agree with its policy in the Middle East, which revolves around strengthening Israel as its regional satrap. It is highly unjust to oppose Iran's peaceful nuclear activity while allowing Israel to develop nuclear weapons.

Dawn, 12 August 2005

Washington says missile test not provocative

WASHINGTON, Aug 11: The US State Department said on Thursday that Pakistan's latest missile test was neither threatening nor provocative. Commenting on the test hours after Pakistan confirmed that it had a test-fired its first nuclear-capable cruise missile, State Department deputy spokesman Adam Ereli said: "It's important to us that actions by states on the subcontinent are done in ways that aren't provocative, in ways that aren't threatening. (And) I think that by all accounts, that test met that criterion." When a reporter asked how the US would view the test in the backdrop of its changing policies in South Asia, Mr Ereli enquired what changes the reporter was referring to. The reporter said he was referring to the Indo-US deal signed during Indian Prime Minister Manmohan Singh's July 18 visit to the White House. "That's an evolution of a close relationship," said Mr Ereli. Asked how the Pakistani test met the criterion of not being provocative or threatening, Mr Ereli said: "My understanding was that it was done in a way that was not alarming, that was not a surprise."

The Tribune, 12 August 2005

Why did CIA shield A.Q. Khan? (K. Subrahmanyam)

Former Dutch Prime Minister Ruud Lubbers in an interview to Dutch radio station on August 9 has revealed that the CIA intervened on two occasions with the Dutch authorities to persuade them not to take action against the Pakistani proliferator, Dr A.Q. Khan. The first occasion was in the mid seventies when Dr Khan was caught copying the drawings and taking URENCO centri-fuge plant away. As the Dutch authorities were about to prosecute him he was protected by the CIA which intervened to stop the action. The second time was in 1985

when the CIA dissuaded the Dutch not to go ahead with a retrial ordered by the appellate court which entertained Dr Khan's appeal against his conviction by the trial court on his removing secret documents. According to Dr Lubbers, the CIA argued that if Dr Khan was left free they would be able to follow him and keep track of his activities in respect of the Pakistani nuclear programme.

The Tribune, 12 August 2005

Doubts over N-deal (Inder Malhotra)

Fierce controversy over the Indo-US nuclear deal, signed by the Prime Minister, Dr Manmohan Singh, and the US President, Mr George W. Bush, has had an invaluable outcome. Both Parliament and the people have discussed it threadbare. Indeed, not for a long time has any policy of the government been put under the scanner so thoroughly as on this occasion. The nuclear doctrine, brought into force five years ago, has never been debated by Parliament. At times the debates in Parliament, on TV, in the print media and at numerous gatherings of the strategic community did look like a classic example of the dialogue of the deaf. But they have served the useful purpose of giving the good Doctor leading the United Progressive Alliance government ample opportunities to answer point by point every single objection, doubt or misgiving about the nuclear deal, including those articulated in the Lok Sabha by the former Prime Minister, Mr Atal Bihari Vajpayee.

The Hindu, 12 August 2005

"Identifying a civilian nuclear facility is India's decision" (T S Subramanian)

Under the nuclear agreement with the United States, "what is going to be identified as a civilian facility is going to be an Indian decision...taken at appropriate points of time," says Anil Kakodkar, Chairman of the Atomic Energy Commission and Secretary, Department of Atomic Energy. In an interview, Dr. Kakodkar reiterates that development programmes will not be put under safeguards.

Times Of India, 12 August 2005

9/11 panel to probe ex-official's claim

WASHINGTON: The September 11 commission will look into a claim that US defence intelligence officials identified the ringleader and three other hijackers as probable members of an al-Qaida cell more than a year before the hijackings but didn't tell law enforcers. The commission investigated the performance of security and intelligence services before the September 11, 2001, hijackings of four airplanes and attacks against New York's World Trade Center and the Pentagon outside Washington. In a report last year, the panel outlined numerous mistakes that allowed the attackers to succeed, including failure to share intelligence within and among agencies. Republican Curt Weldon of Pennsylvania, where one of hijacked planes crashed in a field, who is vice chairman of the House Armed Services and Homeland Security committees, said Tuesday the men were identified in 1999 by a classified military intelligence unit known as Able Danger. If true, that's an earlier link to al-Qaida than any previously disclosed intelligence about Mohammed Atta, the attackers' leader.

Hindustan Times, 12 August 2005

Indo-US relationship to benefit neighbours: US

Dismissing apprehensions that the Indo-US strategic relationship may harm the interests of India's neighbours, the United States has said that contrary to this, the tie-up is beneficial to the whole region. "We certainly do not see any cause for concern on the part of India's neighbours for the relationship that is developing between the United States and India," US State Department deputy spokesman Adam Ereli told reporters at the Foreign Press Centre of the State Department here on Thursday. "To the contrary, this is a relationship that holds the promise of greater stability, greater prosperity - greater prosperity for the entire region," he said when asked whether the tie-up may cause concern for India's neighbours.

Hindustan Times, 13 August 2005

All options open against Iran, says Bush

Maintaining that "all options are on the table" for Iran, US President George W Bush has said that the use of force is the last option, if diplomacy fails to end that country's attempt to enrich uranium. "Look, in all these instances we want diplomacy to work. And so, we are working feverishly on the diplomatic route. We will see if we are successful or not," Bush said in an Israeli television interview, the excerpt of which was released by the White House on Friday. "All options are on the table," he said in reply to a question on US move to curb Iran's attempt to enrich uranium, adding "use of force is the last option for any President." The US is prepared to allow Iran a nuclear reactor built by the Russians but insists that the enriched uranium required to run it, should be provided by Russia.

Times Of India, 13 August 2005

Bush hears but fears

TEXAS: US president George W Bush said on Thursday he understands and respects the views of anti-war advocates like a California mother camped outside his Texas ranch to mourn her soldier son fallen in Iraq, but said it would be a mistake to bring US troops home now. "I understand the anguish that some feel about the death that takes place," Bush said. "I also have heard the voices of those saying: 'Pull out now!'" he said. "And I've thought about their cry and their desire to reduce the loss of life by pulling out. I just strongly disagree." "Immediate withdrawal "would send a terrible signal to the enemy," the president said.

Deccan Chronicle, 13 August 2005

FBI warns of attacks in US close to Sept. 11

WASHINGTON: A group of FBI counterterrorism analysts warned this week of possible terrorist attacks in New York, Los Angeles and Chicago around September 11, but officials cautioned on Thursday that they were sceptical about the seriousness of the threat. The warning grew out of intelligence developed from an overseas source indicating that terrorists might seek to steal fuel tankers in order to inflict "mass casualties" by staging an anniversary attack, officials said. The information led FBI joint terrorism task forces to alert government and law enforcement officials privately this week about the threat, law enforcement officials said. Several officials in Washington who were briefed on the threat said it was described as credible and specific enough to warrant attention.

International Herald Tribune, 13 August 2005

Nuclear realities (William Pfaff)

PARIS The background to the controversy over Iran's nuclear program is an American position on nuclear nonproliferation that is unsustainable in the long term. Much of the international policy community understands that this is so. It is perhaps time that the Washington policy community comes to terms with this reality. America's determination to stop nuclear proliferation produces perverse results. At a period of mounting instability in the Middle East and U.S. engagement in two wars in Islamic countries, it increases the allure of nuclear weapons to governments that do not have them, and reinforces their perceived value as political assets and as deterrents against foreign attack. Nuclear proliferation does not itself promote aggression. Take the alarmist scenarios routinely cited by American and Israeli officials. There is no imaginable way by which nuclear aggression by Iran against Israel could have other than catastrophic results for the attacker. The same is true for any attack by North Korea on an American base in East Asia, or by India on Pakistan, or Pakistan on India.

The Asian Age, 13 August 2005

A civilian nuclear dependency (Bharat Karnad)

Prime Minister Manmohan Singh explained the deal he cut with US President George W. Bush as a continuation of the National Democratic Alliance government policy with the difference that a separation of the military and civilian streams within the country's nuclear energy programme has been agreed to. For an empiricist, every difference as the political philosopher William James long ago said, must make a difference, and what a difference Manmohan Singh's extra concession will make. The PM may have allowed his well advertised abhorrence of nuclear weapons shared by a few others in his Cabinet to get the better of the scientific counsel he may have received. But it is unlikely candid advice was offered because with the government making up its mind, scientists, not being involved in the negotiating process, are often reduced in a crunch to approving the policy or being held responsible for everything going kaput. Thus, R. Chidambaram obediently toed the line on the test moratorium in 1998 and his successor as chairman, Atomic Energy Commission, Anil Kakodkar, may have been under pressure in Washington to okay the transaction the PM was obviously keen on.

Reuters, 13 August 2005

Bush Raises Option of Using Force Against Iran

JERUSALEM: President Bush said on Israeli television he could consider using force as a last resort to press Iran to give up its nuclear programme. "All options are on the table," Bush, speaking at his ranch in Crawford, Texas, said in the interview broadcast on Saturday. Asked if that included the use of force, Bush replied: "As I say, all options are on the table. The use of force is the last option for any president and you know, we've used force in the recent past to secure our country." Iran angered the European Union and the United States by resuming uranium conversion at the Isfahan plant last Monday after rejecting an EU offer of political and economic incentives in return for giving up its nuclear programme. Tehran says it aims only to produce electricity and denies Western accusations it is seeking a nuclear bomb. Bush made clear he still hoped for a diplomatic solution, noting that EU powers Britain, Germany and France had taken the lead in dealing with Iran.

The Korean Herald, 13 August 2005

Washington stresses no rift with South Korea (Lee Joo-hee)

Amid the spider web of negotiations on the North Korean nuclear standoff, the United States reasserted no rift exists with South Korea in pushing for denuclearization of the Korean Peninsula but remained ambiguous on allowing the North to develop nuclear energy for peaceful use. "There's no rift between the United States and South Korea. We are close allies. We are close partners in a broad bilateral relationship and particularly in our common approach to denuclearizing the Korean Peninsula," said Adam Ereli, deputy spokesman of Washington State Department said Thursday. Earlier the same day, South Korean Unification Minister Chung Dong-young, who also heads the National Security Council, told the Internet's Daum Media that South Korea viewed it as North Korea's general right to develop nuclear power for peaceful use, adding that South Korea and the United States saw the situation differently. The United States has not commented directly on whether North Korea should be allowed civilian use of nuclear power.

Daily Times, 13 August 2005

Hiroshima and the road not taken (Abbas Rashid)

Had the US government heeded the important voices at the time in the US that were counselling restraint with respect to the use of the A-bomb, the enterprise of non-proliferation of nuclear weapons in the world may have followed a different trajectory. The 60th anniversary of the dropping of the atom bomb by the US on the Japanese cities of Hiroshima and Nagasaki comes at a time when the nuclear issue is centre-stage, once again. The E-3 negotiations with Iran, with the US in the background, are at a low point. The invasion of Iraq (where no nuclear weapons were discovered) and the restraint demonstrated towards North Korea that is widely suspected of possessing such weapons, not to mention the absence of any discussion over Israel's formidable nuclear arsenal, is unlikely to encourage states to eschew the nuclear option. That the United States itself is moving in the direction of developing deep-earth penetration "bunker-buster" nuclear weapons does not help the world move towards a safer nuclear future.

