

The People's Daily, 1 December 2004

China backs IAEA resolution on Iran nuclear issue

China backs the resolution made by the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) on the Iran nuclear issue and believes the resolution will help solve the issue in an appropriate and timely way under the IAEA framework, Chinese Foreign Ministry spokeswoman Zhang Qiyue said Tuesday. Zhang told a regular press conference that China considers the resolution will help strengthen international nuclear nonproliferation mechanism and safeguard the peaceful use of nuclear power under related supervision system. China is willing to join hands with concerned parties to continue playing a constructive role to realize the above objectives, the spokeswoman said.

The Daily Times, 1 December 2004

Iran must do more: Bush

OTTAWA: President George W Bush on Tuesday welcomed a decision by Iran to freeze sensitive nuclear activities but said that was not the final step and the Islamic republic needed to go further to show its commitment to abandoning nuclear weapons ambitions. "The Iranians agreed to suspend but not terminate their nuclear weapons program. Our position is that they ought to terminate their nuclear weapons program," Bush said during a joint news conference with Canadian Prime Minister Paul Martin. In his first public comments on Iran since the UN nuclear watchdog agency on Monday passed a resolution approving Iran's week-old suspension of sensitive nuclear activities, Bush said Iran had "obviously got more work to do." The passage of the resolution by the International Atomic Energy Agency allowed Iran to escape censure over its nuclear program. Bush reiterated US demands that the suspension must be verifiable. "I viewed yesterday's decision by the Iranians as a positive step, but it is certainly not the final step and it is very important for whatever they do to make sure that the world is able to verify the decision they have made," Bush said.

The Daily Times, 1 December 2004

Iran says nuclear freeze won't last long

TEHRAN: Iran reiterated on Tuesday it was only prepared to freeze its uranium enrichment activities for a few months and would not, as the EU and Washington want, permanently mothball facilities which could make atomic bombs. The comments, made by Iran's chief nuclear negotiator, were a further blow to European Union efforts to persuade Tehran to scrap enrichment for good and were likely to fuel US concerns that Iran secretly plans to produce nuclear weapons. Iran, which insists its nuclear programme is solely for electricity generation, on Monday escaped possible UN sanctions after agreeing to suspend all activities which could be used to make bomb-grade material. The EU hopes Iran will make the suspension permanent in return for trade deals and other incentives. But Tehran says it will never give up its right to develop a fully-fledged nuclear programme, from uranium mines to reactors.

The Dawn, 1 December 2004

Australia 'innocently' exported N-kno whow: Minister informs seminar

SYDNEY, Nov 30: Australia may have "innocently" exported nuclear technology to parties with weapons of mass destruction programs, Defence Minister Robert Hill said on Tuesday on the sidelines of an anti-proliferation forum. As environmental lobby Green peace accused Australia of double standards over nuclear proliferation, Mr Hill urged all Southeast Asian nations to closely monitor their exports of what he called "dual-use" goods. Hill did not specify whether the material in question may have gone to government or non-government bodies, and said he had no reports of such products being obtained by terrorist organisations.

The Jang, 1 December 2004

N Korea waiting for change in US policy before talks

BEIJING: North Korea is waiting for a change in US policy towards Pyongyang before agreeing to a date for another round of talks to resolve its nuclear issue, China said Tuesday. "As to when the next round of six-party talks will be held, the Democratic People's Republic of Korea needs to further observe the new US government to see if its policies on the DPRK have changed," Chinese foreign ministry spokeswoman Zhang Qiyue said. The North has accused the United States of adopting a "hostile" policy towards the reclusive country. Its message was relayed to China during a visit by Beijing's special envoy to North Korea, Ning Fukui to the North from November 24-26 aimed at pushing for a resumption of the stalled talks.

The New York Times, 1 December 2004

One More Round on Iran's Nukes

The compromise resolution thrashed out this week on Iranian nuclear programs is not enormously satisfying, but it represents the best available alternative. Whether it actually stops Tehran's long-running drive to build nuclear weapons will be clearer when it's time to clarify and tighten this set of temporary and conditional agreements sometime next year. Success will depend on whether Washington and Europe can overcome their mutual suspicions and pursue a common strategy including explicit incentives and explicit threats.

The People's Daily, 1 December 2004

FM spokeswoman: DPRK's stand on six-party talks remains unchanged

The Democratic People's Republic of Korea (DPRK) will adhere to the goal of nuclear weapon free and still wants to settle the issue through the six-party talks, said a Foreign Ministry spokeswoman Tuesday. The opinion of the DPRK side was learned by Ning Fukui, Chinese ambassador on the Korean Peninsula affairs, who visited the country last week, said spokeswoman Zhang Qiyue. The DPRK side hoped the new round of six-party talks would make substantive achievements, Zhang said. From Nov. 24 to 26, Ambassador Ning visited the DPRK and had talks with DPRK Deputy Foreign Minister Kim Kye-gwan and Deputy Director of American Affairs for the DPRK's Foreign Ministry Ri Gun on further promoting the six-party talks process.

The People's Daily, 2 December 2004

Analysis: Iran's comforts and worries on new IAEA resolution

The International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) on Monday evening wrapped up its Board of Governors' meeting, adopting a moderately worded resolution on Iran's nuclear case. Iran, though somewhat comforted by the resolution, accepted it reluctantly, eyeing something worrisome and uncertain in the resolution and the future development of the nuclear issue. From the diplomatic and tactical perspective, the Islamic Republic, undoubtedly, achieved great victory at the IAEA meeting. As what Hassan Rowhani, the country's chief nuclear official, has pointed out that Iran, supported by the European Union (EU), frustrated US attempts to refer the Iranian case to the United Nations Security Council.

The Nation, 2 December 2004

Iran freeze 'not the final step'

WASHINGTON: US President George W. Bush said Tuesday that Iran's agreement to freeze all uranium enrichment activities was "certainly not the final step" in easing US fears that Tehran seeks a nuclear weapon. "The Iranians agreed to suspend - but not terminate - their nuclear weapons program. Our position is that they ought to terminate their nuclear weapons program," Bush said. The UN nuclear watchdog agency Monday spared Iran from being referred to the UN Security Council for possible sanctions after Tehran agreed, in a deal with Britain, France and Germany, to suspend its uranium enrichment program. Iran quickly boasted of having humiliated the United States by agreeing to only a temporary freeze and beaten the UN sanctions threat. In Washington, the US State Department rejected such claims as "jaundiced, prejudiced and counterfactual." Bush would not say whether he still hoped to take the Islamic republic before the Security Council or say directly whether he was unhappy about Iran's agreement with the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA).

The Nation, 2 December 2004

N Korea flays IAEA decision over S Korean N-experiments

SEOUL: North Korea vowed Wednesday to step up its "nuclear deterrent force," accusing the UN atomic agency of hushing up South Korea's past nuclear experiments. Pyongyang insisted that South Korea's nuclear activities should be discussed as the most important issue at six-party talks on ending North Korea's nuclear weapons drive. The International Atomic Energy Agency last week reproached South Korea for its undeclared experiments in which small amounts of weapons-grade nuclear material were produced. But the watchdog allowed South Korea to escape referral to the UN Security Council for possible sanctions. "Under this situation the DPRK (North Korea) is left with no option but to increase its nuclear deterrent force," a North Korean foreign ministry spokesman said in a statement published by the official KCNA news agency. "If the IAEA does not settle the secret nuclear experiments of South Korea in an understandable manner, this issue will stand out as the most important issue at the six-party talks pending a top priority discussion," he said.

The Tribune, 2 December 2004

The threat from N-weapons: India has to face the situation (G. Parthasarathy)

In its historic ruling on July 8, 1996, the World Court held that countries possessing nuclear weapons had not just a "need" but an "obligation" to commence negotiations leading to nuclear disarmament. The court held that the use of nuclear weapons would be generally contrary to the principles of international law, though there was some doubt about the use of such weapons when the "very survival of a State" was threatened. India's most serious security threat arises from the fact that it is located between two of the worst nuclear proliferators in the world - China and Pakistan. China has supplied Pakistan with designs, fissile materials, components and reprocessing facilities to enable that country to make nuclear weapons. Pakistan in turn has passed on nuclear weapons and uranium enrichment designs and components to Libya, Iran and North Korea. There is reason to believe that there is a blossoming nuclear relationship between Pakistan and Saudi Arabia, given the fact that Prince Sultan and Saudi scientists have been given access to Pakistan nuclear facilities and Dr A.Q. Khan has visited Saudi Arabia as a guest of Prince Sultan.

The Nation, 3 December 2004

US calls for North Korean nuclear talks

TOKYO: Washington hopes to hold a new round of talks to solve the North Korean nuclear issue by the first week of January, US State Department number two Richard Armitage said in an interview published Thursday. "We all hope to get the talks started again, maybe sometime in December or the first week of January," the mass-circulation Yomiuri Shimbun quoted Armitage as saying in the interview in Washington on Tuesday. China said Tuesday North Korea was waiting for a change in US policy towards Pyongyang before agreeing to a date for another round of six-party talks involving the two Koreas, China, Japan, Russia and the United States. The North has accused the United States of adopting a "hostile" policy towards the reclusive country. Three rounds of multilateral talks to end North Korea's nuclear ambitions have taken place since the standoff erupted in October 2002. North Korea boycotted a fourth round of talks scheduled for Beijing in September in order to wait out the November US Presidential elections, according to many analysts. Washington has called for a complete, verifiable and irreversible dismantlement of the North's nuclear weapons program.

The Nation, 3 December 2004

US slams Iran for restricting IAEA access to military sites

WASHINGTON: The United States on Thursday denounced Iran for not allowing inspectors from the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) to visit military sites suspected of housing work on nuclear weapons. The State Department said the denial of access to the two sites, despite Tehran's repeated insistence that it is not developing nuclear arms and vows to cooperate with the IAEA, was "an anomaly in Iran's behavior."

The Daily Times, 3 December 2004

IAEA seeks access to suspect Iranian military sites

WASHINGTON: The International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) has asked Iran to give its inspectors access to two Iranian military sites suspected of working on nuclear weapons, The New York Times said on Thursday, quoting diplomats in Vienna. The UN nuclear watchdog agency's suspicion is based on satellite photographs indicating the testing of high explosives - of a type used to detonate nuclear weapons - and procurement records showing the purchase of equipment that can be used for enriching uranium, the diplomats were quoted as saying. The two military facilities that IAEA inspectors are seeking access to are the Parchin military complex southeast of Tehran, and Lavisan II, in the northeast of the capital Tehran, the daily said. IAEA Director General Mohamed ElBaradei told The New York Times in an interview that he had asked Tehran repeatedly and unsuccessfully for access to the two military sites. "We still have work to do, a lot of work," the IAEA chief said, estimating that it would take at least two years to resolve all of the outstanding questions on Iran's nuclear programme even with full Iranian cooperation.

The Khaleej Times, 3 December 2004

Iran on the offensive, yet again!

IN THE ongoing battle of words between Iran and the US over the former's nuclear programme, Iran has now come one up on the superpower by claiming a great victory after the UN said it would not punish the Islamic republic with sanctions. This has been a setback for the US which was rooting for UN sanctions on Iran for continuing to pursue 'a clandestine nuclear programme'. Iran is predictably upbeat after the UN announcement and has boldly declared that it would not give up its right to nuclear power. Top Iranian official Hassan Rohani has stressed during talks with European countries that Iran's freeze on uranium enrichment was only temporary. That brings the nuclear standoff back to where it began. For countries that were hoping the EU would be able to succeed where the US hasn't, the UN decision has perhaps come at the wrong time. But for Iran, it's like a shot in the arm. Teheran's tone also indicates that it has once again turned belligerent. For Teheran's friends in the international community, while the news is welcome, its sudden show of defiance is worrisome.

The Nation, 4 December 2004

South Korea urges dialogue to solve N-standoff

LONDON: South Korean President Roh Moo-Hyun urged dialogue rather than the use of force to solve the North Korean nuclear standoff, saying in an interview Friday he was sure talks would eventually lead to a resolution. "The more advisable course would be to adopt a stance of dialogue and reconciliation vis-a-vis North Korea," Roh, who is visiting Britain, told the BBC in an interview. "In fact, an observation of history will show that the resort to force or forceful means has always generated considerable fall-out and this in turn has led to yet more problems in its wake," he said. The South Korean leader made the remarks amid renewed hopes of a resumption of six-country nuclear talks, involving North and South Korea, the United States, China, Japan and Russia.

The Daily Times, 4 December 2004

'Iran making a lot of mistakes'

WASHINGTON: US Defence Secretary Donald Rumsfeld said on Thursday Iran was "making a lot of mistakes" but said any action to prevent it from acquiring nuclear weapons was a call for President George W Bush and other leaders to make. Rumsfeld was asked in an interview with Fox News television whether the United States could allow Iran to become another North Korea, which is believed to have nuclear weapons. "The Iranians are making a lot of mistakes, let me just put it that way," Rumsfeld said. Earlier, he said Bush has decided to work through the Europeans and the United Nations to put diplomatic pressure on Iran to give up nuclear programme. "And what one has to do at that stage is continue to put pressure on them, and it's up to the countries of the United Nations to decide what kind of steps they may or may not want to take," he said. Asked what the odds were that the United States would have to confront Iran militarily, Rumsfeld said, "I guess those are calls for the president ... or for other leaders of other countries to make."

The Daily Times, 4 December 2004

Iran to resume uranium enrichment within six months: Rafsanjani

TEHRAN: Iran will resume enriching uranium after a maximum of six months, powerful former president Akbar Hashemi Rafsanjani vowed on Friday, reaffirming that Tehran's freeze on nuclear fuel cycle work is only temporary. "The last word is after this period, which I do not assume will exceed six months ... we must seriously and firmly follow enrichment programmes and use the very important advantages of nuclear technology," he said. "So far, we have reached the point that we accept to suspend parts of our activities for a period that was not necessary at all. Our negotiators have tried to shorten this period and we interpret it to be about two, three months up to six months," the prominent cleric said at Friday prayers. Earlier this week the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) spared Iran the fate of being referred to the UN Security Council for possible sanctions after Tehran agreed in a deal with Britain, France and Germany to suspend its uranium enrichment programme.

The Daily Times, 4 December 2004

Iran accused of buying suspect metal

VIENNA: Intelligence reports accuse Iran of buying large amounts of a metal that has many civilian uses but which some US and other countries' officials believe Tehran wanted exclusively for an atomic bomb, diplomats say. Washington says that oil-rich Iran is developing nuclear weapons under cover of a nuclear energy programme. Tehran denies this, insisting its atomic ambitions are limited to the peaceful generation of electricity. One non-US diplomat, citing intelligence gathered by his country, said Iran bought "huge amounts of beryllium from a number of countries" but gave no details on the amount or states involved. Beryllium has a long list of innocent uses, such as in spark plugs and X-ray equipment. However, the metal can also be combined with polonium-210 (Po-210), a substance Iran is known to have worked with, to initiate the chain reaction in a bomb.

