

The Tribune, 1 December 2005

Separate civil, military N-facilities, India told

New Delhi, Nov 30: The US Congress will pass the Indo-US nuclear deal after it gets concrete evidence of a marked delineation of India's civil and military nuclear facilities, Mr Dan Burton, leader of a visiting seven-member congressional delegation, said today. Mr Burton, an "India baiter", said at a joint press conference with the congressional leaders - Republican as well as Democrat - that he had fallen in love with India and that the human rights situation in the Kashmir valley had "considerably improved". He said he had always felt that the Kashmir situation should be addressed and now it was being done. "I have always been an admirer of India and its culture. But human rights bothered me. That is now changing," he said. In another context, he said: "Look, I have no horns... I have fallen in love with India, its people and the leadership." Mr Burton and other members of the congressional delegation maintained that the Indo-US nuclear agreement was the "pathway" which both countries could walk together, but there had to be a clear delineation between civilian and military nuclear facilities.

Hindustan Times, 2 December 2005

US confident India nuclear deal will be approved

Washington: The State Department expressed confidence on Thursday that a controversial nuclear deal with India would be approved by Congress and said it would work with lawmakers to make it happen. The landmark US-India accord reached on July 18 would grant New Delhi access to nuclear technology it has been denied for more than two decades because it developed and tested nuclear weapons, but prominent critics complain it undermines non-proliferation goals and should be tightened up. State Department spokesman Sean McCormack said the Bush administration understood the concerns of those who say the deal is flawed. "But at the end of the day we think that the majority will see that this is the right deal for America, as well as for global non-proliferation efforts," he told a news briefing.

The Asian Age, 2 December 2005

PM in a nuclear pickle (Bharat Karnad)

There are two hinges of the India-US nuclear deal. One is the phrase "reciprocally agree" in the July 18 Joint Statement issued by Prime Minister Manmohan Singh and President George W. Bush. The other has to do with the autonomy of India's weapons capabilities. The phrase has quickly become a flash point owing to radically different interpretations about the nature of the mutual commitments. The other issue too has begun sparking. The precariousness of the political perch Prime Minister Manmohan Singh has climbed on to with his suo moto statement in Parliament of July 29, 2005 needs to be noted. Dr Singh in his speech assured Parliament that, "Reciprocity is key to the implementation of all the steps enumerated in the Joint Statement." "We expect," he added, "a close relation between the actions to be taken by the United States and by India. Indian actions will be contingent at every stage on actions taken by the (US)."

The Nation, 2 December 2005

Indo-US deal: victory for whom? (Fauzia Qureshi)

It is being said that the Indo-US agreement on civilian nuclear co-operation is not going anywhere. However, the agreement when signed by President Bush and Prime Minister Manmohan Singh in Washington on July 19th, was dubbed as 'a historical watershed.' The negotiators told their respective media their side gave up little or nothing to win a great deal. If that was true, it is indeed a historic agreement between two so-called democracies. However, we must ask as to what actually was the agreement and whom does it really benefit the most? There is no doubt that the pact makes India the only country in the world to have inked a strategic defence partnership with both the US and Russia. The Mukherjee-Rumsfeld agreement is extremely vast in scope and envisages a broad range of joint activities, including multinational operations, strengthening the two militaries to promote security and defeat terrorism, and strengthening capacity to take on the proliferation of WMD.

The Indian Express, 2 December 2005

India, US close to inking high-tech space pact

NEW DELHI, Dec 1: Taking forward the agenda of civilian space cooperation, India and US are looking at soon finalising a technology safeguard agreement (TSA) on cooperation in the sector. Both sides today agreed on an elaborate action plan. "Removal of some of the restrictions has made a difference to our trade in high-tech products," Foreign Secretary Shyam Saran said today at a joint press interaction with US Under Secretary for Commerce and industry David H McCormick. The discussions between the two officials came following the industry-to-industry interaction as part of the Indo-US High Technology Cooperation Group here. Emphasis was also laid on expanding cooperation in defence technology. Saran revealed that India had received a draft of the TSA. "We hope to be able to conclude that very soon," he said. Saran said all pending issues related to a US payload on Chandrayan, India's first lunar mission set for launch in 2008, have been resolved.

Daily Times, 3 December 2005

US confident about India nuclear deal

WASHINGTON: The State Department expressed confidence on Thursday a controversial nuclear deal with India would be approved by Congress and said it would work with lawmakers to make it happen. The landmark US-India accord reached on July 18 would grant New Delhi access to nuclear technology it has been denied for more than two decades because it developed and tested nuclear weapons, but prominent critics complain it undermines non-proliferation goals and should be tightened up. State Department spokesman Sean McCormack said the Bush administration understood the concerns of those who say the deal is flawed. "But at the end of the day we think that the majority will see that this is the right deal for America, as well as for global non-proliferation efforts," he told a news briefing.

Reuters, 4 December 2005

Iran Says Not Interested in Talks with US

TEHRAN: Iran said on Sunday it had no interest in talking to its arch-foe the United States concerning events in Iraq or about its nuclear programme. Media reports last month quoted U.S. Ambassador to Iraq Zalmay Khalilzad as saying he had been authorised by President George W. Bush to begin a dialogue with Iran about Iraq. U.N. nuclear watchdog chief Mohamed ElBaradei has also suggested lately that Washington would eventually have to get directly involved in negotiations to resolve Tehran's nuclear standoff with the West. But Iran's Foreign Ministry spokesman Hamid Reza Asefi said talks with U.S. officials were "not on our agenda." "The issue of security in Iraq is an internal matter related to the Iraqis," he told a weekly news conference. "The Iraqi people are mature and wise and they should determine their own future. So there is no need for negotiations with America," he said.

The Tribune, 5 December 2005

US seeks Indian plan on separate civil, military N-facilities (Ashish Kumar Sen)

Washington: The fate of the civil nuclear deal between the USA and India hinges on New Delhi producing a "credible, transparent and defensible" plan to separate its civil and military nuclear facilities, according to Bush Administration officials. These officials say they have discussed this separation plan with their Indian counterparts on "numerous occasions" since the agreement was signed by President George W. Bush and Prime Minister Manmohan Singh in Washington on July 18. However, State Department officials say that contrary to claims in recent reports they have not presented any "blueprint" on separation to the Indian Government. Under Secretary of State for Political Affairs R. Nicholas Burns, the Bush Administration's points man on the deal, has not provided any plan on how to separate India's civil and military nuclear facilities, a State Department official said, adding, "We have each reaffirmed that it is the responsibility of the Indian Government to develop such a plan."

The Washington Post, 6 December 2005

N.Korea says US finance row blocking nuclear talks

SEOUL: A U.S. crackdown on North Korea's financial assets makes it impossible to resume multilateral talks on dismantling the communist state's nuclear weapons programs, a commentary in Pyongyang's official media said on Tuesday. It was the first time the North has openly linked a possible halt in the six-party nuclear talks to the U.S. moves against its finances, South Korean officials said. Washington has offered to brief North Korean officials on the legal reason for its clamping down on firms the United States suspects of involvement in counterfeiting, money laundering and the drugs trade. It says these have helped finance Pyongyang's nuclear programs. North Korea's communist party newspaper Rodong Sinmun called the U.S. measures "sanctions" and demanded that they be lifted, the North's official KCNA news agency reported. "It is impossible to resume the six-party talks under such provocative sanctions applied by the U.S. upon the DPRK," the Rodong Sinmun said.

Hindustan Times, 7 December 2005

Empire's new clothes (Vikram Sood)

Dec 6: A single deft move in the 18th century secured the British empire in India many advantages over the advancing Russians. By sending five English dray horses along with a blue velvet upholstered coach to Maharaja Ranjit Singh in Lahore, upstream from Kutch, the British discovered that the Indus was navigable all the way up. They were given access to Afghanistan through his territories by a grateful Maharaja. The irony is that the British were only returning a gift Ranjit Singh had sent King William IV. Not a single shot was fired but the empire had gained. The opening gambits for empire-building at that time were to flatter, cajole, persuade and, if this did not work, then coerce and control and finally occupy. One hundred and seventy years later, these tactics - access to markets and resources - remain unchanged, although the new empire has shown a greater propensity to violence as a first option. The wooing started a few years ago when opinions began to filter through about a new power rising in the east - democratic India.

Daily Times, 7 December 2005

Lobbying against US-India N-deal underway

WASHINGTON: A bipartisan group of 16 former US government officials with vast experience in security-related

issues has circulated a letter to all members of Congress aimed at killing the US-India nuclear cooperation agreement, which is widely seen as a blow to nuclear nonproliferation efforts worldwide. With the nonproliferation lobby and several key members of Congress up in arms against what they see as a "sweetheart deal" for New Delhi, Pakistani representatives here show little sign of taking advantage of the situation. Pakistan's lack of any visible concern, it has been said, springs from the assumption, held by certain decision-makers in Islamabad, that once the deal between India and the US goes through, Pakistan will be in a position to demand the same for itself. It is not known what gives these decision-makers the confidence that a similar deal would be on offer to Pakistan from Washington. Informed opinion here is that no such deal is going to be offered to Pakistan. India is seen by the Bush administration as standing in a class of its own, not to be bracketed with Pakistan.

International Herald Tribune, 7 December 2005

N. Korea ties talks to end of U.S. sanctions (Choe Sang-Hun)

SEOUL, Dec 6: North Korea said Tuesday that it would quit six-party talks on eliminating its nuclear programs unless the United States lifted financial sanctions imposed on the country for circulating counterfeit U.S. dollars and trafficking in illicit drugs. The announcement was the North's most significant reaction yet to the Bush administration's attempt, which has become more strenuous even as the nuclear talks have proceeded, to exert pressure on the regime by cracking down on its far-flung criminal trade. U.S. officials believe such trade plays a pivotal role in funding the North's nuclear weapons development and for the country's overall finances. Pyongyang's stringent demand, and Washington's thus-far categorical rebuff, reflected a new deterioration in relations between the United States and North Korea and diminishing prospects for a breakthrough in nuclear disarmament talks.