Deccan Herald, 14 August 2005

The path of Indo-US nuclear cooperation (L K Sharma)

The path of Indo-US nuclear understanding is even less smooth than the path of true love. While Britain acted on a cue from the US with regard to the civilian nuclear cooperation with India, President George Bush's own plan awaits the approval of the lawmakers when they return from recess. The Bush administration will face a test of its political will. The relevant and irrelevant questions being raised for consideration by Congress indicate that the administration will have to persuade the lawmakers hard to go beyond applauding the address given by Prime Minister Manmohan Singh. The process has to negotiate a minefield of legal and procedural hurdles, presidential waivers and Congressional approvals. All in the face of a nonproliferation lobby still craving for a US nuclear monopoly. This lobby is hoping that if Congress is unable to reject the Bush plan, it will at least modify it in such a way that New Delhi no longer finds it worthwhile.

Dawn, 14 August 2005

Bush's threat to Iran

As the impasse between Iran and the European Union on uranium enrichment intensifies, President George Bush has jumped into the fray with an implicit warning to Tehran. In an interview with Israeli television, Mr Bush said that use of force against Tehran could not be ruled out though it would be the last option. Given the fact that the president has on previous occasions spoken about targeting Iran in a preemptive strike - it was denounced along with North Korea and Syria as constituting the "axis of evil" - the latest statement cannot be dismissed as a casual observation. In the present context, when talks between Tehran and the EU have broken down and Iran has unilaterally removed the IAEA seals on the nuclear reactor at Isfahan, President Bush is only exacerbating the crisis by issuing bellicose statements. This approach is provocative since it reinforces the perception in Iran that the greatest threat to its security comes from Washington. Small wonder, Iran has been demanding assurances that neither the US nor Israel would attack it.

The Hindu, 14 August 2005

Bush nominee under fire

WASHINGTON: A leading abortion rights group has launched the first serious attack on President George Bush's Supreme Court nominee John Roberts by screening a national television advertisement accusing him of excusing violence by protesters outside abortion clinics. The controversial advertisement, which was widely condemned on Friday, is the first major flashpoint in a nomination process for Mr Roberts, who is the choice of the White House to take over from Sandra Day O'Connor. The 30-second advert, funded by Nara Pro-Choice America, stems from a Supreme Court case during the first Bush administration when - as an assistant to the Solicitor General - Mr Roberts successfully argued that a Federal civil rights law should not be used to prevent anti-abortion protesters from blocking access to women's clinics.

The Indian Express, 14 August 2005

Bush leaves open force option against Iran

TEXAS: US President George W. Bush said he could consider using force as a last resort to press Iran to give up its nuclear programme. But German Chancellor Gerhard Schroeder, one of the prominent European opponents of the US led war on Iraq, said that the threat of force was not acceptable. In what appeared to be a reference to Bush's remarks that "all options are on the table," Schroeder told the crowd in his home city of Hanover: "Let's take the military option off the table. We have seen it doesn't work." Responding to a question in an interview to the state-owned Israel Channel One television Bush had earlier in the day said: "As I say, all options are on the table. The use of force is the last option for any president and you know, we've used force in the recent past to secure our country."

The Times Of India, 14 August 2005

US blocks Ghraib abuse video

WASHINGTON: The Pentagon has moved forcefully to block the release of new video evidence of prisoner abuse at Iraq's Abu Ghraib prison, arguing it would help recruit new Islamist insurgents and endanger American lives. The request is contained in a motion filed in federal court by Joint Chiefs of Staff chairman Gen Richard Myers in response to a plea by several human rights groups to make public 87 photographs and four videotapes made at Abu Ghraib by Specialist Joseph Darby that thus far have been kept under wraps. Darby triggered the Abu Ghraib scandal last year when he turned over to military investigators extensive photographic and video evidence implicating his fellow military policemen in brutal abuse of prisoners.

The Times Of India, 14 August 2005

Iran warns Bush against attack

TEHRAN: Iran warned US President George W. Bush Sunday that he would be making a mistake to use force against the Islamic republic over its nuclear programme. "Bush should know that our capabilities are much greater than those of the United States," foreign ministry spokesman Hamid Reza Asefi told reporters. "We don't think that the United States will make such a mistake." The US president on Friday refused to rule out the use of force against Iran over its resumption of nuclear activities, saying "all options are on the table." Bush told Israeli television: "The use of force is the last option for any president. You know we have used force in the recent past to secure our country," he said in a clear reference to Iraq, which the United States invaded in March 2003.

Deccan Herald, 16 August 2005

The path of Indo-US nuclear cooperation (L K Sharma)

While Britain acted on a cue from the US with regard to the civilian nuclear cooperation with India, President George Bush's own plan awaits the approval of the lawmakers when they return from recess. The Bush administration will face a test of its political will. The relevant and irrelevant questions being raised for consideration by Congress indicate that the administration will have to persuade the lawmakers hard to go beyond applauding the address given by Prime Minister Manmohan Singh. The process has to negotiate a minefield of legal and procedural hurdles, presidential waivers and Congressional approvals. All in the face of a nonproliferation lobby still craving for a US nuclear monopoly. This lobby is hoping that if Congress is unable to reject the Bush plan, it will at least modify it in such a way that New Delhi no longer finds it worthwhile.

Hindustan Times, 14 August 2005

US refuses to comment on Pak missile technology

Washington, Aug. 14: The United States has refused to comment on whether China provided missile technology to Pakistan, thus helping Islamabad develop a cruise missile capable of carrying nuclear warheads that could reach targets up to 500 kms. "As is standard practice, we do not comment on intelligence matters," a US State Department spokesman told reporters on Saturday when asked whether China provided missile technology to Pakistan. Pakistan on Thursday had "successfully" test-fired its "indigenously developed" first ever ground-launched cruise missile Hatf VII Babur. On Friday, State Department deputy spokesman Adam Ereli told reporters that he had nothing to share on whether Pakistan got any foreign assistance for this missile. Ereli had also said that Pakistan's first cruise missile test was conducted in a way that was not "provocative", although Islamabad did not give advance information about it to New Delhi.

The Hindu, 15 August 2005

US, Britain warned of more terrorist attacks (Hasan Suroor)

LONDON: American intelligence agencies are reported to have warned of terror attacks on petrol stations in London and several US cities to coincide with the fourth anniversary of "9/11". According to *The Sunday Times*, leaked information from the US Department of Homeland Security reportedly says: "Al-Qaeda leaders plan to

employ various types of fuel trucks as vehicle-borne improvised explosive devices (VBIED) in an effort to cause mass casualties in the US (and London) prior to September 19. Attacks are planned specifically for New York, Chicago and Los Angeles. It is unclear whether the attacks will occur simultaneously or be spread over a period of time. The stated goal is the collapse of the US economy."

The Times of India, 16 August 2005

Top Zarqawi aide dead: US

WASHINGTON: A top aide to Abu Musab al-Zarqawi, head of the al-Qaida operation in Iraq and accused of masterminding high-profile suicide bombings in the country, has been killed by Iraqi security forces, defence officials have confirmed. But the battlefield success hardly impressed two leading US senators, who on Sunday questioned the Pentagon's handling of the situation in Iraq and said they no longer had confidence in defence secretary Donald Rumsfeld. Abu Zubair, also known as Mohammed Salah Sultan, was gunned down in Mosul on Friday, when he got caught in an ambush set up by Iraqi security forces, the officials said, confirming a report by Mosul police. No other details of the operation were provided. But officials pointed out Abu Zubair was wearing a suicide belt filled with metal pellets when he was killed.

Daily Times, 16 August 2005

Indo-US N-deal will seriously undermine NPT: Krepon

WASHINGTON: While a leading expert on security and nuclear issues, Michael Krepon, has expressed serious opposition to the recent Indo-US nuclear deal, the long-time South Asia watcher, Selig Harrison, has taken the opposite view. Michael Krepon, founding president of the Stimson Centre, which has a special interest in nuclear issues and peace, told India Abroad's Aziz Haniffa that America does not need the nuclear issue to raise its relationship with India on a "higher plane." The deal involves a change in the global nuclear order, a "very challenging, ambitious goal" that could neither be achieved through "executive order" or by legislation. "This is going to get very messy. Trust me on this," he added. Krepon, when told that both the Indians and the Bush administration have said that the agreement only involves civilian nuclear facilities so that India's rising energy needs can be met, asked, "Do you believe that?" He said India wants "exceptional treatment" that the Bush administration is willing to grant but that means changing the rules, rules that the US has spent decades to get others to abide by.

Daily Times, 16 August 2005

Tehran warns US over nuclear threat

TEHRAN: Iran's ultra-conservative President Mahmood Ahmadinejad unveiled a new hardline cabinet on Sunday as Tehran warned the West not to resort to bullying over its nuclear programme. Among the key appointments submitted to parliament for approval, Ahmadinejad proposed Ali Saidloo as oil minister of the OPEC member, and conservative MP Manoushehr Mottaki as foreign minister. Saidloo, Ahmadinejad's successor as mayor of Tehran, is a relative unknown in national Iranian politics, while Mottaki has served as ambassador to Japan and Turkey. Iran bluntly told US President George W Bush that it would respond to any attack, and warned that it could consider ending a freeze on uranium enrichment, a process that can make fuel for a nuclear bomb. "Bush should know that our capabilities are much greater than those of the United States," foreign ministry spokesman Hamid Reza Asefi told reporters.

Daily Times, 16 August 2005

US says Asia's cooperation crucial in containing WMD trade

SINGAPORE: Asia's cooperation is crucial in ensuring the success of a US-led effort to curb the trade in weapons of mass destruction (WMD), a senior US official said Monday. "Continuing to build cooperative relationships in the Asia-Pacific region will be essential to our ability to stop the trade in WMD materials and their means of delivery," said Robert Joseph, the undersecretary for arms control and international security. Joseph, speaking at the start of a five-day exercise under the Proliferation Security Initiative (PSI), said Japan and Singapore are the only Asian countries so far to have formally joined the PSI but he was optimistic India would soon follow. He said China has not formally endorsed or asked to join the PSI but has become more cooperative in responding to international efforts to contain the trade in WMD. China's reluctance, Joseph said, was possibly due to concerns it might affect talks on scrapping North Korea's nuclear weapons programme.

Daily Times, 16 August 2005

'North Korea willing to prove it has no uranium scheme'

SEOUL: North Korea is willing to prove it does not have a uranium-based nuclear programme, CNN quoted the country's top negotiator to six-party nuclear talks as saying. Vice Foreign Minister Kim Kye-gwan also said his country could not give up the right to pursue a civilian nuclear programme, CNN reported from Pyongyang on

Sunday. "We don't have any uranium-based weapons programme, but in the future if there is any kind of evidence that needs to be clarified we will be fully prepared to do so," Kim was quoted as saying in the report posted on the television network's Web site. He said Pyongyang was willing to accept inspections by Washington but stopped short of saying whether it would do so in order to break a deadlock in the current round of negotiations.

The Guardian, 15 August 2005

How Bush would gain from war with Iran (Dan Plesch)

President Bush has reminded us that he is prepared to take military action to prevent Iran acquiring nuclear weapons. On Israeli television this weekend, he declared that "all options are on the table" if Tehran doesn't comply with international demands. In private his officials deride EU and UN diplomacy with Iran. US officials have been preparing pre-emptive war since Bush marked Iran out as a member of the "axis of evil" back in 2002. Once again, this war is likely to have British support. A plausible spin could be that America and Britain must act where the international community has failed, and that their action is the responsible alternative to an Israeli attack. The conventional wisdom is that, even if diplomacy fails, the US is so bogged down in Iraq that it could not take on Iran. However, this misunderstands the capabilities and intentions of the Bush administration.