Other diplomats and one US official - all speaking on condition of anonymity - said they had intelligence Iran had acquired and worked with beryllium.

The Daily Times, 4 December 2004

N Korea says US 'red line' can trigger war

SEOUL: North Korea said the United States had no right to unilaterally set limits on Pyongyang's nuclear activities and these "red line" limits could spark a war. The term "red line" is used informally by diplomats from five countries involved in stalled negotiations aimed at dismantling the North's nuclear programme to refer to actions by the North that could trigger a breakdown of the talks. Analysts believe the North would breach the "red line" if it transferred nuclear weapons or a significant component of such a weapon out of the country. "Now the US bellicose forces are going to make the red line the starting point of a war," the North's main newspaper Rodong Sinmun said. "The red line means a limit to the DPRK's promotion of (the) nuclear programme unilaterally set by the US," Rodong Sinmun said in an article carried by the official KCNA news agency.

The International Herald Tribune, 4 December 2004

Iran reportedly working on longer-range missile (Douglas Jehl)

Iran is secretly developing a longer-range ballistic missile than it has publicly acknowledged, with the capacity to strike targets as far away as Berlin, according to an opposition group. The group says the missile, which it says could have the capacity to carry nuclear warheads, is being developed with help from North Korean scientists, even as Iran has agreed to curbs on its nuclear program in a new pact with three European countries. The dissident group says the new missile would have a range of more than 1,500 miles, hundreds of miles longer than the most advanced missiles now in Iran's arsenal, an upgraded version of the Shahab-3 that was tested in the summer.

The Khaleej Times, 4 December 2004

China launches new class of nuclear submarine designed to fire ICBMs

WASHINGTON: China has launched the first submarine in a new class of nuclear subs designed to fire intercontinental ballistic missiles, US defense officials said. The submarine is, at a minimum, months away from having missiles installed and going on a cruise, one official said on Friday, discussing foreign weapons developments only on the condition of anonymity. Still, it is further evidence of China's intentions to expand both its nuclear weapons and submarine forces, officials say. It was widely known that China was building the new class of nuclear-missile submarine, called the "Type 094," but the launch is far ahead of what US intelligence expected, one official said. It would be China's first submarine capable of launching nuclear weapons that could reach the United States from the country's home waters, officials said. The Chinese military has also been developing a new class of submarine-launched ballistic missile, called the JL-2 that is expected to have a range in excess of 4,600 miles. The Type 094 submarine would carry these missiles, but it is not clear whether the missiles are ready for deployment.

The Khaleej Times, 4 December 2004

N. Korea says met US officials, no nuclear progress

SEOUL : North Korean and US officials met this week in New York but made no progress on restarting six-party talks on the North's nuclear programmes, a North Korean Foreign Ministry spokesman said on Saturday. The official KCNA news agency quoted the spokesman as saying Pyongyang was still prepared to be patient to see what the North Korea policy of newly re-elected President George W. Bush's revamped administration looked like. This was the North's clearest mention yet of Bush's election victory a month ago. Contacts took place between the United States and North Korea in New York on Nov. 30 and Dec. 3, the spokesman said. Typically, such meetings of the "New York channel" are between members of the North's mission to the United Nations and State Department officials.

The Dawn, 5 December 2004

EI Baradei denies charges

VIENNA, Dec 4: UN nuclear chief Mohamed ElBaradei angrily denied on Saturday charges he had collaborated with Iran ahead of publishing written reports on his investigation of the Islamic Republic's controversial nuclear programme. "We never show a report to any single member" of the International Atomic Energy Agency, "not the least of course an inspected country," ElBaradei said. ElBaradei was reacting to news reports that he had heeded Iranian demands to drop mentions of IAEA requests to visit the Parchin military site and Iran's use of the sensitive material beryllium in a report he had made to the IAEA board in September.

The Indian Express, 5 December 2004

N-talks after Bush forms team: N Korea

SEOUL: North Korea made it clear on Saturday it would not return to six-party talks on its nuclear programmes until US President George W. Bush assembled his new team and Washington decided its policy toward Pyongyang. North Korean and US officials met twice this week in New York but made no progress on restarting the talks, a North Korean Foreign Ministry spokesman said, according to KCNA news agency.

The Daily Times, 5 December 2004

Powell says US can't hunt Iran nukes in caves

WASHINGTON: US Secretary of State Colin Powell said on Friday that Washington had no way to force Iran to allow UN inspectors unrestricted access to suspected nuclear sites despite US doubts Tehran would come clean on its own. Powell also said Iran's agreement with European nations last month to suspend some suspicious nuclear activities was inadequate, but

the international community must still press Iran to reveal the full extent of its programme. The Bush administration fears the Islamic republic may be developing a nuclear weapon at secret sites, where it may continue to work, while it has agreed to open other facilities to inspectors. Powell acknowledged that Washington has failed to win international support, even from its major European allies, to demand unrestricted access.

The People's Daily, 6 December 2004

DPRK calls for establishment of peace mechanism in six-party talks

The Democratic People's Republic of Korea (DPRK) said on Saturday that Pyongyang is not in a hurry to resume the six-party talks on the country's nuclear activities saying it wants to establish a "peace mechanism" with the five other parties involved while discussing nuclear issues on the Korean peninsula. The official Korean Central News Agency (KCNA) said in a commentary Saturday that the United States' claim of wanting "the establishment of a peace mechanism after the settlement of the nuclear issue," gives the impression that the US is interested in settling the Korean Peninsula issue. A lasting peace mechanism was proposed by US Assistant State Secretary James Kelly during the second round of six-party talks held in Beijing, pledging that if the DPRK abandons its nuclear ambitions completely, the US and four other parties would sign a long-term peace agreement with the DPRK to replace the current non-aggression pact, known as the armistice mechanism, in place for the last 50 years. According to the commentary, the establishment of a peace mechanism was envisaged in the Korean Armistice Agreement and a UN resolution supporting it was adopted. All participants in the six-party talks have manifested their stands that the issue of establishing a peace mechanism on the Korean peninsula should be included in the process of settling the nuclear issue, the commentary said.

The Dawn, 6 December 2004

Tehran bans military sites for UN team

TEHRAN, Dec 5: Iran said on Sunday it was not obliged to allow UN atomic energy agency inspectors to visit military sites alleged to be involved in secret nuclear weapons work, but that it was willing to discuss the issue. "It is not a matter of unlimited commitments and unlimited inspections," foreign ministry spokesman Hamid Reza Asefi told reporters when asked if International Atomic Energy Agency teams would be able to probe two suspect military facilities. "We will act in accordance with the NPT (Non Proliferation Treaty), our duties and responsibilities," Mr Asefi added. The IAEA is mandated under the NPT to verify that all nuclear material in a country is declared and not being diverted for nuclear weapons purposes, as the United States claims is the case in Iran.

The Dawn, 6 December 2004

IAEA has access in Iran, says ElBaradei

VIENNA, Dec 5: UN atomic agency chief Mohamed ElBaradei weighed into the debate on whether the IAEA has the tools it needs to investigate Iran's nuclear programme when he said his agency had good access to suspicious sites. "We follow on every piece of information that can give us an indication that there might be undeclared nuclear materials in Iran," ElBaradei said in an interview on Saturday. An IAEA board of governors resolution on Iran last week had failed to give the agency the "unrestricted access" in the Islamic Republic which nations like the United States say is needed if the IAEA is to resolve the Iranian nuclear question. ElBaradei said the issue has been raised that "we do not have the authority to go everywhere" but he said this was a "non-issue because we have received access to every facility we asked for in Iran." The IAEA goes beyond NPT accords in what it calls "transparency visits," when it asks Iran as a confidence-building measure to allow it to inspect sites, even if the agency does not have a suspicion of nuclear material at these places, ElBaradei said.

The Daily Times, 6 December 2004

COMMENT: Was it against nukes or just BJP? (V Krishna Ananth)

The Congress party has gone on record, time and again, stressing that the explosions on May 11-13, 1998 and the weaponisation programme were possible only because Jawaharlal Nehru, Indira Gandhi and Rajiv Gandhi worked to that end. The claim is indeed correct. Barring Morarji Desai's brief term as prime minister, the nuclear programme received un-stinted support from all the regimes. It was certainly not an "achievement" of the BJP and Atal Behari Vajpayee. Of course, exercising the nuclear option and weaponisation were part of the BJP's stated agenda and integral to its fascist outlook. The new regime's attitude towards the nuclear weapons programme is no different in any substantive sense from that of the earlier one. The idea that it should be given more time before a campaign is launched or stepped up suffers from the same fatal flaw that made the past campaigners for peace end up as apologists of the Soviet establishment.

The Jang, 6 December 2004

IAEA inspectors return to S Korea

SEOUL: Four inspectors from the UN nuclear watchdog agency began additional investigations on Monday into South Korea's past secret nuclear experiments, officials said. Last month, the Vienna, Austria-based International Atomic Energy Agency decided not to refer the issue of South Korea's nuclear experiments to the U.N. Security Council, which could have imposed punitive measures. Still, the IAEA's board of governors criticized South Korea for conducting plutonium and uranium experiments in 1982 and 2000 without reporting them to the agency.

The New York Times, 6 December 2004

Iran Hints It Sped Up Enriching Uranium as a Ploy (NAZILA FATHI)

TEHRAN, Dec. 5: Iranian officials have hinted in recent days that they sped up their enrichment of uranium in the past year to put Iran in a better position to negotiate with the West. In a rare admission, Sirous Nasseri, a member of Iran's negotiating team with three European countries over its nuclear program, was quoted Sunday in the daily newspaper Shargh as saying that Iran had mastered the nuclear fuel cycle since last year, when it came under international pressure to abandon its

uranium enrichment program. "We are in a better negotiating position for political work than last year," the daily quoted him as saying. Ali Akbar Salehi, Iran's former ambassador to the International Atomic Energy Agency, told students at Ferdowssi University in Mashhad on Wednesday that the government of President Muhammad Khatami had, for the first time, allocated money and facilities to make "advanced centrifuges" for uranium enrichment, Shargh also reported. Iran began its nuclear program before the Islamic revolution in 1979 with aid from the United States, Germany and France. But the world has been suspicious of the nuclear program of Iran's Islamic government.

The New York Times, 6 December 2004

North Korea Said to Expand Arms Program (DAVID E. SANGER and WILLIAM J. BROAD)

VIENNA, Dec. 3 - Nearly two years after international nuclear inspectors were ejected from North Korea, the director general of the International Atomic Energy Agency says he is now certain that the nuclear material his agency once monitored there has been converted into fuel for four to six nuclear bombs. The assessment by the energy agency's chief, Mohamed ElBaradei, in an interview here at its headquarters, aligns with the private assessments of many American intelligence officials. But it goes well beyond anything that the Central Intelligence Agency or President Bush and his aides have said in public. In the interview, Dr. ElBaradei said his judgment that North Korea had converted its stockpile of spent nuclear fuel into weapons-grade plutonium was not based on new intelligence. Instead, he said, it was based on the agency's years of accumulated knowledge of North Korea's abilities, and the amount of time that had passed since North Korea ejected inspectors and began removing the 8,000 spent nuclear fuel rods that inspectors had been monitoring.

The People's Daily, 7 December 2004

Russia: Korea nuke talks in late Jan.

DPRK could return to six-party talks on its nuclear programs in late January after US President Bush forms his new cabinet, Russian ambassador to Japan Alexander Losyukov said Monday. "Probably, the negotiations could be restarted sometime at the end of January," Losyukov, Russia's former point man on the talks, told reporters. "We think the sooner we restart the negotiations, the better." DPRK said on Saturday it would not return to the talks involving North and South Korea, the United States, Japan, Russia and China, until Bush assembled his new team and Washington decided its policy toward Pyongyang.

The People's Daily, 7 December 2004

China stresses urgency of strengthening Biological Weapons Convention

A Chinese diplomat to the United Nations Conference on Disarmament stressed the urgency of strengthening an international convention on controlling biological weapons Monday in Geneva. "The Biological Weapons Convention (BWC) plays a key role in eliminating the threat of and preventing proliferation of biological weapons," said Hu Xiaodi, the Chinese Ambassador on disarmament affairs to the United Nations office here. The increasing threat of bio-terrorism and transboundary prevalence of infectious diseases is a reminder to the world of the necessity and urgency of strengthening the effectiveness of the BWC, he said. Hu made the remarks at the annual meeting of signatories to the convention which began Monday and will run through Friday. He pointed out that a sound and effective system of disease surveillance and response is conducive to minimizing the impact of infectious diseases on people's work and living and contributes to the early detection, active prevention and effective response to bio-terrorism. The BWC, which took effect in 1975, has more than 140 signatories. China joined the convention in 1984.

The People's Daily, 7 December 2004

Russia reveals new missile program

Russia has revealed it is fitting its strategic bombers with cruise missiles capable of delivering a massive precision strike thousands of miles away. The government's Rossiyskaya Gazeta daily announced in a headline that Russia's long-range air force finally has a new weapon and the country now has a strategic cruise missile with a non-nuclear warhead. ITAR-TASS also quotes an unnamed senior air force commander as saying Russia has broken the US monopoly on the use of long-range conventional cruise missiles. These cruise missiles have a range of more than 3,000 kilometres and can miss a target by no more than a few meters while carrying a warhead of hundreds of kilotons. The technology appears to be similar to cruise missiles that the United States has long attached to its own intercontinental bombers like the B-2 Stealth bomber.

The Daily Times, 7 December 2004

Chemical weapons inspections: No access to unrelated facilities: FO

ISLAMABAD: Dr Qadeer Khan will not be given to any country or the International Atomic Energy Agency, said Masood Khan, Pakistan's Foreign Office spokesman, on Monday. He told his weekly press briefing that Pakistan was confident of its investigative system and would continue cooperating with the international community in the battle against the international nuclear black market. The spokesman also said seminars and workshops were being arranged to meet Pakistan's obligation to raise awareness about the Chemical Weapons Convention ratified in October 1997. He said that under the convention, inspectors were only allowed managed access to specific facilities and not allowed to enter any unrelated facility.

The Dawn, 7 December 2004

State Dept report criticizes Dr Khan (Anwar Iqbal)

WASHINGTON, Dec 6: An official report on a State Department Web site quotes a senior Bush administration official as saying that Pakistanis regard Dr A.Q. Khan as a "traitor to Pakistan". The report, still on display at the Washington File, an official site of the US State Department, also quotes President Pervez Musharraf as telling US President George W. Bush that he believed it was "absolutely in Pakistan's interest" to uncover the remaining elements of the so-called Khan network of nuclear proliferators.