The Indian Express, 8 December 2005

Ahead of Foreign Secy visit, US Senate panel chief seeks credible India plan on n-separation (C Raja Mohan)

WASHINGTON, Dec 7: As India prepares to discuss its plans to separate civilian and military nuclear facilities with the Bush Administration later this month, an influential Senator has urged New Delhi to put as many reactors as possible in the non-military category. Speaking to a visiting Indian delegation here Tuesday, Richard Lugar, chairman of the Senate Foreign Relations Committee, underlined that India must provide full political satisfaction to the US Congress that must approve the historic nuclear pact signed by President George W Bush and Prime Minister Manmohan Singh in July. "I would urge the Indian side to think in maximalist terms and include as many facilities as possible within the scope of the civilian declaration", Lugar said. Under the Bush-Manmohan pact, India agreed to separate its civilian and military facilities in return for full civilian nuclear energy cooperation from the US. Implementation of the pact requires the amendment of current laws by the US Congress in Washington and the Nuclear Suppliers Group that brings all the major international supplier nations together.

Daily Times, 8 December 2005

India becomes partner in nuclear reactor project

NEW DELHI: India said on Wednesday its inclusion as a full partner in the ambitious multinational International Thermonuclear Experimental Reactor (ITER) energy project was an acknowledgement of India being a responsible nuclear state with advanced nuclear technology. The decision was taken by the six partner countries - US, European Union, Russia, China, Japan and South Korea - in Jeju, South Korea on Tuesday. "The decision recognises that India can significantly contribute to such endeavours and also is recognition that India is a country with advanced nuclear technology, including in the field of fusion research," said a spokesman for the External Affairs Ministry. ITER is the experimental step between the latest studies of plasma physics and future electricity-producing fusion power plants. The main ITER facility will be built in Cadarache in France by 2016 and all partners will participate in its construction, development and research.

Daily Times, 8 December 2005

United States looks to India as new global ally

WASHINGTON: The Bush administration is looking increasingly to India as a core ally as it seeks to engineer what could be a major diplomatic shift away from the power alignments forged after World War Two. Old standby Britain, increasingly important Japan and, according to some of the officials familiar with administration thinking on geopolitics, Australia all join India in a group of countries Washington believes shares its values and goals. "You might call this emerging set of alliances the 'four by four' strategy (which is) built around four great powers - the United States, Great Britain, Japan and India," Thomas Donnelly of the American Enterprise Institute (AEI), a think-tank with close ties to the administration, wrote on the AEI website. Nuclear power India, a growing economic force on China's border and familiarly dubbed the world's biggest democracy, is the relative newcomer to the group. Often an adversary as a Soviet sympathizer and leader of the non-aligned movement during the Cold War, it now enjoys dramatically improved ties under President George W Bush. Presidential aides say the United States is committed to helping India not just prosper but rise as a regional power. One senior official has

said privately that the administration also intends to back India for a permanent seat on the UN Security Council.

Dawn, 8 December 2005

US Congress threatens to throw out India N-deal

WASHINGTON, Dec 7: The chairman of the US Senate's Foreign Relations Committee warned on Tuesday that Congress would throw out any 'opaque' plan by the Bush administration to forge unprecedented civilian nuclear cooperation with India. President George Bush agreed to give India, which is not a member of the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT), access to civil nuclear energy technology under a deal he signed with Prime Minister Manmohan Singh in July. But India has to first separate its civilian and military nuclear programs and place its nuclear reactors under International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) inspections. Under US law, the deal also has to be approved by the US Congress. "While the Bush administration has, I think, been very clear in discussions with the Indian government about its expectations, let me emphasize that any Indian plan will have to pass muster with the United States Congress," Republican Senator Dick Lugar said.

Asia Times, 10 December 2005

US turns the screws on deal with India (Ramtanu Maitra)

The "historic" US-India nuclear deal of July 18, on which Indian Prime Minister Manmohan Singh wants to situate his legacy, is in trouble. It is evident that the US Congress is keen to extract the proverbial pound of flesh before it approves the deal. It also seems the optimism that prevailed in the Indian camp earlier is vanishing fast and what India will have to surrender to get the deal through could well be the new worry of New Delhi. At the end of November, Indian Foreign Secretary Shyam Saran was in Washington to attend the inaugural session of the Indo-US High Technology Cooperation Group's meeting. Addressing the China Business Big Picture session, the Indian visitor said: "The nuclear agreement, as would be appreciated, has larger implications for high-technology trade as it is premised on US recognition of India's impeccable record on non-proliferation. It not only recognizes that non-proliferation is better served with India as a partner, but also sends a clear signal that India cannot be a partner and a target at the same time of technology denial regime." It is evident that the Indian foreign secretary's efforts to grease the wheels did not accomplish much.

Deccan Herald, 10 December 2005

India, US to conduct biggest ever military exercise

New Delhi: In a step up of service-to-service engagement, India and US will conduct the biggest-ever army level exercises near Ranikhet in Uttaranchal in January as American officials today indicated that Washington was working to open doors to high-technology transfers. A company force of the US army will conduct joint exercises with a thrust towards anti-insurgency operations in the mountainous terrain near Choubhatia, US officials said adding that in the coming year, armed forces of the two countries would participate in "more complex, patterned" war games. "US Pacific Command wants to expand its military-level interaction with India over a broad front to enable the two armed forces to share experience in doctrines and higher formation-level exercises", officials said. Officials said though Indo-US defence trade stood at USD 287 million, they expected a big jump in arms sales through major deals with Navy, special forces and Air Force in the offing.

Dawn, 10 December 2005

Implications of Indo-US alliance (M. Tayyab Siddiqui)

The July visit of Indian Prime Minister Manmohan Singh to the US was hailed by both sides as a "historical watershed". The true import of this visit, however, has not been sufficiently grasped by Pakistan, in particular the long-term adverse impact that growing Indo-US relations, especially in the context of a strategic partnership, would have on Pakistan. Wide-ranging bilateral agreements, particularly those under the rubric of the "Framework for the US India Defence Relationship", establish India as a major world power. Of all the defence-related agreements, the most significant in its reach and impact has been the Proliferation Security Initiative. The PSI will confer on India a special status in the 44-member Nuclear Suppliers Group (NSG), granting it permanent exemption from NSG guidelines which currently prevent India from purchasing nuclear reactors and bars nuclear cooperation with non-NPT members.

The News, 10 December 2005

Deal in the doldrums

The much-hyped proposal for a civilian nuclear cooperation deal between India and the United States appears to be in the doldrums after a Congressional Committee put up conditions that will be too difficult for New Delhi to meet. A deal that was seen as smooth sailing thus far in New Delhi has turned tumultuous after tough positioning by American congressmen in the name of nuclear non-proliferation. The chairman of the US Senate Foreign Relations Committee warned Congress on Wednesday that it would throw out any "opaque" plan by the Bush administration to forge unprecedented civilian nuclear cooperation unless there was complete separation of Indian civilian and military nuclear facilities. India will also have to open its civilian nuclear facilities to inspectors from the

IAEA to be able to draw nuclear benefits from Washington. It will certainly be a difficult decision for New Delhi to affect the required separation, as it may lead to the identification of facilities that are engaged in nuclear works for military purposes.

The Tribune, 11 December 2005

US Congress hinders nuclear pact, says newspaper (Ashish Kumar Sen)

Washington: The Bush administration has hit the brakes on its efforts to implement a civil nuclear technology agreement with India following skepticism about the deal from members of the US Congress, according to a Washington newspaper. The Hill, a newspaper, quoted a congressional source as saying of the agreement with India, "The administration did come and had a discussion with us on general options for their legislative package, but they were not ready to commit on anything." A Bush administration official told The Tribune, the administration intended to "continue to move forward on this initiative and hoped that India will present a civil-military separation plan and begin its implementation by early 2006." The Bush administration's efforts could also be held up by mid-term elections across the United States in 2006. "Next year is going to be a very political year, and the chances for joint congressional action for an issue this complicated could be small unless the administration puts a real push on the Congress," the congressional source said, adding, "There is not a lot of congressional pressure to do this quickly."

The Indian Express, 12 December 2005

N-separation at fairly advanced stage: PM (Sunit Arora)

ON BOARD PM AIRCRAFT, Dec 11: Indicating that India is pushing to quickly meet commitments made in the Indo-US nuclear deal, Prime Minister Manmohan Singh today said that the exercise for separating civilian and military nuclear facilities is at a "fairly advanced stage". Singh's statement on the nuclear deal-made to reporters en route to Kuala Lumpur where he will attend the ASEAN summit and East Asian summit-assumes significance as there have been indications that the US has been going slow in putting in place a legislation to be approved by the US Congress. Informed sources said that India's separation exercise will reflect a definite move forward when Foreign Secretary Shyam Saran visits Washington next week. When questioned about Left parties' pressure to increase the 8.5 per cent interest rate announced by the Employees Provident Fund Organisation (EPFO), Singh once again dropped the ball firmly in the EPFO's court, refusing Budgetary support, but did say: "If they (EPFO) can sustain a higher rate, I will be happy."

The Times of India, 12 December 2005

India and the nuclear deal (K Subrahmanyam)

The world is witnessing a rethink on nuclear power. The British prime minister has unveiled a policy review of the need for new nuclear plants for Britain. Finland has inaugurated the largest nuclear power plant in Europe. China is going in for nuclear energy on a large scale. The US administration is of the view that energy problem of the 21st century cannot have hydrocarbon solutions. Major industrialised nations are pooling their R&D efforts for International Thermo Nuclear Energy Research (ITER). A fourth-generation nuclear power reactor is under development and it is expected to be safer and more proliferation-proof. The Bush administration's offer of a nuclear deal with India should be seen in the context of US interest in an economic partnership with India to ensure its own competitiveness and innovativeness. The discussion between prime minister Manmohan Singh and President Bush on July 18 essentially focused on civil nuclear energy and creating conditions to enable the international community (all but three nations are members of the NPT) to permit India access to civil nuclear energy.