The Washington Post, 15 August 2005

Why the India Deal Is Good (Selig S. Harrison)

In their attack on the White House decision to ease restrictions on the transfer of civilian nuclear technology to India ["A Bad Deal With India," op-ed, Aug. 3], Lawrence J. Korb and Peter Ogden emphasize two arguments: that the United States "secured so little in return" from India and that the nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT), which India did not sign, has been irreparably damaged. Both of these arguments are fallacious. Moreover, Korb and Ogden ignore the compelling realities of geology and arithmetic that lie behind the administration's controversial departure. The geological reality is that India has 31 percent of the world's known deposits of a rare radioactive mineral, thorium, in addition to its substantial reserves of uranium. This has emboldened New Delhi to embark on an exponential expansion of its nuclear power generating capacity, utilizing imported uranium-fueled reactors at first but shifting progressively to thorium-based fast-breeder reactors now under construction or on the drawing board. Fast-breeders, which Japan is also building, are the key to energy independence, since they continuously "breed" never-ending new supplies of plutonium alongside their production of electricity.

The Times of India, 15 August 2005

The great nuclear handshake (K Subrahmanyam)

Many people in India charge that Prime Minister Manmohan Singh did not get all that he should have in the Washington summit. Similarly, there are voices in Washington which complain that India got all it wanted without giving anything worthwhile in return. Bargain theorists would say that when there is equal dissatisfaction on both sides, it is a good bargain. When one nation gets everything in its wish list without conceding anything in return to the other, it is known as unconditional surrender and happens only at the end of a war which is lost. In other cases of interactions between nations, there is a give and take. Indo-US relations for the last 58 years were in the nature of one between 'estranged democracies'. Though the Clinton visit in 2000 began a thaw, on the nuclear issue Washington was dominated by non-proliferation jehadis like Strobe Talbott. One should not forget that in 1998 Clinton conceded during his visit to China that Beijing had legitimate interests in South Asia.

The Tribune, 17 August 2005

Why the India deal is good (Selig S Harrison)

The White House decision to ease restrictions on the transfer of civilian nuclear technology to India has been criticised with two arguments: that the United States "secured so little in return" from India and that the nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT), which India did not sign, has been irreparably damaged. Both of these arguments are fallacious. The geological reality is that India has 31 per cent of the world's known deposits of a rare radioactive mineral, thorium, in addition to its substantial reserves of uranium. This has emboldened New Delhi to embark on an exponential expansion of its nuclear power generating capacity, utilizing imported uranium-fueled reactors at first but shifting progressively to thorium-based fast-breeder reactors now under construction or on the drawing board. Fast-breeders, which Japan is also building, are the key to energy independence, since they continuously "breed" never-ending new supplies of plutonium alongside their production of electricity.

The Indian Express, 18 August 2005

Dismantling core group, US eases India's path to proliferation security (C Raja Mohan)

SINGAPORE: Responding to India's concerns about discrimination, the Bush Administration has decided to dismantle the so-called core group of the multilateral Proliferation Security Initiative (PSI) that seeks to prevent illegal trade in weapons of mass destruction and related material. The US Under Secretary of State for Non-

Proliferation and International Security, Robert Joseph said here that the PSI "core group has done its job and we have now moved away from it". India, which has been debating the merits of joining the PSI, has been concerned about its two-tiered structure that seemed to differentiate between the core group and other members. The core group refers to the few founding members of the PSI, which was launched by the United States in May 2003, and others like Singapore and Russia which joined later. The core group, according to Joseph, was never conceived as an "exclusive club" within the PSI. Its objective, he said, was to lay out the basic terms of the initiative and open up the membership to others. Joseph, the pointman for US non-proliferation policy in the State Department, was speaking at a seminar here on 'South East Asia's role in Non-Proliferation'.

The Hindu, 18 August 2005

A mother's protest divides US (Gary Younge)

NEW YORK: Rightwing criticism of a bereaved mother who is camped outside US President George Bush's Texas ranch in protest at the conflict in Iraq has intensified as her campaign struck a nerve with growing anti-war opinion in the country. Pro-war commentators characterised her as a "nut" who was being manipulated by the left. The Internet gossip Matt Drudge falsely claimed that Cindy Sheehan "dramatically changed her account" of one meeting she had with Mr. Bush. That claim was then picked up by Fox News and repeated on Slate's website by the columnist Christopher Hitchens. Mr. Hitchens accused Mrs. Sheehan of "spouting piffle" and lambasted her protest as "dreary, sentimental nonsense." Personal attacks on her were set to grow after her husband of 28 years filed for divorce, citing "irreconcilable differences." Patrick Sheehan, who was her high school boyfriend, is seeking a share of insurance money and benefits awarded by the US government after their soldier son's death in Iraq.

Daily Times, 19 August 2005

Pakistan could have 110 N-bombs by year end (Khalid Hasan)

WASHINGTON: By the end of the current year, Pakistan will have produced enough weapons grade uranium to manufacture 50 to 110 nuclear weapons against India's 75 to 110. According to a study published by the Non-proliferation Centre of the Carnegie Endowment for International Peace, India may be producing significant quantities of highly enriched uranium at its gas-centrifuge plant in Trombay, outside Mumbai, though the amounts produced remain unknown. The study says both India and Pakistan possess components to deploy a small number of nuclear weapons within a few days or weeks, with fighter-bomber aircraft being the most likely delivery vehicle. Pakistan's nuclear weapons are stored in component parts, with the fissile core separated from the non-nuclear explosives. It is not known where the fissile material and warheads are stored. India, states the study, continues to produce nuclear materials for use in weapons and has not officially said how many weapons it has and how many it intends to produce. Pakistan has been equally discreet.

The Hindu, 19 August 2005

A challenge to American dominance in world (Vladimir Radyuhin)

MOSCOW: Russia and China have launched the first ever joint war games seen as a demonstration of the two nations resolve to challenge the United States' dominance in world affairs. The week-long military manoeuvres which started on Thursday involve 2,000 Russian and 8,000 Chinese troops, combat aviation, and warships. Under the scenario of the joint exercises, dubbed "Peace Mission 2005," Russian and Chinese forces acting on a United Nations mandate land in an imaginary country to stop ethnic strife. However, the involvement of several Russian long-distance bombers Tu-22M and Tu-95 armed with nuclear-capable cruise missiles add a strategic dimension to the war games.

The Hindu, 19 August 2005

A signal to US: officials

WASHINGTON: US intelligence officials believe that the exclusion of American observers at the joint China-Russia military exercises is a signal that it is not wanted in Central Asia. "For the Chinese and the Russians, this is a message to the United States...they want to see our bases in Central Asia and presence in Asia cut back," said several officials who spoke on condition of anonymity.

The Indian Express, 19 August 2005

Reckless in Washington (Saeed Naqvi)

One of the most painful experiences is to depart, for good, even from a rented house. The departure of the 8,000 or so Jewish settlers from Gaza has an undeniable poignancy to it. But the huge melodrama the western media has sought to project, distorts the focus when this solitary event is placed against the epic tragedy that is being played out in the Middle East. In funereal tones, a solemn looking reporter describes columns of Israeli troops carrying away two young boys, kicking and screaming, like they were being forced to go to school. "Settlers must

not blame the troops; they must blame me", says Ariel Sharon, emoting pain. They could have given him a glycerine tear or two for heightened effect. But everybody knows that protecting 8,000 settlers with 21,000 troops was not cost effective. Hence the withdrawal. Meanwhile, occupation continues on a much larger scale on the West Bank. The Palestinians will not be allowed to have their own airport, port, even access to their own cities in the West Bank. Says Mohammad "we travel to Amman or Cairo to catch our flights". But travelling to Amman or Cairo is by itself a forbidding expedition.

Hindustan Times, 19 August 2005

Outsourcing no longer main issue in US: Mulford

US Ambassador David C Mulford on Thursday said outsourcing of services to India remained a sensitive matter in his country but was no longer a central issue. "The issue of outsourcing is still sensitive because it is linked to loss of jobs but it is not the central issue back home," Mulford told the business community at a function organised here by the Indian Chamber of Commerce. "A majority of the population in the US view it as a global phenomenon. People tie it with modern technology and the intensity of the issue has declined," he said. Mulford said private enterprise and free markets were key to long-term progress. The US commitment to develop deep economic and commercial ties with India has never been stronger, he remarked. "US exports to India are up by 50 per cent and India's exports to the US are up by 15 per cent for the first quarter of 2005," he noted.

The Washington Post, 21 August 2005

N.Korea restarts Yongbyon nuclear reactor-report

TOKYO: A U.S. satellite has detected signs that North Korea recently restarted a reactor that could be used for the extraction of material to make nuclear warheads, a Japanese newspaper said on Sunday. The surveillance satellite detected steam coming out of a boiler connected to a building housing the five-megawatt reactor at Yongbyon, Asahi Shimbun said, quoting unnamed sources related to six-way nuclear crisis talks, including a senior U.S. official. The sources said the steam had been detected before the resumption of the six-way talks in late July that aimed to entice the North to give up its nuclear weapons and bomb-making programmes in exchange for economic aid and security guarantees. "It is hard to think that the boiler would operate by itself while the nuclear reactor is stopped. It can only be concluded that North Korea has put in new nuclear fuel rods and has restarted the nuclear reactor," Asahi quoted a U.S. government source as saying. South Korea said in April the reactor's operations had been suspended and the following month, North Korea said it had completed extracting 8,000 fuel rods from the 5 megawatt reactor.

Dawn, 21 August 2005

Indo-US strategic alliance (Talat Masood)

India and the United States are natural allies, but India's Nehruvian philosophy of non-alignment and its aspirations to play a global role in exploiting the capitalist and communist blocs during the cold war kept them apart. After the break-up of the Soviet Union, that barrier was removed and India and the United States started moving closer to each other. It was only after the nuclear tests of May 1998 that this process met a temporary setback. But it did not take long for the relationship to revive and in hindsight it seems that nuclear testing was seized upon by Washington and New Delhi as an opportunity to optimize their relationship. Several rounds of Singh-Talbot talks provided that platform. The visit of President Clinton to India in 1999 was the first manifestation of the emerging partnership in the post-nuclear South Asia. The lifting of sanctions and increased military cooperation, joint counter-terrorist operations and the setting up of several committees to identify areas of mutual interest followed the president's visit. In January 2004, the US administration and Vajpayee government announced further steps in Strategic Partner Initiative, which included cooperation on missile defence, lifting of ban on civilian space programme and technology transfer from the US.

The Indian Express, 22 August 2005

India watching US N-laws: Kakodkar (Lalitha Vaidyanathan)

MUMBAI, Aug 21: India will closely watch the Nuclear Suppliers Group (NSG) regime and how the United States would change its laws with regard to dismantling restrictions and lifting embargo on civil nuclear technology before it starts reciprocating by segregating civilian and military nuclear facilities. This process follows the historic Indo-US nuclear cooperation agreement which Prime Minister Manmohan Singh and President George W Bush signed last month. "The act of identification and segregation of the civilian and military nuclear facilities in India will be taken up in a phased manner, and is going to be purely on reciprocal basis. But before we take up take any reciprocal steps, we have to closely watch what happens to the US laws on restrictions and lifting of embargo and the nuclear suppliers group front," said Dr Anil Kakodkar, chairman, Atomic Energy Commission (AEC).