The Daily Times, 7 December 2004

Israel, India and Pakistan developing biological weapons? (Khalid Hasan)

Washington: Pakistan and India may be working on developing biological weapons, according to a new report. The finding comes from the newly-minted Centre for the Study of Weapons of Mass Destruction at the Department of Defence. The report says, "Several other countries are suspected of pursuing offensive biological weapons (BW) research, development, and possibly weaponisation, including North Korea, China, and Iran. Nations that have the potential to develop offensive BW and that may possibly be conducting limited efforts include Pakistan, Cuba, Israel, India, and Syria. In the case of Pakistan, it asserts, "since September 11, 2001, Pakistan's role in the war on terror has replaced its role as a proliferator as the central focus of US policy. The question is no longer (as it was a few years ago) 'Should Pakistan be legitimised as a nuclear weapon state?' but rather, 'How can we ensure that Pakistan remains stable and committed to the war on terror and that its nuclear weapons remain secure?'

The Daily Times, 7 December 2004

Indian MPs distressed by Russian uranium fuel freeze

NEW DELHI: Indian parliamentarians expressed concern on Monday at reports that Russia would stop supplying enriched uranium to local nuclear plants. Raising the issue during Zero Hour, C K Chandrappan (CPI) said many several installations, particularly the Tarapur plant in South India, could not function without the enriched uranium earlier supplied by Russia. Speaking to The Hindu, a senior Russian official said the guidelines of the Nuclear Suppliers Group (NSG) prevented Moscow from providing the fuel. Alexander Yuryevich, director of the Russian Federal Atomic Energy Agency, denied reports that Russia was providing two additional 1,000 MW reactors to India. He said Russia's commitments with the NSG were keeping it from expanding nuclear cooperation with New Delhi. India needs 50 tonnes of enriched uranium to keep the Tarapur plant going.

The International Herald Tribune, 7 December 2004

Time to call North Korea's bluff (Ralph A. Cossa)

North Korea is continuing to play hard to get. While the other five members of the six-party talks - China, Japan, South Korea, Russia and the United States - continue, individually and collectively, to call on the North to resume negotiations over its nuclear weapons program, Pyongyang continues to blame everyone but itself for the current lack of dialogue. In an attempt to divert attention from its own transgression, North Korea insists that the South's nuclear programs be examined at the next round of six-party talks, whenever that might be. Seoul, after initially resisting this demand, has now begrudgingly agreed that its own nuclear activities can be an agenda item. Yet Pyongyang continues to play for more time, no doubt enjoying the spectacle as the others continue to beg the North to come to the table.

The Khaleej Times, 7 December 2004

US in bid to jumpstart N. Korea talks amid nuclear bomb warning

WASHINGTON: A US special envoy left for China, South Korea and Japan in a bid to jump start North Korean nuclear talks, the State Department said on Monday, as the UN nuclear watchdog chief warned Pyongyang could develop up to six atomic bombs. Mohamed ElBaradei, the head of the International Atomic Energy Agency, told the New York Times he was now certain the nuclear material his agency once monitored in North Korea had been converted into fuel for four to six nuclear bombs. ElBaradei said his judgment that North Korea had converted its stockpile of spent nuclear fuel into weapons-grade plutonium was not based on new intelligence.

The People's Daily, 8 December 2004

US envoy to visit S. Korea, Japan on DPRK nuclear issue

US special envoy Joseph DeTrani will visit South Korea and Japan on the nuclear issue of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea (DPRK), State Department deputy spokesman Adam Ereli said at a briefing on Tuesday. Ereli said that DeTrani, who is currently in Beijing, will hold talks with South Korean counterparts on Dec. 8th and 9th and then he will be in Japan on Dec. 10th and 11th. "The purpose of those meetings are to look at ways to bring North Korea to the negotiating table," Ereli said.

The People's Daily, 8 December 2004

DPRK slams US for deployment of Patriot missiles in South Korea

The Democratic People's Republic of Korea (DPRK) on Tuesday roundly condemned United States' policy of deploying a new type of Patriot missile in Kwangju, South Korea. "This indicates that the US plan to start a new war on the Korean Peninsula is being stepped up towards the final stage," the Minju Josen newspaper said. The US confirmed last week it had completed the deployment of its Patriot PAC-3 missile system in South Korea as part of an 11 billion US dollar upgrade of its military presence on the Korean Peninsula. The Patriot missile system is designed to intercept and destroy incoming ballistic missiles, cruise missiles and enemy aircraft. The newspaper said the DPRK will continue to increase its war deterrent force in response to US military actions in South Korea.

The Nation, 8 December 2004

India, Russia sign protocols for missiles

NEW DELHI: India and Russia signed three protocols for fresh investments in joint development of Brahmos supersonic cruise missiles and agreed to draft an Intellectual Property Rights (IPR) accord in four to five months for patenting weapons systems made with collaborative efforts. The two countries also decided to work out "mutually acceptable" conditions on leasing of long - range TU-22 bombers.

The Nation, 8 December 2004

US holds talks with China over NKorea nuclear issue

BEIJING : US special envoy Joseph De Trani held talks Tuesday with senior Chinese officials as Beijing called for greater flexibility and sincerity in the six-party negotiations on the North Korean nuclear issue. De Trani was in China for discussions with Vice Foreign Minister Zhou Wenzhou and China's pointman on North Korea Ning Fukui, attempting to kick-start stalled multinational negotiations. Chinese foreign ministry spokeswoman Zhang Qiyue said Beijing was keen for an early resumption of the six-party talks.

The Nation, 8 December 2004

Iran, EU Nuclear talks next week

TEHRAN: Negotiations between officials from Iran and Britain, France and Germany aimed at building on the Islamic republic's agreement to freeze sensitive nuclear work are to start next week, a senior Iranian official said on Tuesday. Iran's top national security official and nuclear negotiator Hassan Rowhani said the first round of the dialogue was likely to involve himself, the foreign ministers of the EU's "big three" - Britain's Jack Straw, France's Michel Barnier and Germany's Joschka Fischer - as well as EU foreign policy chief Javier Solana. Rowhani said the talks would take place sometime next week in "one of Europe's capitals". Officials had already slated December 15 as the approximate starting date. He also said the director of the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA), Mohamed ElBaradei, had asked to take part in the meeting.

The Dawn, 8 December 2004

Tehran probing four over N-espionage

TEHRAN, Dec 7: Iran's judiciary said on Tuesday it was investigating four people suspected of spying on the country's nuclear programme, contradicting reports that their trial had already begun. "The trial of the nuclear spies will probably take place in secret after the end of the investigation," judiciary spokesman Jamal Karimi-Rad told the student news agency, ISNA.

The Dawn, 8 December 2004

Nuclear vacillation and duplicity (Dr Mahjabeen Islam)

Several months ago an Iranian government official stated that Iran's nuclear ambitions were not towards the development of a nuclear weapon, for Islam forbade the manufacture of weapons of mass destruction. Not that the United States was at all coddled by that for just as it is for Iran the Great Satan, Iran for America is evil incarnate. No loss of international affection there. With four more years of evangelical extremism in the United States the confrontation with the Ayatollahs of Iran is now a level moral playing field. The lead article "Will Iran be Next?" in the current Atlantic Monthly snags one's attention and with alternating pique and palpitation one reads through the tedium of a war game played out on Power Point. The article states "the presidential candidates did not spend much time on Iran and its nuclear threat. But the winner will have no choice. The decisions will be like Iraq, but much harder".

The Jung, 8 December 2004

Pakistan successfully test- fires nuclear capable missile Hataf- IV

ISLAMABAD: Pakistan successfully test fired Hataf-IV Shaheen-I on Wednesday. Hataf-IV, Shaheen-I surface to surface missile having a range of 700 kilometers can carry all types of warheads. President Pervaiz Musharraf and Prime Minister Shaukat Aziz have congratulated the team and nation on successful test.

The Japan Times, 8 December 2004

Japan to lift arms-export ban for U.S. missile shield project (NAO SHIMOYACHI)

The government's new basic defense policy will limit arms exports to missile defense-related products developed with the United States, and America would be the only recipient, politicians and government officials involved in this issue said Tuesday. The policy will be adopted later this week. The officials said sales of weapons and equipment concerning missile defense will be made possible as an exception to Japan's self-imposed ban on arms exports. In announcing the new policy, which will come in the form of a statement issued by Chief Cabinet Secretary Hiroyuki Hosoda, the government will clearly state that Japan will adhere to a "cautious policy" concerning arms exports, they said.

The Nation, 9 December 2004

Japan drops plan on long-range missile

TOKYO : Japan has dropped a proposal to develop its first long-range surface-to-surface missile due to protests from a Buddhist-oriented party in the ruling coalition, an official said Wednesday. The Defence Agency planned to study building the new missile amid growing concern about neighbours North Korea and China, in a move that could effectively end Japan's self-imposed ban on offensive weapons. But coalition partner New Komeito strongly opposed the move, leading the government to notify the party it was dropping the study from an upcoming defence plan, a New Komeito official said. New Komeito is backed by Japan's biggest lay Buddhist group, Soka Gakkai. The party has been in a balancing act between the Liberal Democratic Party of Prime Minister Junichiro Koizumi, a close US ally and supporter of the Iraq invasion, and Soka Gakkai members opposed to war. Japan's current ground-based missiles are only capable of hitting air or seaborne targets as opposed to long-range ground targets. But in October an advisory panel to Koizumi called for Japan to consider acquiring the ability to launch pre-emptive strikes on foreign missile vessels.

The Khaleej Times, 9 December 2004

Iran secretly approached US for pact' (Muawia E. Ibrahim)

ABU DHABI : An international expert has disclosed that Iran had secretly approached Washington to negotiate an agreement

on the nuclear issue after it felt vulnerable to US pressure, following the Riyadh bombings last year. Delivering a lecture at the Emirates Centre for Strategic Studies and Research (ECSSR) in Abu Dhabi on Tuesday, Dr Gary Samore, Director of Studies and Senior Fellow for Non-proliferation at the International Institute for Strategic Studies (IISS), UK, said: "After the Iraq war, Iran felt vulnerable to US pressure and secretly approached Washington to negotiate an agreement on the nuclear issue. However, this happened after the May 2003 Al Qaeda bombings in Riyadh, which Washington traced to senior Al Qaeda officials residing in Iran. Teheran's overtures were spurned. "He said the unexpected had happened at that time when the US, instead, led a campaign at the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) to adopt a resolution in September 2003 that implicitly threatened to refer Iran to the UN Security Council for past violations of its IAEA safeguards agreement. In response, Iran reached an agreement with the EU-3 (the United Kingdom, France and Germany) in October 2003 to resolve past violations, accept more intrusive IAEA inspections under the Additional Protocol and 'temporarily' suspend its enrichment and reprocessing programmes. In return, the Europeans agreed to protect Iran from US efforts to refer Iran to the UN Security Council, which Teheran feared could lead to economic sanctions and even lay the basis for a military attack on its nuclear facilities, the non-proliferation expert said.

The Khaleej Times, 9 December 2004

North Korea says it's committed to disarmament talks, but US won't give any incentives to lure it back to table: US official

SEOUL: North Korea has told US officials it is committed to six-nation talks pressing the communist nation to give up its nuclear program, but Washington won't offer any new incentives to lure Pyongyang into restarting negotiations, a US official said on Thursday. North Korea "said they had determined to work through the six-party process to peacefully resolve the issue," the official, knowledgeable about the talks, told journalists in the South Korean capital, Seoul. "But they were not prepared to give us a date to resume the talks." The North refused to attend the latest round of negotiations - which also include China, Japan, Russia and South Korea - that had been planned for September. The latest North Korean nuclear crisis began in late 2002 when US officials said they were told in Pyongyang that the country had embarked anew on a campaign to acquire nuclear weapons. Last year, North Korea pulled out of the Nuclear Nonproliferation Treaty. A key US envoy, Joseph DeTrani, is in Seoul this week meeting with South Korean officials on a trip including stops in China and Japan to press North Korea to continue the talks.

The People's Daily, 10 December 2004

China-EU co-op on nonproliferation, arms control crucial to global efforts: FM spokeswoman

The cooperation agreement between China and the European Union on nonproliferation and arms control is crucial to global efforts in the field, China's Foreign Ministry spokeswoman Zhang Qiyue said in Beijing on December 9. Zhang made the remark at a regular press conference in response to a question about the EU-China joint declaration on nonproliferation and arms control signed Wednesday at the seventh EU-China summit by Li Zhaoxing, China's Foreign Minister, Javier Solana, secretary general of EU council and representative for the EU Common Foreign and Security Policy and Bernard Bot, Dutch Foreign Minister, whose country holds the rotating EU presidency. The declaration recognizes China and EU as a major strategic partners in disarmament and nonproliferation and defines cooperation priorities. It is conducive to raising the cooperation to a higher level and expand the all-round strategic partnership between the two sides.

The Nation, 10 December 2004

Pak-India missile pre-test notice pact on 14th (SHAIQ HUSSAIN)

ISLAMABAD : Pakistan and India will finalize a bilateral pact on pre-notification of missile tests in their talks on nuclear and conventional CBMs on December 14-15 with official circles here expecting substantial progress towards a broad agreement on "Strategic Stability" encompassing both nuclear and conventional restraint.

The Jang, 10 December 2004

Firing of Hatf-IV

Pakistan on Wednesday successfully test-fired the indigenously built Hatf-IV (Shaheen-1). This missile can hit targets up to 700 kilometres and can carry all kinds of warheads. The rapid advancements that are taking place in the field of science and technology make it vital that these modern developments be utilised so that the nation can move ahead on the road to progress. Needless to say that it would also equip and enable the country to tackle any emergency and untoward situation with confidence. It is vital and important for every nation to conduct such tests, to maintain the operational capability of its armaments. Otherwise these latest weapons would be rendered useless. All the developed countries of the world as well as the underdeveloped countries carry out such tests. India has also been implementing a long programme of conducting such tests. Under these circumstances, Pakistan has no option but to give a new impetus to its capabilities in the field of defence and technology. For successfully meeting these challenges, not only our talented scientists but also the entire nation deserves to be congratulated.

The Daily Times, 10 December 2004

Ex-CIA official alleges retaliation for not faking WMD reports

WASHINGTON: A sacked CIA official is suing the agency for allegedly retaliating against him for refusing to falsify his reports on Iraq's weapons of mass destruction to support the White House's pre-war position, The Washington Post said Thursday. Described as a senior CIA official who was sacked in August "for unspecified reasons," the plaintiff's lawsuit appears to be the first public instance of a CIA official charging that he was pressured to produce intelligence to support the US government's pre-war contention that Iraq's weapons of mass destruction were a grave threat to US and international security.