Yahoo News, 13 December 2005

Indian PM says nuclear facility separation at 'advanced stage'

The separation of India's civilian and military nuclear plants, key to a July deal with the United States on nuclear technology sales, is at an "advanced stage," Prime Minister Manmohan Singh has said. Singh was quoted Monday in the Indian press as saying that New Delhi has made rapid progress on identifying those plants to be considered civilian and hence subject to inspections by the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA). The exercise of designating nuclear plants as military or civilian is at "a fairly advanced stage," Singh told reporters flying with him Sunday as he headed to Malaysia to attend three days of meetings with Asian leaders. US President George W. Bush agreed to give India, which is not a member of the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT), access to civilian nuclear energy technology under a deal he signed with Singh in July. But India has to first separate its civilian and military nuclear programs, which could mean an effective cap on nuclear weapons production.

Hindustan Times, 13 December 2005

Out of fission

With the Bush visit four months away, India's timetable for nuclear separation is getting short. Prime Minister

Manmohan Singh's remarks that India's plans to separate its civilian and military nuclear facilities are in an advanced stage offer the reassurance that the negotiations with the US on implementing the historic nuclear pact are on track. The longer India lingers on its separation plan, the more likely it is the deal would just drift beyond the grasp of the two nations. Having come this far it would be a pity to squander the deal, which promises to lift the decades-old nuclear blockade against India and transform Indo-US relations. President Bush's visit to India in late February or early March next year offers the forcing event to compel bureaucracies in both the capitals to get their nuclear act together.

The Statesman, 14 December 2005

US arms deals

What the American arms industry now offers India - latest radars for F-16s, P3-Orions with a hint of the next generation of maritime reconnaissance/strike aircraft, to name just some - would invite comparison with Santa's sack full of goodies. Yet, as the carol heralding his arrival asserts, there is that question of whether you've been "naughty or nice". And since Uncle Sam will be making that determination there is always the possibility of the supply line being choked. Hence the Indian defence establishment's tendency to be tempted by state-of-the-art gadgetry must be tempered with hard-nosed pragmatism - can unhindered supply of spares and product support be assured for decades to come? If the current bonhomie has erased memories of how our naval aviation was virtually grounded by the post-Pokharan II sanctions, the crash of the Iranian C-130 ought to re-raise disturbing queries.

Hindustan Times, 15 December 2005

Many in India, US, S Korea favour building of nuke plants

New York: While a large number of people around the world support the continued use of existing nuclear reactors and are opposed to new ones, many in India, United States and South Korea favour building of new plants, according to a survey. However, the percentage of Indians supporting construction of new power plants was the lowest among the three countries, the survey conducted by Globescan for the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) showed. While 33 per cent Indians favour building new plants, 23 per cent would like the existing ones to continue and are against building new ones. Another 22 per cent would like to shut down all nuclear-based power plants immediately. The maximum support for building new nuclear power plants is in South Korea where nearly 52 per cent would like to see new plants come up with only 34 per cent opposition building new ones and 13 per cent want all plants to be closed down.

Hindustan Times, 16 December 2005

Indo-US trade council moves to hasten N-deal (S. Rajagopalan)

Washington: As the Indo-US nuclear pact debate drags on in US Congress, an influential business lobby has stepped in to speed up matters. The US-India Business Council, an offshoot of the US Chamber of Commerce, has selected Patton Boggs, a well-known law firm, to provide it lobbying support on Capitol Hill. The Chamber is also gearing up to institute a coalition exclusively for the purpose. "Patton Boggs' objective will be to help ensure enactment of legislation needed to permit the US to pursue full-scale civilian nuclear cooperation with India, recognising that India is a secular and stable democracy that has earned trust on non-proliferation," the USIBC said on Wednesday. Approval of the nuke deal by the US Congress will involve amending the Atomic Energy Act of 1954, which at present forbids transfer of civilian nuclear technology to India.

The Tribune, 16 December 2005

Indo-US N-deal reciprocal: PM

New Delhi, Dec 15: Prime Minister Manmohan Singh said today that the Indo-US nuclear deal was proceeding on the basis of "strict reciprocity" and India was at liberty not to meet its commitments if the US Administration did not fulfil its obligations. Responding to supplementaries during question hour in the Rajya Sabha, the Prime Minister said the decision to put certain facilities and reactors under international inspection was India's and there was no question of doing it under pressure. On the members' apprehension that the US Administration has been asking for more concessions since the nuclear deal was reached, the Prime Minister said the binding constraint for the two countries was the July 18 agreement. Observing that the approval by the US Congress for the July 18 agreement was the concern of the US Administration, the Prime Minister said he expected the US Administration to use its full weight to get the necessary approval of the Congress.

The Hindu, 17 December 2005

Keep fast breeder reactor out of IAEA inspections: U.S. expert (Siddharth Varadarajan)

NEW DELHI: On the eve of crucial negotiations with the U.S. on the separation of India's civilian and military nuclear facilities, a well-known American analyst has strongly defended the Indian atomic establishment's desire to keep indigenous programmes such as like the fast breeder reactor (FBR) outside the purview of international safeguards and inspections. In an interview to The Hindu on Friday, Selig S. Harrison, director of the Washington-

based Center for International Policy's Asia programme, said Indian negotiators had to guard against hardline "American nationalists" in the Bush administration who are reluctant to accept India's nuclear status. Among them are Robert Joseph, Under-Secretary of State for Arms Control, whose "abhorrent" testimony at a Senate hearing last month on India accepting 'in-perpetuity' safeguards for all its civilian facilities, Mr. Harrison says, "made my hair stand on end".

The Tribune, 17 December 2005

Unfounded criticism

Prime Minister Manmohan Singh has scotched fears about the India-US nuclear deal signed in July last in his intervention in the Rajya Sabha on Thursday. There are sections of public opinion, even among those who support the UPA government, which believe that there are some hidden clauses in the agreement. The import of his statement is that what guides India's relations with the US on the nuclear issue is the written agreement he and President George W. Bush signed on July 18. In other words, everything is in the public domain. It also means that the fears that the US has obtained from India more than it has given to India are unfounded. The agreement will come into force only if the US Congress passes it and in case the Bush administration fails to accomplish this task, India can opt out of its obligations.

Daily Times, 17 December 2005

Manmohan says no changes to India-US nuclear deal

NEW DELHI: India said on Thursday it would permit no changes to a landmark nuclear deal with the United States to ensure its passage by the US Congress. Prime Minister Manmohan Singh told parliament the landmark deal struck with President George W Bush when he visited Washington in July giving New Delhi access to civilian atomic technology was a "binding commitment." The agreement would extend full US civilian nuclear energy cooperation to New Delhi, denied access to nuclear technology since 1974 when it first tested a nuclear weapon and refused to sign the Nuclear Non-proliferation Treaty. US Congressional critics complain the agreement undermines international nuclear non-proliferation efforts and needs to be stricter. The Indian prime minister was seeking to allay speculation that Washington had been asking for more concessions and that New Delhi might give in to gain US civilian nuclear cooperation.

The New Nation, 16 December 2005

Editorial: Will the deal materialise? (Samuel J Fernandes)

As the US starts outlining its perspective on the nature and scope of Indo-US nuclear engagement, strategic analysts in India interpret it as the beginning of an effort to suck India irreversibly into the non-proliferation architecture with a less relaxed system of exclusion than India would have expected. For many in India, the hopes engendered by the July 18 agreement that the US might usher India into the exclusive club as a de facto if not de jure nuclear power in the emerging global order with all possible privileges legally accruing to it as a nuclear weapon state, have started receding in the wake of the recent statements by US government officials. Close on the heels of Under Secretary of State for Political Affairs, Nicholas Burns' October visit to New Delhi, the US state department spokesman came out with a statement that the India must begin separation of nuclear facilities before the administration would present any draft for consideration by the US legislatures.

Hindustan Times, 16 December 2005

Nuke energy critical: Panel

Bhopal, December 15: A panel of experts set up by the PM to prepare the Integrated Energy Policy has said nuclear energy is critical for India's long-term energy security. The draft policy was unveiled on Thursday by Dr Kirit Parikh, Planning Commission member and head of the panel. "No dramatic finds of oil and gas are expected," he said. "If we want to continue to grow at eight or 10 per cent, we need energy security. Nuclear power has the potential to supply thousands of megawatts of power." "For the next 20-25 years, we won't require it but after that we cannot forego the option," he said.

The Telegraph, 18 December 2005

Delhi nukes US show-stealer (K.P. Nayar)

Washington, Dec. 17: With the Indo-US nuclear agreement of July in trouble, India has dramatically turned tables on the non-proliferation fundamentalists in Washington, sending an unambiguous message that where its interests are involved, the country can deal with them on New Delhi's terms and get the better of them in their stronghold. Even as foreign secretary Shyam Saran is packing his bags for Washington for a crucial meeting here on Wednesday with US under-secretary of state for political affairs Nicholas Burns, the Indian embassy in Washington has forced the non-proliferation lobby to back off from a confrontation with New Delhi on the nuclear deal, which could have soured Saran's visit. The confrontation would have centred around India's CIRUS nuclear reactor: it is a research reactor, which was supplied to India by Canada in 1954 and thus accounts for the first three letters of CIRUS, standing for Canada-India reactor. The Americans supplied heavy water for the reactor,

adding the last two letters of the CIRUS name.

The Tribune, 18 December 2005

India, USA to go for agro projects

Washington, Dec 17: With a view to give a fillip to agriculture cooperation, India and the USA have decided to focus on innovative joint projects in the public and private sector for increasing agricultural productivity. At the first board meeting of the United States-India Initiative on Agriculture, both sides laid the groundwork for a new chapter in partnership, US Deputy Secretary of Agriculture, Chuck Conner said. "Over the past two days the Board of the U.S.-India Knowledge Initiative has laid the groundwork for a new chapter in our partnership by focusing on innovative joint projects in which both the public and the private sectors can cooperate", Mr Conner said. "These projects will promote the development and adoption of science and technology to increase agricultural productivity. The board has taken a step toward invigorating our tradition of knowledge exchange", he added.

