

Daily Times, 1 January 2005

Pakistan and India exchange lists of nuclear installations today

ISLAMABAD: Pakistan and India will exchange lists of their nuclear installations today (Saturday) under an agreement that prohibits the two countries attacking each other's nuclear installations, Foreign Office sources said on Friday. The lists will be exchanged by diplomats in New Delhi and Islamabad simultaneously. According to the agreement signed on December 31, 1988 and enforced on January 27, 1991, Pakistan and India have to inform each other on January 1 every year about the nuclear installations and facilities mentioned in the accord.

Daily Yomiuri, 1 January 2005

N. Korea 'told of danger line' (Takao Hishinuma)

Charles Pritchard, former special U.S. envoy on peace of the Korean Peninsula, in an interview with The Yomiuri Shimbun, discussed the current situation vis-a-vis the secretive nation. He said he had warned North Korean officials, telling them the United States would not tolerate any moves by North Korea to transfer nuclear materials to a third party. Pritchard is currently a visiting fellow at the Brookings Institute.

The Associated Press, 2 January 2005

Iraq, Iran, North Korea Top Bush Agenda

WASHINGTON: The three countries President Bush called an "axis of evil" in his first term are at the top of his foreign policy to-do list in the second, along with a revitalized Mideast peace process and continued efforts to repair European alliances frayed by the U.S.-led invasion of Iraq. War and reconstruction in Iraq are likely to continue to command more attention than any other international issues, at least for the first couple of years of Bush's new term. "The first priority has got to be getting Iraq right," said Max Boot, a conservative expert on national security at the Council on Foreign Relations. In the short run, the Bush administration also must juggle a complicated response to the devastation from tsunamis across South Asia amid some international sniping that the rich United States is not doing enough.

Dawn, 2 January 2005

N-talks with EU on track: Iran

TEHRAN, Jan 1: Iran's top nuclear negotiator Hassan Rowhani said on Saturday that negotiations with the Europeans aimed at easing international concerns over the country's nuclear programme were on the right track. But he nevertheless said he was disappointed that one promised incentive - Iran's accession to the World Trade Organisation - had failed to materialize despite the European Union's support. "As part of their commitments, the Europeans were supposed to support Iran's membership of the WTO, which they did. But we feel the Europeans did not support Iran enough. They have to get Iran become a member," he told state television. Under an agreement negotiated in Paris in November, Iran agreed to suspend uranium enrichment activities in order to escape the threat of being referred to the United Nations Security Council by the International Atomic Energy Agency.

Daily Times, 3 January 2005

EI Baradei unchallenged for third term at IAEA

VIENNA: Mohamed ElBaradei will run unchallenged for a third term as head of the UN nuclear watchdog, the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) said on Saturday, despite Washington's campaign to oust him. ElBaradei, an Egyptian lawyer, recently announced he would seek re-election as director general of the agency he has headed since 1997. No other candidates came forward before the deadline for nominations at the turn of the year, the IAEA said. "No new candidates were submitted for the position of director general," IAEA spokeswoman Melissa Fleming said. Some US and other countries' officials have privately complained that ElBaradei was not only soft on Iraq and Iran, but had also withheld information from the IAEA board of governors that could boost the US campaign to refer Iran to the UN Security Council for economic sanctions.

Daily Times, 3 January 2005

N Korea warns of nuclear war risk

SEOUL: North Korea said Saturday that the risk of a nuclear war was mounting on the Korean peninsula as the United States attempts to "stifle" it by force. It urged Washington to drop its "hostile" policy toward the communist state and demanded solidarity among all Koreans in order to drive out US troops stationed in South Korea, calling them the "very source of a nuclear war." The statement was made in a New Year editorial run in North Korean newspapers. "The danger of a nuclear war is growing on the Korean peninsula as the days go by owing to the US moves to stifle the DPRK (North Korea)," the editorial said, according to Pyongyang's official Korean Central News Agency.

The Tribune, 3 January 2005

Iran's N-ambitions (Sudarshan Bhutani)

Iran's nuclear ambitions cannot be considered separated from its relations with the United States of America. Ever since the 1979 revolution in Iran, the US has made no secret of its desire to bring about a change of regime in Teheran. It supported Saddam Hussein in his inconclusive war against Iran in the 1980s and it continues to support the Iranian exiles and dissidents. In response, the Iranians have employed a variety of means to safeguard their position. They have diversified and improved their relations wherever possible, with their neighbours and major powers in Europe and Asia alike. With the US, Iran has remained circumspect and has not opposed its policies where its vital interests are not at stake.

People's Daily, 4 January 2005

China makes consistent efforts in arms control

Arms control and disarmament have become key contents in the white papers on China's National Defense issued by the State Council since 1998. The 2004 white paper—issued on Dec. 27—followed the formula by highlighting the country's progress in arms control, disarmament and non-proliferation as well as the country's new propositions in these fields, said an article in Tuesday's China Daily Opinion column. The Chinese Government is committed to preventing the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction (WMD), a significant step that can affect the development of humankind, it said.

The News, 4 January 2005

The tsunami's nuclear threat (J Sri Raman)

CHENNAI: This southern coastal city has just survived a double peril - the tsunami disaster and a nuclear threat. The waves of tidal height, which hit here last Sunday, destroyed fishermen's hamlets and flooding out thousands of other homes and lives - and also inundated a part of the nuclear plant in the city outskirts close to the sea. Pending a full report on the damage, it is already clear that the Kalpakkam nuclear complex and the tsunami made a deadly combination. The nuclear part of the combination ruled out a full report for now, for two reasons. First, no one can easily dent the disaster-proof secrecy that surrounds any nuclear plant. Second is the threat of radioactive leaks. Camera crews cannot capture these as easily as carcasses and debris floating in furious waters.

People's Daily, 5 January 2005

Egypt denies secret nuclear experiments

The U.N. atomic watchdog agency has found evidence of secret nuclear experiments in Egypt that could be used in weapons programs, diplomats said Tuesday. The diplomats told The Associated Press that most of the work was carried out in the 1980s and 1990s but said the International Atomic Energy Agency also was looking at evidence suggesting some work was performed as recently as a year ago. Egypt's government rejected claims it is or has been pursuing a weapons program, saying its nuclear program is for peaceful purposes. "A few months ago we denied these kinds of claims and we do so again," Egyptian government spokesman Magdy Rady said. "Nothing about our nuclear program is secret and there is nothing that is not known to the IAEA."

Dawn, 5 January 2005

Iran nuclear fuel deal stalled over fee: Russia

LONDON, Jan 4: A deal that would clear the way for Iran to start up its Russian-built Bushehr nuclear power plant has been delayed over Moscow's fee for taking back Russian-made spent fuel, Russia's nuclear chief said on Tuesday. "We have told them they have to pay for spent fuel, just like fresh fuel," Alexander Rumyantsev, head of Russia's Atomic Energy Agency, said after an informal meeting with US Energy Secretary Spencer Abraham. Rumyantsev on Tuesday rejected earlier reports that said the Iran agreement could be signed as early as January, adding Russia and Iran had until mid-year to finalise the agreement. With Iran accused by the United States of seeking nuclear weapons, Russia and Iran have promised the United States they will sign a deal to remove spent fuel from Iran before the Bushehr plant is switched on.