The Daily Times, 10 December 2004

North Korea unlikely to resume talks by January: Australia

CANBERRA: North Korea is unlikely to resume talks on its nuclear ambitions by the end of January and the onus is on China to bring the reclusive state back to the table, Australia's Foreign Minister Alexander Downer said on Thursday. Downer, who made a rare visit to Pyongyang in August, told Reuters there were no signs North Korea would resume talks with the United States, China, South Korea, Japan and Russia before US President George W Bush's inauguration on Jan. 20.

The International Herald Tribune, 10 December 2004

East Asia: 6 - 1 = a new regional force (Francis Fukuyama)

The United States is confronting several immediate problems in eastern Asia, including the North Korean nuclear standoff, tension between China and Taiwan, and Islamist terrorism in Southeast Asia. Washington and several Asian countries currently maintain a series of bilateral alliances inherited from the early days of the cold war. But a new multilateral framework is needed to address these pressing current and emerging issues. The White House has stumbled upon an excellent opportunity for institutional innovation with the ongoing six-party talks on Korean security and nuclear weapons involving the United States, North and South Korea, Japan, China and Russia. Washington embraced this arrangement in the wake of the collapse of the 1994 Agreed Framework, but if and when the immediate North Korean crisis passes, the format should be made permanent.

The Khaleej Times, 10 December 2004

Towards a more peaceful world (JONATHAN POWER)

IMAGINE for a moment that the US gave up all its nuclear weapons, a totally farfetched idea but one supported by such luminaries as former secretary for defence, Robert McNamara, the late Paul Nitze, Ronald Reagan's hard-line negotiator on nuclear arms and General George Lee Butler, the former chief of U.S. strategic (i.e. nuclear) forces. But imagine if it did happen what effect this would have on Russia. It would then move immediately to close down its decaying early warning system and its hair-trigger nuclear posture, which former senator Sam Nunn sees as a likely cause of accidental nuclear war. Imagine what effect it would have on Iran, Syria, Saudi Arabia and Japan that are all in one way or another laying the groundwork for going rapidly nuclear, if their leaders give a clear decision. Imagine what it would do to Pakistan and India who if they could mend their fences on Kashmir might then find nuclear disarmament a logical next step. Imagine what China would do, a country that although nuclear, has never developed its arsenal to its full potential. That would leave North Korea, Israel, Britain and France. Lo and behold these four might then feel the wind of world opinion and disarm too.

The International Herald Tribune, 10 December 2004

U.S. hints at reward to a disarmed North Korea (Andrew Salmon)

By Andrew Salmon International Herald Tribune North Korea can expect a range of benefits if it drops its nuclear arms programs, a U.S. official knowledgeable about talks with the Communist regime said Thursday, as he called for the North to return to nuclear negotiations. "We are talking permanent, thorough, transparent denuclearization, that is subject to verification," the official, who spoke on the condition of anonymity, said at a meeting with journalists. He ruled out offering any incentives to bring Pyongyang back to the six-party talks, however. He added that if Pyongyang denuclearizes, it could expect "a rich basket" of "corresponding measures," including energy aid and assistance in joining international financial institutions. The official also said that North Korea would be offered multilateral security assurances and could be removed "very quickly" from the U.S. list of states that sponsor terrorism.

The Khaleej Times, 10 December 2004

EU3, Iran to start nuclear talks on Monday

BRUSSELS - Foreign ministers of Britain, France and Germany and the European Union's foreign policy chief will meet a top Iranian official in Brussels on Monday to launch talks on long-term nuclear cooperation, diplomats said. The said Hassan Rohani, secretary of Iran's Supreme National Security Council, would meet Jack Straw, Michel Barnier, Joschka Fischer and Javier Solana to begin negotiations promised when Iran agreed last month to suspend uranium enrichment activities. The talks are aimed at working out a package of economic and political incentives to persuade Iran permanently to give up work on uranium enrichment and plutonium reprocessing -- activities that can produce atom bomb material.

The Japan Times, 10 December 2004

Long-range missile quest off defense buildup plan (NAO SHIMOYACHI)

The government will not begin controversial research into long-range precision missile technology, according to the fiscal 2005-2009 midterm defense buildup plan handed to the ruling bloc Thursday. The plan was to be approved Friday by the Cabinet together with the new National Defense Program Outline.

The People's Daily, 11 December 2004

US says six-party talks should resume "as soon as possible"

The US position on the six-party talks is that it should resume as soon as possible, State Department deputy spokesman Adam Ereli said at a news briefing on Friday. "It is our view that the talks should resume as soon as possible. That is the point that Special Envoy (Joseph) DeTrani is making in his visits to the (East Asian) region. We think it is in the interests of all parties to return to talks as soon as possible," Ereli said. DeTrani is visiting the East Asian region on resuming the six-party talks.

The Nation, 11 December 2004

IAEA cooperation to continue but no quizzing AQ: FO (Shaiq Hussain)

ISLAMABAD : Pakistan Friday said it would continue to cooperate with the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) but the

UN nuclear watchdog or any other world body would not be allowed directly or indirectly to question Dr. A.Q. Khan. The Foreign Office Spokesman Masood Khan while commenting on the media report said no outside agency or person would be given access to Dr. Khan or any other Pakistani scientist for questions. He ruled out any direct or indirect investigations and testimonies, saying that all speculations in this regard are baseless and they carry not even an iota of truth. The Spokesman said Pakistan has full confidence in the effectiveness of its investigative system and procedures so there is no need of any external probe. Moreover, he added Pakistani government has not received any such request.

The Nation, 11 December 2004

Pakistan cautions against enlarging scope of SC Resolution on WMDs (IFTIKHAR ALI)

UNITED NATIONS : Pakistan has cautioned against broadening the scope of Security Council Resolution 1540 aimed at dealing with the threat of acquisition and use by non-state actors, particularly terrorists, of mass destruction weapons (WMDs). Speaking at the 15-member Council, Pakistan's UN Ambassador Munir Akram said that any attempt to enlarge the scope of Resolution 1540 from preventing terrorists to acquire WMDs to the general non-proliferation regime is bound to create more complexities.

The Daily Times, 11 December 2004

Bush manipulated Korean intelligence like he did Iraq's

BEIJING: The United States manipulated intelligence on North Korea's nuclear programme in a similar fashion to its use of weapons of mass destruction to justify the war on Iraq, a US foreign policy expert said in an article published on Friday. "Relying on sketchy data, the Bush administration presented a worst-case scenario as an incontrovertible truth and distorted its intelligence on North Korea (much as it did in Iraq), seriously exaggerating the danger that Pyongyang is secretly making uranium-based nuclear weapons," Selig Harrison said in Foreign Affairs magazine.

The Daily Times, 11 December 2004

North Korea's uranium programme serious: Seoul

SEOUL: Regional powers have enough intelligence to conclude North Korea is capable of enriching uranium even though Pyongyang denies it and a US-based analyst calls the threat overblown, a South Korean official said on Friday. North Korea has repeatedly denied operating such a scheme but has said it has been running a separate plutonium-based programme for nearly two years. Washington has made the highly enriched uranium programme a major focus of now-stalled talks involving the two Koreas, China, Japan, Russia and the United States.

The Daily Times, 11 December 2004

Iran-EU nuclear talks begin on Monday

TEHRAN: Substantive talks on a nuclear, political and trade cooperation pact between Iran and the European Union will begin next week with a ministerial meeting in Brussels, an Iranian official said on Friday. "After an agreement at the ministerial level, I believe we can start the working groups immediately on December 14 or 15," said Hossein Mousavian, an aid to Iran's nuclear negotiator Hassan Rohani.

The Nation, 12 December 2004

US missile defense test delayed again

WASHINGTON : The US Missile Defense Agency has again postponed a missile defense flight test, due to bad weather at a launch site in the Pacific, a spokesman said early Sunday. The agency has been trying to conduct the test, which would be the first of its kind in two years, since the middle of last week, but has had to put it off three times due to weather conditions.

The Nation, 12 December 2004

Pakistan, India to discuss agreement on missile tests next week

ISLAMABAD : Nuclear-armed Pakistan and India are due to meet in Islamabad next week to discuss a possible agreement on giving advance notice to each other before conducting missile tests, foreign ministry spokesman said Sunday. The expert-level talks on confidence building measures (CBMs) will be held December 14-15 in Islamabad, foreign ministry spokesman Masood Khan told AFP. Pakistani and Indian officials would also discuss setting up a hotline between top foreign ministry civil servants to avoid the possibility of nuclear conflict because of any mishap or misunderstanding, Khan said.

The New York Times, 12 December 2004

The U.S. vs. a Nuclear Iran (DAVID E. SANGER)

WASHINGTON, Dec. 11: The Bush administration says the prospect of Iran's obtaining a nuclear weapon is "intolerable," and from the White House to the State Department, officials express considerable skepticism that Europe's efforts to negotiate quietly an end to Iran's nuclear activities will succeed. Yet, though President Bush threatened Iraq before the war there, he has said almost nothing about the possibility of resorting to military action in Iran. That may reflect the fact that Pentagon war planners, reviewing available options, say there are no good options for Mr. Bush - or for Israel, which has expressed even greater alarm about a nuclear-armed Iran if negotiations fail. Almost unanimously, these planners and Pentagon analysts say there are no effective military ways to wipe out a nuclear program that has been well hidden and broadly dispersed across the country, including in crowded cities. Confronted with intelligence evidence, Iran admitted to inspectors last year that it had hidden critical aspects of its civilian program for 18 years, and even today there are questions about whether all of its nuclear-related sites are known.

The Dawn, 12 December 2004

Tests in Iran raise suspicions: officials

VIENNA, Dec 11: High-energy neutron experiments in Iran that could be either civilian-oriented or related to making an atomic bomb have risen suspicions since they are allegedly conducted under military supervision, diplomats said on Friday and in recent interviews. The experiments, carried out with a neutron generator, are thought to be taking place at an alleged base of Iran's elite Revolutionary Guards. They involve the sort of dual-use technology that the UN nuclear watchdog, the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA), has its eye on, but has trouble investigating since it can have civilian as well as military applications.

The People's Daily, 13 December 2004

US taps IAEA leader's phone with Iranians: report

The US government has dozens of intercepts of Mohamed El Baradei's telephone calls with Iranian officials, searching for ammunition to oust him as director general of the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA), the Washington Post reported Sunday. The intercepted calls have not produced any evidence of nefarious conduct by El Baradei, the newspaper quoted US government officials as saying. But some officials within President George W. Bush's administration believe that the intercepted calls show El Baradei lacks impartiality.

The Daily Times, 13 December 2004

Nuclear freeze temporary: Iran

TEHRAN: Iran warned on Sunday that it was not prepared to permanently freeze its controversial nuclear fuel work and that it expected quick results from crucial talks with Britain, France and Germany. "The permanent suspension of enrichment is not on our agenda," Foreign Ministry spokesman Hamid Reza Asefi told reporters on the eve of the negotiations set to take place in Brussels today (Monday). "We have agreed to a voluntary suspension for a short period. A short-term freeze is what we are stressing," he added. The Brussels talks are aimed at building on Iran's agreement to suspend sensitive uranium enrichment activities that have sparked fears Tehran is seeking to acquire nuclear weapons. Over the coming months, the two sides will be trying to hammer out a long-term accord that includes "objective guarantees" Iran will not develop the bomb and a package of incentives in return.

The Nation, 13 December 2004

US threatens military action against Iran if talks fail

The United States doesn't rule out the possibility of military action against Iran if the on-going diplomatic efforts fail to result in the permanent abandonment of its nuclear programme, reported Zee TV and Doordarshan quoting a senior Bush administration official as saying on Sunday. US Under Secretary of Defense for Policy, Douglas J. Feith, told The Jerusalem Post that Washington hopes that the on-going diplomatic efforts bear fruits and Tehran takes a clue from Tripoli and gives up on its nuclear ambitions. "I don't think that anybody should be ruling in or ruling out anything while we are conducting diplomacy," he told the daily on the possibility of a military action in an interview.

The Daily Times, 13 December 2004

No peace until South explains atomic tests'

SEOUL: North Korea will not dismantle its nuclear programmes or improve ties with South Korea until questions about the South's nuclear experiments are clearly answered, Pyongyang said on Sunday. The UN nuclear agency said in November that South Korean scientists had enriched uranium in 2000 to a level close to what would be needed for an atomic bomb and had also extracted a small amount of weapons-grade plutonium in 1982. "If the South Korean authorities are truly interested in the de-nuclearisation of the Korean peninsula and a peaceful unification of the country, they should explain the truth about the criminal nuclear activities and immediately stop nuclear weapons development activities," said Rodong Sinmun, the North's official newspaper.

The Jang, 13 December 2004

EU and Iran begin talks on nuclear program

BRUSSELS: The European Union and Iran begin talks on Monday towards giving Tehran trade, technology and security rewards for suspending crucial nuclear activities that could be used to make nuclear weapons. The process is fraught with difficulties since Iran says its suspension of uranium enrichment, a key step in making nuclear fuel, is a temporary measure designed to show its intentions are peaceful while EU negotiators Britain, France and Germany want the halt to become permanent, diplomats said.

The New York Times, 13 December 2004

U.S.-European discord over Iran is deepening (Steven R. Weisman)

Despite a renewed American effort to repair relations with Europe, a disagreement between the Bush administration and European leaders over how best to persuade Iran to abandon its suspected nuclear weapons program has deepened in recent weeks, diplomats on both sides say. The diplomats said the disagreement focused on what Europeans maintained was the crucial next step in their drive to persuade Iran to move beyond its recently agreed upon voluntary suspension of uranium enrichment activities to the point of abandoning them outright. But in recent interviews, European diplomats said that to gain a permanent cessation, the Bush administration must participate in talks with Iran and signal a willingness to be a part of an eventual final accord involving economic incentives and a discussion of security guarantees for Iran. "We have a deal with Iran that is not perfect," said a European diplomat. "We have to develop it into a permanent suspension. But we will succeed only if we can provide a lot of carrots. We will not obtain a comprehensive deal on Iran without the United States."

The Khaleej Times, 13 December 2004

Iran warns against slow pace of nuclear talks

TEHERAN: Iran's top nuclear negotiator Hassan Rowhani warned yesterday that the Islamic republic would abandon key talks with the European Union on its nuclear programme if it was clear no progress was being made. The talks, set to begin in Brussels today, are aimed at building on Iran's agreement to suspend sensitive uranium enrichment activities that have sparked fears the clerical regime is seeking to acquire nuclear weapons. The two sides will be hammering out a long-term accord that includes "objective guarantees" Iran will not develop the bomb and a package of trade, technology and security incentives.