Daily Times, 18 December 2005

Civilian nuclear programme: India hopeful of international cooperation

NEW DELHI: Fuel-hungry India said on Saturday it was hopeful it will soon be able to get international help to develop its civilian nuclear energy capabilities. "I am optimistic through constructive dialogue with the international community, we will soon be part of the mainstream with full civilian nuclear cooperation," said Prime Minister Manmohan Singh. In July India signed a landmark deal with the US that would give it access to atomic technology, to which it has been denied since first testing a nuclear weapon in 1974 and refusing to sign the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty. But the pact, which must be approved by the US Congress, is opposed by many US lawmakers as well as nuclear experts who say it undermines anti-nuclear proliferation efforts. Singh's comments came before a second meeting of the Nuclear Working Group headed by Foreign Secretary Shyam Saran and US Undersecretary of State for Political Affairs Nicholas Burns, which is thrashing out details of the accord.

The Asian Age, 19 December 2005

Does the U.S. deal really serve India? (Bharat Karnad)

Any foreign or defence policy wrinkle is justified in terms of its serving the national interest. This is par for the course. But the treating of "national interest" as an overly fungible concept to legitimise even lame and myopic initiatives in the nuclear policy field with plainly injurious consequences to the country, is a seminal development in the annals of Indian foreign and military policy-making and an achievement of the economic-minded Manmohan Singh-led regime that the Congress Party may find hard to live down. After all, for 57 years of the nuclear programme, successive Indian governments cutting across party lines have been zealous in protecting this high-technology enclave from the predatory attentions of the established nuclear weapons states, and thereby in safeguarding the country's weapons capability and potential size and quality of its nuclear arsenal. It is the nuclear security of the nation that is now endangered.

The Tribune, 19 December 2005

Logic of separation (K. Subrahmanyam)

It is to India's advantage to go ahead with N-deal. The July 18, 2005, joint statement of Prime Minister Manmohan Singh and President George Bush was about exceptionalising from the NPT technology denial regime, a non-signatory of the treaty, and not about accommodating India as a nuclear weapon state in the NPT. The United States by itself cannot amend the treaty and make India a nuclear weapon state with equal status with five states recognised as such under Article 1 of the NPT. The exceptionalisation is being done to enable India to have access to civilian nuclear power within the overall framework of the nonproliferation regime. Once this basic fact is understood it would follow that all rights and obligations equal to those of nuclear weapon states envisaged to be conferred on India is still subject to this overall caveat. India will be accepted as a nuclear weapon state outside the treaty and not as a weapon state within the treaty. Therefore, there will be differences between the rights of weapon states and India. No amount of verbal acrobatics can do away with this basic fact of life as of today. It may change some years from now but today this is the reality.

Daily Times, 19 December 2005

Turner calls for eliminating N-arms from South Asia (Umer Farooq)

ISLAMABAD: Media tycoon and United Nations Foundation Chairman Ted Turner has said the governments of Pakistan and India should work for the complete elimination of nuclear weapons from South Asia, as what he said the nuke-free region would be a much safer place. "I have mentioned this issue in my meetings with Indian officials and now in Pakistan I will raise the issue of nuclear disarmament in my meetings with the government officials on Monday" said Ted Turner while speaking at a press conference here on Sunday. Members of the UN Foundation accompanied him. A five-member delegation of the foundation, comprising Dr Harlem Brundtland, the

former Prime Minister of Norway, Senator Timothy E Wirth, the foundation president, Nafisa Sadik and Mahmmod Younus, is visiting Pakistan in order to get a first hand understanding of the situation in the earthquake-affected areas.

The News, 19 December 2005

Taking forward the Indo-US nuclear deal (Jyoti Malhotra)

America is back on the Indian radar this week, despite the north Indian obsession with Pakistan which allows public opinion to stray westward from time to time. And so, Foreign Secretary Shyam Saran is winding his way to Washington DC for talks with his counterpart, Nicholas Burns - and a "drop in" on the most powerful woman in the world, as well as certainly amongst the most interesting, Condoleezza Rice - for talks on how to take the Indo-US nuclear deal forward. The world would do well to keep a close eye on the peripatetic Saran. He was in Nepal last week, during which time he said hello to King Gyanendra and to the major Nepalese political figures - even as the Nepalese army chief was at the exact same time shaking hands with Pakistan's very influential generals in Islamabad. He goes forth from his office in South Block to meet Prime Minister Manmohan Singh in Parliament almost every other day these days, a two-km stretch that is definitely the most influential piece of real estate in this country. And now he's going to the US.

The Indian Express, 19 December 2005

As Saran heads for US, view from Delhi: key to headway lies in basics (C Raja Mohan)

NEW DELHI, Dec 18: India believes that a reaffirmation of political objectives that shaped the Indo-US nuclear pact last July will facilitate a mutual understanding on its early implementation. As Foreign Secretary Shyam Saran heads to Washington this week for a critical round of nuclear talks, India hopes a clarification of the fundamentals will help resolve the many complex issues relating to nuclear separation and international safeguards. Motivated criticism in the United States and ill-informed fear in India since the pact was signed five months ago, has muddied the nuclear debate in both capitals and between them. The Indo-US nuclear pact, signed by President George W Bush and Prime Minister Manmohan Singh on July 18, was initiated on the political premise in Washington that a strong India is in the interest of the United States. And central to the pact is the explicit American acknowledgement of the existence of a military nuclear programme in India.

The Telegraph, 19 December 2005

Gifting The Future Away (Bharat Bhushan)

The signals from the US are that it wants India's nuclear plants and facilities to fall neatly into one of the two categories - civilian or military. The argument is that only a clear categorization would allow the US to fend off criticism that by contributing to India's civilian nuclear programme, it was aiding its military programme. The US has also decided, through a joint statement issued in Washington on July 18 that India would be treated in a special category - distinct from the members of the nuclear club as well as those who have nuclear weapons, have not signed the nuclear non-proliferation treaty, but do not merit nuclear technology co-operation. This is either because of their record of proliferation (Pakistan) or because they do not publicly claim that they have nuclear weapons (Israel).

The Hindu, 20 December 2005

Stage set for nuclear separation talks (Siddharth Varadarajan)

New Delhi: With the expert group headed by Foreign Secretary Shyam Saran now en route to Washington, India is set to hold the most detailed round of discussions to date with the U.S. on the planned separation of its civilian and military nuclear facilities. However, senior officials familiar with the issue told The Hindu on Monday that the two sides were not expected to clinch a deal this time, and that additional rounds of technical talks would be necessary before mutually acceptable specific reciprocal commitments could finally be worked out. According to official sources, the Department of Atomic Energy had prepared a number of options and scenarios for the proposed separation, involving the inclusion and exclusion of different facilities.

Hindustan Times, 19 December 2005

Saran to visit US to discuss India's N-plan

New Delhi: Foreign Secretary Shyam Saran leaves for the US on Tuesday to discuss a plan to separate the country's civilian and military nuclear facilities in line with a bilateral nuclear cooperation pact. The plan, if found credible by the US administration, will be presented to the US Congress and will prove crucial in facilitating civilian nuclear energy cooperation with Washington. Contrary to fears expressed by vocal non-proliferation activists in the US, the Indian plan proposes to place a large number of civilian nuclear reactors under International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) safeguards, diplomatic sources said. "The list is exhaustive enough to satisfy the Bush administration," said a source.

The Times of India, 19 December 2005

It would amount to playing with fire (Viny Mishra)

There is little benefit in India persisting with a nuclear programme - whether it is proclaimed to be benign or admittedly malignant. There has never been a 'peaceful' nuclear programme anywhere in the world. If nuclear power is not used to make weapons, at the very least such programmes cause immeasurable ecological damage. Almost half a century after Eisenhower's 'Atoms for Peace' speech, the planet is left with a legacy of nuclear waste that will be radioactive for tens or hundreds of thousands of years. As yet, no safe solution for its disposal exists anywhere in the world, and in this situation, it is unlikely India will come up with a safe disposal system. Considering India's growing cities and villages, it is a matter of time before people start living dangerously close to a nuclear dump or grave.

Hindustan Times, 19 December 2005

Indo-US talks on nuclear issue on Wednesday

New Delhi: India and the US are expected to spell out the steps taken by them on implementation of Civil Nuclear deal when Foreign Secretary Shyam Saran and his American counterpart Nicholas Burns hold talks in Washington on Wednesday. During the meeting, India is likely to specify its plans for segregating the civil and military nuclear installations, believed to be in advanced stages, as is required under the July 18 joint statement issued after talks between Prime Minister Manmohan Singh and US President George W Bush. The Indian side is also expected to seek to know from the US about the steps the Bush administration has taken to lift restrictions on high technology sale, considering the recent assertion by Prime Minister Manmohan Singh that the deal is based on "strict reciprocity".

Deccan Herald, 19 December 2005

Strategic importance (G Parthasarathy)

The July 18 Agreement suggests that the US accepts India's nuclear capabilities. Every Prime Minister longs to leave some achievement in foreign policy and national security as a lasting and historic legacy. Jawaharlal Nehru is remembered for his success in pursuing an independent foreign policy. The liberation of Bangladesh was Indira Gandhi's greatest achievement in foreign policy. Atal Behari Vajpayee's greatest contribution was the sagacity shown in resisting foreign pressures following the May 1998 nuclear tests. Dr Manmohan Singh can regard his July 18 Agreement with President Bush as his outstanding contribution to Indian foreign policy, if the Agreement is approved by the United States Congress and existing international sanctions in nuclear and technological co-operation with India are brought to an end.

Boston.com News, 19 December 2005

Canada urges India to open up nuclear reactor (Carol Giacomo)

WASHINGTON: Canada urged India on Monday to allow nuclear inspectors access to a Canadian-supplied reactor where experts say the country produces a significant amount of its weapons-grade plutonium. Lack of independent access to the Cirus research reactor, located north of Mumbai (formerly Bombay), is one of the issues slowing implementation of a sweeping nuclear cooperation deal that the United States announced with India on July 18. That deal has come under fire from the U.S. Congress and from non-proliferation experts who say the case of the 40-megawatt reactor raises questions about India's trustworthiness. In a statement, Canada said it has urged U.S. and Indian officials to designate the reactor a civilian facility open to inspection by the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA).