China Daily, 6 January 2005

U.S. wants North Korea reply on nuke talks by February

The United States is setting a deadline of early February for a reply from North Korea on whether the state will return to six-party talks on its nuclear arms program, a Japanese newspaper said on Thursday. If Pyongyang does not reply positively by the time US President Bush gives his State of the Union address, the United States will prepare to bring the matter to the U.N. Security Council, the conservative Sankei Shimbun said, quoting an unidentified diplomatic source familiar with the talks. The president usually gives his speech to Congress in late January but this year it looks likely to be around Feb. 2 after his inauguration ceremony on Jan. 20, the newspaper added.

Dawn, 6 January 2005

UN nuclear watchdog team to visit Iran

VIENNA, Jan 5: Ending a months-long standoff, the UN atomic agency will visit "within the next few weeks" Iran's Parchin military facility where the United States charges that Tehran is simulating testing of atomic weapons, the agency's chief Mohamed ElBaradei said on Wednesday. "We expect to visit Parchin within the next few weeks," Mr ElBaradei said. The International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) has been trying to gain access to Parchin since July. Iran denies carrying out any nuclear-related work at Parchin, a huge military complex 30 kilometres southeast of Tehran. A senior US official said the United States was concerned about high-explosives testing in Parchin that may "amount to (nuclear) weapons intent". The official said the Iranians may be working on testing "high-explosive shaped charges with an inert core of depleted uranium" as a sort of dry test for how a bomb with fissile material would work.

The News, 6 January 2005

North Korea issues wartime guidelines

SEOUL: North Korea has ordered its people to be ready for a protracted war against the United States, issuing guidelines on evacuating to underground bunkers with weapons, food and portraits of leader Kim Jong Il. The 33-page "Detailed Wartime Guidelines," published in South Korea's Kyunghyang newspaper on Wednesday and verified by Seoul, was issued April 7, 2004, at a time when the communist regime was claiming that it was Washington's next target following the Iraq war. The manual, the first such North Korean document made public in the outside world, was signed by Kim Jong Il in his capacity as chairman of the Central Military Committee of the ruling Workers' Party. That ended speculation over whether Kim has

assumed the top military post following the 1994 death of his father, President Kim Il Sung.

Daily Times, 6 January 2005

EI Baradei warns US against spying on IAEA

VIENNA: IAEA chief Mohamed ElBaradei on Wednesday warned the United States against spying on the UN atomic agency saying it would be a blow to "multilateralism and the United Nations system as we know it." Bush administration has listened in on phone calls between ElBaradei and Iranian diplomats, seeking ammunition to oust him as head of IAEA, The Washington Post had reported in December. The US wants ElBaradei replaced at the crucial Vienna-based agency believing he is not being tough enough on Iran accused by Washington of hiding a covert nuclear weapons program, diplomats said. ElBaradei said he had only read the press reports and knew no more about the reported eavesdropping but "if it were true of course it would bother me a lot."

Daily Times, 6 January 2005

US to look into reports that Egypt got nuclear tech from AQ Khan

WASHINGTON: The United States has said it will discuss with the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) press reports that Cairo has a secret uranium research programme and that detained Pakistani nuclear scientist Abdul Qadeer Khan might have supplied nuclear technology to Egypt, Saudi Arabia and Syria. "We've seen the press reports. We don't have anything definitive or authoritative from the IAEA. I expect we'll be discussing these press reports with them," State Department deputy spokesman Adam Ereli told a press briefing in Washington.

The Hindu, 6 January 2005

Italy's nuclear waste for U.K.

LONDON: Italy is hoping to export 99 per cent of its nuclear waste to the U.K. after public demonstrations made it impossible to find a suitable site on Italian soil. The Italian Government has 235 tonnes of spent fuel from the country's long decommissioned reactors in deteriorating stores. Contracts worth £200 million are on offer to the British Nuclear Fuels (BNFL) at Cumbria, northern England, to reprocess the nuclear fuel, provided the U.K. keeps the waste and the plutonium and uranium that would be recovered. The Italian nuclear industry was shut down after the Chernobyl disaster. The British Government said retaining waste from half a dozen customers of BNFL would increase the revenue of the state-owned company by £680 million, and this would go towards the £2 billion a year clean-up costs. Any plan to import waste from Italy is bound to be controversial because the UK has failed to find its own depository for waste and is not expected to have one for another 30 years.

Reuters, 6 January 2005

N.Korea nuke crisis getting worse: El Baradei

VIENNA: The crisis caused by North Korea's refusal to abandon its nuclear weapons ambitions is deepening and needs to be resolved as soon as possible, the head of the U.N. nuclear watchdog said Wednesday. "This has been a pending issue for 12 years, and frankly it is getting worse," International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) chief Mohamed ElBaradei told Reuters in an interview. "We need to address the whole question and bring it to a resolution," he said. "I would certainly hope that by the end of the year we should be there." Communist North Korea has been locked in a stand-off with its neighbors and the United States over its nuclear program since 2002. Pyongyang has refused to return to six-country talks on dismantling its nuclear programs unless Washington drops what the North says is a "hostile policy."

People's Daily, 7 January 2005

US urges DPRK to return to six-party talks

The United States on Thursday urged the Democratic People's Republic of Korea (DPRK) to return to the six-party talks "as soon as possible." "It is in North Korea's interest to come back to the six-party talks as soon as possible," White House spokesman Scott McClellan said at a news briefing. "The president wants to see a peaceful, diplomatic resolution to the situation in North Korea. North Korea needs to stop its pursuit of nuclear weapons, and then it can realize better relations with the rest of the international community," he said. "We will continue to work with all nations in the region who are sending one unified message to North Korea: We want a non-nuclear peninsula, and you need to abandon your ambitions for nuclear weapons. That is the message that is being sent to North Korea," McClellan said.

Dawn, 7 January 2005

IAEA probes Egypt for nuclear experiments

VIENNA, Jan 6: The UN nuclear watchdog is investigating Egypt for small, undeclared nuclear experiments that could be related to atomic weapons development, diplomats said. Egyptian Foreign Minister Ahmed Abul Gheit swiftly denied that his country had done anything counter to the nuclear Non Proliferation Treaty (NPT). The experiments involved making uranium metal, which could be used to make weapons-grade plutonium, and carrying out the first steps of uranium enrichment by making uranium tetrafluoride (UF₄), one diplomat said. But another diplomat close to the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) said no uranium was actually enriched, referring to the process that makes nuclear fuel but what can also be the explosive core of atomic bombs.

Daily Times, 7 January 2005

Egypt says its nuclear programme peaceful

CAIRO: Egypt's nuclear programme is not military and is aimed at generating electricity and desalinating water, senior

Egyptian officials were quoted as saying on Thursday. Western diplomats said on Wednesday the UN nuclear watchdog, the International Atomic Energy Agency, was investigating undeclared nuclear work in Egypt that could have been linked to an atomic weapons programme. "Egypt has a peaceful nuclear programme for nuclear energy directed fundamentally towards generating electricity and desalinating water," Prime Minister Ahmed Nazif was quoted as saying in the semi-official al-Ahram newspaper. He said Egypt, a country of 70 million, reserved the option of building nuclear power stations if they proved economical and there was a need.