The Times of India, 23 August 2005

Critical stage for Indo-US N-pact (Indrani Bagchi)

NEW DELHI: In the face of mounting criticism against the Indo-US nuclear agreement, the action will shift to US early September, with a multi-pronged initiative from both sides. US will send one of its key diplomats, under secretary for political affairs, Nicholas Burns, to India next month. The next step will be the extraordinary meeting of the Nuclear Suppliers Group (NSG), expected in October. According to diplomatic sources, there is only one issue on the agenda - the US-India agreement. The first important step will be a proposal that the Bush administration will make in the US Congress soon after it reconvenes in September - requesting the legislative body to amend US laws to accommodate India. Its passage is critical because this is the signal other countries are waiting for. The spurt of activity in the US administration to get to work comes as the voices of criticism in Washington achieve higher decibel levels. The opposition is coming from all quarters - from the Democratic party non-proliferation lobby, which includes the likes of former assistant secretary for non-proliferation to even heavyweights in the US Senate like majority leader Bill Frist and chairman of the Senate foreign relations committee, Richard Lugar.

Daily Times, 23 August 2005

Nuclear black market: Western companies let off: Kasuri

LONDON: Pakistan uncovered the involvement of Western companies in the nuclear black market that Dr AQ Khan operated in, but the US and UK have taken no action against them, Foreign Minister Khurshid Kasuri has said. The US and Britain blacklisted 290 people who helped former Iraqi president Saddam Hussein build his nuclear set up, but they have not been touched, Kasuri said in an interview with the BBC Hard Talk programme. The minister said Pakistan had not and would not allow any foreign country or agency to interrogate Dr Abdul Qadeer Khan, the scientist who confessed to selling nuclear secrets to other countries. He said Pakistan had shared information gleaned from Dr Khan with the US and the International Atomic Energy Agency. He said Dr Khan had been pardoned because he had cooperated with Pakistan's investigation agencies. Pakistan had dismantled all terrorist training camps and Indian accusations of infiltration into Kashmir were baseless, Kasuri said. The struggle in Indian-held Kashmir was indigenous and there was no infiltration across the Line of Control from Pakistan or Azad Kashmir. "We have dismantled all training camps that were functional earlier and were used during the Afghan jihad against the Soviets," he said.

Daily Times, 23 August 2005

US, South Korea hold military drills ahead of nuclear talks

SEOUL: The United States and South Korea on Monday began annual war games that North Korea calls a show of force aimed at making Pyongyang cave in to US demands that it dismantle its nuclear weapons programmes. The military exercises called Ulchi Focus Lens are computer-simulated drills designed to test US and South Korean readiness and coordination of command posts. North Korea regularly calls any joint exercises between the two allies preparations for war on the peninsula. With six-party talks on North Korea's nuclear weapons programmes scheduled to resume the week of Aug. 29, the North's media was even more critical than usual. The exercises come "at a time when the US war preparations have reached their final phase," the official KCNA news agency said on Saturday. The North's army said earlier this month the drills were designed to "force the DPRK to accept the unjust demands raised by the US at the six-party talks," according to official media reports.

The Washington Post, 23 August 2005

No Proof Found of Iran Arms Program (Dafna Linzer)

Traces of bomb-grade uranium found two years ago in Iran came from contaminated Pakistani equipment and are not evidence of a clandestine nuclear weapons program, a group of U.S. government experts and other international scientists has determined. "The biggest smoking gun that everyone was waving is now eliminated with these conclusions," said a senior official who discussed the still-confidential findings on the condition of anonymity. Scientists from the United States, France, Japan, Britain and Russia met in secret during the past nine months to pore over data collected by inspectors from the International Atomic Energy Agency, according to U.S. and foreign officials. Recently, the group, whose existence had not been previously reported, definitively matched samples of the highly enriched uranium -- a key ingredient for a nuclear weapon -- with centrifuge equipment turned over by the government of Pakistan. Iran has long contended that the uranium traces were the result of contaminated equipment bought years ago from Pakistan. But the Bush administration had pointed to the material as evidence that Iran was making bomb-grade ingredients.

The Times of India, 22 August 2005

US satellite catches NKorea red-handed

TOKYO: A US satellite has detected signs that North Korea recently restarted a reactor that could be used for the extraction of material to make nuclear warheads, a Japanese newspaper said on Sunday. The surveillance

satellite detected steam coming out of a boiler connected to a building housing the five-megawatt reactor at Yongbyon, Asahi Shimbun said, quoting unnamed sources related to six-way nuclear crisis talks, including a senior US official. The sources said the steam had been detected before the resumption of the six-way talks in late July that aimed to entice the North to give up its nuclear weapons and bomb-making programmes in exchange for economic aid and security guarantees. "It is hard to think that the boiler would operate by itself while the nuclear reactor is stopped. It can only be concluded that North Korea has put in new nuclear fuel rods and has restarted the nuclear reactor," Asahi quoted a US government source as saying. South Korea said in April the reactor's operations had been suspended and the following month, North Korea said it had completed extracting 8,000 fuel rods from the 5 megawatt reactor.

The Indian Express, 23 August 2005

Govt hires 'friend' Blackwill firm to lobby in US (Shishir Gupta)

NEW DELHI: With the Indo-US nuclear deal expected to go to US Congress next month-which has to change laws to give it effect-New Delhi has decided to hire Barbour Griffith & Rogers International (BGR), as its lobbyist to push its case on the Hill. The president of the firm is former Ambassador to India Robert Blackwill. Top sources said the decision to hire BGR as lobbyist was taken after consultations between the UPA leadership and Indian Ambassador to US Ronnen Sen this month. The formal signing will take place next week. After his term as US ambassador to India (2001-2003), Blackwill was a key member of the Bush Administration's team on foreign policy. He was Deputy Assistant to President George W Bush, Deputy National Security Advisor for Strategic Planning as well as Presidential Advisor to Iraq during the first term of the Bush Administration.

Deccan Herald, 23 August 2005

We will accept nothing less than total victory: Bush

President George W Bush has said that the United States will not accept anything less than total victory in the war on terror. "We will accept nothing less than total victory over the terrorists and their hateful ideology," Bush said while addressing the 'Veterans of Foreign Wars National Convention' in Salt Lake City, Utah, on Monday. Defending the War on Iraq, Bush said it was central to America's war against terrorism. "Iraq, is a central front in the war on terror. In the long run, victory in the war on terror requires changing the conditions that gave rise to violence and extremism. So the third part of our strategy on terror is to spread the hope of freedom across the broader Middle East," the President said. He praised the Gaza withdrawal plan of Israeli Prime Minister Ariel Sharon, calling it "courageous" and "painful".

The Tribune, 23 August 2005

India Day Parade wows Americans

NEW YORK: Tri-coloured patriotism swept through the streets of the Big Apple yesterday when nearly 1,00,000 Indian Americans descended on the city to celebrate India's 58th Independence Day anniversary and took part in the famous India Day Parade in the company of celebrities, politicians and top citizens. Waving the Indian flag and marching to the chants of Vande Mataram across the streets of Manhattan, the marchers displayed a brand of patriotism that projected strong ties between the USA and India. "God Bless India" and "God Bless America" were the constant refrain of the crowd at the parade, which was televised live by all major American television networks.

The Tribune, 23 August 2005

Hyphenated Americans (F.S. Aijazuddin)

The phrase "Cablinasian" was coined by Tiger Woods, the US golf phenomenon, to describe his parentage - born as he was of an African-American father and a Thai mother. Tracing his roots, he defined himself innovatively as a Cablinasian - that is, a mixture of Caucasian, black, Indian and Thai blood. Only in the US would such a prominent figure take pride in his composite parentage, rather than attempting to disguise it. Among all the countries of the world that have welcomed immigrants, the US stands out as the one where immigrants are most likely to succeed and the one where they are least likely to assimilate into an identity known as an American WASP - the White Anglo-Saxon Protestant. Once, the Anglo-Protestant culture was, according to controversial social-scientist Samuel Huntington, central to the American national identity. No longer now.

The Tribune, 24 August 2005

Acquiring missile defence (Maj Gen (retd.) Jatinder Singh)

Recent newspapers reports have suggested that during the Defence Minister's visit, the US offered to provide India details of Patriot anti-missile system, the latest version of which is PAC 3 as also collaboration relating to missile defence. The collaboration aspect is not understood considering that the US itself feels that it is nowhere as far as fielding ground based BMD is concerned. As reports in the US defence media indicate, the US House

and Senate armed services committees have queried the Pentagon on the Defence Department's missile defence activities, ranging from how best to avoid fratricide to the next generation of early warning satellites. The army has been asked to explain by early 2006 efforts to correct problems with the Patriot missile shooting friendly planes in Iraq. The House has also desired to be briefed on the improvements to the systems in an aircraft that alert air defence batteries that they are friendly. The House also directed the Defence Secretary to submit a fresh cost review on the Space Based Infrared System (SBIRS) early warning satellites. The cost of that programme has risen steadily from about \$ 2 billion when it began to more than \$ 10 billion. The first launch of a SBIRS satellite is slated for 2008.

The Tribune, 24 August 2005

India on way to joining the fusion club (Sridhar K Chari)

The prospects of India joining a select band of countries exploring together ways to tap unlimited fusion reaction energy have brightened. This is the result of the Indo-US joint statement issued during Prime Minister Manmohan Singh's visit to Washington. The statement has a cryptic reference to something called ITER. The acronym is not even spelt out, and all that the statement says is, "India has expressed its interest in ITER and a willingness to contribute. The United States will consult with its partners considering India's participation". A little sense of mystery is, perhaps, appropriate, as it deals with the rarefied realm of plasma physics. ITER-International Thermonuclear Energy Reactor-is an experimental 'fusion reactor' to be built by a consortium of several nations, including the US, many in the European Union, Japan, China, Russia and South Korea. They have come together to spend up to \$12 billion (more than Rs 45,000 crore) to achieve the holy grail of nuclear technology - sustained energy from atomic fusion. To some, the effort is akin to alchemy. To others, it is the answer to all our energy problems, promising not only a limitless supply, but almost total environment-friendliness.

Southasiamedia.net, 24 August 2005

US, China duel in South Asia

WASHINGTON, DC: The South Asian nuclear arms race, one of the most potentially unstable and dangerous on the planet, has gone global. Not only are Pakistan and India feverishly racing each other to develop more sophisticated and powerful nuclear delivery and missile defense systems, they are looking increasingly to China and the United States to help them. China is no newcomer to this race. The massive infusion of North Korean Nodong missile technology to the Pakistan nuclear missile program over the past decade would never have been possible without the active, covert support of China, which shares common borders with both nations and is a strong, consistently supportive ally of both. The trade ran both ways. UPI's Arnaud de Borchgrave has reported how Abdul Qadeer Khan, the immensely popular father of Pakistan's nuclear weapons program, made many visits to North Korea providing crucial know-how for Pyongyang's own program that is now believed to have at least two workable nuclear weapons.