The Tribune, 21 December 2005

Nuclear deal and after (T.P. Sreenivasan)

The think-tanks in Washington are divided right in the middle", said Mr Stephen Cohen, the South Asia specialist at the Brookings Institution. Nothing unusual, I thought to myself. But he proceeded to say: "In Brookings itself, the opinion is divided. So it is in the CSIS, Carnegie and Stimson Centre." Well, that is serious. Think-tanks in the United States ordinarily have coordinated views within themselves as each has a history and an ideology of its own. It is normal to characterise one as conservative and another as liberal. When it comes to non-proliferation, there is even a consensus among them. But on the matter of the India-US nuclear deal, there is no common position even within individual think-tanks. Three of them, the Brookings Institution, the Carnegie Endowment for International Peace and the Stimson Center joined together to hear me on "India after the India-US Nuclear Deal". Questioning was not hostile when I outlined the different strands of Indian opinion on the deal.

Hindustan Times, 21 December 2005

US Congressmen seek to oppose India nuclear deal

Washington: Two US lawmakers have proposed a resolution expressing congressional disapproval for President George W Bush's "sweeping" nuclear agreement with India, one of the congressmen said. If the resolution passed, it would signal lawmakers' "disapproval" of the July 18 deal, which has generated strong opposition from non-proliferation advocates because it would give India access to previously banned technology. "The

administration's move to launch nuclear cooperation with India has grave security implications for South Asia and the entire world," said Democratic Rep Edward Markey of Massachusetts, who introduced the resolution with Republican Rep Fred Upton of Michigan last week. Markey, co-chair of the Bipartisan Task Force on Non-proliferation, is a member of the House Energy and Commerce Committee, as is Upton.

Daily Times, 21 December 2005

'India must place civilian N-facilities under safeguards' (Khalid Hasan)

WASHINGTON: Two nuclear experts have recommended that India place all its civilian nuclear facilities under full international safeguards, in order to obtain congressional satisfaction about its July 2005 nuclear cooperation agreement with the United States. The agreement announced on 18 July by President George Bush and Prime Minister Manmohan Singh regarding the establishment of a US-India "global partnership" will require changes to US non-proliferation laws and policies and could dramatically increase nuclear and nuclear-related commerce with India, David Albright and Susan Basu of the Institute for Science and International Security (ISIS) argue in a paper issued here this week. According to the analysis, "Part of this agreement is an Indian commitment to separate its civil and military nuclear programmes and put declared civil facilities under international safeguards. Safeguards should apply in perpetuity, with minor, standard exceptions that do not include use in nuclear explosives or weapons.

The Tribune, 22 December 2005

India not to compromise on N-facilities (Ashish Kumar Sen)

Washington: Foreign Secretary Shyam Saran on Wednesday indicated he had come with "certain ideas" on the separation of India's civil and military facilities, a prerequisite for civilian nuclear cooperation with the United States. Prior to his meeting with Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice, Mr Saran told an audience at the Carnegie Endowment for International Peace, India would be addressing the separation plan "on the basis that this has to be credible, transparent... And, as far as we are concerned, it should not impact adversely our strategic programme." He said predictions that India would offer a minimal separation of its civil nuclear facilities displayed a "lack of comprehension of our objectives in entering into this understanding." "India's energy security will be advanced by obtaining international cooperation on as wide a scale as feasible, without accepting limitations on our strategic programme," he added.

The Tribune, 22 December 2005

Resolution opposing N-deal moved in US House (Sridhar Krishnaswami)

Washington, Dec 21: Coinciding with Foreign Secretary Shyam Saran's visit here for talks on the Indo-US civilian nuclear cooperation, two lawmakers have moved a bipartisan resolution in the House of Representatives opposing the deal and claiming that it posed "grave security implications" for South Asia and the entire world. "The current law prohibits the sale of nuclear technology to any country such as India which refuses to sign the Non-Proliferation Treaty, refuses to allow full safeguards under the treaty and which develops nuclear weapons and detonates nuclear tests in defiance of the treaty," Democrat Ed Markey, who has co-sponsored the resolution, along with his Republican colleague Fred Upton, said in a statement. "Supplying nuclear fuel to countries that are not party to the NPT derails the delicate balance that has been established among nuclear nations and limits our capacity to insist that other nations continue to follow this important policy," Markey said.

The Indian Express, 22 December 2005

'N-separation should not affect Indo-US strategic programme' (Sridhar Krishnaswami)

WASHINGTON, Dec 21: India and the US today began talks here on the bilateral nuclear deal with Foreign Secretary Shyam Saran asserting the separation of civilian and military sites should not affect New Delhi's strategic programme. Saran began his parleys here with a call on US Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice and followed it up with discussions with under-secretary of state political Affairs Nicholas Burns on the proposed civilian nuclear deal with India. Both Saran and Burns were joined in the discussions by senior officials of the two governments. Details of the meeting are unavailable but the two are said to be discussing various issues, including the civilian nuclear cooperation deal which is said to be in a critical stage of negotiations. The focus of the Saran-Burns meeting is on the civilian nuclear cooperation with the main objective of moving forward the discussions, said a senior administration official.

The Hindu, 22 December 2005

Saran meets Rice, Burns

WASHINGTON : India and the United States on Wednesday began crucial talks on the landmark bilateral nuclear deal, with visiting Foreign Secretary Shyam Saran asserting that the separation of civilian and military sites should not affect New Delhi's strategic programme. Mr. Saran began his parleys here after calling on U.S. Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice in the morning and followed it up with detailed discussions with Under Secretary of State, Political Affairs, Nicholas Burns, who is Bush administration's pointsman on the proposed civilian nuclear deal

with India. Mr. Saran and Mr. Burns were joined in the discussions by senior officials of the two Governments. The focus was on the civilian nuclear cooperation issue, a senior Bush administration official said. Ahead of the talks with Ms. Rice and Mr. Burns, Mr. Saran was at the Carnegie Endowment answering a few questions and used the occasion to outline India's parameters for the talks on the nuclear deal signed on July 18.

Dawn, 22 December 2005

US think-tank wants India's N-facilities placed under watch (Chidanand Rajghatta)

WASHINGTON: An American think-tank has produced a wish-list of Indian nuclear facilities which it wants placed under international safeguards. The Institute for Science and International Security's (ISIS) wish-list includes six major fuel fabrication plants, four reprocessing plants, two breeder reactors, four enrichment facilities, nine research reactors, and nine heavy water production plants, all of which the think-tank deems as civil nuclear facilities. The only units recognised as being associated with India's fissile material production for nuclear weapons - and therefore possibly outside the ambit of safeguards - are five facilities in Trombay and the Rare Materials Project outside Mysore. These facilities produce and process plutonium and uranium for possible use in nuclear weapons. Even in this limited list, the ISIS managers have a problem with a couple. The Cirus reactor, which was supplied by Canada and supported by the US under a peaceful nuclear pledge by India, should be safeguarded, the institute said, arguing that "if India declares this reactor as military, it would directly violate its commitment to Canada".

Daily Times, 22 December 2005

'Pakistan mum on US-India N-ties' (Khalid Hasan)

WASHINGTON: Indian Foreign Secretary Shyam Saran said here on Wednesday that Pakistan had not brought up the July 18, 2005 Indo-US nuclear cooperation agreement under discussion with India at any level. Asked after an address on US-India relations at the Carnegie Endowment for International Peace, if, given the consternation with which the July 18 agreement between India and the United States was viewed in Pakistan, Islamabad had raised the issue at any level with India, Saran replied, "Never in my knowledge." Asked about the Iran-Pakistan-India gas pipeline, the foreign secretary answered that energy security is a major Indian concern, as it is Pakistan's. He added that India would look at the project from the viewpoint of its economic viability. In his prepared remarks, the Indian official offered a strong defence of the deal which has triggered grave concerns in the nonproliferation community in the United States and Europe, because of the implications the agreement carries for nuclear proliferation in general and the Nonproliferation Treaty (NPT) in particular.

Boston.com News, 21 December 2005

India defends nuclear deal with US (Carol Giacomo)

WASHINGTON: India on Wednesday defended a controversial new civilian nuclear cooperation deal with the United States and rejected demands by American critics that New Delhi accept curbs on its atomic weapons program. Ahead of talks with senior U.S. officials, Indian Foreign Secretary Shyam Saran said he was bringing "ideas" to address a centerpoint of the July 18 deal -- India's commitment to place nuclear facilities associated with its civilian energy program under international inspection. But he declined to give details, including how India would treat its Canadian-supplied Cirus nuclear plant, which experts say was intended for peaceful use but was diverted for military purposes. "We are not talking here about a capping of India's strategic (nuclear weapons) program. We are not talking here about a fissile material cutoff" but about how to meet India's burgeoning energy needs, he told the Carnegie Endowment for International Peace, a think tank.

The Indian Express, 23 December 2005

On N-deal, Saran is meeting Lugar (Pranab Dhal Samanta)

New Delhi, Dec 22: Foreign Secretary Shyam Saran may be in Washington for the meeting of the joint working group to implement the July 18 joint statement, but he is using the visit to reach out to other key players involved in the debate on the nuclear deal. In this context, he is meeting today Senator Richard Lugar who chairs the Senate Foreign Relations Committee. Given that the Bush administration is planning an India-specific legislation to enable full civilian nuclear cooperation with India, this meeting will be important. It comes at a time when two senators have moved a resolution opposing the nuclear deal. Saran will look to clarify any issues on the deal that Lugar may have encountered during hearings on the agreement. His remarks had generated slight concern in South Block, particularly the point that Washington was not in favour of India negotiating a "voluntary offer" safeguards agreement with the IAEA. New Delhi is of the view that though it's not a signatory to the Non-Proliferation Treaty, India is a nuclear weapons state with an exceptional track record on all parameters followed by NPT members. In fact, Saran today made it clear in Washington that the kind of controls India has introduced recently through a legislation to prevent clandestine proliferation puts it in the "NPT Plus" category.