The News, 7 January 2005

UN atomic chief proposes global freeze on nuclear cycle

TOKYO: UN atomic energy chief Mohamed ElBaradei has proposed that all countries lead by example by committing not to build facilities for uranium enrichment and nuclear reprocessing for five years. Iran has agreed to suspend uranium enrichment temporarily in a deal with the European Union, while North Korea is refusing to return to talks over US allegations the communist state enriched uranium to build nuclear weapons. ElBaradei told a Japanese daily in an interview that a global freeze on construction for uranium enrichment and nuclear reprocessing would be discussed at a May conference in New York on the Nuclear Nonproliferation Treaty.

The Asahi Shimbun, 7 January 2005

IAEA chief urges 5-year nuke hold (Yukio Aoki)

VIENNA: Calling for a "structural adjustment" to nuclear nonproliferation, Mohamed ElBaradei, director-general of the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA), on Wednesday proposed a five-year moratorium on constructing uranium enrichment and nuclear reprocessing facilities. ElBaradei spoke in an interview with The Asahi Shimbun. He said the proposal would be taken up during a review of the Nuclear Nonproliferation Treaty (NPT) at a May conference in New York. A comprehensive adjustment of the NPT has become more urgent with recent revelations that a nuclear black market has brought nuclear technology to North Korea, Iran and Libya, he said.

Daily Times, 8 January 2005

IAEA for global freeze on N-enrichment

TOKYO: UN atomic energy chief Mohamed ElBaradei has proposed that all countries lead by example by committing not to build facilities for uranium enrichment and nuclear reprocessing for five years. Iran has agreed to suspend uranium enrichment temporarily in a deal with the European Union, while North Korea is refusing to return to talks over US allegations the communist state enriched uranium to build nuclear weapons. ElBaradei told the Asahi Shimbun in Friday's edition that a global freeze on construction for uranium enrichment and nuclear reprocessing would be discussed at a May conference in New York on the Nuclear Nonproliferation Treaty.

Tehrantimes.com, 8 January 2005

Iran will resume nuclear fuel production if Europe breaches commitments, wastes time

TEHRAN: Mohammad Sa'idi, the deputy director for planning and international affairs of the Iran Atomic Energy Organization (IAEO), said in Mashhad last week that maintaining possession of the nuclear fuel cycle is the Islamic Republic of Iran's main strategy, the Tehran daily Qods reported on Thursday. In a speech at a conference entitled "Nuclear Dossier, Victory, Defeat or Withdrawal", Sa'idi stressed that if Iran concludes that the European Union intends to waste time, it will immediately resume nuclear fuel production. Pointing to Iran's nuclear strategy, which was officially formulated in 1988 at the Supreme Council for Technology under the supervision of the president, he said that Iran would enjoy advanced technology and industry in the fourth decade after the Islamic Revolution in view of its current nuclear energy potential.

The Korean Herald, 8 January 2005

[EDITORIAL] Restarting six-way talks

It takes little imagination to assume that North Korea will continue to be at the top of the U.S. foreign policy agenda during President George W. Bush's second term in office. It has been one of his national security goals to stop Pyongyang from pursuing its nuclear weapons program. No progress has been made in the efforts to resolve the conflict at the six-way talks involving South Korea, China, Japan and Russia, as well as North Korea and the United States. It is primarily Pyongyang that is to blame because it has stayed away from the multilateral negotiating table for six months. It may have been tactically wise of Pyongyang to suspend the talks ahead of the U.S. presidential election in November to see which of the two candidates, Bush or John Kerry, would win. But it would be an act of downright stupidity should it decide to continue to boycott the talks.

Daily Times, 9 January 2005

Israeli TV airs footage of top-secret N-plant

JERUSALEM: An Israeli television channel has for the first time aired footage of Israel's controversial top-secret Dimona nuclear facility. Channel 10 showed the 15-minute video on Friday as part of a documentary on the plant in the southern Negev desert, an installation which international inspectors have never been allowed to visit. The footage consists essentially of wide shots of the compound's gardens and there are no close-ups of the dome-shaped reactor, which can only be seen in the background. Israel has never publicly acknowledged that it maintains a nuclear arsenal but foreign experts say it has used the reactor at Dimona to produce between 100 and 200 nuclear warheads.

Daily Times, 9 January 2005

US Congressman flies to North Korea for talks

BEIJING: A US Congressman began a four-day visit to North Korea on Saturday, with talks to focus on the North's nuclear plans and human rights. "I anticipate meeting with North Korean officials, discussing the issue of their nuclear program, and hopefully, their reintegration into the international community and human rights matters," Democratic Representative Tom Lantos of California told reporters in Beijing before flying to North Korea. A separate group of US lawmakers led by Republican Curt Weldon will also visit North Korea next week. While the visits are not part of official efforts aimed at dismantling the North's nuclear programmes, they are supported by the White House, which had stopped lawmakers from visiting Pyongyang last year.

Reuters, 9 January 2005

Sailor Dies After Nuclear Submarine Mishap

HONOLULU: A nuclear submarine that ran aground about 350 miles south of Guam, killing one crewman and injuring 23 others, was due back at its home port in Guam on Monday, according to a Navy spokesman. There were no reports of damage to the USS San Francisco's reactor plant, but the extent of damage to the 360-foot submarine would be determined when it gets to port, said Jon Yoshishige, spokesman for the U.S. Pacific Fleet. The vessel was moving under its own power. Officials said they still don't know what the Los Angeles-class submarine hit Saturday, but Lt. j.g. Adam Clampitt of the Pacific Fleet said it had been conducting operations underwater at the time. The incident is under investigation, said Yoshishige.

People's Daily, 10 January 2005

US says no deadline set for Pyongyang on six-party talks

The United States has not set a deadline for the resumption of six-party talks designed to solve nuclear issues on the Korean peninsula, State Department spokeswoman Darla Jordan said on Saturday. The spokesman said that Washington remained committed to a diplomatic solution, noting that the six-party process is "the best way to resolve our differences." He declined to answer further questions such as whether a deadline was under consideration, but said "there's been no such decision" to set a deadline. Jordan made the remarks after some senior US officials said they expect President George W. Bush to reappraise his approach in his second term to deal with this issue.

Daily Times, 10 January 2005

'Pakistan urging North Korea not to proliferate N-tech'

TOKYO: Pakistan has told Japan that Islamabad was resolved to urge North Korea not to use or spread nuclear technology that it gained from nuclear scientist Abdul Qadeer Khan, according to Japan's Kyodo News service. Shoichi Nakagawa, Japan's economy, trade and industry minister now visiting Pakistan, told Japanese reporters on Saturday that he wanted to restart yen loans to help peaceful development in Pakistan. Mr Nakagawa met President, Prime Minister and Commerce Minister. In their talks, Pakistani officials told Nakagawa that they were resolved to urge North Korea not to use or spread nuclear technology that it gained from nuclear scientist Abdul Qadeer Khan, Kyodo said.