The China Daily, 14 December 2004

North Korea reconsidering place at nuclear talks

North Korea is seriously reconsidering its role in talks on its nuclear plans because of what it sees as a concerted campaign to topple the North's ruling system, the North Korean Foreign Ministry said on Monday. The United States had launched a psychological campaign to persuade people there was a crisis in the North, including mass defections by generals to China, the ministry said in a lengthy English-language statement. "Under this situation the DPRK is compelled to seriously reconsider its participation in the talks with the U.S., a party extremely disgusting and hateful," said the statement, published by the official KCNA news agency. DPRK stands for the North's official name, the Democratic People's Republic of Korea.

The People's Daily, 14 December 2004

Iran slams US for alleged phone tapping on UN nuclear chief

Iran on Monday slammed the US for its alleged phone tapping on the conversations between the UN nuclear watchdog chief Mohamed El Baradei and Iranian officials, the official IRNA news agency reported. "The US has several times violated the international norms. We expect the country, which invites others to respect the international norms, to do so itself," government spokesman Abdollah Ramezanzadeh was quoted as saying. "Iran has not held any secret talks with the chief of the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA)," Ramezanzadeh added. Some media reported on Sunday that the US had intercepted the phone conversations between El Baradei and Iranian diplomats in a bid for materials to oppose the IAEA chief. El Baradei's reports played crucial roles in the IAEA's decisions on Iran's nuclear case at the agency's several past meetings. At the latest meeting on Nov. 29, the agency decided not to refer Iran's case to the UN Security Council, which dissatisfied the US, an enthusiastic advocate of the referral.

The Nation, 14 December 2004

Iran 'optimistic' over N-negotiations with EU

TEHRAN : Iran said Monday it was optimistic ahead of crucial talks with the European Union aimed at striking a long-term accord that would ease concerns over the country's nuclear programme. "We are optimistic over the results of the negotiations given the good faith that we have shown and they have shown," government spokesman and cabinet secretary Abdollah Ramazanzadeh told reporters. "I think that the negotiations will move forward in a positive manner," he added, and played down fears here that Britain, France and Germany would adopt "extremist positions influenced by third countries" - a reference to the United States. The European Union and Iran were beginning talks Monday on giving Tehran trade, technology and security rewards for suspending crucial nuclear activities that could be used to make weapons.

The Nation, 14 December 2004

Editorial : Threats to Iran

US Under Secretary of Defence for Policy Douglas Feith, a prominent member of the pro-Israel neocon group in the Bush administration, has threatened Iran with military action if it fails to abandon permanently its nuclear enrichment programme. Ironically he said this while talking to the Jerusalem Post, published from Israel, a country the US has allowed, perhaps even encouraged, to acquire atomic technology and build a nuclear arsenal. The hypocrisy underlying this selective approach would be widely resented in the Muslim world. The warning comes on the eve of negotiations set to take place in Brussels. This in fact constitutes another exercise in putting pressure on the EU to force Iran, the only country defying Israel in the Middle East, to abandon its programme. The US has been itching to drag Iran to the Security Council and get the latter to impose sanctions on the country, subsequently repeating what it has already done in Iraq. Washington was unhappy when last month three EU members, Britain, France and Germany which had engaged Iran over the issue, praised it for its decision to stop enrichment for the time being. It is pressing these countries to coerce Iran into stopping enrichment permanently.

The China Daily, 14 December 2004

Iran refuses to give up nuclear research - diplomats

Iran intends to use Monday's talks with France, Britain and Germany to ensure it has the right to go on carrying out research with equipment that could be used to develop nuclear weapons, Western diplomats said. Iran's top nuclear negotiator, Hassan Rohani, will meet foreign ministers of the EU's "big three" in Brussels on Monday for talks on details of a deal that would reward Iran for taking steps to assure the world it is not developing an atom bomb. "Iran plans to insist on its right to conduct R&D (research and development) and to agree to conduct negotiations only on how it will be inspected and not the fact of the existence of R&D," a diplomat who follows the work of the Vienna-based U.N. International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) told Reuters.

The New York Times, 14 December 2004

Iran and Europeans Open a New Round of Negotiations

BRUSSELS, Dec. 13 : Iran and its European partners pledged Monday to work to overcome their differences and lingering suspicions as they began negotiations for a long-term agreement on nuclear, economic and security cooperation. The largely ceremonial talks among Iran's senior nuclear negotiator, Hassan Rowhani, and the foreign ministers from Britain, France and Germany flow from Iran's agreement last month to freeze its programs to make enriched uranium, which is useful either for

producing energy or making bombs. To throw the weight of the European Union behind the process, Javier Solana, the group's foreign policy chief, also took part in the meeting on Monday.

The Jang, 14 December 2004

Australia supports IAEA chief amid spying row

SYDNEY: Australia said on Monday it had confidence in UN nuclear watchdog chief Mohamed ElBaradei despite a report that close ally Washington has spied on him and wants Foreign Minister Alexander Downer to take over the job. With ElBaradei's second term as International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) chief about to end, The Washington Post reported that US officials have listened in to telephone conversations between him and Iranian diplomats, seeking ammunition against him.

International Herald Tribune, 14 December 2004

Iran: A test for the European approach (Stuart E. Eizenstat)

Iran's nuclear threat may prove one of the biggest challenges facing the Bush administration in its second term. Iran will also be the crucible for the European Union's nascent common foreign and security policy, and its reliance on diplomacy, economic incentives and multilateral institutions to resolve world problems. With the Bush administration on the sidelines with a policy based solely on sanctions and non-engagement with the radical regime in Tehran, the EU has the unique opportunity to take the leadership on an issue vital to the security of the Middle East and to the West. The nuclear accord in which Iran agreed to suspend its production of enriched uranium, fashioned by England, France and Germany and recently approved by the 35-nation International Atomic Energy Agency is an important first step. But the EU must go further. It would take a flight of fancy to doubt Iran's intentions to develop a full-blown nuclear weapons program, marrying a long-range missile capacity with a nuclear warhead. Iran's defense minister, Ali Shamkhani, publicly boasted that Iran could mass-produce an upgraded version of its Shahab-3 missile to a range of 2,000 kilometers, or 1,250 miles. This would eventually give Iran a missile capable of carrying a nuclear warhead to Israel, throughout the Middle East and to the easternmost states of the EU.

The Indian Express, 14 December 2004

Beyond nuclear stability :Towards military peace and tranquility on the Indo-Pak border (C. RAJA MOHAN)

As India and Pakistan start talks on nuclear and conventional military confidence-building measures this week in Islamabad, part of the attention of the negotiators should be riveted on those outside the room - the so-called international community. If normalisation of relations is the central political objective for India in the peace process with Pakistan, Kashmir is the core issue for Islamabad, and promoting military stability between the two nuclear neighbours has been the principal priority in the region for the US and other major powers. Looking at it cynically, India and Pakistan should have little difficulty in signing off a series of agreements from the well-known laundry list of nuclear CBMs. At the meeting of their nuclear experts last June, India and Pakistan, indeed, got down to the business of reducing the risk of war between the two nations. They agreed to institute secure lines of communications between the two establishments. India also handed over a draft agreement on the prior notification of ballistic missile flight testing. Both are useful ideas, but not new. They were outlined in the memorandum of understanding signed during the then Prime Minister Atal Bihari Vajpayee's visit to Lahore in 1999.

The People's Daily 15 December 2004

Iran open to talks with US on nuclear issue

Iran will not object to talking with the United States on Tehran's nuclear program on the basis of mutual respect and equality, said Iranian Foreign Minister Kamal Kharazi here on Tuesday. But the offer was rejected by Washington. "Our condition for negotiating with America is that they negotiate with us based on principles of mutual respect and equality and not to impose their viewpoints," the minister told a joint press conference with his South African counterpart Nkosazana Dlamini-Zuma. Iran re-started negotiations with Britain, France and Germany on Monday on freezing Tehran's nuclear program, and said earlier that it will continue to freeze its nuclear activities only as long as the talks with the above European countries show progress.

The Nation, 15 December 2004

Inconclusive N-talks extended for today (Shaiq Hussain)

ISLAMABAD - Pakistan and India stretched the schedule of nuclear talks to another day to finalise a bilateral agreement on advance warning of missile tests as their long discussion on the subject remained inconclusive on Tuesday. "The two sides, however, are determined to reach the agreement on pre-notification of flight-testing of missiles and it is for this that they decided to hold further talks on Wednesday," a senior Pakistani official told The Nation. He hoped that the agreement would be finalized today. The official said if the experts from both sides, as expected, agree on advance missile testing notification pact, it will be submitted to the foreign secretaries who will ink the accord in their meeting scheduled for December 27-28. The two countries normally inform each other before holding missile tests under an MoU but now they are in the process of finalizing a formal agreement in this regard.

The Nation, 15 December 2004

White House mum on ElBaradei eavesdropping

WASHINGTON: The White House on Monday denied it sought to oust the head of the UN nuclear watchdog agency, Mohamed ElBaradei, and refused to comment on a news report that the United States had spied on him. But spokesman Scott McClellan reiterated US opposition to giving the Egyptian diplomat, 62, a third term at the helm of the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) when his current term expires next year. "We remain committed to the agreement that was reached in Vienna, where heads of United Nations organisations should only serve two terms," he said. "Serve no more than two terms, I should say." That was a reference to the Geneva group of top 10 contributors to international organisations, which has held that heads of such agencies should not serve more than two terms.

The Nation, 15 December 2004

Iran seeks quick end to EU talks on nuclear issue

TEHRAN : Iran's foreign minister stressed on Tuesday that Tehran wanted negotiations with European countries over Iran's nuclear programme concluded quickly. Kamal Kharazi said, however, that the start of the talks which opened on Monday in Brussels augured well because of their seriousness and "determination to reach an agreement." Monday's talks were focused on giving Tehran the trade, technology and security rewards in return for suspending the nuclear activities under an agreement struck last month in Paris. "We hope they go quickly and work seriously in this phase of discussion," Kharazi said at a joint press conference with visiting South African counterpart Nkosazana Dlamini-Zuma in Tehran. He mentioned several times a forecast of three months for an agreement, a timeframe questioned by the European side.

The Dawn, 15 December 2004

Iran's nuclear project (Najmuddin A. Shaikh)

On December 13, negotiations began between Iran and the European Union on the curbs that the EU is seeking to place on Iran's nuclear programme in return for concessions in economic and security cooperation. The EU participants include the foreign ministers of UK, France and Germany and the EU's foreign policy chief Xavier Solana. The Iranian side is led by Hasan Rouhani, secretary of Iran's Supreme National Security Council. At the joint press conference, Hasan Rouhani spelt out the objective as being to "establish such confidence that there will be no concern left for anyone" while the UK foreign secretary, Jack Straw, leading the talks on behalf of the European group, maintained that a key aim of the talks would be to "to provide objective guarantees that Iran's nuclear programme can only be used for peaceful purposes". The negotiators have agreed to set up three working groups on nuclear, security and economic cooperation. The first meeting of the groups commenced immediately after the conclusion of the ministerial meeting. The objective is that these groups will reach agreements within the next three months on exactly how Iran's nuclear programme will be monitored to ensure that it is not moving towards nuclear weapon production, and exactly what security guarantees and trade and economic cooperation concessions the EU will make available to the Iranians in return.

The Jang, 15 December 2004

Return to nuclear talks tricky: North Korea

SEOUL: North Korea will find it difficult to return to nuclear talks if the United States keeps insisting that Pyongyang renounce peaceful as well as military atomic activities, the North's main newspaper said on Tuesday. The editorial in Rodong Sinmun followed a statement on Monday from the North Korean Foreign Ministry that said Pyongyang was seriously reconsidering its role in the talks because of what it sees as a concerted campaign to topple the North's ruling system. Yet while the rhetorical volume rose, North Korea made a gesture to the South by inviting a minister to a factory-opening ceremony on Wednesday just over the border in the North.

The Dawn, 16 December 2004

Nuclear talks end without agreement: Deal on Sir Creek survey (Qudssia Akhlaque)

ISLAMABAD, Dec 15: Indo-Pakistan talks on nuclear and conventional confidence-building measures (CBMs) ended here on Tuesday without any tangible outcome despite exhaustive negotiations on formalizing an agreement on pre-notification of missile flight-testing. Although both sides worked hard on the text of the draft agreement, it could not be finalized due to some technical glitches, it is learnt. "Due to varying interpretations of the scope and technical parameters involved, the two delegations decided to reflect further and consult their respective systems," sources told Dawn. The agreement could not be firmed up due to sharp differences over the technical parameters and data that should be incorporated, and on the type of missile tests to which it would be applicable, they added. Apparently India wanted the agreement to be confined only to ballistic surface-to-surface missiles but Pakistan maintained that it should extend to all types. It appears that cruise missiles could have been one of the issues and also India's call for more data that stalled progress on the accord.

The Hindu, 16 December 2004

South Asia no longer a nuclear flashpoint: Pakistan (B. Muralidhar Reddy)

ISLAMABAD, DEC. 15. India and Pakistan talks on nuclear and conventional confidence building measures (CBMs) aimed at reducing the risk of accidental war and promoting strategic stability ended here today on an upbeat mood with Pakistan declaring that South Asia was no longer a "nuclear flashpoint." Addressing a joint press conference leader of Pakistani delegation, Tariq Osman Hyder, said that with India and Pakistan in dialogue mode and "progress on important issues" related to nuclear CBMs, South Asia was no longer a nuclear flashpoint. "We are currently in the process of consolidation of the gains (from the peace process)," he said in response to a specific question on how far India and Pakistan have moved on nuclear risk reduction.

The Daily Times, 16 December 2004

US missile defence test fails

WASHINGTON: The first test in nearly two years of a multibillion-dollar US anti-missile shield failed on Wednesday when the interceptor missile shut down as it prepared to launch in the central Pacific, the Pentagon said. About 16 minutes earlier, a target missile carrying a mock warhead had been successfully fired from Kodiak Island, Alaska, according to a statement from the Missile Defence Agency. The aborted \$85 million test appeared likely to set back plans for activation of a rudimentary bulwark against long-range ballistic missiles that could be fired by countries like North Korea.

The Daily Times, 17 December 2004

Natwar's regret over N-tests angers MPs (Iftikhar Gilani)

NEW DELHI: Prime Minister Manmohan Singh has assured parliamentarians that the Indian government has not changed its nuclear policy, after Foreign Minister Natwar Singh was reported as saying that India's testing of the bomb in 1998 had triggered a nuclear standoff with Pakistan. Opposition members in the Rajya Sabha were in uproar on Thursday at Natwar's remarks. In an interview to Korea Times in Seoul, the Indian foreign minister "virtually regretted" the nuclear tests and advised North and South Korea not to follow India's example and become nuclear powers. He said that "regret would be futile... you can't put it back in the tube; it's out".