Hindustan Times, 23 December 2005

India rejects fissile moratorium (S Rajagopalan)

Washington: While strongly reaffirming its commitment to non-proliferation, India on Wednesday ruled out a moratorium on its fissile material production or acceptance of any new conditions in order to secure approval for the Indo-US nuclear deal. In a clear enunciation of the Indian stance, Foreign Secretary Shyam Saran forcefully rejected some of the new conditions being pushed by the US's powerful non-proliferation lobby. "These suggestions are deal breakers and are intended as such," he remarked. Several leading lights of the NPT lobby were present at Washington's Carnegie Endowment for Peace, where Saran marshaled his arguments to make the point that India's non-proliferation record is such that it belonged to the 'NPT plus' category. On separation of civilian and nuclear facilities, the critical issue that will be the focus of his talks with the US establishment over the next two days, Saran scoffed at predictions that India would offer just a token or minimal separation plan. "This displays a lack of comprehension of our objectives in entering into this understanding," he said adding: "India's energy security will be advanced by obtaining international cooperation on as wide a scale as feasible without accepting limitations on our strategic programme."

The Indian Express, 23 December 2005

US optimistic on its relationship with India

Washington, Dec 22: The United States has said that it was optimistic of a "bright" future for its relationship with India and it looked forward to taking the engagement to the next level. Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice who met visiting Foreign Secretary Shyam Saran, was "quite optimistic about a bright future for the United States-India relationship and Washington is looking forward to working with India closely to take the relationship to the next steps," State Department Spokesman Sean McCormack said here, quoting her. The Spokesman said that the focus of the nearly 20-minute meeting between the Saran and Rice was the forthcoming visit of US President George W Bush to India. "It was a very general discussion. They talked about the planning for the President's upcoming trip to India. I think that was the focus of their discussions... There's the hope and desire on both sides that the President's trip be a historic trip that really signifies a changed relationship between the US and India that we have been working..On for the past several years," McCormack said.

The Statesman, 23 December 2005

Arjun Singh allays N-deal fears

New Delhi, Dec. 22: The human resources development minister, Mr Arjun Singh today reiterated that reciprocity was the bedrock for the civilian nuclear energy understanding between India and United States. During the zero hour, the former foreign minister, Mr Yashwant Sinha had raised concerns that the USA might be "shifting the goalpost" on the 18 July understanding. He quoted the statement of US Congressman, Mr Tom Lantos in the first hearing in August, when he had said in context of India's relation with Iran - "They (Indians) need to be told in plain English either they are with the US or against it." He had claimed that Parliament could not be a "mute spectator" and the country could not place its civilian nuclear installations open to international inspections in perpetuity in return for a possible bilateral concessions in the field of nuclear energy.

The Times of India, 23 December 2005

Target: Indian Cirus reactor (Chidanand Rajghatta)

WASHINGTON: As pressure continues to build on New Delhi to put more and more of its nuclear facilities under international safeguards, US interlocutors are targeting two Indian plants in particular for intrusive monitoring. The first is Cirus, India's oldest nuclear reactor, which is believed to have provided most of the bang for the 1998 tests. The other is among India's most secret facilities -- a uranium enrichment plant outside Mysore that is expected to provide goods for a new generation of weapons and also fuel India's nuclear submarine program. While an Indian delegation led by foreign secretary Shyam Saran began talks with a US team led by Undersecretary of State Nicholas Burns on Wednesday, actors in the nuclear field are advancing their agendas to bring India's nuclear program under tighter scrutiny. Canada dusted off a half century old deal with India to demand that New Delhi place the Cirus reactor under IAEA safeguards saying it "would respect the peaceful assurances of our original agreement."

Hindustan Times, 23 December 2005

No favours to US firms in N-contracts (S Rajagopalan)

Washington, Dec 22: India has sought to scotch speculation in some quarters that it will favour US companies with nuclear contracts over rival foreign firms in return for US help in clearing the decks for civilian nuclear cooperation. The watchword here will be "level playing field", according to Indian Foreign Secretary Shyam Saran. "Once the market is open, there would be a level playing field for all potential suppliers," he said during a Q&A at the Carnegie Endowment. Asked if US firms will get the first shot on nuclear contracts, he explained that India was talking to all major partners, including Russia and France, besides the US, over plans for "a very major expansion in our nuclear energy programme". Russia, in fact, is already building two 1,000 MW reactors in Koodankulam in Tamil Nadu, he pointed out. Saran estimated that once the current restrictions on technology transfer are removed, the share of nuclear power in India's overall energy supply will move into double digits from

the present lowly three per cent.

Hindustan Times, 23 December 2005

Cross-border terrorism figures in Indo-US talks

Washington: The issue of cross-border terrorism figured in the talks Foreign Secretary Shyam Saran had with senior Bush administration officials who assured him that it was a "matter very high" on the agenda of US-Pak parleys. "In the spirit of our relationship I have shared with the United States administration the phenomenon of cross border terrorism as well," Foreign Secretary Shyam Saran said in response to a question at the end of his two-day visit to Washington. In the course of his visit, Saran met a number of senior administration officials, including Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice, National Security Advisor Stephen Hadley and the Under Secretary of State for Political Affairs Nicholas Burns. Saran maintained that officials of both sides have used the latest occasion to discuss a range of issues. "I have brought to their attention that we still do not see a clear pattern in terms of decrease and elimination of cross-border terrorism and infiltration," Saran said. When asked what the response of the Bush administration had been, the Foreign Secretary said, "we have been assured by the US that this is a matter very high on the agenda of US-Pakistan talks.

Hindustan Times, 22 December 2005

Nuclear cooperation will help India, US: Saran

Washington: Visiting Foreign Secretary Shyam Saran has made a strong case for the Indo-US civilian nuclear cooperation deal, saying it would not only help India's energy needs but open vast doors to American business. The senior Indian official is in Washington to negotiate on the finer aspects of the historic civilian nuclear cooperation agreement signed by President George W Bush and Prime Minister Manmohan Singh July 18 last year. "To believe that civil nuclear energy is unimportant because it constitutes only three percent of India's current energy production betrays a lack of understanding of our energy requirements and their emission implications," asserted Saran, addressing an audience of US business, academic and policymakers at the Carnegie Endowment for International Peace here. "Civil nuclear energy is currently limited precisely because of technology denial. If freed from current restrictions, there is little doubt that it will rapidly move into percentages of double digits," he said in what must surely appeal to American business as yet another field opening up in doing business with the emerging economic powerhouse. His visit comes in the backdrop of a resolution introduced by two US Congressmen warning against such a deal on grounds it endangered global nuclear weapons pre-emption.

Hindustan Times, 24 December 2005

No opening up nuke facility: NSA

New Delhi: National Security Adviser MK Narayanan has expressed confidence that the India-US nuclear deal will be implemented soon, but this may not happen before US President George W Bush's visit in New Delhi in early March. "I don't think it will happen before Bush comes to India. But by the time he comes, which hopefully will be in early March, most of the issues will be sorted out," he told a news channel in an interview. He also clarified that India's commitment to put its civilian facilities under international inspection will not compromise its strategic programme. Answering a question, Narayanan also ruled out demilitarisation along the Line of Control (LoC). "Troop reduction can be considered if there is a reduction in violence, but the worrying factor is the increase in infiltration," he said. During Foreign Secretary Shyam Saran's visit to the US that concluded on Thursday, India and the US made a "considerable advance" on civilian nuclear energy cooperation. During his discussions with US officials, including his counterpart and Undersecretary of State Nicholas Burns, Saran for the first time unveiled a credible separation plan of the Indian civilian and military nuclear facilities to Washington.

Deccan Herald, 24 December 2005

'Issues on nuke deal will be resolved'

New Delhi: India on Saturday said it was hopeful that many of the contentious issues on the nuclear deal with the US would be resolved before President George W Bush's visit here early March and an agreement in principle firmed up on its implementation. New Delhi is also expecting Foreign Secretary Shyam Saran, who held talks with his American interlocutors in Washington, to bring a draft legislation, which the US will present to the Congress for its approval of the July 18 understanding reached between Prime Minister Manmohan Singh and Bush. "If both sides are reasonably satisfied with this as also certain changes and guidelines of Nuclear Suppliers Group, it is possible to move forward," National Security Adviser M K Narayanan told NDTV. During Singh's visit to Washington in July, the US had implicitly recognised India as a nuclear weapon state and agreed to supply fuel for Tarapore reactors following a series of commitments by India, including that of separating civilian and military facilities. Asked whether India saw the US legislation coming through before the arrival here of Bush, Narayanan candidly said "No, I don't think it will happen before President Bush comes to India."

The Indian Express, 24 December 2005

Expect some significant advance on n-deal: Saran

NEW DELHI, Dec 23: India and US stayed on course to take the nuclear deal forward with Foreign Secretary Shyam Saran indicating at the end of his two-day visit to Washington that "significant advance" can be expected on this initiative even before US President George W Bush's visit to India. The Foreign Secretary said his talks with Under Secretary of State for Political Affairs -his counterpart in the Joint Working Group on implementing the July 18 joint statement-were positive and should lead to a successful outcome in the days ahead. The Indian side is understood to have shared ideas on plans to separate civilian and military nuclear entities. For its part, US appraised the Indian delegation of its efforts in introducing a legislation making a special exemption for India from controls that currently prevent full civilian nuclear cooperation between the two countries. The other crucial issue in this connection is the kind of safeguard agreement India will sign with the IAEA. It may be noted that Saran had made it clear a day earlier in Washington that India had a military nuclear programme and so, the model of safeguards agreement signed by non-nuclear weapons states cannot apply to India. While no details were divulged on discussions over this subject, the Foreign Secretary said he was going back "extremely satisfied" with the progress in this round of talks.

The Times of India, 24 December 2005

Indo-US N-deal in on course: Saran (Chidanand Rajghatta)

WASHINGTON: The US-India nuclear cooperation deal is on course to being tied up for implementation by the time of President Bush's visit to New Delhi in early March. After two days of talks with key American officials in Washington, India's foreign secretary Shyam Saran said his meetings had produced "very positive forward movement" and he was "going back very encouraged by the environment" with respect to the implementation of the nuclear deal. "As far as civilian nuclear cooperation is concerned, we had a very positive exchange of views and come to the conclusion that we should be in a position to make significant advance on this initiative before the Bush visit," Saran told correspondents at the end of his visit. He declined to even countenance the possibility that the visit could be derailed by wrinkles or hurdles on the nuclear issue, although he maintained growing ties between the two sides could not be pegged to any single subject. The foreign secretary's upbeat assessment was evident in his use of the word 'positive' a dozen times in his exchange with reporters, and his rejection of doubts that non-proliferation lobbies could trip-up the deal. But Saran said his meeting with Lugar was "extremely positive" and he sensed a "very encouraging environment" in seeing the nuclear agreement through.