The News, 10 January 2005

IAEA to take samples from Iranian site

TEHRAN: Iran said on Sunday it has given the UN's atomic watchdog permission to take so-called environmental samples from a suspect military site in order to disprove US allegations of secret weapons-related activities. "The question is not of a visit to the military installations of Parchin. The agency had asked to take samples from the green areas of Parchin because the Americans and others have made accusations," Foreign Ministry spokesman Hamid Reza Asefi told reporters. He said Iran will allow UN nuclear experts to take environmental samples at the military site but won't allow them to inspect military equipment. "To demonstrate that we have nothing to hide and that the Iranian nuclear programme is peaceful, we have authorised the agency to take these samples," he added.

The News, 10 January 2005

N Korea urges Bush to drop 'hostile' policy

SEOUL: US President George W Bush must drop his "hostile" policy towards North Korea during his second term in order to revive six-way nuclear talks, Pyongyang said in a statement monitored here on Sunday. A North Korean foreign ministry spokesman said in the statement late Saturday that Washington should "opt for co-existence" with Pyongyang. The North Korean call came as Bush is due to be sworn in for a second four-year term on January 20 with little progress made in his efforts to check Pyongyang's nuclear ambitions. "We will closely follow what a Korea policy the second term Bush administration will shape and react to it," said the foreign ministry statement carried by the official Korean Central News Agency. "The prospect of settling the nuclear issue between the DPRK (North Korea) and the US will entirely depend on the latter's attitude." North Korea has been under growing pressure to return to the stalled six-nation negotiations, which also include South Korea, China, Japan, Russia and the US.

The Associated Press, 10 January 2005

Iran Won't Allow Military Gear Inspection

TEHRAN: Iran will allow U.N. nuclear experts to take environmental samples at a military site the United States links to an alleged nuclear weapons program but won't allow them to inspect military equipment, the foreign ministry spokesman said Sunday. The head of the International Atomic Energy Agency, Mohamed ElBaradei, said last week that Iran had agreed to grant access to the site at Parchin, just southeast of Tehran, and that his inspectors could arrive soon. The IAEA had pressed Tehran for months to be allowed to inspect the military complex, long used to research, develop and produce ammunition, missiles and high explosives. "The discussion is not about visiting military installations," Foreign Ministry spokesman Hamid

Reza Asefi told reporters Sunday.

The Tribune, 10 January 2005

Resuscitating the NSC: Need for leader with balanced worldview (K. Subrahmanyam)

The task before the Prime Minister in selecting the next National Security Adviser (NSA) is first to determine whether he wants the National Security Council (NSC) to function with the NSA as its Secretary or to continue with the existing system without the council ever being convened and functioning. The role of the council as was envisaged in 1998 by the NDA government was to ensure that the national security management was based on integrated thinking and coordinated application of the political, military, diplomatic, scientific and technological resources of the state to protect and promote national security goals and objectives. Underlying this concept is the basic idea that national security in the context of the nation needs to be viewed not only in military terms but also in terms of internal security, economic security, technological strength and foreign policy. This wording on the role and concept is verbally taken from the NDA government's Cabinet Secretariat resolution of April 16, 1999, on setting up the NSC. The Congress party in its election manifesto promised to make the NSC a professional and effective institution.

The Indian Express, 10 January 2005

The NSC needs organisation (Jasjit Singh)

The tragic and sudden demise of J.N. Dixit, who was so eminently suited to be the country's national security adviser (NSA) has left a void. This is deeper because no functioning institution was really established in the past six years after a task force set up to look into the issue had suggested one. At this point two aspects deserve attention. First, the US model tends to inspire ideas about the National Security Council (NSC) and the role of the NSA; and, second, we need to look closely at the institution required in our country.

People's Daily, 11 January 2005

US decides to develop missile interceptor with Japan

The U.S. Defense Department has decided to embark on the development of an interceptor missile and will seek to begin talks with Japan this year to move the joint research of the missile defense system to the development phase, Pentagon officials said Monday. Japan eased its arms export ban in December to enable sales of missile components to the United States ahead of a planned upgrading of the joint research. The United States has independently developed the Standard Missile 3 interceptor with a diameter of 34 centimeters. The U.S. Navy has pressed for building a bigger missile with 53 cm in diameter. The Navy says it would provide longer range and higher interception capability, but some experts doubt its effectiveness.

Daily Times, 11 January 2005

Govt considering several new nuclear plants: PAEC chief

ISLAMABAD: The government is considering building several nuclear power plants in the near future to meet the growing demand for electricity in Pakistan, said Pervez Butt, the Pakistan Atomic Energy Commission (PAEC) chairman, on Monday. "The international community has agreed that in the face of global warming caused by greenhouse gases emitted during conventional power production, the future of power generation lies in nuclear energy which is cost-effective and environment-friendly," Butt told journalists at the opening of the five-day International Atomic Energy Agency-PAEC National Workshop on 'Enhancing the capability of utility and regulatory bodies to communicate with the public'. To a question he said the planning commission was trying to work out the exact future energy needs of the country. He said the Chashma-II nuclear power plant would be completed in seven years and generate 325 mega watts of electricity

Daily Times, 11 January 2005

Iran may resume uranium enrichment in March

TEHRAN: Iran may resume uranium enrichment - which can be used to make atomic bombs - in March if talks with the European Union fail to yield satisfactory progress, a senior Iranian security official said on Monday. Even if the talks go well, Hossein Mousavian told Reuters Tehran was only prepared to extend until June the enrichment freeze it began in late November in an effort to disprove US accusations it is seeking nuclear weapons. "The outcome of the talks will have a great impact on Iran's decision," said Mousavian, a member of Iran's nuclear negotiating team with the EU and head of the foreign policy committee on the Supreme National Security Council. "If the talks end without any result, March itself could be the date for resuming enrichment. If the outcome is really fruitful ... and develops in a direction of comprehensive and strategic cooperation between Iran and Europe, there will be a chance of extending the suspension for three more months," he said.

Daily Times, 11 January 2005

South Korean to appear in Russian court over nuclear trade

SEOUL: A South Korean suspected of smuggling radioactive materials into the Russian Far East will go on trial in a Russian court at the end of January, an official at Seoul's Foreign Ministry said on Monday. In late December, Itar-Tass news agency reported, citing prosecutors in the Pacific city of Yuzhno-Sakhalinsk, that the man, identified as Kim Jong-hon, worked for a South Korean firm suspected of illegally trading sensitive materials. "The government is in talks with Russia to speed up the process and ensure he has not been receiving unfair treatment there," a Foreign Ministry official told Reuters by telephone. "Without any knowledge about Russian rules, he appears to have tried to bring to the country material that was supposed to be used for resources exploitation," he added.