The Hindu, 17 December 2004

We are a responsible nuclear power, says Manmohan

NEW DELHI, DEC. 16 : There is no uncertainty over the country's nuclear policy, the Prime Minister, Manmohan Singh, asserted in the Rajya Sabha today. "India is a nuclear power and a responsible nuclear power," he said. Dr. Singh was responding to clarifications sought by the Leader of the Opposition, Jaswant Singh, after question hour on a newspaper report about the External Affairs Minister, Natwar Singh's "remarks" to a South Korean newspaper. The Prime Minister said he had also seen the report and would check its authenticity from Mr. Natwar Singh when he returned from his foreign tour tomorrow. In his assessment, the Minister's reported remarks must have been in the context of replies to questions from journalists. "It was not a policy statement." Responding to Mr. Jaswant Singh's query on the continuity of the foreign policy, Dr. Singh emphasised that India's defence and foreign policy were decided on continuity and consensus and "need to be kept out of national politics."

The Hindu, 17 December 2004

Seoul did not raise nuclear option, says Natwar Singh (P.S. Suryanarayana)

SINGAPORE, DEC. 16. The External Affairs Minister, K. Natwar Singh, today reaffirmed that "the question of a regret" over India's possession of nuclear weapons "didn't arise" at all and emphasised New Delhi's "impeccable" record of non-proliferation. Commenting on the controversy over some Indian media reports that he had, while speaking to The Korea Times in Seoul, expressed regret over New Delhi's decision to make atomic weapons, Mr. Singh narrated to The Hindu how he had actually portrayed India in its strategic colours as "a responsible nuclear power" with a commitment to disarmament.

The Nation, 17 December 2004

Japan, NKorea urged not to complicate N-talks

BEIJING : China Thursday urged Japan and North Korea not to do anything to complicate the resumption of six-party nuclear talks, cautioning Tokyo against imposing sanctions on Pyongyang. "We hope both sides' actions will not complicate the process of the six-party talks," said foreign ministry spokesman Liu Jianchao. North Korea says it would regard any sanctions imposed on it by Japan as a declaration of war and would hit back with an "effective physical" response. Many Japanese support sanctions after North Korea provided Tokyo with the wrong ashes to support its claim that two Japanese it kidnapped during the Cold War had since died. Liu indicated China wanted the issue resolved bilaterally. "As to Japan and North Korea's bilateral issues, we hope they can resolve this issue through dialogue," he told a regular briefing. China, North Korea's closest ally, is trying to restart six-party talks also involving the two Koreas, Japan, Russia and the United States to halt the Stalinist country's nuclear weapons drive.

The Nation, 17 December 2004

Editorial: Disagreement on CBMs

DESPITE being described as cordial and constructive, the second round of Pak-India talks that began at the end of November has so far made little headway. The two-day meeting on nuclear and conventional CBMs has ended without achieving any breakthrough. For all intents and purposes the two countries stand where they were in June when they held expert level parleys on the issue. Reportedly the talks could not make progress because India wanted the agreement to be confined to surface-to-surface missiles only while Pakistan rightly maintained that it should extend to all types. Pakistan's concern was understandable because India is currently engaged in developing missiles that can be fired from submarines also, and while air-launched missiles have yet to be developed or deployed by either side, it would be useful to cover them too.

The People's Daily, 17 December 2004

Resumption of nuclear talks impossible before Jan. 20: S.Korean official

South Korean government has pushed aside any notion of resuming the stalled six-party nuclear talks before US President George W. Bush begins his second term next month, a senior South Korean official was quoted as saying by a local English newspaper on Friday. The official predicted on Thursday that any form talks within the six-party nuclear framework will not occur before Jan. 20 when the new Bush's administration embarks on its work, according to The Korean Herald. "And, the chances are extremely slim that North Korea (the Democratic People's Republic of Korea) will return to the talks before then," the official was quoted as saying. The official also estimated Pyongyang will wait and see who they have to deal with in the new Bush administration, and assess what may be in store for them before making any decisions on the talks.

The People's Daily, 17 December 2004

White House says Bush committed to missile defense

The White House said Thursday that President George W. Bush remains "firmly committed" to a missile defense system, even though the first full flight test of the system in two years failed. "The president remains firmly committed to moving forward on missile defense," White House spokesman Scott McClellan said at a regular news briefing. "It's important that we move forward on this because the president's top responsibility is to do everything he can to protect the American people." Bush's effort to deliver a key campaign promise by declaring a missile defense system operational by the end of this year suffered an embarrassing setback early Wednesday when an interceptor rocket failed to launch on cue in the first flight test in two years.

Sixteen minutes after a rocket carrying a mock warhead as a target was launched from Kodiak, Alaska, the ground-based interceptor experienced an anomaly shortly before it was to be launched from the Marshall Islands in the central Pacific Ocean.

The Indian Express, 17 December 2004

Russia sitting on 70 mn tons of N-waste

MOSCOW, DECEMBER 16 : President Vladimir Putin has said that Russia possesses more than 70 million tons of solid nuclear waste, but no effective means to process them. Addressing a State Council session today after launching the third unit at the Kalininskaya nuclear power plant, in the city of Udomlya (Tver Region), about 350 km north of Moscow, Putin said that the infrastructure for processing the waste was "extremely inadequately" developed. Meanwhile, the head of the Federal Atomic Energy Agency Alexander Rumyantsev said that his ministry would develop a control board to fit the nuclear power station at Bushehr in Iran, tailored to Iranian requirements.

The Daily Times, 18 December 2004

South Korea and Japan urge North to resume nuclear talks

IBUSUKI: Leaders of Japan and South Korea strongly urged North Korea on Friday to return to talks aimed at ending its nuclear weapons programme. Speaking to reporters following their meeting in southern Japan, Japanese Prime Minister Junichiro Koizumi and South Korean President Roh Moo-hyun agreed that it was important not to hastily impose economic sanctions on North Korea.

The Daily Times, 18 December 2004

EU eyes deeper ties with Iran after nuclear deal

BRUSSELS: EU leaders are ready to intensify their political and economic ties with Iran if Tehran allays concerns over terrorism and human rights, they said in a draft text on Friday at a summit in Brussels. Hailing a deal last month when Iran agreed to suspend uranium enrichment, a key part of the nuclear fuel cycle, the leaders confirmed their aim to sign a trade and cooperation agreement. Moreover, they "confirmed the Union's readiness to explore ways to further develop political and economic cooperation with the Iran, following action by Iran to address other areas of concern," the draft text said. Under an agreement reached in Paris last month between Britain, France and Germany, acting for the European Union, and Iran, Tehran agreed to suspend uranium enrichment in exchange for trade, technology and security rewards. Talks to give it the rewards it is seeking duly began earlier this week. Uranium is enriched by centrifuges into fuel for civilian nuclear reactors. But, in a highly refined form, it can also be the explosive core of atomic bombs.

The Tribune, 18 December 2004

Editorial Not a partisan issue N-policy is based on national consensus

THE Prime Minister has set at rest speculations over External Affairs Minister Natwar Singh's off-the-cuff remark on India's nuclear policy in Seoul. Dr Manmohan Singh has clarified that India is a nuclear power and, a responsible one at that. He has also stated that there is national consensus on India's nuclear policy. In other words, it does not matter under which dispensation India went in for Pokhran II. It is true that it was the NDA government which took the momentous decision soon after coming to power. Some individuals might have criticised the tests but every political party supported the government decision. After all, the NDA government could not have ordered the tests if the previous governments had not allowed the scientific establishment to acquire the necessary technological know-how and developed the required infrastructure.

The Tribune, 18 December 2004

Wanted: white paper on nuclear policy : No scope for a partisan view (K. Subrahmanyam)

It does not reflect great credit to our system of policy making that the Prime Minister had to say that a statement attributed to the Foreign Minister on nuclear policy was not a statement on foreign policy. The Foreign Minister is a member of the National Security Council and of the national command authority empowered to authorise the release of nuclear weapons. This development highlights that at the level of the Cabinet there is not adequate understanding of the Indian nuclear policy. The Prime Minister has reiterated that the country's defence and foreign policies are decided on continuity and consensus and "need to be kept out of national politics".

The Daily Times, 19 December 2004

US asked to take firmer line against N-proliferation (Khalid Hasan)

WASHINGTON: The United States and its allies have failed to take a "firmer line" against states outside the circle of five recognised under the NPT, according to an expert. Henry D. Sokolski, executive director of the Nonproliferation Policy Education Centre, maintains in a paper contributed to a new book on the subject published by the Strategic Studies Institute that the US and its allies would have to actively contest the notion that all states have a natural right to acquire nuclear weapons. He also wants the notion challenged that if a nation's security is threatened, it has a right to break out of the NPT. He warns that if that were not done, North Korea's recent accumulation of nuclear technology under false "peaceful" pretenses and its withdrawal from the Treaty is sure to be only the first of such defections. The US and its allies, he recommends, should also take a stronger stand against non-NPT states.

The Hindu, 19 December 2004

Minister has lowered India's prestige: Advani

COIMBATORE, DEC. 18. The Bharatiya Janata Party president, L. K. Advani, today expressed his fear that India might "surrender" its nuclear power status if some nations were to step up pressure. While deploring the reported "advice" by the

External Affairs Minister, Natwar Singh, to South Korea and other countries that might want to acquire nuclear weapons "not to follow the example of India," he alleged that the Minister had "lowered India's prestige" in the eyes of the international community. According to him, Mr. Singh's "advice," given in an interview to a South Korean newspaper, amounted to a "brazen repudiation" of the "most important dimension of India's self-defence strategy."

The Dawn, 20 December 2004

Congress likely to overturn N-policy: Advani (Jawed Naqvi)

NEW DELHI, Dec 19: India's Congress-led coalition government braced for damage control on Sunday, after the main opposition Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) accused it of seeking to reverse the country's nuclear policy. BJP President Lal Krishan Advani said in a statement in Coimbatore on Saturday that Foreign Minister Kunwar Natwar Singh's remarks in Seoul last week advising the Koreans not to follow India's example in pursuing nuclear arms, indicated that New Delhi could be planning to reverse the policy. Mr Singh's advice "tendered in an interview given to a South Korean newspaper, amounts to a brazen repudiation of the most important dimension of India's self-defence strategy.

The Dawn, 20 December 2004

Limited war can lead to N-conflict, says study

WASHINGTON, Dec 19: No conventional war between India and Pakistan will remain limited for long and will gradually lead to a full-scale war and ultimately to a nuclear conflict, warns a study by a Pakistani defence official. The study, presented recently at a Washington think-tank, looks at various scenarios that could lead to an all-out war between the two South Asian neighbours who conducted a series of nuclear tests in May 1998 and also possess nuclear-capable missiles. The author, who wished not to be identified, argues that recently India has put forward the concept of a limited conventional war aimed at achieving a specific political objective, such as putting down the uprising in Kashmir. But the author warns that what India may see as "a limited conventional war" may not be accepted by Pakistan as such. "Similarly, what India defines as limited political perspective, may have a different implication for Pakistan," he adds. He points out that most Western analysts and scholars are not comfortable with India's limited war doctrine and they also believe that "a limited war between India and Pakistan cannot remain limited for long."

The Hindu, 20 December 2004

Editorials A Vindictive Move

THE UNITED STATES has launched an ill-judged and bloody-minded campaign to deny the Director General of the International Atomic Energy Agency, Mohammed ElBaradei, a third term after his current tenure expires in 2005. In justification of its campaign, Washington cites the "Geneva rules" that are generally observed by the 14 countries that provide the bulk of the funds for the various United Nations institutions. According to the U.S., these rules stipulate that those who head U.N. agencies should not serve more than two terms. However, the commonly held view is that these so-called rules have no binding force. Most countries represented on the IAEA's board of governors have a positive assessment of Dr. ElBaradei's performance in office since his appointment in 1997 and are prepared to set aside the convention. Under these circumstances the U.S. might not be able to win the support of 12 countries on the 35-member board so as to be in a position to block the Egyptian technocrat's re-appointment.

The Nation, 21 December 2004

N Korea vows to strengthen deterrent

SEOUL: North Korea, which says it deserves nuclear weapons for self-defence, vowed Monday to strengthen its deterrent if the United States holds on to a "hostile" policy on the communist country. A North Korean foreign ministry spokesman condemned the recent US legislation of a human rights law on North Korea as part of the US policy to bring down the communist regime. Stalinist North Korea has been locked in a standoff with the United States and its allies for years over its nuclear weapons drive. Negotiations are deadlocked. "If the United States... pursues its hostile policy to isolate and stifle (North Korea) under the pretext of the 'nuclear issue' and 'human rights issue'... the latter will react to it by further increasing its self-defensive deterrent force," the spokesman said in a statement carried by the official Korean Central News Agency (KCNA).

The Nation, 21 December 2004

Editorial Take a stand

USING a no-holds barred vocabulary, Egyptian President Hosni Mubarak has warned President Bush that "meddling" in Iran would be a "catastrophic mistake" which could set off a wave of violent protest in the middle East and in turn destabilise the world. When taken with the earlier threat delivered by Bush to Iran and Syria against "meddling" in Iraq, President Mubarak's warning serves to bring things into perspective on who happens to be the real meddler in that region. While any hope that US hostility towards Iran would recede are evaporating with every statement from the US, one has to identify the three principal players pushing Bush towards a military confrontation with Iran. There is Tel Aviv and its powerful neocon backers in the US who feel the only other challenger to Israel/US supremacy in the region, after Iraq's nuclear programme was dismantled and the country brought under US control, is now Iran. Hence the focus on Iran's nuclear programme. Next there is the interim Iraqi government which both fears Iran's influence on Iraq's Shia majority in the coming election and would like it humbled in time. This group must also find a scapegoat for its inability to control the violent resistance to the US occupation, which explains why they blame Iran for interfering although Iraq's resistance now emanates from its Sunni heartland.

The Daily Times, 21 December 2004

IAEA chief says any phone taps violate his privacy

DUBAI: The head of the UN nuclear watchdog Mohamed ElBaradei said on Sunday any US monitoring of his telephone calls would be a violation of his privacy but that he had nothing to hide. Commenting on reports that US officials had tapped his phone conversations with Iranian officials, the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) chief told Al Arabiya television that he had no secrets to conceal.

The Hindu, 21 December 2004

U.S. using chemical weapons against civilians: Iraqi leader (Aniket Alam)

HYDERABAD, DEC. 20: "The Americans are losing the war in Iraq and in their frustration have started using chemical weapons and napalm bombs on civilian populations," alleges Khudur al-Azawi of the Iraq National Democratic Party. Speaking to The Hindu on the sidelines of the recently-held Anti-War Assembly in Hyderabad, Mr. Azawi dismissed media accounts of the war in Iraq as "U.S. propaganda".