The Tribune, 24 December 2005

Indo-US defence cooperation (Air Marshal R.S. Bedi (ret))

Left's proclivity for opposing the UPA government on devious issues came to the fore when it decided yet again to hold demonstrations against the government decision to conduct a joint exercise between the US and the Indian Air Force. Attempt to block the exercise at the field level was rather bizarre. Notwithstanding, the government went ahead with the exercise, codenamed "Cope India 2005" which commenced on schedule on November 7, heralding a new chapter in Indo-US defence relations. Perhaps, the CPM is of the opinion that this nature of defence collaboration, especially with the US, may eventually lead to leasing out the military bases. It doesn't augur well for India's strategic interests and independent foreign policy, they feel. What's the basis of this perception is hard to understand, for India had always pursued an autonomous defence policy in the past. In fact, India has been quite sensitive on this aspect of its foreign policy.

The Indian Express, 25 December 2005

US mosques secretly monitored for nukes

WASHINGTON, Dec 24: US officials have secretly monitored radiation levels at mosques and Muslim homes, since September 11, 2001 as part of a secret programme searching for nuclear bombs, the US News and World Report said on Friday. The news magazine said in its online edition that the far-reaching programme covered over a hundred sites in the Washington, DC, area and in at least five other cities as well. "In numerous cases, the monitoring required investigators to go on to the property under surveillance, although no search warrants or court orders were ever obtained, according to those with knowledge of the programme," the magazine said. Federal officials cited by the report maintained the programme was legal and said warrants were not needed for the kind of radiation sampling it conducted. According to the magazine, the programme began in early 2002 and was run by the FBI and the Department of Energy's Nuclear Emergency Support Team. At its peak, the effort involved three vehicles in the Washington area monitoring 120 sites a day, nearly all of them Muslim targets such as prominent mosques and office buildings selected by the FBI, the report said, adding that the programme also operated in at least five other cities -Chicago, Detroit, Las Vegas, New York, and Seattle-when threat levels there have risen.

The Indian Express, 25 December 2005

N-deal: Now, focus on IAEA safeguards (C. Raja Mohan)

NEW DELHI, Dec 24: As India and the United States put the implementation of their nuclear pact on a fast track,

the government is expected to shortly begin consultations with the International Atomic Energy Agency on safeguards arrangements for its civilian nuclear facilities. Foreign Secretary Shyam Saran and his US interlocutors last week in Washington appear to have concluded that an early closure to the deal would dramatically change the political setting for Bush's India visit in late February or early March. El Baradei, who received the Nobel Peace Prize this year, strongly defended the US nuclear deal with India in a conclave of non-proliferation hawks in Washington last month. Under the nuclear pact signed by President George W. Bush and Prime Minister Manmohan Singh, the US will resume atomic energy cooperation with India, once India identifies its civilian military facilities and puts them under IAEA safeguards. India's nuclear separation plans are inextricably linked to the type of IAEA safeguards to be put in place. A unique safeguards arrangement with Delhi, that fully recognises the reality of a military nuclear programme in India, would make it easier for Delhi to put a larger number of facilities on its civilian list. Analysts say, it would make sense for India to negotiate a separate agreement with the IAEA-referred to in the IAEA jargon as Information Circular 66-for every nuclear facility it chooses to put under international safeguards.

The Tribune, 25 December 2005

Burns' crucial visit to India next month (Rajeev Sharma)

New Delhi, Dec 24: United States' Under Secretary for Political Affairs Nicholas Burns will come here next month on a crucial visit during which the final nuts and bolts for implementation of the July 18 Indo-US nuclear agreement are expected to be fastened, diplomatic sources said today. It is also expected that India will complete its ongoing exercise for separation of its civil and military nuclear facilities by the time Mr Burns comes here next month-end. The attempt of the two countries will be to finalise and finetune everything so that when President George W. Bush comes for his "historic" visit to India in early March, he can make a major announcement. Mr Burns will hold the fourth meeting of the Joint Working Group (JWG) which has been specially created for ensuring implementation of the nuke deal. The JWG is headed by Foreign Secretary Shyam Saran from Indian side and Mr Burns from the American side.

The Hindu, 25 December 2005

Russia's offer to Iran

MOSCOW: The Russian Foreign Ministry said it made a formal offer to Iran on Saturday to move its uranium enrichment programme to Russia, raising diplomatic pressure on Teheran to accept the Western-backed plan it has so far rejected. The Russian Embassy in Teheran on Saturday handed over a formal note containing the offer to the Iranian authorities, Russia's Foreign Ministry said in a statement. The note said that "an earlier Russian offer to Iran to establish a joint Russian-Iranian enrichment venture in Russia remains valid." Iran has insisted that it would enrich uranium and produce nuclear fuel domestically despite international efforts to curb its atomic programme. Iran says its nuclear programme is only aimed at producing electricity, but the United States accuses Iran of running a covert atomic weapons programme.

The News, 25 December 2005

N Korea, Japan discuss nuclear programme

BEIJING: Japanese and North Korean officials met in the Chinese capital on Saturday for talks aimed at normalising ties between East Asia's economic powerhouse and the isolated Stalinist state. Negotiations focused on key bilateral stumbling blocks-North Korea's past abductions of Japanese citizens to train its spies, mostly in the 1970s and Pyongyang's nuclear ambitions. The meeting came after Japan approved a joint missile defence programme with the United States, a system to shoot down incoming missiles mid-air. Japanese and North Korean delegates in their meeting focussed on the format of future talks and a Japanese plan to break them up into three working groups-on the issues of normalizing ties, abductions and North Korea's nuclear programmes. While the two sides fell short of an agreement on such a new format in their three hours of talks, Japan's chief delegate Akitaka Saiki said he was hoping for "concrete results" on Sunday, Jiji Press reported.

Dawn, 25 December 2005

Fair treatment sought on N-technology access (Ihtasham ul Haque)

ISLAMABAD, Dec 24: Pakistan has sought the support of the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) in its quest for being treated on a par with India by the Nuclear Suppliers Group (NSG) which controls developing countries' access to nuclear technology. Informed sources told Dawn on Saturday that IAEA was aware of Pakistan's needs for nuclear technology to meet its growing demand for energy. IAEA believes that Pakistan's requirements of nuclear technology should be met to help it generate more electricity and eliminate widespread salinity and water-logging. While Pakistan has taken up the issue of acquiring from the United States nuclear energy for peaceful purpose, it is also asking IAEA to use its influence with the Bush administration as well as other members of the NSG to get a fair treatment. Pakistan has been suggested to ensure that nuclear exports are carried out with appropriate safeguards, physical protection and non-proliferation conditions. The NSG seeks to restrict the export of items that can contribute to proliferation of nuclear weapons. Pakistan, the sources said,

was told by the IAEA officials that several US think tanks and nuclear-related bodies believed that Washington should treat India and Pakistan on an equal footing in helping them meet their energy needs.

The Indian Express, 26 December 2005

U.S. eyes big arms sales to India in '06

WASHINGTON: The Bush administration is maneuvering to balance possible big new U.S. arms sales to archrivals India and Pakistan in the new year. In the past week, U.S. Vice President Dick Cheney and Defense Secretary Donald Rumsfeld have made separate visits, not announced in advance, to Pakistan, a key ally in the U.S.-declared war on terrorism. Islamabad will make up its mind in the coming year on a U.S. offer to resume F-16 fighter aircraft sales after a 16-year break, Foreign Minister Khurshid Kasuri was quoted by the Associated Press of Pakistan as saying after Cheney left. Separately, the United States is poised to push in the new year for major arms sales to India, a hedge against China's growing regional military clout and influence. The Bush administration is weighing, among other things, whether to let India buy a state-of-the-art radar system as part of a U.S. bid for a potential \$5 billion contract to supply 126 multi-role fighters, Kohler said in the interview. The possible supply of Active Electronically Scanned Array Radar, or AESA, would boost U.S. prospects against expected competition from Sweden, France and Russia. The technology is meant to let U.S. fighters detect and destroy enemy aircraft at significantly longer ranges.

The Indian Express, 25 December 2005

US ties can balance rising China: India

New Delhi, November 28: Growing warmth in ties between India and the United States can help offset China's rising economic and military clout in Asia, a top Indian official said on Monday. Ties between India and the United States, once on opposite sides of the Cold War divide, have warmed in recent years, with the two nations forging a strategic partnership encompassing many areas from military to economic and space. The high point came in July when Washington took a landmark decision to resume cooperation with India on civil nuclear energy after a gap of many years. "If we are looking at Asia in the coming years, there is no doubt there is a major realignment of forces taking place in Asia," Foreign Secretary Shyam Saran said. "There is the emergence of China as a global economic power. There will be increased capabilities that China would be able to bring to bear in this region and even beyond," he told an India Economic Summit in New Delhi. Analysts have long said that Washington's growing interest in developing strong ties with New Delhi is aimed at offsetting Beijing's rising influence in Asia.