The Asahi Shimbun, 11 January 2005

RADIATION CONCERNS: Russia ships spent nuke fuel through Soya Strait near Hokkaido (Hiroyuki Takei)

Japanese nuclear experts fear the vessel and its containers are not up to international standards. Russia has been using a Soviet-era ship to transport spent nuclear fuel near Hokkaido and through the Sea of Japan, raising concerns about possible radioactive contamination in northern Japan, nuclear industry officials said. Despite the risks of moving such highly radioactive material, Moscow is under no legal obligation to inform Tokyo of such shipments, Japanese government officials say. But Russian authorities provided a map of the ship's route to the Japan Atomic Industrial Forum (JAIF) in autumn 2003. Until now, the route of the Russian vessel was not known. The spent fuel is taken from dismantled nuclear-powered submarines at a plant in a suburb of Petropavlovsk Kamchatskiy on the Kamchatka Peninsula. The fuel is then loaded on a ship which passes through the Soya Strait, the narrow strip of water that separates Hokkaido and Russia's Sakhalin, according to JAIF officials.

The Washington Post, 12 January 2005

N. Korea Hesitant To Resume Talks

BEIJING, Jan. 11: A U.S. congressman who traveled to North Korea for talks with senior leaders said Tuesday that the discussions were "serious and substantive" but that he was told the North was not ready to resume negotiations about dismantling its nuclear weapons program. Rep. Tom Lantos (D-Calif.), briefing reporters after three days of meetings in Pyongyang, said the officials indicated they were "waiting to see the shape of the second Bush administration" before resuming six-nation talks that began in 2003. Lantos said he told them that Bush's new foreign policy team was in place, that its approach to North Korea would not change and that Congress supported the approach. The North Koreans did not specify what would persuade them to resume the talks, he said.

Tehranimes.com, 12 January 2005

EU and Iran to resume talks after nuclear deal

BRUSSELS: The European Union (EU) is to resume talks with Iran on a trade and cooperation accord this week, following Tehran's suspension of uranium enrichment activities, the European Commission said on Tuesday. But in parallel EU negotiators will resume political negotiations on key areas of concern, including the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction, said the EU executive. "The resumption ... is a clear signal of our wish to work with Iran," said EU external relations commissioner Benita Ferrero-Waldner, saying the talks starting Wednesday "are an important element of a wider package." "Iran can look forward to a richer relationship with the European Union, as long as the international community can be confident that Iran's nuclear program is not being developed for military purposes," she said.

People's Daily, 13 January 2005

S. Korean president expresses hope on six-party nuclear talks

South Korean President Roh Moo-hyun on Thursday expressed his hope that the six-party nuclear talks aimed to resolve nuclear issue on the Korean Peninsula would bear good result. Roh made the remarks during his first press conference in 2005 at the Presidential Office. "The North Korea (Democratic People's Republic of Korea) nuclear issue should be solved. I would not make any comment on possible pessimistic predictions for the six-party talks," Roh said to reporters at the televised press conference. "I hope the six-party nuclear talks will bear good result," added Roh. However, the president refused to make prediction when the stalled six-party nuclear talks will be resumed.

Dawn, 13 January 2005

UN inspectors in Iran to check site

TEHRAN, Jan 12: Inspectors from the UN atomic watchdog arrived in Tehran on Wednesday to visit a military site the United States claims may be involved in covert nuclear weapons activities, student news agency ISNA reported. "The group of inspectors are to stay in Iran for a week and they will start taking environmental samples from Parchin on Thursday," ISNA said. Iran said on Sunday it had given the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) permission to take so-called environmental samples from the Parchin site south east of Tehran in order to disprove US allegations of secret weapons-related activities. Environmental sampling involves taking swabs or soil samples to detect the presence of nuclear activity. "The question is not of a visit to the military installations of Parchin. The agency had asked to take samples from the green areas of Parchin because the Americans and others have made accusations," foreign ministry spokesman Hamid Reza Asefi told reporters on Sunday.

Daily Times, 13 January 2005

Iran says it will soon resume uranium enrichment under UN

TEHRAN: Iran's top nuclear negotiator said Wednesday that Tehran will soon resume uranium enrichment under the supervision of the UN nuclear watchdog, the student news agency ISNA reported. "Suspension of enrichment is for a limited period to win the confidence of the international community and to reach an understanding with Europe for full relations in the political, economic, security and nuclear fields," Hasan Rowhani was quoted as saying. "Iran will not allow other countries to halt its enrichment programme, and we will soon resume uranium enrichment under the supervision of the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA)," he said during talks with a visiting Japanese official. Iran, accused by the United States of seeking to covertly develop nuclear weapons, agreed in November to freeze uranium enrichment activities in exchange for a trade and cooperation agreement with the European Union.

The News, 13 January 2005

IAEA inspectors not allowed to spy on military sites, warns Iran

TEHRAN: Iran warned on Wednesday it would not allow UN nuclear inspectors to 'spy' on a suspect military site, which the

United States claims may be involved in nuclear weapons activities. A team from the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) arrived here on Wednesday to carry out inspections at the Parchin facility, which Iran had long kept off limits to the agency. "We are watchful. We have allowed inspections into our military installations but we will not allow any espionage or the theft of information from our military sites," Hossein Mousavian, the spokesman for Iran's nuclear negotiations team, said in his remarks carried by the Mehr news agency.

The News, 13 January 2005

S. Korea optimistic on nuke talks with North

SEOUL: South Korea is cautiously optimistic North Korea will return to talks on Pyongyang's nuclear programmes after US President George W Bush is inaugurated, the South's foreign minister said on Wednesday. Ban Ki-moon also told reporters Seoul wanted China to make greater use of its influence in Pyongyang to persuade the North to resume talks that have been stalled since an inconclusive third round in June last year.

Reuters, 13 January 2005

S. Korea's Roh Sees North Talks When Bush Team Set

SEOUL: Stalled six-party talks on North Korea's nuclear program could resume as soon as President Bush finishes putting together his new diplomatic team, South Korean President Roh Moo-hyun said on Thursday. Conditions were ripe for those talks but not yet for a summit between himself and North Korean leader Kim Jong-il, Roh told a televised 80-minute New Year news conference at his presidential Blue House compound. On the economy, the key concern for most South Koreans, Roh said depressed private consumption and investment would begin to pick up from the second half of this year, bolstered by government efforts to stimulate Asia's third-largest economy. He also said South Korean troops would stay in Iraq until allies were satisfied their mission was complete.

Khaleej Times, 13 January 2005

E.U. resumes trade talks with Iran

BRUSSELS: The European Union reopened trade talks with Iran on Wednesday, 18 months after negotiations halted because of Teheran's nuclear ambitions. While both sides were optimistic after the talks in Brussels, Iranian officials warned that if an agreement were not reached by June, Teheran might pull away from its agreements to suspend uranium enrichment and reprocessing activities. The European Union has said that no deadline has been set for clinching the deal. "We are willing and ready to move at the speed that Iran wants us to," an official said. E.U. officials have warned, however, that the trade talks - and parallel discussions on political issues - could once again be put on hold if Teheran went back on its nuclear commitments.

