

The Dawn, 1 December 2004

Russia angry at US-India arms talks

NEW DELHI, Nov 30: Russia tersely told India on Tuesday that it would no longer transfer any high technology defence system to New Delhi without a pact to protect intellectual property rights (IPR) , and said India's bid to buy American Patriot anti-missile system would not work on Russian-supplied platforms. Press Trust of India quoted Russian Defence Minister Sergei Ivanov as saying in Moscow that it was not going to move further in sharing sophisticated military technologies with India without the IPR pact. On reports about India's plans to assess the US Patriot ABM system, he said Russia has already demonstrated its S-300 system to Indian experts at several occasions. He expressed doubt whether Patriot missiles could be amalgamated into the integrated air defence system modelled by Russia for India, PTI said.

The Indian Express, 1 December 2004

US to sell six anti-ship missiles to Pakistan

Washington, December 1: The United States is all set to deliver six Phalanx anti-ship missiles worth USD 155 million to Pakistan in addition to the Orion surveillance aircraft and anti-tank missiles it has agreed to sell under a 'Foreign Military Sale'. The Pentagon has notified the US Congress about the proposed sale, which include Phalanx Close-In Weapon Systems (CIWS), upgrade of six Phalanx CIWS Block 0 to Block 1B, as well as associated equipment and services to Pakistan, a Defence Ministry statement said.

Indian Express, 2 December 2004

India to talk open skies proposal with US in Jan

New Delhi, Dec.1. Civil Aviation Minister Praful Patel today indicated that the Government would hold talks with the US in January on the latter's pending proposal for an "open skies" agreement to remove all constraints from the existing treaty. "We will be sending a team to the US in January for air bilateral talks. We are keen to add more city pairs to the existing entitlements and would also want more US flights to operate to India. All these issues will be addressed at this meeting," Patel said, on the sidelines of meeting of civil aviation regulators in South Asia. A new agreement would mean adding new points of call and increasing the number of carriers. The one hurdle in the proposal is that the US wants a separate clause on aviation safety. While Washington's concerns stem from 9/11, India has streamlined its safety regulations in line with the recommendation of the International Civil Aviation Organisation.

The Tribune, 3 December 2004

Rumsfeld to visit India on December 8

New Delhi, Dec.2. United States' Defence Secretary Donald Rumsfeld is visiting India on December 8 and during his talks with the Indian leadership the two sides would be conducting a general overview of the bilateral relationship, diplomatic sources said today. Mr Rumsfeld will be having substantive discussions with his Indian counterpart Pranab Mukherjee and is also expected to meet External Affairs Minister K. Natwar Singh. The Defence Secretary is visiting India at a time when Washington is on the verge of selling the next instalment of F-16 fighter aircraft to Pakistan, a move which New Delhi has strongly opposed. The US has also proposed sale of "multi-role fighter aircraft" to India (read F-16s), P3C Orion naval surveillance aircraft, Patriot surface to air missile system (which is essentially an anti-missile missile) and ship-based Sea Hawk helicopters.

The Tribune, 4 December 2004

USA mum on permanent UN seat for India

Washington, Dec.3. The United States is non-committal on its support to India's bid for a permanent seat on the UN Security Council. Asked about India's claim at a press conference yesterday, White House Press Secretary Scott McClellan said several countries were aspiring to be permanent members of the Security Council and "we" ll be looking at that." The US, he said, would be looking closely at recommendations for reforms in the UN. One area that they talk about is reform in the United Nations Security Council. We want to make sure that any recommendations that we support to improve the overall effectiveness of the United Nations. "We want it to be a result-oriented, multilateral organisation that means what it says, as the President (George W. Bush) said earlier today," Mr McClellan added.

The Times of India, 10 December 2004

Indian sensitivities in mind: Rumsfeld (Rajat Pandit & Indrani Bagchi)

New Delhi. Manmohan said India would address all issues with Pakistan, provided General Pervez Musharraf stuck to his commitment to stop terrorism against India. Instead, Rumsfeld focused on Musharraf's cooperation in the war against terrorism by providing direct assistance on Afghanistan, said officials. The Indian message was a reiteration of the external affairs minister's statement in Parliament on Wednesday and what foreign secretary Shyam Saran carried to new US secretary of state Condoleezza Rice last month. "Decisions like supplying more P-3C Orion maritime surveillance aircraft, which is also missile-equipped, to Pakistan have little relevance in the war against terrorism... These planes won't help in catching Osama. They will be used against India," was the thrust of the Indian message.

The Pioneer, 11 December 2004

Rumsfeld seeks India's help in Iraq reconstruction (Ashok Dixit)

New Delhi. US Defense Secretary Donald Rumsfeld is reported to have asked India to provide sufficient reconstruction-related assistance to the US-backed coalition in war-ravaged Iraq. Highly-placed sources in the PMO said that during his interaction with the Indian leadership on Thursday, lasting close to three hours, including meetings with Defence Minister Pranab

Mukherjee, External Affairs Minister K.Natwar Singh and the Prime Minister, Dr Manmohan Singh, Rumsfeld did not make any specific request for the deployment of Indian troops in Iraq, but focussed on seeking other forms of assistance from New Delhi. New Delhi, the sources said, had conveyed that "It would be happy to respond, but only after the situation in Iraq stabilises a little more."