Daily Times, 27 December 2005

Arms sales to Pakistan, India in 2006: Rivalry could put US 'on the hook'

WASHINGTON: The Bush administration is manoeuvring to balance possible big new US arms sales to archrivals India and Pakistan in the New Year. In the past week, US Vice President Dick Cheney and Defence Secretary Donald Rumsfeld have made separate visits, not announced in advance, to Pakistan, a key ally in the US-led war on terrorism. If their rivalry flared anew, the United States could be on the hook to deliver sophisticated weaponry to a region on the brink of war, said Matt Schroeder of the Federation of American Scientists' arms sales monitoring project. Islamabad will make up its mind in the coming year on a US offer to resume F-16 fighter aircraft sales after a 16-year break, Foreign Minister Khurshid Kasuri was quoted by the Associated Press of Pakistan as saying after Cheney left. In May, the Pentagon told Congress it was proposing to let Pakistan buy 300 AIM-9M-1/2 'Sidewinder' heat-seeking, air-to-air missiles and 60 Harpoon missiles with a combined value of up to \$226 million. India as the China hedge: Separately, the United States is poised to push in the new year for major arms sales to India, a hedge against China's growing regional military clout and influence. The Bush administration is weighing, among other things, whether to let India buy a state-of-the-art radar system as part of a US bid for a potential \$5 billion contract to supply 126 multi-role fighters, Kohler said in the interview. The possible supply of Active Electronically Scanned Array Radar, or AESA, would boost US prospects against expected competition from Sweden, France and Russia. The technology is meant to let US fighters detect and destroy enemy aircraft at significantly longer ranges.

Dawn, 27 December 2005

Nuclear clouds gather over Asia (Praful Bidwai)

NEW DELHI: The Asia-Pacific region has not only emerged as one of the main engines of the world economy but it has also taken the global centre-stage in developments pertaining to nuclear weapons and efforts to acquire a capability to make them. From Iran and Israel in West Asia, through India and Pakistan in South Asia, to North Korea and Japan in the East, the region exhibited, in 2005, unprecedented activity in the nuclear field that can only intensify in the coming years. In each of these countries, the United States plays a major role. Its policies of selectively favouring or opposing their nuclear activities will alter the strategic balance in some of the world's most volatile regions. "This is a marked shift from the cold war period, where the global nuclear centre of gravity lay in the all-out confrontation between the eastern and western blocs, which was most intense in Europe," says Achin

Vanaik, professor of international relations and global politics at Delhi University. 2005 witnessed two landmark nuclear developments - an attempt by the US and its allies to censure Iran and prevent it from enriching uranium, either for military or civilian purposes, and an Indo-US agreement to "normalize" India's nuclear weapons status and resume civilian nuclear commerce with it.

The Hindu, 28 December 2005

U.S. sanctions on two Indian firms

Washington: The United States has imposed sanctions on two Indian firms, six Chinese Government-run companies and an Austrian company involved in selling missile goods and chemical arms materials to Iran, the Washington Times says quoting unnamed Bush administration officials. According to the report, these sanctions against the Indian and Chinese firms have been under consideration since April and were approved by Deputy Secretary of State Robert B. Zoellick over the past several weeks. The announcement about the sanctions will be published in the U.S. Government's Federal Register in the coming days, the Times report said on Tuesday. At the same time, the U.S. Government announced that it had lifted the sanctions imposed last year on Chaudhary Surendar, one of two Indian nuclear scientists linked to Iran's nuclear programme. India had denied that Mr. Surendar was linked to Iranian proliferation activities. Sanctions were imposed on him in September 2004 for his alleged role in providing weapons of mass destruction and missile goods to Iran under the Iran Non-Proliferation Act. The other scientist, Y.S.R. Prasad, continues to face sanctions until they expire in September next.

Hindustan Times, 28 December 2005

Indo-US nuke deal aimed at making world more secure: Sen

Washington, Dec 27: Dismissing the notion that its agreement with the US on sharing civilian nuclear technology amounts to weakening of non-proliferation regime, India has said the deal is based on a "very close" understanding of security interests of the two countries and aimed at making the world more secure. "India has a unique track record. It is the first country in Asia to build a nuclear reactor on its own. You are talking about a country which has about 50 years of experience of handling nuclear assets," Indian Ambassador to the US Ronen Sen said in an interview to the Dallas Morning News. He rejected the notion that the Indo-US nuclear deal amounts to weakening of the non-proliferation regime. "Absolutely not. It is based on a very close understanding of the national security interests of both our countries and to making the world a safer and more secure place," he told the paper. Citing "with justifiable pride" India's track record on proliferation, Sen said, "Nothing has leaked from India. We put into place such tight controls on preventing anything from leaving our country. And we've had these in place much before they were codified in international treaties and norms. It's an impeccable track record. And this is recognised." He said that one reason why the agreement is so important to India in spite of the country's long know-how with nuclear technology is because of the fact that India is "uniquely disadvantaged" in terms of access to energy resources.

Hindustan Times, 28 December 2005

US sanctions on Indian firms unfair: Centre

New Delhi: India on Wednesday termed as unjustified the US decision to impose sanctions on its two firms for supplying some chemicals to Iran, asserting that the transfer did not violate Indian regulations or its international obligations. The sanctions imposed by the US government on two Indian firms -- Sabero Organics Gujarat Limited and Sandhya Organics Limited -- under the US Iran Proliferation Act, 2000 relate to transfer of some chemicals, External Affairs Ministry spokesman Navtej Sarna told reporters in Mumbai. "Our preliminary assessment is that the transfer of such chemicals is not in violation of our regulations or our international obligations," he said. Sarna said the imposition of sanctions by the US on Indian firms, "which in our view have not acted in violation of our laws or regulations, is not justified." The spokesman emphasised that India's commitment to prevent onward proliferation is second to none. "We have instituted a rigorous system of export controls and our track record in this regard is well known," he said, adding India is working with international community including with the US as a partner against proliferation.

The Tribune, 28 December 2005

Changing times (K. Subrahmanyam)

Even US is adjusting itself to new reality. What distinguishes true statesmanship from the run-of-the-mill foreign policy practitioners is the ability to recognise critical changes at international level and exploit them to the advantage of one's own country. Mediocre minds tend to look at international relations as linear extrapolations of the past and thereby allow crucial opportunities to slip by. That the present is an extraordinary time - "one in which the terrain of international politics is shifting beneath our feet and the pace of historical change outstrips even the most vivid imagination" has been recognised in an article by the US Secretary of State, Dr Condoleezza Rice, in the Washington Post of December 11, 2005. Her plea is that "we must transcend the doctrines and debates of the past and transform volatile status quos that no longer serve our interests. What is needed is a realistic statecraft for a transformed world". This is very sound advice not only to her countrymen but to the

Indians as well. She defines the new international threat as weak and failing states serving as global pathways that facilitate the spread of pandemics, the movement of criminals and terrorists and the proliferation of the world's most dangerous weapons.

International Herald Tribune, 28 December 2005

U.S. deal is a bad choice for power generation (Brahma Chellaney)

A much-trumpeted deal between the United States and India seeks to employ the lure of assistance with commercial nuclear power to bring many Indian nuclear sites under international inspections. Even as tough negotiations are now under way to implement the deal, few have examined its premise - that the way for India to meet its rapidly expanding energy demands is to import nuclear power reactors. The deal's very rationale is fundamentally flawed because generating electricity from imported reactors makes little economic or strategic sense. Such imports will lead to energy insecurity and exorbitant costs. India should not replicate in the energy sector the major mistake it has pursued on armaments. India should not think of compounding that blunder by spending billions more to import overly expensive reactors when it can more profitably invest in the development of its own energy sources. India should think instead of tapping its vast hydroelectric reserves and exploiting its coal reserves, which are among the largest in the world.

Daily Times, 29 December 2005

Unresolved CIRUS question integral to US-India N-deal (Khalid Hasan)

WASHINGTON: A leading nuclear nonproliferation expert has said that the July 2005 US-India agreement on nuclear cooperation will have to deal with the CIRUS question before it can find final congressional approval. CIRUS is still being used and India is being pressed to lay it open for inspection by the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA). India's reluctance to do so could well act as a deal breaker for the nuclear cooperation agreement. In an interview with India Abroad, Leonard Spector, a former senior US official and currently with a top California-based think tank specialising in security and nonproliferation issues, said when asked about CIRUS, "I don't believe CIRUS has been identified specifically as a source of concern, but it seems to be part of the range of concerns that the (Capitol) Hill is concentrating on. No one can look at this overall situation and not identify CIRUS as a question. It may not be the be-all and end-all in the minds of certain congressmen and senators, but the document that they have in front of them, when they decide how hard they are going to push on various items, one choice they will have to make is about CIRUS." Spector said there is room for negotiation with India to do the right thing.

The Independent, 29 December 2005

The uncertain nuclear future of India (Amulya Ganguli)

The longstanding unanimity of views among the nuclear 'haves' - the Big Five comprising the US, Britain, France, Russia and China - on India's nuclear status was again confirmed during Prime Minister Manmohan Singh's recent visit to Russia. By hinting that India should abide by its recent agreement with the US on the nuclear issue, Moscow indicated that it was with its old adversary, Washington, on this matter. There is nothing surprising about this attitude since even at the height of the Cold War, the then Soviet Union had not hesitated to side with the US to advise India to accept the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT) even though Moscow was one of New Delhi's closest friends. What this stance showed was that when it came to nuclear power, the five permanent members of the UN Security Council had no differences over refusing an outsider entry to their exclusive club. India was - and still is - an outsider, having refused to sign the NPT and acquiring a nuclear arsenal in defiance of world opinion, as the nuclear 'haves' allege. Pakistan and Israel too are in the same category, with the exception that the latter has not officially let it be known that it possesses nuclear weapons. It was only in last July that the US agreed to formally accept India's nuclear status in an unprecedented departure from the norms of the NPT, demonstrating how the world had changed since the end of the Cold War. India's reputation as a responsible power induced America to modify its earlier policy.

Daily Times, 31 December 2005

India concluding separation of civilian, military N-installations (Iftikhar Gilani)

NEW DELHI: India is moving to conclude the separation of its civilian and military nuclear installations before the visit of US President George W Bush. It is also ready to give the assurances that the nuclear material would not be diverted towards third countries or to military installations. Official sources said on Friday that nuclear agreement with the United States was "on track" and both countries were making progress. The sources said that while India was ready to give assurances and separate its installations, it had made it clear that the country would not accept anything that will adversely affect its strategic interests. Sources said that conditions regarding India and non-nuclear states would have to be different. They also said that India was in touch with the 44-nation Nuclear Suppliers Group (NSG), including China on the issue. But, they stated that the main responsibility lay with the US to convince the powerful nuclear group. India had got a sense that within the NSG, a positive environment existed in terms of making an exception for India, he added.