The Korean Herald, 13 January 2005

Ambassador Hill may head U.S. team on nuke negotiation (Choi Sung-ah)

U.S. Ambassador Christopher Hill may be Washington's next top nuclear negotiator, according to reports circulating here, and South Korean officials signaled it as "highly probable." The latest information out of Washington indicates Hill is likely to succeed Assistant Secretary of State for East Asian and Pacific Affairs James Kelly, who currently heads Washington's delegation to the six-nation disarmament talks on North Korea's nuclear standoff. The Foreign Ministry took a cautious line. It made no presumptions about the veracity of the reports, although it noted Hill is a "Korea expert." At his weekly news conference yesterday, Foreign Minister Ban Ki-moon welcomed the possibility of Hill being designated as the chief nuclear negotiator for the second Bush administration - a comment interpreted by many as implying the reports may be true.

People's Daily, 14 January 2005

DPRK top official meets US congressional delegation

A top official of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea (DPRK) on Thursday met with a visiting US Congressional delegation to discuss pending issues between the two countries, the official Korean Central News Agency (KCNA) reported. The DPRK's President of the Presidium of the Supreme People's Assembly, Kim Yong-nam, held talks at the Mansudae Assembly Hall with the US delegation headed by Curt Weldon, vice-chairman of the Armed Services Committee of the House of Representatives. Radio Free Asia reported earlier that the US delegates will explain to Pyongyang that "the United States has no intention to overthrow the DPRK's system". Pushing the resumption of the six-party talks is expected to be a main topic during the visit.

The News, 14 January 2005

IAEA team visits Iranian military site

VIENNA: UN nuclear inspectors on Thursday visited the suspect military site of Parchin in Iran that the United States claims may be involved in covert nuclear weapons work, an International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) spokesman said. "I confirm that a team of IAEA inspectors is today conducting an inspection at Parchin, including the taking of environmental samples," spokesman Mark Gwozdecky said in a statement released to the press by e-mail. Environmental samples are swipes taken to check for radiation. Results from such sampling are available after about a month of laboratory analysis. Iran had warned on Wednesday that it would not tolerate "spying" at the Parchin military facility, which had previously been off limits to IAEA inspectors.

Daily Times, 15 January 2005

NCP to be equipped with nuclear laboratory

LAHORE: The newly built National Centre for Physics (NCP) will be equipped with a modern atomic accelerator and an experimental nuclear laboratory, said Dr Samar Mubarakmand, the National Engineering and Scientific Commission (NESCOM) chairman and a renowned nuclear scientist. He made the statement while addressing the closing ceremony of the 10th National Symposium on "Frontiers of Physics" held at Government College University (GCU) on Friday. He said the centre would be equipped with an atomic accelerator, an experimental nuclear laboratory and a modern vacuum laboratory to facilitate research in nuclear studies, adding it would benefit young Pakistani physicists. Besides the new features, a modern computer science facility linked to the inter-grid network would also be constructed.

The New York Times, 15 January 2005

China Promotes Another Boom: Nuclear Power (Howard W. French)

CHINA: The view from this remote point by the sea, with lines of misty mountains stretching into the distance, is worthy of a classical Chinese painting. In the foreground, though, sits a less obvious attraction: one of China's first nuclear power reactors, and just behind it, another being rushed toward completion. There are countless ways to show how China is climbing the world's economic ladder, hurdling developed countries in its path, but few are more pronounced than the country's rush into nuclear energy - a technology that for environmental, safety and economic reasons most of the world has put on hold. In its anxiety to satisfy its seemingly bottomless demand for electricity, China plans to build reactors on a scale and pace comparable to the most ambitious nuclear energy programs the world has ever seen.

The New York Times, 15 January 2005

Submarine Crash Shows Navy Had Gaps in Mapping System (Christopher Drew)

Sailors on the San Francisco, a nuclear-powered attack submarine, had just finished cleaning the vessel last Saturday as it sped along 500 feet beneath the surface of the South Pacific. Submarines run blind, just listening for sounds of danger. And to the captain and other officers relying on undersea navigation charts, everything seemed clear. Suddenly, there was a horrible screeching. And according to an e-mail message written by a crew member, the inside of the submarine quickly resembled a scene from the movie "The Matrix." He wrote, "Everything slowed down and levitated and then went flying forward faster than the brain can process." The submarine had crashed head-on into an undersea mountain that was not on the charts. One sailor was killed, and about 60 others were injured. Now, Defense Department officials say they have found a satellite image taken in 1999 that indicates an undersea mountain rising to perhaps within 100 feet below the surface there.

International Herald Tribune, 15 January 2005

North Korea Reports It's Ready to Resume Nuclear Arms Talks

SEOUL, Jan. 14: North Korea announced Friday that it was ready to return to six-party talks on its nuclear weapons programs and other "outstanding issues," while proclaiming its desire to become a "friend" of the United States. The announcement followed a four-day visit by an American Congressional delegation led by Representative Curt Weldon, Republican of Pennsylvania and vice chairman of the House Armed Services Committee. Members of the delegation, speaking Friday at a news conference in Seoul, said the talks among South and North Korea, the United States, Japan, China and Russia, which have been stalled since September, could restart "within weeks."

The Korean Herald, 15 January 2005

N. Korea ready to rejoin six-way talks, shows conciliatory gesture (Choi Sung-ah)

North Korea is ready to rejoin the six-nation talks on its nuclear ambitions, according to a U.S. Congressional delegation which arrived in Seoul yesterday after a four-day trip to the communist country. Pennsylvanian Republican Curt Weldon, who headed the six-member delegation said they met with several top Pyongyang officials who all agreed that the nuclear issue needs to be resolved peacefully. "Our unanimous impression is that DPRK is ready to rejoin the six-party process," Weldon told reporters in a news conference at the Foreign Ministry yesterday. He added that there are two things the North is watching closely; the lineup in the second Bush administration and comments out of Washington that are perceived to be negative.

The News, 16 January 2005

Iran eases deadline for N-talks with EU

TEHRAN: Iran has agreed to avoid setting a firm deadline for talks on its nuclear programme with the European Union. Senior nuclear negotiator Hossein Mousavian said on Saturday, "We have reached an agreement with the Europeans not to threaten each other with a deadline." He said Iran could maintain its freeze of uranium enrichment activities until at least mid-year. The EU and Iran kicked off a fresh round of talks this week on a potentially lucrative trade pact in November by Britain, France and Germany. The trade deal forms part of a package of the incentives, which Iran could earn after giving 'objective guarantees' to suspend uranium enrichment. Iran has agreed to suspend its enrichment activities while the talks are in progress and continues to insist it only wants to produce fuel for nuclear reactors, but there are fears that the sensitive fuel cycle work could be geared towards making weapons.

Reuters, 16 January 2005

U.S. Conducting Secret Missions Inside Iran

WASHINGTON: The United States has been conducting secret reconnaissance missions inside Iran to help identify potential nuclear, chemical and missile targets, The New Yorker magazine reported Sunday. The article, by award-winning reporter Seymour Hersh, said the secret missions have been going on at least since last summer with the goal of identifying target information for three dozen or more suspected sites. Hersh quotes one government consultant with close ties to the Pentagon as saying, "The civilians in the Pentagon want to go into Iran and destroy as much of the military infrastructure as possible."