The Telegraph, 24 August 2005

Iran closer to bomb than US thinks

WASHINGTON: A nuclear expert warned on Tuesday that Iran could build a nuclear bomb much earlier than a recent US estimate which said Iran was between six and 10 years away from success. Gary Milhollin, director of the Wisconsin Project on Nuclear Arms Control, writes in the New York Times that "Americans should resist the latest intelligence-agency lullaby. Given the dismal performance of our spies and analysts in recent years, why should we think they have suddenly wised up? Iran is determined to get the bomb - all the agencies agree on that - and dealing with that threat is not a job that can be left for the next administration." According to him, Americans should not be comforted by the 6-10 year time lag before Iran gets itself a nuclear weapon, but be alarmed. Iran, he points out, started an essential part of the process this month by resuming the conversion of about 37 tons of natural uranium into the gaseous form that can be fed into centrifuges that spinning the gas at high speed, enrich its potency, either to a low level for fueling a reactor, or to a high level for fueling a bomb. The 37 tons, which are expected be ready for enrichment in about a month, would be sufficient for six to nine weapons.

The Asian Age, 24 August 2005

Indo-U.S. nuclear deal is unequal (Yashwant Sinha)

The dust has settled, at least for the present, on the issues arising out of the Prime Minister's visit to the United States and his statement to Parliament on July 29, 2005. Both Houses of Parliament have discussed his statement, specially the nuclear deal, in some detail. This perhaps is the time, therefore, to reflect coolly on certain aspects of the nuclear deal which still remain outstanding. The Prime Minister said in the last but one sentence of his statement to Parliament, "I, therefore, venture to think that my visit to the US has opened up new opportunities and possibilities for promoting our energy security and pathways to accelerated social and economic development." The single peg on which the Prime Minister rests the nuclear deal, therefore, is energy security which will accelerate social and economic development. Let us examine this approach in some detail. As is well

known, at present nuclear energy contributes less than three per cent to the energy basket of India.

The Indian Express, 24 August 2005

No trace of WMD programme in Iran: US experts (Dafna Linzer)

Traces of bomb-grade uranium found two years ago in Iran came from contaminated Pakistani equipment and are not evidence of a clandestine nuclear weapons programme, a group of US government experts and other international scientists has determined. "The biggest smoking gun that everyone was waving is now eliminated with these conclusions," said a senior official who discussed the still-confidential findings on the condition of anonymity. Scientists from the United States, France, Japan, Britain and Russia met in secret during the past nine months to pore over data collected by inspectors from the International Atomic Energy Agency, according to US and foreign officials. Recently, the group, whose existence had not been previously reported, definitively matched samples of the highly enriched uranium—a key ingredient for a nuclear weapon—with centrifuge equipment turned over by the government of Pakistan.

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Hindustan Times, 24 August 2005

US expert for close Indo-US ties to contain China

A leading American Sinologist has urged India and the US to forge close strategic ties to contain China. Richard D. Fisher, vice president of the International Assessment and Strategy Center, a Washington think tank, Monday urged New Delhi to raise its voice against military cooperation between China and Europe. "As India and America are considering many steps in strategic cooperation, we believe that deterrence has always rested on preparation," Fisher said, referring to China's growing military preparedness. "It is not the intention of the US to tell you what you need and where you want to go. But I do hope that our cooperation will put the Chinese on notice. "The Chinese have much more to gain while being responsible." Fisher, who has worked with the US Congress and several think tanks for two decades, has analysed security issues in East and South Asia with special focus on their impact on US security policies. He was speaking Monday at the Institute of Peace and Conflict Studies. He said the US and India were going to be the targets of China's nuclear intimidation. "The only way out is to develop a nuclear missile defence system," he said. "They threaten no one. They merely take away the other's ability to kill you."

Hindustan Times, 24 August 2005

Christian body asks US to murder Venezuelan President

Religious broadcaster Pat Robertson urged the United States to assassinate Venezuelan President Hugo Chavez, who is a "dangerous enemy," Roberts told watchers of his 'The 700 Club' television show. "If he thinks we're trying to assassinate him, I think that we really ought to go ahead and do it," Robertson, 75, said in a live broadcast on Monday from Christian Broadcasting Network headquarters in Virginia Beach, Virginia. Robertson's incendiary comment came at the close of a long report by his CBN news team on Chavez's anti-US rhetoric and growing links to both President Fidel Castro's communist Cuba and Arab nations.

The Indian Express, 24 August 2005

No trace of WMD programme in Iran: US experts

Traces of bomb-grade uranium found two years ago in Iran came from contaminated Pakistani equipment and are not evidence of a clandestine nuclear weapons programme, a group of US government experts and other international scientists has determined. "The biggest smoking gun that everyone was waving is now eliminated with these conclusions," said a senior official who discussed the still-confidential findings on the condition of anonymity. Scientists from the United States, France, Japan, Britain and Russia met in secret during the past nine months to pore over data collected by inspectors from the International Atomic Energy Agency, according to US and foreign officials. Recently, the group, whose existence had not been previously reported, definitively matched samples of the highly enriched uranium—a key ingredient for a nuclear weapon—with centrifuge equipment turned over by the government of Pakistan.

Deccan Herald, 24 August 2005

Hostilities break out in US over Iraq war (L K Sharma)

'Four More Years' is no longer the slogan for the re-election of President Bush. Instead, it will be the US military that will be in Iraq for four more years, according to one section. Some say it should start withdrawing. Some others say it should fight the war as long as it takes. A fresh debate on the Iraq policy has been sparked by a senior army commander's statement that the US might have to keep more than 1,00,000 troops in Iraq for the next four years. He said this after some officials had started talking of a gradual pull-out. General Peter Schoomaker, the Army's Chief of Staff, said such a protracted troop deployment was a "worst-case scenario", but the planners were already considering their options up to 2009.

Hindustan Times, 25 August 2005

US is engaged in global war on terror: Bush

WASHINGTON: US President George W Bush has said that America was engaged in a worldwide war against terrorism, a conflict affecting the security of every citizen. "Our nation is engaged in a global war on terror that affects the safety and security of every American," he said in an address to the National Guard of Idaho at Nampha (Idaho) on Wednesday. Bush stressed that so long as he was President, the US would stay in Iraq and fight till it won the war. "An immediate withdrawal of our troops in Iraq or the broader Middle East, as some have called for, would only embolden the terrorists and create a staging ground for more attacks against America and free nations. So long as I'm the President, we will stay, we will fight, and we will win the war on terror," Bush told the troops and their families. He said that during the last few decades terrorists grew to "believe that if they hit America hard, as in Lebanon and Somalia, America would retreat and back down," and added that the US would no longer "allow terrorists to establish new places of refuge in failed states from which they can recruit and train and plan new attacks".

Hindustan Times, 25 August 2005

Chinese websites used to target US systems: Report

WASHINGTON: Websites in China are being used as a staging ground for attacks on computer networks in the US Defence Department and other agencies, the Washington Post reported on Thursday. The newspaper said no classified systems have been compromised but officials were concerned that data pulled together from different agencies could become useful intelligence to an adversary. The newspaper cited four government officials who spoke separately about the intrusions, which were said to go back two or three years. It said the FBI had launched an investigation. "It's not just the Defence Department but a wide variety of networks that have been hit," including the departments of State, Energy, and Homeland Security as well as defence contractors, one official was quoted as saying.

The Times Of India, 25 August 2005

Most mothers not like you: Bush to Cindy

DONNELLY (IDAHO): President George W Bush took on the California mother, who has been defiantly protesting outside his Texas home, saying Tuesday that Cindy Sheehan doesn't represent the views of most military families and that fulfilling demands like hers for withdrawal from Iraq would weaken the US. Bush said he understood the anguish of the woman whose son was killed in Iraq last year. But he said he disagreed with her assertion that US troops should be brought home before more die in a "senseless war." "I think those who advocate immediate withdrawal from not only Iraq but the Middle East are advocating a policy that would weaken the US," Bush said. The president said US troops in Iraq are keeping Americans safe and that Iraqis are making progress toward democracy. He urged patience as officials in Baghdad struggle to complete a constitution.

Daily Times, 25 August 2005

Subramanyam to head taskforce on India-US deal

NEW DELHI: Noted defence expert K Subramanyam, who headed the Kargil inquiry panel, has been tipped to head a high-level taskforce being set up to work on the strategic deals with the United States that will follow from Prime Minister Dr Manmohan Singh's accord with US President George Bush last month. American Foreign Under-Secretary Nicholas Burns is coming to Delhi early next month for further discussions on the accord and the government felt that setting up a taskforce would ensure that India's interests are guarded in any decisions taken on implementation of the accord, sources in the prime minister's office said. Subramanyam has championed closer ties between India and the US and has written extensively in support of the deal struck by Singh and Bush to lift the sanctions imposed on India after its first nuclear tests at Pokharan back when Indira Gandhi was prime minister.

The Statesman, 25 August 2005

Weapons-ready NPT members

Iran and North Korea's clever manipulation of their rights to exploit nuclear energy under the nuclear Nonproliferation Treaty, to which Iran is a party and which North Korea may rejoin, together with deep difference among the Western powers and their partners, have put new obstacles in the path of efforts to rein in the nuclear weapons capabilities of the two states. If the USA and other parties cannot find greater unity in curbing the nuclear ambitions of the two countries, which President George W Bush termed members of the "axis of evil," the nuclear weapon potential of both may grow unchecked. Whether coordinated or not, both North Korea and Iran have resisted the effort to end their weapons-relevant nuclear activities by claiming the right of peaceful use of nuclear energy granted to NPT members. This, despite the fact that Iran - an NPT member - carried on clandestine efforts to enrich uranium, and North Korea - having withdrawn from the NPT - now processes enough plutonium to make six to eight bombs.

Hindustan Times, 25 August 2005

To protect India, US could have nuked China in '63

Boston, Aug 25: Top advisers to President John F Kennedy warned him in 1963 that if he pledged to defend India against any attack by communist China, the United States would likely have to use nuclear weapons to enforce the commitment, according to a newly de-classified tape recording. George Ball, Undersecretary of State in the Democratic administration, also warned in what today would be considered insensitive language that using a nuclear response could subject the country to charges of racism following the twin atomic bombings in Japan that ended World War II. "If there is a general appearance of a shift in strategy to the dependence on a nuclear defence against the Chinese in the Far East, we are going to inject into this whole world opinion the old bugaboo of being willing to use nuclear weapons against Asians when we are talking about a different kind of strategy in Europe," Ball told the President during a May 9, 1963, national security meeting in the White House. "This is going to create great problems with the Japanese -- with all the yellow people."

The Indian Express, 25 August 2005

John F. Kennedy had threatened to nuke China if it attacked India

Boston, Aug 25: Top advisers to President John F. Kennedy warned him in 1963 that if he pledged to defend India against any attack by Communist China, the United States would likely have to use nuclear weapons to enforce the commitment, according to a newly declassified tape recording. George Ball, Under-Secretary of State in the Democratic administration, also warned in what today would be considered insensitive language that using a nuclear response could subject the country to charges of racism following the twin atomic bombings in Japan that ended World War II. "If there is a general appearance of a shift in strategy to the dependence on a nuclear defence against the Chinese in the far East, we are going to inject into this whole world opinion the old bugaboo of being willing to use nuclear weapons against Asians when we are talking about a different kind of strategy in Europe," Ball told the President during a May 9, 1963, National Security meeting in the White House.

The Indian Express, 25 August 2005

'We will not help India make nuclear weapons'

Islamabad, Aug 3: Making it clear that it would not assist India in producing nuclear weapons, the US has said that the recent nuclear pact signed between the two countries was only to help New Delhi generate energy through peaceful nuclear technology. In a video conference, US Assistant Secretary of State Christina Rocca also told editors of Pakistani newspapers on Tuesday night that the ten-year defence pact with India was actually the renewal of an old one and its aim was to stabilise the region. She affirmed US opposition to the India-Pakistan-Iran gas pipeline, saying Tehran had violated the Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT). The India-US nuclear agreement would help India generate only energy through peaceful nuclear technology and would not assist in producing nuclear weapons, Rocca said. "We will not help India make nuclear weapons," she told News daily.