The People's Daily, 22 December 2004

India successfully tests BrahMos cruise missile

The land version of the BrahMos cruise missile, jointly developed by India and Russia, was successfully tested for the first time at a range in western Indian state of Rajasthan Tuesday, the Indo-Asian News Service (IANS) reported. The test firing of the supersonic missile, which takes its name from the Brahmaputra and Moskva rivers, at the Western Test Range was witnessed by Indian Army Chief-Designate Lt. Gen. J. J. Singh and Defense Research and Development Organization chief M. Natarajan.

The China Daily, 22 December 2004

Iran readies Uranium for nuke enrichment -Diplomats

Iran will continue preparing raw "yellowcake" uranium for enrichment, a process that can be used to make nuclear weapons, until the end of February, despite a recent pledge to freeze all such activity, diplomats said. "The Iranians have decided to continue UF4 (uranium tetrafluoride) production until the end of February," a diplomat told Reuters. Two other diplomats in Vienna, where the U.N.'s International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) is based, confirmed the report. UF4 is the precursor to uranium hexafluoride (UF6), the gas that is fed into centrifuges which spin at supersonic speeds to purify it for use as fuel in civilian nuclear power plants or in atomic weapons. Iran recently pledged to freeze all activities linked to uranium enrichment as a confidence-building gesture. The United States accuses Iran of pursuing nuclear weapons under cover of a civilian atomic energy program, a charge Iran denies. Washington has also told the European Union's "big three" -- France, Britain and Germany -- that Tehran has no intention of honoring its pledge to freeze enrichment work.

The Nation, 22 December 2004

Pakistan, Russia vow to check N-proliferation (SHAIQ HUSSAIN)

ISLAMABAD: Pakistan and Russia Tuesday agreed to increase cooperation in the efforts against terrorism and nuclear proliferation, which they said, is vital for regional peace and stability. Both the countries concluded their two-day meeting of Defence Consultative Group on Strategic Stability here with a pledge to strive jointly against the global menace of terror as well as nuclear proliferation, said sources privy to the meeting. Foreign Ministry Additional Secretary Tariq Osman Haider headed Pakistani side while Deputy Foreign Minister of Russia, Sergey Kislyak led his country's delegation in the two-day meeting, said a spokesman of the Foreign Office. A source said that the two sides agreed to increase the sharing of intelligence information against terrorism that would help eradicate the menace from the region.

The Daily Times, 22 December 2004

US seeking talks with Iran

TEHRAN: Washington wants to hold direct talks with Tehran, with which it broke ties 24 years ago, to discuss a number of issues including the Islamic state's nuclear programme, said a senior Iranian security official on Tuesday. Hussein Mousavian, one of Iran's chief negotiators on the nuclear issue, said Iran had no objections to European Union efforts to involve Washington in negotiations aimed at dispelling international concerns about Iran's atomic ambitions. EU officials privately acknowledge that their efforts to persuade Tehran to give up sensitive nuclear activities, such as uranium enrichment, have little chance of success without full US support and involvement in the talks.

The Daily Yomiuri, 22 December 2004

North Korea plays wait and see

The basic tone of the new policy toward North Korea of the second administration of U.S. President George W. Bush will be the key to finding where Japan, South Korea and the United States should be heading on the issue. To resume the six-way talks that have been suspended since June, it is important that Japan, South Korea and the United States keep pace with each other. But the direction of the second Bush administration's policy on North Korea remains unclear, and that has resulted in disarray between Japan and South Korea. On Nov. 30 and Dec. 3, representatives from Washington and Pyongyang held informal talks in New York, but only managed to exchange respective principles. Han Song Ryol, North Korea's deputy permanent representative to the United Nations, insisted the United States should renounce its hostile policy toward Pyongyang first, while U.S. envoy on North Korea Joseph DeTrani reiterated that North Korea should completely abolish its nuclear development program.

The Nation, 23 December 2004

10 N-spies arrested on US, Israeli payroll: Iran

TEHRAN: Ten people arrested on suspicion of spying on Iran's nuclear programme were working for US and Israeli intelligence services, Intelligence Minister Ali Yunessi said Wednesday. "More than 10 nuclear spies were arrested during the

current (Iranian) year," which started on March 20, Yunessi said, quoted by the official news agency IRNA.

Dawn, 23 December 2004

Iran orders military to 'stand ready': Fears of attack on nuclear sites

TEHRAN, Dec 22: The Iranian military has been ordered to stand ready to defend the country's nuclear sites in case of attack, army chief General Mohammad Salimi said on Wednesday. "The air force has been ordered to protect the nuclear sites, using all its power," Mr Salimi said, quoted by the government daily Iran. "The air force has temporarily suspended all its manoeuvres and focused its means on patrolling the sky," he added. "All our forces including land forces, anti-aircraft, radar tactics ... are protecting the nuclear sites and an attack on them will not be simple," the general said. American newspapers and the regional press have speculated over a possible US or Israeli attack on the nuclear sites of Iran, which the Jewish state and Washington suspect of working to develop the bomb. US and Israeli officials have denied any such plans.

Jang, 23 December 2004

'N-tests, Kargil crisis proved blessing for India economy' (Rauf Klasra)

MUMBAI: The official record of the Reserves Bank of India (RBI) reveals that the nuclear explosions of 1998 and dangerous conflict with Pakistan on Kargil turned out to be a big blessing for Indian economy as \$ 11 billion were collected both from local and overseas Indians in the name of patriotism, hardly within a year time. Unlike Pakistan, the Indian government had not frozen bank accounts in foreign currency, rather it issued bonds that were purchased by the Indians all over the world. The Indian foreign reserves at present stood at \$ 130 billion, highest in the region after China, and are expected to grow further because of the flow of foreign direct investment.

Daily Times, 23 December 2004

Russia test fires ballistic missile

MOSCOW: Russia successfully test fired a RC-20B ballistic missile on Wednesday from a silo in the southern Orenburg region, news agencies reported. The missile, known to NATO as an SS-18 Satan, was launched at 11.30am (8H30 GMT) and reached its target in the far eastern Kamtchatka peninsula some 6,000 kilometres away, Interfax reported. "This launch confirmed the principal technical characteristics of the flight of the missile which represents a significant part of the combat potential of Russia's strategic forces," General Nikolai Solovtsov, the head of Russia's nuclear force, was quoted as saying. It was the first test of that type of missile since 1991.

Daily Times, 23 December 2004

2005 make or break year for North Korea talks: South Korea

BEIJING: The normalisation of relations between the United States and North Korea is key to resolving the North's nuclear standoff, a top South Korean official said on Wednesday, adding that a breakthrough was crucial next year. Unification Minister Chung Dong-young, in China for a four-day visit to discuss ways to jumpstart stalled talks on North Korea's nuclear programmes, made the remarks in a speech to students at the prestigious Peking University.

Khaleej Times, 23 December 2004

EI Baradei faces tough road to re-election as UN nuclear watchdog chief

VIENNA : UN nuclear watchdog chief Mohammed ElBaradei is expected to be the only candidate when his post comes up for election next year but is not a shoo-in as Washington finds him too soft on Iran, diplomats said. The deadline for submitting candidacies to become director general of the watchdog International Atomic Energy Agency falls December 31 but after that the IAEA's 35-nation board of governors must approve a candidate by a two-thirds vote. The United States wants ElBaradei replaced at the crucial Vienna-based agency since it feels he is not tough enough against an Iranian nuclear program which Washington charges hides covert weapons development, diplomats said. Washington officially says it opposes ElBaradei, a former Egyptian diplomat who has run the IAEA since 1997, getting a third four-year term, referring to the Geneva group of top 10 contributors to international organizations' policy that agency heads should not serve more than two mandates.

The Japan Times, 23 December 2004

Mongolia's nuclear-free wish (BRAD GLOSSERMAN)

JEJU ISLAND, South Korea : Mongolia is a landlocked wilderness the size of Alaska. With a population of only 2.7 million, it is squeezed between two geopolitical giants, China and Russia. The collapse of the Soviet Union led to the withdrawal of Russian troops in 1992, leaving the country alone -- and vulnerable. Mongolia devised a novel solution to its security dilemma: It declared its territory a nuclear weapons-free zone and has worked to gain international recognition of that status. Success would mark an important advance in the fight to shore up the global nuclear nonproliferation regime. Mongolia's euphoria at the end of the Soviet era was tempered by concern. Northeast Asia remained a dangerously tense region. North Korea is a focus of international attention, and while Russia and China have declared a new era of "friendly, good neighborly" relations, their past has often been tense.

Daily Times, 24 December 2004

Ultrafast US supercomputer to simulate nuke explosion (Adam Tanner)

LEADING nuclear scientists with top security clearances will gather next summer at a screening room east of San Francisco and witness the results of the greatest effort ever in supercomputing. Using a computer doing 360 trillion calculations a second, scientists at Lawrence Livermore National Lab will simulate the explosion of an ageing nuclear bomb in three dimensions. The short, highly detailed video produced by the world's fastest computer will attempt to illustrate how missiles dating back to the Nixon administration would perform today. "My job ... is to ensure that the nuclear weapons in the stockpile

are safe and reliable," said Bruce Goodwin, associate director for defence and nuclear technologies. "Safe means no matter what you do to them they don't go off when they are not supposed to. Reliable means that should the president ever have to use one, it will work exactly as it is supposed to." The United States has about 10,000 nuclear warheads as a deterrent against attack. Washington stopped real nuclear tests in 1992, a year after the collapse of the Soviet Union, and signed the Comprehensive Test Ban Treaty in 1996.

Dawn, 24 December 2004

N-issues discussed with Russia

ISLAMABAD, Dec 23: Pakistan said on Thursday that Islamabad and Moscow had shared their perspectives on the nuclear proliferation-related issues at the talks held in Islamabad recently.

Jang, 24 December 2004

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Daily Times, 24 December 2004

AQ Khan's proliferation activities: No way to verify Musharraf's version: Powell

WASHINGTON: US Secretary of State Colin Powell said on Thursday that he had no evidence to "prove or disprove" Pakistani President Pervez Musharraf's statement of not having knowledge of AQ Khan's nuclear proliferation activities. Mr Powell told a Christian Science Monitor press briefing that he had no reason to believe President Musharraf's claim. "I have no evidence on that," he said when asked whether he thought the Pakistani president was complicit at any time with AQ Khan's proliferation operations. Mr Powell said, "I've spoken to President Musharraf about this directly and he said that he did not, and that what AQ Khan was doing was so compartmented within government circles that it wouldn't have been possible for him to conduct such activities without the knowledge of others outside the circle. President Musharraf was outside that circle.

Daily Times, 25 December 2004

North Korea demands Japan be excluded from six-way talks

SEOUL: North Korea has threatened to boycott six-party talks on its nuclear weapons program unless Japan is excluded from the negotiating table, reports said Friday. "It has become difficult for (the North) to sit down with Japan at the six-way talks as Japan acts without faith and morality," the North's Central Television Broadcasting Station said late Thursday, in a report monitored by South Korea's Yonhap news agency. Japan is a member of the six-nation talks which also involve the two Koreas, the United States, China and Russia. The talks aimed at persuading North Korea to halt its nuclear weapons drive have stalled after three rounds. Pyongyang boycotted a fourth session planned for September. Tensions have increased between Japan and North Korea after the North last month handed over what it said were the remains of two Japanese kidnapped during the Cold War.

The Hindu, 25 December 2004

Russia test-fires Topol-M

MOSCOW, DEC. 24: Russia has successfully test-fired a mobile version of its latest Topol-M intercontinental ballistic missile on Friday. The Topol-M system, fired from the Plesetsk base in the far northern region of Arkhangelsk, hit the designated target in Kura test range on Kamchatka peninsula in the Far East, the RIA Novosti news agency reported. It was the last for the mobile Topol-M system before it begins to be deployed in 2006. Topol-M missiles will eventually become the backbone of Russia's land-based strategic missile forces. The missile can carry three nuclear-tipped warheads weighing 1.2 tonnes, have a range of over 11,000 km and can manoeuvre in ways that are difficult to detect. The President, Vladimir Putin, said last month that "no other nuclear power has or will have such weapons in the years to come." A silo-based version of Topol-M has been deployed since 1998.

The New York Times, 26 December 2004

As Nuclear Secrets Emerge in Khan Inquiry, More Are Suspected (WILLIAM J. BROAD and DAVID E. SANGER)

When experts from the United States and the International Atomic Energy Agency came upon blueprints for a 10-kiloton atomic bomb in the files of the Libyan weapons program earlier this year, they found themselves caught between gravity and pettiness. The discovery gave the experts a new appreciation of the audacity of the rogue nuclear network led by A. Q. Khan, a chief architect of Pakistan's bomb. Intelligence officials had watched Dr. Khan for years and suspected that he was trafficking in machinery for enriching uranium to make fuel for warheads. But the detailed design represented a new level of danger, particularly since the Libyans said he had thrown it in as a deal-sweetener when he sold them \$100 million in nuclear gear. Nearly a year after Dr. Khan's arrest, secrets of his nuclear black market continue to uncoil, revealing a vast global enterprise. But the inquiry has been hampered by discord between the Bush administration and the nuclear watchdog, and by

Washington's concern that if it pushes too hard for access to Dr. Khan, a national hero in Pakistan, it could destabilize an ally. As a result, much of the urgency has been sapped from the investigation, helping keep hidden the full dimensions of the activities of Dr. Khan and his associates. There is no shortage of tantalizing leads. American intelligence officials and the I.A.E.A., working separately, are still untangling Dr. Khan's travels in the years before his arrest. Investigators said he visited 18 countries, including Syria, Saudi Arabia and Egypt, on what they believed were business trips, either to buy materials like uranium ore or sell atomic goods.

Daily Times, 27 December 2004

Iran to shoot down 'flying objects' near nuclear facilities

TEHRAN: Iran's air force has been ordered to shoot down any unidentified or suspicious flying objects in Iran's airspace, an air force spokesman said on Saturday, amid state-media reports of sightings of flying objects near Iran's nuclear installations. "All anti-aircraft units and jet fighters have been ordered to shoot down the flying objects over Iran's airspace," spokesman of the Regular Army Air Force Colonel Salman Mahini said. Flying object fever has gripped Iran after dozens of reported sightings in the summer and in recent weeks. State-run media has reported sightings of unidentified objects flying over parts of Iran where nuclear facilities are located.

Nation, 28 December 2004

Kharazi apprises Musharraf of Iran's stand on N-issue

ISLAMABAD: Iranian Foreign Minister Dr Kamal Kharazi on Monday called on President General Pervez Musharraf here and apprised him of his country's position on current standoff with the United States over Tehran's nuclear programme. Dr Kharazi, accompanied by members of his delegation, apprised the President in detail of the security threats that his country perceives due to mounting tensions with US on nuclear issue, said the diplomatic sources. They said the Iranian foreign minister hinted at his country's desire that Islamabad uses its 'good offices' for ending the impasse between Iran and United States over the nuclear issue as Pakistan is a close allied state of Washington in global war on terror.