Deccan Chronicle, 13 December 2004

US arms for Pak will jeopardise relation, says Pranab

Bhubaneswar, Dec.12. Defence Minister Pranab Mukherjee on Sunday took strong exception on the supply of sophisticated arms to Pakistan by the US. He said it would jeopardise the peace process between India and its neighbour. Mukherjee who was here to dedicate a Martyrs Memorial to the nation in the premises of Sainik School expressed concern over the series of concessions given to Pakistan by the US. He said supply of F-16 aircrafts, powerful missile arrangements, naval surveillance reconnaissance aircrafts to Pakistan would have adverse repercussion on the peace process between India and Pakistan. His Ministry had drawn attention of US Defence Secretary Donald Rumsfeld during his recent visit to India, Mukherjee informed.

Deccan Chronicle, 14 December 2004

No decision on F-16s' sale to Pak: US envoy

New Delhi, Dec.13. US Defence Secretary Donald Rumsfeld, who was in India to ostensibly allay misgivings about the hefty military package given to Pakistan, made matters worse by openly defending Pakistan President Pervez Musharraf on the question of terrorism at his meeting with Defence Minister Pranab Mukherjee. Indian concern about crossborder terrorism was countered by Rumsfeld with the observation that Musharraf had done "enough" to tackle this and that his life was in danger as a result. The Indian reaction to a visit intended to remove irritants led US Ambassador to India David Mulford to hold an on-the-record press briefing on Monday in what amounted to a major damage control exercise. He said no decision had been taken on supplying F-16s to Pakistan, remained evasive on the possible supply of Patriot systems to India and insisted that "if there was any shadow (on US-India relations) I did not see it".

The Tribune, 16 December 2004

Indo-US pact on customs cooperation

New Delhi, Dec.15. In a landmark event, India and the USA today signed the Customs Co-operation and Mutual Administration Assistance Agreement to combat custom offences. The agreement was signed in North Block by the US Ambassador, Mr David Mulford and the Central Board of Excise and Customs Chairman, Mr A. K. Singh. On the occasion, several senior customs officials of the two countries were present. The agreement will more effectively coordinate responses and develop defences on the part of the two countries against terrorism, trade fraud, money laundering, narcotics interdiction, smuggling of weapons of mass destruction, cyber smuggling, child pornography, intellectual property violations and human trafficking.

Deccan Chronicle, 17 December 2004

US keen to supply arms to India

New Delhi, Dec.16. When US Defence Secretary Donald Rumsfeld came visiting last week, it was only natural that he would do the usual protocol thing and extend an invitation to his counterpart, Pranab Mukherjee, to visit Washington. What's different about this invitation is the American keenness for an early date and India's ready acceptance. Consequently, the two sides are believed to be looking at March 2005 as a probable time frame, the soonest the Bush Administration can get down to serious business after the January inauguration. The debate has acquired fresh impetus because of two developments. One is the US announcement to resume the sale of F-16s to Pakistan. The other is increased pressure from Washington for India to consider informal offers of weapons systems and aircraft like the Patriot missiles and the P-3C Orion naval reconnaissance aircraft.

Deccan Chronicle, 21 December 2004

US entry into North-East concerns Army

New Delhi, Dec.20. Indian defence personnel are deeply concerned about the decision, taken under the NDA government, to allow the United States military access to the Northeast. The frequent visits to the Northeast by US diplomats and soldiers are seen here as a serious breach in security that could facilitate the identification of India's "politico military assets" and allow the physical verification of satellite photographs with ground positions. Top Indian defence officials have, in the recent past, sent notes voicing reservations about allowing the US or any other country access to the Northeast. It has been pointed out at length that military cooperation with the US would be far more advantageous for the other country than for India.

The Tribune, 24 December 2004

India, Pak look to USA for help, says Powell

Washington, Dec.23. The USA has said that both India and Pakistan now look to Washington for assistance on common issues because it deals with India and Pakistan separately and not as "India-Pakistan". "I think we should be pleased with what we have been able to do with Pakistan, and even more interesting is what we have been able, also, to do with India by not seeing them as the same India-Pakistan," US Secretary of State Colin Powell yesterday said at a Christian Science Monitor press lunch. "We are working with India on its needs, a new strategic framework that we have got with them, the NSSP (next steps in strategic partnership) and we deal with it as a major sovereign, democratic nation and we deal with Pakistan as a separate nation. And because we do it that way, they look to us for assistance when they need to work on common issues," he said.

Indian Express, 30 December 2004

Bush says to work closely with India, Australia, Japan on relief (David Stout)

Washington, Dec.29. Breaking his holiday silence, President George W Bush promised a long-range American commitment today to help the countries battered by earthquake-spawned waves. "These past few days have brought loss and grief to the world that is beyond our comprehension," Bush said at his ranch in Crawford, Texas. He said the United States would work closely with Japan, India and Australia to coordinate relief efforts. "We are committed to helping the affected countries in the difficult weeks and months that lie ahead," Bush said, adding that Washington had pledged an initial \$35 million in assistance and was prepared to contribute much more. Bush said Undersecretary of State Marc Grossman would lead a US task force to work with Japan, India and Australia to help coordinate relief efforts among various agencies and to encourage other countries to join in.