The Japan Times, 25 August 2005

Japan to develop rocket for joint defense system

WASHINGTON: The Japanese and U.S. governments have begun arranging for Japan to develop a rocket engine and the United States a warhead for the joint sea-based missile defense system, diplomatic sources said Tuesday. The missile shield system is scheduled to reach the development phase in fiscal 2006. The two countries will conclude a new pact on the project after Japan's Security Council endorses the plan around the end of this year. To fund the project to develop the enhanced Standard Missile-3 interceptor, the Defense Agency is expected to request billions of yen for fiscal 2006 in its annual budgetary request at the end of this month. The U.S. has already completed preparations for moving into the development stage to mass produce and deploy the missile, and the development-sharing arrangement is expected to accelerate cooperation getting the overall missile defense system up and running.

The Korean Herald, 25 August 2005

Six-nation talks to restart in Beijing Sept. 2: report (Lee Joo-hee)

With the six-nation talks on the North Korean nuclear standoff apparently set to resume Sept. 2, U.S. and North Korean officials held a fourth series of discussions through the informal New York diplomatic channel. China is considering restarting the six-party talks, which have been in recess since Aug. 7, Japan's Kyodo News agency quoted Chinese Vice Foreign Minister Wu Dawei as saying yesterday. Wu, China's top negotiator for the Beijing talks, made the comment in Tokyo talks with Japan's Social Democratic Party, Kyodo said. The report did not say whether Wu confirmed the comments to reporters, or whether SDP officials briefed reporters on the content of the meeting. An official at SDP headquarters could not immediately confirm the report. In Seoul, the Foreign Ministry said it had no confirmation yet on the date for resumption. But sources here have suggested the talks will likely resume in the latter part of next week once member countries wrap up their preparatory discussions.

The Associated Press, 25 August 2005

JFK Tape Reveals Nuclear Defense for India

BOSTON: Top advisers to President John F. Kennedy warned him in 1963 that if he pledged to defend India against any attack by China, the United States would likely have to use nuclear weapons to enforce the commitment, according to a newly declassified tape recording. George Ball, undersecretary of state in the Democratic administration, also warned in what today would be considered insensitive language that a nuclear response could subject the United States to charges of racism following the two atomic bombings of Japan that ended World War II. "If there is a general appearance of a shift in strategy to the dependence on a nuclear defense against the Chinese in the Far East, we are going to inject into this whole world opinion the old bugaboo of being willing to use nuclear weapons against Asians when we are talking about a different kind of strategy in Europe," Ball told the president during a May 9, 1963, national security meeting in the White House. "This is going to create great problems with the Japanese -- with all the yellow people."

Aljazeera, 24 August 2005

U.S.'s hollow threats against Iran

Bush's administration has in recent months decided to subcontract its Iran strategy to Europe. In what political analysts described as a dramatic reversal of its long-standing assertion that the United States will not negotiate with Iran over its nuclear ambitions, the White House announced last February that it was siding with the European Union big three states; France, Germany and Great Britain, in the diplomatic initiative to persuade Iran suspend its nuclear program. What lies behind this new engagement? It's absolutely not that the White House has gone soft on Iran as some may believe. The U.S.'s role in Iran's current nuclear standoff as an onlooker is more eye-catching compared with that of the European Union. However, the American President's recent threat of using the military strike option against Iran seems to be more a psychological deterrent than a real one.

The Hindu, 26 August 2005

Accord with United States not to halt indigenous nuclear programme

THANJAVUR: Technology denial by countries like the US had forced India to develop indigenous technology for its entire atomic energy programme, said Dr. V. Venugopal, Director, Radiochemistry and Isotopes group, Bhabha Atomic Research Centre (BARC), here on Thursday. Delivering the keynote address at a seminar on "Atomic energy, environment, and human welfare" held at the Ponnaiyah Ramajayam Engineering College, he recalled that after the Pokhran nuclear tests, the US stopped fuel for the Tarapur plant and Canadian scientists abruptly left the country. "We were left with no choice but to make our own fuel," he said. The facilities required for the entire nuclear cycle were then indigenously developed - opening of uranium mines, milling, preparing nuclear grade pure uranium oxide, fabrication of metallic and oxide fuels, operation of 15 reactors, reprocessing to recover plutonium and uranium 233, fabricating them into fuels for thermal and fast reactors, finally managing the waste into different matrices for storing and disposal.

The Indian Express, 26 August 2005

Terrorists converging on Iraq, US stays: Bush

NAMPA, IDAHO: US President George W. Bush has said that terrorists had converged on Iraq and pulling US troops out would only embolden them. Bush's speech was part of an effort to counter increased anti-war sentiment. A Harris poll released on Wednesday showed Bush's approval rating dropping to 40 per cent, while 58 per cent had a negative opinion. The previous Harris poll in June had Bush's approval rating at 45 per cent, versus 55 per cent disapproval. Bush said foreign fighters were targeting Iraqi civilians with car bombs and suicide attacks. "The stakes in Iraq could not be higher," he told an audience of about 9,500, on Wednesday, adding: "So long as I'm the President, we will stay, we will fight, and we will win the war on terror."

Times Of India, 26 August 2005

US wanted to nuke China for India

WASHINGTON: The United States considered using nuclear weapons against China in order to defend India in the 1960s but option was questioned in internal debates on two counts: there were fears it may be viewed as racism against oriental people after the nuking of Japan, and there were doubts about why Washington U.S should defend India when its colonial patron United Kingdom did not. Declassified tapes from National Security Council meetings during the Kennedy administration show the US President and his key advisors grappling with the Chinese threat in a meeting to discuss how to defend India. The tape recording is dated May 9, 1963, suggesting the debate was an afterthought because the India-China border war had ended in November 1962.

The New York Times, 26 August 2005

'63 Tapes Reveal Kennedy and Aides Discussed Using Nuclear Arms in a China-India Clash (Anand Giridharadas)

MUMBAI Aug. 25: In May 1963, President John F. Kennedy and his aides discussed the feasibility of using nuclear weapons in the event China attacked India for a second time, according to newly declassified audio recordings that were released Thursday by the John F. Kennedy Presidential Library and Museum in Boston. Over the crackle of the decades-old tapes, President Kennedy and his advisers can be heard discussing how to prevent India from becoming, in the popular idiom of the day, another domino to fall to Communism. On the tapes, Robert S. McNamara, who was President Kennedy's defense secretary, is heard to say: "Before any substantial commitment to defend India against China is given, we should recognize that in order to carry out that commitment against any substantial Chinese attack, we would have to use nuclear weapons. Any large Chinese Communist attack on any part of that area would require the use of nuclear weapons by the U.S., and this is to be preferred over the introduction of large numbers of U.S. soldiers."

China Daily, 26 August 2005

US scholar: Strong China not a security threat

WASHINGTON: A stronger China does not mean it becomes a threat to the United States and the Asian country's rapid development is to the benefit of the whole world, including America, a US scholar says. Michael Swaine, an expert on US-China military and security policy at the Carnegie Endowment for International Peace, a leading think-tank in the United States, paid tribute to China's rapid growth. "It is to the benefit of the world, to the benefit of Asia and to the benefit of the United States for China to be continuing to grow, to expand economically, to become more prosperous, to become, as a result hopefully, more stable and more involved in the international community," Swaine told Xinhua in a recent interview. "I myself don't believe that if China is becoming a larger power with more capability, ... it by definition becomes a threat to the United States," Swaine said. "If China's growth were to falter, or it began to decline or to break up, I think that many Americans would believe that this would be a very negative consequence for the region, for the world and for the United States. It will produce all kinds of difficulties," said Swaine.

Hindustan Times, 26 August 2005

PAC-3 missile defense: US to brief India

WASHINGTON: The Pentagon's top arms salesman will brief India next month on advanced US weapons, including the combat-tested Patriot PAC-3 air missile defense system plus two multi-role fighter aircraft, a spokesman said on Thursday. The presentation of the Patriot Advanced Capability, or PAC-3, by Lt Gen Jeffrey Kohler, head of the Pentagon's Defense Security Cooperation Agency, is significant because India has sought to buy another sophisticated anti-missile system, the Arrow, from Israel. Kohler will travel to New Delhi early next month to meet Indian Defense Ministry officials, said Jose Ibarra, a spokesman for the agency that handles US government-to-government weapons sales. The presentation does not necessarily mean the United States is ready to sell India the PAC-3, described by its manufacturers as the world's most capable system of its kind, Ibarra said. "This is just a briefing on a weapons system," he said.

Asia Times, 26 August 2005

Taking India's fight to the Hill (Ramtanu Maitra)

Recent reports indicate that the Indian Embassy in Washington, following consultations with New Delhi, has appointed Washington's lobbying heavyweight, Barbour Griffith & Rogers International (BG&R), which could get down to business as early as next month. The news should not come as a complete surprise to Asia Times Online readers. This author, in an article The man who oils India's wheels, dated January 25, informed readers that soon after his resignation from the State Department, former US ambassador to India, Robert Blackwill, was hired as president by BG&R in November 2004. According to BG&R's web site, its clients include the Republic of China (Taiwan). His appointment was not only a "Good Samaritan" act by Blackwill's friends; it also enhanced BG&R's prestige and made it a potent competitor for a host of contracts in Iraq, India and elsewhere, the author

predicted. It is apparent that the auspicious moment has arrived and the appointment could not be delayed any further. The article indicated that BG&R was going to be hired by the Indian Embassy as lobbyists.

The Hindu, 27 August 2005

US States bypass Bush; set to sign pact on freezing gas emissions

WASHINGTON: America's north-eastern States are on the brink of a declaration of environmental independence with the introduction of mandatory controls on greenhouse gas emissions of the kind rejected by the Bush administration. In the first regional agreement of its kind in the US, nine States are expected to announce a plan next month to freeze carbon dioxide emissions from big power stations by 2009 and then reduce them by 10 per cent by 2020. The region stretches from New Jersey to Maine and generates roughly the same volume of emissions as Germany.

The Indian Express, 27 August 2005

Bush urges Shi'ites not to alienate Sunnis

BAGHDAD: US President George W. Bush stepped in to attempt a resolution of the growing crisis over Iraq's constitution, calling a key Shi'ite leader to warn him not to alienate already disaffected Sunni Arabs, whose resistance to the draft showed no sign of abating on Friday. Bush's call to cleric Abdul Aziz al-Hakim, a driving force in the Islamist-led coalition, betrayed Washington's concern that a mid-October referendum could turn into a sectarian showdown rather than the unifying celebration that the US hoped would bury Iraq's authoritarian past. Thousands of supporters of former dictator Saddam Hussein and followers of maverick Shi'ite cleric Moqtada al-Sadr took to the streets in separate demonstrations on Friday to protest against provisions in the draft constitution aimed at creating a federal Iraq - a step many fear could lead to the country being divided. The draft was still being discussed with disgruntled Sunnis on Friday, extending talks originally meant to last three days.