Daily Times, 28 December 2004

Tsunami may have damaged Indian nuclear plant

NEW DELHI: Huge waves that battered the Indian coastline after an earthquake in Indonesia may have damaged a nuclear power plant in southern Tamil Nadu state, the government said on Monday. The Press Trust of India news agency said Indian Prime Minister Manmohan Singh had called a meeting on Tuesday to review any damage to the plant. Authorities on Sunday shut down the Indira Gandhi Atomic Energy Centre in Kalpakkam, 80 kilometres south of Tamil Nadu capital Madras as a precaution. Water seeped into the facility, which is located on the coast, after the tsunami hit following Sunday's earthquake. "Information reaching here suggests that facilities at Kalpakkam nuclear station may have been affected by the tidal waves," said a spokesman from the prime minister's office. The private NDTV news channel said 1,500 families in the Kalpakkam township of Tamil Nadu had been evacuated by government relief agencies.

Daily Times, 28 December 2004

New allegations made about the Abdul Qadeer Khan 'network' (Khalid Hasan)

WASHINGTON: New allegations made on Sunday by the New York Times say that Dr Abdul Qadeer Khan sold \$100 million worth of nuclear gear to Libya and as a "sweetener" included blueprints for a 10-kiloton nuclear bomb. The report says intelligence officials had watched Dr Khan, "for years", though it fails to say why they waited, "for years", before exposing his alleged network. US experts were unsure who else had those designs besides Libya. They were not certain if the designs had also been passed on to Iran, Syria or the Al Qaeda organisation. Experts from the US and the IAEA are said to have quarrelled over who should have control over the blueprints and after, "hours of tense negotiation, agreement was reached to keep it in a vault at the Energy Department in Washington, but under IAEA seal."

Jang, 28 December 2004

The US vs Iran -- and whither Pakistan? (Ethan Casey)

Last January in Islamabad I was chatting about the A Q Khan nuclear proliferation scandal with my friends Zahyd Hamead and Hassan Iqbal. "All those countries are in the axis of evil," Hassan pointed out. "This is really significant, I think," said Zahyd. "I personally think Pakistan's goose is cooked. They're going to dismantle Pakistan without firing a shot. He is a national hero. He could have anything for the taking in Pakistan. Why would he sell nuclear materials to North Korea and Iran? They offered him probably billions."

Daily Times, 28 December 2004

Roh urges North Korea to return to six-party nuclear talks

SEOUL: South Korean President Roh Moo-Hyun on Sunday urged North Korea to return to six-party nuclear talks aimed at ending the communist country's nuclear weapons drive. The call came a week after US President George W. Bush renewed a commitment to diplomacy to convince North Koreans to give up their nuclear weapons programmes. "It is time for North Korea to get actively into dialogue," Roh told Seoul-based daily Kyeonghyang in a year-end interview released by his office for its Monday edition. "We have set conditions and circumstances (for North Korea) to come to negotiations, haven't we? It is appropriate to let other issues tackled at the dialogue table, isn't it? I want to tell North Korea so." North Korea has been locked in a tense standoff over the United States demand to irreversibly and verifiably end its drive to produce nuclear weapons.

The Tribune, 29 December 2004

The making of the Bomb: Let us clear up the nuclear confusion (Inder Malhotra)

LIKE some other stray remarks that can sometimes be more crucial than formal policy pronouncements at august forums, former Prime Minister and most respected BJP leader, Atal Behari Vajpayee's sudden disclosure - that the "real architect" of the 1998 nuclear tests was P.V. Narasimha Rao - has created a sensation across the country. This should hopefully go some way to clear up the confusion about the evolution of the country's nuclear policy and programme which has been caused partly by astonishing and surprisingly widespread ignorance even in decision-making circles and partly by the polity's endless discord that has made the nuclear issue a plaything of partisan politics. Mr Vajpayee, who now acknowledges that not only was Mr Rao, as Prime Minister, consulting him but also it was he who encouraged him to go ahead with a fresh blast at Pokhran, surely had a duty on the day the earth shook at Pokhran a second time. Instead, he staged a solo performance that the BJP mindlessly converted into crassly partisan and jingoistic extravaganza. Only such a climate can give rise to the absurd notion that South Asia was nuclearised only in May 1998. The reality is that this had happened eight years earlier when both countries had developed nuclear weapons of their own. Innocent souls pretending that untested weapons don't mean anything need to be reminded that the bomb that decimated Hiroshima was totally untested. Only the one dropped at Nagasaki later was.

The Tribune, 29 December 2004

P.V. Narasimha Rao and the Bomb : How he pushed development of N-deterrent (K. Subrahmanyam)

Mr Atal Bihari Vajpayee in an obituary tribute to late Narasimha Rao has now acknowledged the latter as the true father of Shakti nuclear test of May 11, 1998. If only he had done it on the day of the test he could have avoided the divisiveness that was created in the country at that time. The present UPA government in which the Congress party plays the dominant role must have a detailed account of Narasimha Rao's role on the evolution of Indian nuclear policy so that there will be no unnecessary discontinuity in the country's security and foreign policy. Narasimha Rao, President Venkataraman, Mr V.P. Singh, Dr Arunachalam, Dr A.P.J. Kalam and others gave their accounts on country's nuclear polity evolution during the Kargil committee's enquiry. While there is a chapter on the nuclear backdrop in the Kargil Review Committee Report, the full supporting documentation is available in the annexures. One could understand why the NDA had an interest in not publishing the annexures of the Kargil report since the Rao account would have appropriated most of the credit for nuclear weapon development to the Congress. The publication of the annexures at this stage would be to the advantage of UPA. Even during the period of Indira Gandhi and Rajiv the two senior leaders of the party who were in the picture on the nuclear programme were R. Venkataraman and Narasimha Rao. The account of Rao about the weapon being operationalised only during his period is supported by the account of Mr V.P. Singh in the Kargil report. Though the credit for the order to assemble the weapon goes to Rajiv Gandhi and the credit for restarting the development programme of the weapon after Morarji Desai halted it, belongs to Indira Gandhi it was Narasimha Rao who operationalised it.

Korea Herald, 29 December 2004

Head of nuke force gets ambassador rank

The Foreign Ministry yesterday upgraded to ambassadorial rank the head of the country's nuclear task force as part of its latest reshuffling of posts. Cho Tae-yong, director-general of the ministry's task force on the North Korean nuclear issue and currently No. 2 negotiator on the South Korean delegation to the six-party talks, is to be made a special home-based ambassador. As one of the youngest officials to be titled ambassador, the 48-year-old career diplomat will now have an equivalent rank to his counterparts in the six-party framework, including U.S. Ambassador Joseph Detran and China's Ambassador Ning Fukui.

Daily Times, 30 December 2004

Narasimha - the true father of India's nuclear plan (Iftikhar Gilani)

NEW DELHI: India, it has been revealed, began developing its nuclear capability between 1991 and 1996 under the watchful eye of late prime minister PV Narasimha Rao, who initiated the cutting of the country's defence budget to give priority to its "nuclear deterrent". Writing in the Chandigarh-based newspaper The Tribune, Subrahmanyam reveals the secret account of Rao's role in making operational the country's first nuclear weapon during his administration, a fact he himself disclosed to the committee. Subrahmanyam says that this claim has been "supported by the account of VP Singh (former PM) in the Kargil Report".

Jang, 30 December 2004

Lithuania starts closing Chernobyl-type nuclear plant

VILNIUS: Lithuania shuts down unit one of its Chernobyl-style Ignalina nuclear power plant on New Year's Eve, as it moves to honour a promise to the EU to close the facility in the coming years. "Everything is ready for the process. We shall start it at about 2:00 pm (1200 GMT) and according to our estimates the unit will stop at about 9.00 pm (1900 GMT)," Viktor Shevaldin, the plant's general manager told AFP. Under the agreement, which secured the former Soviet republic its membership earlier this year of the EU bloc, Lithuania closes the first unit on Friday and is scheduled to close the remaining unit in 2009. The EU has been worried about safety at the Ignalina plant, as it operates the same kind of reactors as in Ukraine's Chernobyl nuclear plant, which exploded in 1986 in the world's worst civil nuclear disaster.

The Tribune, 30 December 2004

Kalpakkam reactor : Safe but upgrade safeguards

The Union Government has done well to allay fears about the safety of the nuclear reactors of the Madras Atomic Power Station (MAPS) at Kalpakkam after tsunami struck. The reason for the fears, especially among the less informed, was the loss of life and property in Kalpakkam township. Understandably, when people are reeling under a devastating calamity, their fears are the more the result of feeling than knowledge. Hence, it is heartening that Prime Minister Manmohan Singh not only

satisfied himself with a personal report but also fielded National Security Adviser J N Dixit to reassure the nation at large. Atomic Energy Commission Chairman Anil Kakodkar, who proceeded to Kalpakkam at the behest of the Prime Minister, deserves to be commended for taking mediapersons round the MAPS site to see the situation for themselves. This reinforces public confidence in what is officially put out.

People's Daily, 31 December 2004

China promises to go on promoting six-party talks

China expressed its optimism on December 30 for hosting the next round of the six-party talks on nuclear disarmament of the Korean Peninsula, saying it will continue to push the negotiation process forward. Foreign Ministry spokesman Liu Jianchao attributed the failure of the fourth round of six-party talks to "political and external reasons." "But all the parties concerned have expressed their support for the six-party talks, and the foundation and conditions for continuing the talks still exist," he said at the regular press briefing. He cited patience, sincerity and flexibility as essential for opening a new round of talks. "China will continue to make unremitting efforts to push forward the process of six-party talks," he said.

Daily Times, 31 December 2004

US media assault on Dr Khan continues (Khalid Hasan)

WASHINGTON: The media assault on Dr AQ Khan continues, the latest being an editorial in Boston Globe on Thursday that accuses President Pervez Musharraf of appearing to protect his government and military from "embarrassment" in the "world's worst case of nuclear proliferation." The leading article charges that Dr AQ KHAN "is known to have peddled nuclear secrets to Iran, North Korea, and Libya." He is also said by US intelligence to have visited Egypt, Ivory Coast, Kazakhstan, Kenya, Mali, Mauritania, Morocco, Niger, Nigeria, Saudi Arabia, Senegal, Sudan, Syria, Tunisia, and the United Arab Emirates. Dr Khan's business trips are a subject of interest, according to the newspaper, because there could hardly be a more pressing mission for US intelligence than to discover what other countries besides Iran, North Korea, and Libya might have received help from Khan's network in developing nuclear weapons. "And since some nuclear scientists working in the Khan Laboratories visited Osama bin Laden in Afghanistan before Sept. 11, 2001, al Qaeda would have to be added to the list," it deduces.

Dawn, 31 December 2004

Indian N-plant to resume operation

NEW DELHI, Dec 30: A nuclear power plant in the southern Indian state of Tamil Nadu which was battered by the massive tsunami in the Indian Ocean will resume operations, a report said on Friday. Authorities said on Sunday they shut down the Indira Gandhi Atomic Energy Centre in Kalpakkam, 80 kilometres south of Tamil Nadu capital, Madras, as a precaution.

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Al Qaeda's nuclear ambitions unattainable, says paper

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Dawn, 31 December 2004

Opinion : Pakistan's nuclear strategy (M.H. Askari)

The potential damage from an accident at Kalpakkam affecting Pakistan and other neighbouring countries of India can perhaps not be accurately estimated, primarily because India would conceivably never make all the information about its facility public. India like Pakistan is not a signatory to the non-proliferation treaty (NPT) nor does it have a bilateral understanding with Pakistan. This has prompted the internationally known Pakistani scientist and peace activists, Dr. Zia Mian, one-time research fellow at the Sustainable Development Policy Institute, working on peace and security, to remark: how many such 'unusual occurrences were there in Pakistan last year (1994) or the year before? "only the Pakistan Atomic Energy Commission (PAEC) knows and they are not telling". Dr. Zia Mian may not actually be exaggerating the facts for such matters seldom get reported to the public in Pakistan. The right of the people in Pakistan to know precisely how they stand vis-a-vis the potential threat by the nation's nuclear programme, to their health and security cannot be overemphasised. The Pakistan-India People's Forum for Peace and Democracy (PPFPD) and the South Asia Free Media Association (SAFMA) and other public-spirited public organizations frequently raise the remand for the people to be kept informed on such matters.

The International Herald Tribune, 31 December 2004

A.Q. Khan's secrets

A.Q. Khan, the Pakistani metallurgist, is known to have peddled nuclear secrets to Iran, North Korea and Libya. What is not known - at least by U.S. intelligence - is what he did on visits to Afghanistan, Egypt, Ivory Coast, Kazakhstan, Kenya, Mali,

Mauritania, Morocco, Niger, Nigeria, Saudi Arabia, Senegal, Sudan, Syria, Tunisia and the United Arab Emirates. Khan's business trips are a subject of interest because there could hardly be a more pressing mission for U.S. intelligence than to discover what other countries besides Iran, North Korea and Libya might have received help from Khan's network in developing nuclear weapons. And since some nuclear scientists working in the Khan Laboratories visited Osama bin Laden in Afghanistan before Sept. 11, 2001, Al Qaeda would have to be added to the list. Khan sold hardware and divulged centrifuge technology in the three countries and, at least in Libya, provided a design for nuclear bombs. But crucial questions about the extent of Khan's proliferation activities remain unanswered because the government of Pakistani President Pervez Musharraf - after arresting and pardoning Khan more than a year ago - has refused to allow him to be questioned directly by the CIA. Pakistani authorities do permit questions to be submitted to them for transmission to Khan, but so far that mediated form of interrogation has yielded no pertinent information about potential new sources of nuclear proliferation.

The Indian Express, 31 December 2004

Can we bridge this Gulf? The time is ripe for a review of the region's security (JASJIT SINGH)

In the complex world of today, is it realistic to ask that the Gulf region be a nuclear weapon-free zone? If so, why? After all, the proposal for a larger Middle East as a Weapons of Mass Destruction (WMD) Free Zone has not moved at all for the simple reason that the Arab states did not want to forego their right to possess chemical weapons as long as Israel possesses nuclear weapons. Iran under the Shah put forward a proposal for the Middle East as a nuclear weapon free zone in 1974 which in due course was expanded into the WMD-free zone proposal. The Gulf region can only be a subset of the broader construct of the Middle East WMD Free Zone. And given the hype about Iran's nuclear programme during the past two years, it is obvious that any suggestion to narrow the scope from the broader Middle East to the Gulf region would have Iran as the focal point.

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