One former high-level intelligence official told The New Yorker, "This is a war against terrorism, and Iraq is just one campaign. The Bush administration is looking at this as a huge war zone. Next, we're going to have the Iranian campaign." The White House said Iran is a concern and a threat that needs to be taken seriously. But it disputed the report by Hersh, who last year exposed the extent of prisoner abuse at the Abu Ghraib prison in Iraq.

Reuters, 16 January 2005

Iran Says EU Nuclear, Trade Talks Going Well

TEHRAN: Iran voiced optimism on Sunday about negotiations with the European Union on its nuclear program and a possible trade deal and said there was no need to involve Washington in the talks right now. The European Union last week resumed talks with Iran, suspended for about 18 months, regarding a possible Trade and Cooperation Agreement with the Islamic state. Negotiations on a possible trade deal were frozen due to increasing EU concerns about Iran's nuclear ambitions. Tehran's decision late last year to suspend sensitive nuclear work and enter negotiations with the EU on its nuclear program opened the way for the trade talks to resume. Iran's Foreign Ministry spokesman Hamid Reza Asefi, speaking at a weekly press briefing, described the trade talks held in Brussels last week as "very positive."

The News, 16 January 2005

North Korea ready to resume nuclear talks

SEOUL: North Korea told a visiting US congressional delegation that it is ready to return to six-party nuclear talks and offered to become a "friend" of the United States if Washington doesn't slander the rule of totalitarian leader Kim Jong Il. The overture Friday was highly unusual. North Korean propagandists have turned anti-Americanism into a near religion and regularly exhort their people to prepare for a possible war with "US imperialists." The offer came shortly after the six-member bipartisan US congressional delegation concluded talks with senior communist officials in Pyongyang. Republican Rep. Curt Weldon, who led the group, called the trip an "overwhelming success," and said in Seoul that North Korea appeared ready to negotiate "in a matter of weeks."

The Associated Press, 16 January 2005

Iran: Samples Will Prove Nukes Peaceful

TEHRAN: Iran said Sunday that environmental samples taken from a military complex this weekend by U.N. nuclear inspectors will prove that the country's atomic program is for peaceful purposes and not making weapons, as the United States alleges. Foreign Ministry spokesman Hamid Reza Asefi said inspectors from the International Atomic Energy Agency took samples from landscaped areas of the huge Parchin complex, which Washington believes may be involved in nuclear weapons research. "We know what the result will be. Since we have never done any illegal activity, definitely the result will prove our declarations," Asefi told reporters.

Daily Times, 16 January 2005

Lack of nuclear security in subcontinent matter of concern: experts (Khalid Hasan)

WASHINGTON: Participants at a discussion session devoted to nuclear security in South Asia here this week expressed concern at the lack of progress in the India-Pakistan peace process in view of the last two rounds having ended inconclusively. The session was organised by the South Asia programme of the Brookings Institution for an exchange of views on a recent publication on South Asian nuclear security co-authored by Michael Krepon and Pakistan's Ziad Haider, to name two of the three. Krepon is the founder president of Stimson, a leading Washington think tank with a special interest in South Asia, especially in relation to nuclear capabilities and proliferation.

Daily Times, 17 January 2005

North Korea denies having uranium

SEOUL: North Korea denied that it has a secret uranium-enrichment programme and accused Washington of double standards, a day after it indicated a willingness to rejoin six-nation nuclear disarmament talks. Calling the United States a "nuclear criminal," North Korea's state-run newspaper Rodong Sinmun accused Washington on Saturday of "conniving at, patronising and cooperating with the pro-American forces" in Israel, Japan and South Korea to develop nuclear arms "The US accusation against the (North) over its nonexistent 'uranium enrichment issue' clearly proves that the US policy of double standards assumes extremely partial and aggressive nature," the newspaper said.

The News, 18 January 2005

Pakistan denies providing Iran N-sites data to US (Mariana Baabar)

ISLAMABAD: Pakistan categorically denied on Monday that it had provided any data to the United States regarding Iran's nuclear programme. As pressure increased on Iran's nuke plan with reports being leaked to the American media, a future scary scenario is being built which suggests that after Iraq, the United States is preparing to strike inside Iran to destroy its nuclear infrastructure. "There is no such collaboration though Pakistan is cooperating with the international community. We do not have much information on Iran's nuclear programme. These reports are exaggerated and there appears to be no substance in these news reports", Foreign Office spokesman Masood Khan told the weekly press briefing.

The New York Times, 18 January 2005

U.S. Is Punishing 8 Chinese Firms for Aiding Iran (David E. Sanger)

WASHINGTON, Jan. 17: The Bush administration imposed penalties this month against some of China's largest companies for aiding Iran's efforts to improve its ballistic missiles. The move is part of an effort by the White House and American

intelligence agencies to identify and slow important elements of Iran's weapons programs. The White House made no public announcement of the penalties, and the State Department placed a one-page notice on page 133 of The Federal Register early this month listing eight Chinese companies affected. The notice kept classified the nature of the technology they had exported. Since the Federal Register announcement, the penalties have been noted on some Web sites that concentrate on China and proliferation issues.

Khaleej Times, 18 January 2005

Bush won't rule out action against Iran over nukes

WASHINGTON: US President George W. Bush said on Monday he would not rule out military action against Iran if that country was not more forthcoming about its suspected nuclear weapons program. "I hope we can solve it diplomatically, but I will never take any option off the table," Bush said in an interview with NBC News when asked if he would rule out the potential for military action against Iran "if it continues to stonewall the international community about the existence of its nuclear weapons program." Iran denies it has been trying to make nuclear weapons and says its nuclear program is geared solely to producing electricity. Bush's comments followed Pentagon criticism on Monday of a published report that it was mounting reconnaissance missions inside Iran to identify potential nuclear and other targets.

People's Daily, 18 January 2005

US denies alleged reconnaissance in Iran

The Pentagon on Monday vehemently denied a report by The New Yorker magazine over alleged US reconnaissance missions inside Iran to identify nuclear, chemical and missile sites for possible air-strikes as soon as this summer. Pentagon spokesman Larry Di Rita, in a written statement, said the report by award-winning investigative reporter Seymour Hersh was "so riddled with errors of fundamental fact that the credibility of his entire piece is destroyed." Hersh said secret missions have been going on at least since last summer with the goal of identifying target information for at least three dozen targets in Iran. Those targets "could be destroyed by precision strikes and short-term commando raids," the report said.

The Hindu, 18 January 2005

U.S. operatives in Iran?

WASHINGTON, JAN. 17. Teams of U.S. commandos have entered Iran searching for hidden sites that could be working on developing nuclear weapons, The New Yorker magazine reports in today's edition. The Government of the President, George W Bush, has authorised secret military missions inside Iran at least since mid-2004, the magazine reports. Their goal is to identify target information for up to 26 suspected nuclear, chemical and missile sites, according to the magazine. "This is a war against terrorism, and Iraq, is just one campaign," a former high-level government intelligence official told the magazine.