The Indian Express, 27 August 2005

The measure of success

Critics began using the "Q" word to describe the war in Iraq two years ago, well before the Sunni insurgency and al Qaeda franchise-leader Abu Mussab al Zarqawi began inflicting serious casualties on U.S. and coalition forces. Today President George W. Bush's approval ratings are in the tank and calls for an unequivocal pull-out from the Iraqi "quagmire" are starting to be heard on Capitol Hill. But does this mean that the coalition is actually failing? Spearheaded by the Pentagon's office of Advanced Systems and Concepts, a group of DoD and civilian officials has been struggling to forge a consensus on so-called "measures of effectiveness" in the global war on terrorism..."Our tasking was to come up with some good alternative ideas, and the fact that the ability to measure how you were doing was a good idea was one of the initial things that came out of the game," said Gary Anderson, a former Marine colonel and frequent DoD consultant who ran a series of Pentagon-sponsored war games which examined alternative strategies to waging America's war on terrorism... The Pentagon-sponsored team concluded that the war on terrorism is essentially a global insurgency, where discontinuous groups that share a radical Islamic ideology are waging a campaign against the ideologies of the United States and its allies. Therefore, Anderson's team argued, US strategy should incorporate many of the same methods used to counter classic insurgencies, including covert military and police actions; political and economic reform; and the winning hearts and minds.

The Times Of India, 27 August 2005

Clintons get cosy with Republicans

WASHINGTON: One Clinton jets to Alaska and Iraq with Republicans, and enthusiastically sponsors legislation with Republican lawmakers who impeached her husband. The other plays golf with former president George H W Bush and accepts assignments from the current one. All this bipartisan snuggling by Senator Hillary Rodham Clinton and former president Bill Clinton has some Democrats and Republicans questioning their motives. Is this calculated politics designed to get the former first lady ready for a presidential bid in 2008? Or is it a pragmatic concession to the fact that Republicans control Washington, and working with them is the only way to get anything done? Do the Clintons have a bipartisan streak?

The Times Of India, 27 August 2005

US to brief India on PAC-3 missile defence

WASHINGTON: The Pentagon's top arms salesman will brief India next month on advanced US weapons, including the combat-tested Patriot PAC-3 air missile defense system plus two multirole fighter aircraft, a spokesman said on Thursday. The presentation of the Patriot Advanced Capability, or PAC-3, by Lt. Gen. Jeffrey Kohler, head of the Pentagon's Defense Security Cooperation Agency, is significant because India has sought to

buy another sophisticated anti-missile system, the Arrow, from Israel. Kohler will travel to New Delhi early next month to meet Indian Defense Ministry officials, said Jose Ibarra, a spokesman for the agency that handles US government-to-government weapons sales. The presentation does not necessarily mean the United States is ready to sell India the PAC-3, described by its manufacturers as the world's most capable system of its kind, Ibarra said.

Hindustan Times, 27 August 2005

Bush's popularity hits all-time low

US President George W Bush's popularity rating has plunged to an all-time low since he assumed office four and a half years ago, a survey has found. Continuing its downward slide, the President's approval rating in the month of August dipped by four per cent to touch the lowest level of 40 per cent, according to the Gallup poll. While he managed to garner the approval of 40 per cent of Americans, a staggering 56 per cent of the respondents opined that his performance in the White House was not satisfactory. The previous low score was last month, when 44 per cent of Americans polled between July 25-28 said they approved of Bush's performance. His previous worst disapproval figure was in a June 24-26 poll, when 53 per cent had a negative opinion of the US leader.

Hindustan Times, 27 August 2005

Bush will be to blame if something happens to him: Chavez

Venezuelan President Hugo Chavez has claimed that US leaders share religious broadcaster Pat Robertson's hope that he will be assassinated, and that if any plot is carried out, US President George W Bush will be to blame. Chavez brought up Robertson's remarks on Friday while addressing supporters at the Presidential palace, saying "he has expressed the desire of the elite that governs the United States." "If something happens to me, the responsible one will be George W Bush, he would be the murderer," said Chavez, who has repeatedly accused the Bush administration of plotting to overthrow him.

The News, 28 August 2005

Progress accelerated: US senator

MOSCOW: Russia is easing restrictions on US inspections of sensitive sites where strategic nuclear and other weapons are being dismantled and destroyed or stored under a US-funded programme, a senior US senator said here on Friday. "Progress... has accelerated since President Putin met President Bush" in Bratislava last February and agreed to "break the logjam" on site inspections, taxation of US funds sent to Russia for the programme and other issues, Senator Richard Lugar said. "Russia in the past had placed severe restrictions" on access by US experts to various sites, including those where fissile material from dismantled nuclear warheads was supposed to be stored, Lugar, chairman of the US Senate Foreign Relations Committee, told a small group of journalists. But that has changed in the months since Russian President Vladimir Putin and US President George W Bush held their summit in the Slovak capital. Specifically, Russia has agreed to permit three US inspections of the sites each year, he said.

The News, 28 August 2005

N Korea slams US monitor

SEOUL: North Korea said on Saturday Washington's decision to appoint a special envoy to monitor human rights in the reclusive country casts a shadow over six-party talks aimed at ending Pyongyang's pursuit of nuclear weapons. Earlier this month US President George W Bush named Jay Lefkowitz to promote human rights in North Korea, which Western politicians and activists say has an abysmal human rights record. The North's main newspaper, Rodong Sinmun, branded Lefkowitz a hard-line conservative, according to a report in Korean monitored by Seoul's Yonhap news agency. The Pyongyang daily said the appointment had "forced it to take a different approach" to the six-country talks that are scheduled to resume next week out of fear the appointment is an attempt to undermine its leaders, Yonhap said. "If the United States continues to act this way and cast chills on our generosity and flexibility, we cannot help but think otherwise," Rodong Sinmun said in a commentary carried in the Korean-language service of the North's official KCNA news agency.

Dawn, 28 August 2005

US-Russian efforts to save N-sites gain steam (David Holley)

MOSCOW: Joint US-Russian efforts to boost security against potential terrorist attacks on Russian storage sites for nuclear warheads have accelerated in recent months, the chairman of the Senate Foreign Relations Committee said here on Friday. Senator Richard G. Lugar (R-Ind.) credited the stepped-up pace of activity to a new commitment by Russian President Vladimir V. Putin after a February summit with President Bush in Bratislava, Slovakia. "We've had an agreement for inspections at the warhead storage sites that has broken the logjam of misunderstanding there," Lugar said at a news conference. "This is an important breakthrough." Under

the 1991 Nunn-Lugar Act, which established the Cooperative Threat Reduction programme, the United States has spent billions of dollars to help dismantle nuclear warheads, ballistic missiles, bombers, submarines and other weapons in former Soviet states.

The Times Of India, 29 August 2005

Indian burns midnight oil for CIA

NEW DELHI: The Central Intelligence Agency's National Intelligence Council (NIC) will now have an Indian brain. Professor Sumit Ganguly, who holds the Rabindranath Tagore chair in history in the University of Indiana, Bloomington, will join the NIC to help shape US policy on South Asia. As part of what is known as the Global Expertise Reserve Program, the NIC will use Ganguly's expertise on South Asia, especially India, as it seeks to interpret events and prophesy trends in South Asia. When contacted, Ganguly said he was not at liberty to talk about the appointment. But according to the NIC's website, experts like Ganguly will work with the intelligence community in warning policy makers of potential humanitarian, diplomatic, economic, or military crises, or in better understanding the factors contributing to those crises. Ganguly's appointment comes as US and India have embarked on an ambitious relationship to change the contours of the global nuclear order, signing a deal in July that gives India access to civilian nuclear technology. The deal is only part of a larger focus on India by US policy makers.

Deccan Herald, 29 August 2005

Bush popularity hits all-time low

US President George W Bush's popularity rating has plunged to an all-time low since he assumed office four-and-a-half years ago, a survey has found. Continuing its downward slide, the President's approval rating in the month of August dipped by four per cent to touch the lowest level of 40 per cent, according to the Gallup poll. While he managed to garner the approval of 40 per cent of Americans, a staggering 56 per cent of the respondents opined that his performance in the White House was not satisfactory. The previous low score was last month, when 44 per cent of Americans polled between July 25-28 said they approved of Bush's performance.

The Telegraph, 29 August 2005

Pak not to extradite Khan

Islamabad, Aug. 28: Asking the US to treat it as an ally and not as a "target", Pakistan has said it cannot go beyond what it has already done to help the probe into A.Q. Khan's nuclear proliferation network and ruled out extradition of the disgraced scientist. "The United States should realise that Pakistan has extended maximum possible cooperation to the international effort to dismantle the Khan network of nuclear proliferators and cannot go beyond what it has already done," Pakistan's ambassador to the US Jehangir Karamat said. "They should know that we cannot extradite Dr A.Q. Khan. They should not even talk about it," he was quoted as saying at a Washington policy analysis group meeting by the media here today. Karamat described US-Pak relations as "very good" but said the US would have to decide "whether it considered Pakistan an ally or not". "If we are an ally country we should be treated as an ally and not a target," he said.

Reuters, 29 August 2005

Japan Sees No Sign of U.S. - N.Korea Nuclear Deal

TOKYO: There were no signs of the United States and North Korea reaching agreement on key issues in their standoff over Pyongyang's nuclear ambitions and the timing of the next round of talks is uncertain, Japan said on Monday. "We understand that the countries concerned are making efforts, but regrettably, we see no signs of the United States and North Korea reaching an agreement on essential areas," Japan's top government spokesman, Hiroyuki Hosoda, told reporters. Hosoda made the remarks after Thai Foreign Minister Kantathi Suphamongkhon said on Sunday in Pyongyang that North Korea had told him it was not ready to rejoin six-party talks on its nuclear weapons programs. "The North Korean foreign minister told me what he had in mind, what had caused North Korea not to be able to participate in the six-party talks scheduled for Monday," Kantathi told reporters in Pyongyang. "The North Koreans said that they are willing to dismantle their nuclear weapons as long as there is trust among the parties concerned. They say they are ready to dismantle and go back to the NPT (Non-Proliferation Treaty), allowing the International Atomic Energy Agency to step in, as long as there is trust among parties."

The Guardian, 30 August 2005

Nuclear bomb plan revealed

A nuclear scientist said that Brazilian military officials came close to building an atomic bomb in the early 90s in defiance of a presidential order officially scrapping the programme in 1985. Jose Luiz Santana, the former president of Brazil's national nuclear energy commission (CNEN), said in a televised interview that many

components for an atomic bomb were manufactured in the early 90s. He said proponents of the bomb planned a test explosion in September 1990 at a military base in the remote Cachimbo mountains, in Brazil's eastern Amazon region. Military officials even obtained a supply of enriched uranium from another country to arm it, he told Globo TV, Brazil's largest network. He refused to identify the country or name the military officials involved in the programme. "I took office in April 1990 ... but it was only in August that CNEN managed to gain control of the container [of enriched uranium from the military]," he said. Brazil's government said last year that it was working to enrich its own uranium.

The New York Times, 30 August 2005

North Korea Delays Resuming Talks on Ending Nuclear Programs (Steven R. Weisman)

WASHINGTON, Aug. 29: North Korea, declaring its unhappiness with plans for a joint United States-South Korea military exercise, said Monday that it would not return this week to negotiations in Beijing over its nuclear program, as scheduled, but proposed to resume the talks the week of Sept. 12. Responding to the delay, Sean McCormack, the State Department spokesman, said the United States would be ready to return when the North Koreans wanted and suggested that it did not appear that the delay was caused by any problems in the negotiations themselves. "We've seen no indication that anybody is backing off their commitment to returning to the talks," Mr. McCormack said. The participants in the six-way talks are the United States, North Korea, South Korea, Japan, Russia and China, which has been the talks' sponsor. The talks broke off earlier this month, with plans for them to resume for work on a two- or three-page "statement of principles" that the United States hopes will guide future negotiations. The goal is to get North Korea to dismantle its nuclear programs in return for economic and political benefits.

Hindustan Times, 30 August 2005

US Army removes official who criticised Halliburton contract

WASHINGTON: A high-ranking Army official who publicly criticised the Pentagon's decision to award Halliburton Co a no-bid contract for work in Iraq has been demoted, officials said on Monday. Bunnatine H Greenhouse, who had been the Army Corps of Engineers' top procurement official since 1997, was removed, effective Saturday, for what Corps officials called a poor job performance. Her lawyer, however, said her removal constitutes "blatant discrimination" and violates an earlier agreement with the Army to suspend her demotion until "a sufficient record" pertaining to her complaints is complete. "The failure to abide by prior commitments and the circumstances surrounding Ms Greenhouse's removal are the hallmark of illegal retaliation," her attorney, Michael D Kohn, wrote in the letter to Rumsfeld.

Deccan Chronicle, 30 August 2005

Chavez to complain to UN against US

CARACAS: Venezuelan President Hugo Chavez has warned he will lodge a complaint against the United States at the United Nations and other international bodies if the US government fails to act against television evangelist Pat Robertson, who has called for Chavez's assassination. "If the US government does not take action that it must take, we will go to the United Nations and Organisation of American States to denounce the US government," the Venezuelan leader said on Sunday as he addressed participants at talks on a social charter for the Americas. He added he believed that by failing to act against Mr Robertson, the United States was "giving protection to a terrorist, who is demanding the assassination of a legitimate President." Mr Robertson caused a diplomatic stir last Monday when he said on the air that if Mr Chavez believed the United States was trying to kill him, "I think that we really ought to go ahead and do it."

Deccan Chronicle, 30 August 2005

US dismisses reports of Laden being wounded

KABUL: The US military and Nato peacekeeping forces on Monday dismissed reports carried on Islamic websites that Osama bin Laden had been injured in western Afghanistan. US spokesman Colonel James Yonts said that his military had checked claims that the Al Qaeda leader had been wounded by Spanish troops based in the western province of Herat. "When we looked into that report - you know any allegation such as this, we take it very seriously - we found no proof," Col. Yonts told reporters in Kabul. The claim first surfaced on August 24 in a story on Italian news website Adnkronos International. It quoted two messages carried by "various Islamic websites," the first of which said Bin Laden had been wounded in a clash with the Spaniards while the second gave details including that the injury was to his left leg. In May, Islamic websites were used to give the news that Abu Musab al-Zarqawi, Al Qaeda's pointman in Iraq, had been wounded. An audio message confirming the injury was later attributed to Zarqawi himself. The Nato-led peacekeeping force in Afghanistan, which has hundreds of Spanish troops based in Herat, also ruled out that any of its troops had injured Bin Laden, who has a \$50 US bounty on his head. "I'm afraid that was just a rumour. No truth in it," Nato spokesman in Kabul Major Andy Elmes said.

Dawn, 31 August 2005

Pakistan may also get N-cooperation from US: expert (Anwar Iqbal)

WASHINGTON, Aug 30: Pakistan can also receive civilian nuclear cooperation from the US if it can offer guarantees similar to what India is offering in return for the deal it has signed with the US, Stephen P. Cohen, an expert on India, Pakistan and South Asian security, told Dawn. Mr Cohen, a senior fellow at Washington's Brookings Institution, however, warned that because of Pakistan's past record the international community would like to verify Islamabad's assurances before offering it any deal. Other experts disagreed. They said that Pakistan should not expect similar cooperation from the US because it did not have a good record of protecting its nuclear assets. President Bush announced the deal to share civilian nuclear technology with India during Indian Prime Minister Manmohan Singh's visit to the White House last month. The US Congress is expected to debate the deal during the fall session which begins on Sept 6. The Indo-US agreement will have far-reaching consequences for Pakistan which, like India, is an unrecognized nuclear weapon state and has not yet signed the Nuclear Non-proliferation Treaty.

Reuters, 31 August 2005

U.S. Praises Libya, Wags Finger at Iran, North Korea

WASHINGTON: Iran, North Korea and Russia still are among the world's biggest violators of international arms control agreements but Libya is a poster child for reform, according to a State Department report on Tuesday. In an unclassified version of a "noncompliance report," the State Department urged tough action against countries violating arms control, nonproliferation and disarmament agreements. "Particularly in a post-9/11 world in which there exists a very real threat of weapons of mass destruction being used as weapons of terror, it is vital that the international community take all steps necessary to end noncompliance," the report said, referring to the attacks on September 11, 2001. The report, which was sent to members of Congress, did not specify what actions should be taken but a senior State Department official said the United States was discussing the report with a variety of countries that she declined to name. The report was prepared in three versions -- a watered-down unclassified one for public consumption, another labeled "secret" and a third marked "top secret" for a very small number of government officials.

The Asian Age, 31 August 2005

Rationale of Indo-US pact (Govind Talwalkar)

The Indo-US agreement signed by President George W. Bush and Prime Minister Manmohan Singh may not be a breakthrough, but it is a significant advance with great potential. It was President Bill Clinton and Prime Minister Atal Behari Vajpayee who initiated the move to redefine the relationship between the two countries. But the Clinton administration was constrained by its policy about non-proliferation, and hence, no agreement could be reached. It was the Rand Corporation report prior to the election of George Bush in 2000 which advocated the systematic decoupling of India and Pakistan by the US in its strategic calculations. The report said that US relations with these two countries should be governed after separately assessing the value of each of them to US interests. After assuming office, Bush and his colleagues tried to cultivate India, and entered into various bilateral agreements in the fields of military, counter-terrorism and economic cooperation.

The Guardian, 31 August 2005

Bush is the real threat (Tony Benn)

Now that the US president has announced that he has not ruled out an attack on Iran, if it does not abandon its nuclear programme, the Middle East faces a crisis that could dwarf even the dangers arising from the war in Iraq. Even a conventional weapon fired at a nuclear research centre - whether or not a bomb was being made there - would almost certainly release radioactivity into the atmosphere, with consequences seen worldwide as a mini-Hiroshima. We would be told that it had been done to uphold the principles of the nuclear non-proliferation treaty (NPT) - an argument that does not stand up to a moment's examination. The moral and legal basis of the NPT convention, which the International Atomic Energy Agency is there to uphold, was based on the agreement of non-nuclear nations not to acquire nuclear weapons if nuclear powers undertook not to extend nuclear arsenals and negotiate to secure their abolition. Since then, the Americans have launched a programme that would allow them to use nuclear weapons in space, nuclear bunker-busting bombs are being developed, and depleted uranium has been used in Iraq - all of which are clear breaches of the NPT. Israel, which has a massive nuclear weapons programme, is accepted as a close ally of the US, which still arms and funds it.

Reuters, 30 August 2005

U.S. Lifts Some Curbs on India Nuclear Cooperation

WASHINGTON: The United States on Tuesday moved to further nuclear cooperation with India by allowing six Indian entities involved in civil nuclear and satellite work to purchase less sensitive U.S.-made items without special licenses. The new rule, published in the Federal Register, removes some restrictions imposed after New

Delhi sparked international condemnation when it conducted nuclear weapons tests in 1998. Since then, President Bush has accelerated a diplomatic embrace of the world's largest democracy. U.S. officials said the Commerce Department rule change does not clear the way for the transfer of the kind of advanced nuclear power reactors and other technology that New Delhi is keen to obtain to meet its civilian energy needs. An agreement announced in July after Indian Prime Minister Manmohan Singh met Bush at the White House promised such broad nuclear cooperation in the future. But that agreement, upending decades-old nonproliferation standards, would require changes in U.S. law and international policy that the administration has yet to propose.

The Associated Press, 30 August 2005

New Report Comments on Biological Weapons

WASHINGTON: Evidence indicates that Russia, Iran, North Korea and Syria all continue to maintain biological weapons programs, according to the State Department. In a report released Tuesday, the department said China maintains "some elements" of an offensive biological weapons program. As for Cuba, the study said U.S. government experts were divided as to whether Cuba is trying to develop such capability. All six countries had been linked previously in varying degrees to biological weapons programs. The study, mandated by Congress, assesses compliance by foreign countries with arms control, nonproliferation and disarmament agreements. It covers developments over a two-year period ending in December 2004. The 108-page report assesses the situation in individual countries on all aspects of weapons of mass destruction --- nuclear, chemical and biological. It also reviews missile proliferation and the status of compliance with agreements on conventional forces in Europe, among other defense issues.

The Hindu, 31 August 2005

India's nuclear case to come up before United States Congress

NEW DELHI: With the United States Congress returning from its summer recess next week, the Bush administration is preparing its case for the legislative changes required to keep its end of the nuclear bargain struck with India last month. On 8 September, Under Secretary of State Nicolas Burns will testify before Congress on the importance of the India-US nuclear agreement. "His testimony will be the first presentation, as it were, on the subject, but there are also lots of private meetings" with legislators, US ambassador David Mulford told reporters here on Tuesday. The President has made a case (to provide India with civilian nuclear technology), he said. "But it has to be advanced to Congress and this is an issue that can be a little complicated."

The Times Of India, 31 August 2005

US takes 6 Indian N-facilities off restricted list

NEW DELHI: The US on Tuesday took six Indian nuclear and space facilities off its restricted Entities List. This is one more than was agreed between the two countries in July, when Bush and Manmohan Singh signed a landmark nuclear agreement. Announcing the lifting of restrictions, the US federal register said the procedure implements two of the steps the US agreed to take as part of the NSSP (Next Step in Security Partnership), which was wrapped up by the two leaders in Washington. While exports to these facilities will still need end-user certification, the US has essentially lifted restrictions on exports to these organisations. This is the first visible step after the Bush-Manmohan nuclear deal. These are - "removal of license requirements for exports and re-exports of items controlled unilaterally by the US for non-proliferation reasons to India and removal of six Indian entities from the Entity List."

The Hindustan Times, 31 August 2005

Hurricane Katrina leaves US Congressman Jindal homeless

Indian American Congressman Bobby Jindal was among thousands of residents in New Orleans, Louisiana, who were left without food or electricity after Hurricane Katrina pounded the US Gulf coast. "The events of the last 48 hours have hit us harshly, and the effects of Hurricane Katrina are still not fully known," Jindal, a resident of Louisiana's New Orleans that has been submerged under the flood waters, said on his website. "I know most of you, like my family and I, have spent a restless night, evacuated from your homes and still without power. We are all worried about what we will find when we are finally given the all clear to return," he said.

The Tribune, 31 August 2005

USA says Dawood "very much" in its sight

NEW DELHI: As Pakistan insisted that underworld don Dawood Ibrahim, whose deportation is sought by India, is not in its territory, the USA today said the fugitive is "very much" in its sight and it would like to see individuals like him apprehended. "Individuals like him... we would like to see them apprehended," American Ambassador David Mulford told reporters here on being asked about Dawood, a designated terrorist by the USA, and said to be in Pakistan. "He is very much in our sight," Mulford said without elaborating. India yesterday sought the deportation

of Dawood and 30 others during the Home Secretary-level talks but Pakistan said the underworld don was not in the country and lived "somewhere else".