Timesonline, 18 January 2005

Terrorism warning over nuclear waste (Mark Henderson)

Government dithering over a long-term strategy for disposing of nuclear waste is increasing the risk of an accident or terrorist attack and undermining efforts to combat climate change, independent scientists said yesterday. Experts accused ministers of ducking their responsibility to tackle the issue by needlessly commissioning an inquiry into possible options, even though there is an international consensus that burying radio active waste is the only viable solution. This inertia means that hundreds of tonnes of hazardous waste will languish unnecessarily in surface tanks for decades, when a much safer way of dealing with it already exists. The danger of an accident is significantly higher when waste is stored in this way, and canisters kept at nuclear power stations or the Sellafield reprocessing plant are more vulnerable to a 9/11-type terrorist attack.

The Times of India, 18 January 2005

Now, a 'Khan-for-Iran' deal (Chidanand Rajghatta)

WASHINGTON: Pakistan and United States have struck a "Khan-for-Iran" deal. According to well-known investigative journalist Seymour Hersh, Washington has agreed to wink at Pakistan's nuclear transgressions and spare its nuclear proliferator A Q Khan in return for Islamabad's cooperation in neutralizing Iran's nuclear program. Pakistan has readily obliged U.S and betrayed Iran, and Hersh cites U.S intelligence sources as saying an American commando task force in South Asia is now working closely with a group of Pakistani scientists and technicians who had previously helped Iran's nuclear quest. Pakistan, expectedly, has denied this.

The Times of India, 18 January 2005

US plans to attack Iran: Report

WASHINGTON: Teams of US commandos have been operating inside Iran since last summer, identifying suspected weapons sites for possible air strikes, The New Yorker reported on Monday. However, criticising the report written by award-winning reporter Seymour Hersh, Pentagon's spokesman Lawrence DiRita said in a statement that the article "is so riddled with errors of fundamental fact that credibility of his (Hersh) entire piece is destroyed". Hersh, who exposed the extent of prisoner abuse at Abu Ghraib prison in Iraq, wrote that he was repeatedly told by US intelligence and military sources that "the next strategic target was Iran." US government has authorised spying missions inside Iran at least since mid-2004 to gather intelligence on declared and suspected nuclear, chemical and missile sites, the magazine said.

Dawn, 19 January 2005

Iran says it has military might to deter attack

TEHRAN, Jan 18: Iran has the military might to deter attacks against it, Defence Minister Ali Shamkhani said on Tuesday, after

US President George Bush said he would not rule out military force against Iran over its nuclear programme. "We are able to say that we have strength such that no country can attack us because they do not have precise information about our military capabilities due to our ability to implement flexible strategies," the semi-official Mehr news agency quoted Mr Shamkhani as saying. "We can claim that we have rapidly produced equipment that has resulted in the greatest deterrent," he said, without elaborating. In October, Iran announced successful trials of its Shahab-3 ballistic missile with a range of 2,000kms, putting parts of Europe, as well as Israel and US bases in the Gulf, within reach.

Daily Times, 19 January 2005

Action against Iran won't be ruled out: Bush

WASHINGTON: US President George W Bush said on Monday he would not rule out military action against Iran if that country was not more forthcoming about its suspected nuclear weapons programme. "I hope we can solve it diplomatically, but I will never take any option off the table," Bush said in an interview with NBC News when asked if he would rule out the potential for military action against Iran "if it continues to stonewall the international community about the existence of its nuclear weapons programme". However, in a separate interview with ABC News, Bush said that "our policy toward Iran is to deal with them diplomatically". Iran says its nuclear programme is geared solely to producing energy.

People's Daily, 19 January 2005

China asks DPRK, US to maintain contact

Democratic People's Republic of Korea (North Korea) and the United States should continue all kinds of contact and exchanges with goodwill and flexibility to convene the next round of six-party talks on the Korean Peninsular nuclear issue as early as possible. Chinese Foreign Ministry spokesman Kong Quan made this remark at a routine news conference in Beijing Tuesday, when commenting on US Congressman Curt Weldon's recent visit to China and DPRK. Weldon headed a six-member US congressional delegation to visit Pyongyang from Jan. 11-14. After that, his delegation came to China at the invitation of the Chinese People's Institute of Foreign Affairs.

The News, 19 January 2005

'Nigeria has no nuclear ambition'

ABUJA: Nigeria has no ambition to become a nuclear power, but the developing West African nation is interested in atomic energy for peaceful uses, President Olusegun Obasanjo said on Tuesday. Obasanjo made the comments in a meeting with the visiting head of the UN's International Atomic Energy Agency, Mohamed ElBaradei, who is leading a team of experts inspecting Nigeria's nuclear facilities. Receiving ElBaradei at his residence in the capital, Obasanjo said Nigeria wanted "to use all available sources of power for the improvement of the lives of Nigerians," according to a statement by presidential spokeswoman Remi Oyo. Obasanjo said Nigeria needed the IAEA to help manage its radioactive materials and prevent them from falling into "the wrong hands," the statement said. ElBaradei later visited the Gamma Irradiation Plant at Sheda near the capital, Abuja.

The News, 19 January 2005

Weapons of mass delusion

After two years of claiming that Saddam's weapons of mass destruction (WMDs) were reason enough to invade of Iraq, the USA and her quislings have had to officially call off the search for what could be more appropriately called Weapons of Mass Delusion. A search that, while ridding Iraq of a hated dictator, has also caused the people of that country immeasurable pain in terms of lives lost, limbs maimed and any little security dissipated. The people of Iraq have suffered before - not least from the crippling US-imposed sanctions after the First Gulf War of 1991 that resulted in the deaths of over a million infants over the next decade. In 2003, Saddam's WMDs became the pretext for this devastating war on Iraq, while the actual motives are more likely to establish a stranglehold over the second largest known oil reserves, and to provide strategic bases for US forces in the region.

The New York Times, 19 January 2005

Iran, Calling Bush's Words 'Threats,' Says It Is Not Intimidated (Nazila Fathi)

TEHRAN, Jan. 18: A number of Iranian officials declared Tuesday that Iran would not be intimidated by threats, a day after President Bush refused to rule out military action against Iran if it continued to pursue nuclear weapons. "We are not afraid of foreign enemies' threats and sanctions, since they know well that throughout its Islamic and ancient history, Iran has been no place for adventurism," Iran's former president, Ali Akbar Hashemi Rafsanjani, told the state news agency, IRNA. Iran's defense minister, Ali Shamkhani, made some vague threats of his own, saying, "We have developed a might that no country can attack us because they do not have accurate information about our military capabilities," according to the Mehr news agency. "We have produced equipment at a rapid pace with the minimum investment that has resulted in the greatest deterrent force."

Daily Times, 19 January 2005

US lawmaker sees Korean nuclear talks maybe in February

TOKYO: Talks on North Korea's nuclear arms programmes could resume in early February if the United States refrains from "inflammatory rhetoric", a US congressman said on Tuesday after talks with Pyongyang's number two leader last week. Republican Curt Weldon of Pennsylvania said Pyongyang was serious about abandoning its nuclear programmes if Washington would give security and other assurances sought by the North. Weldon led a bipartisan delegation of lawmakers who met North Korea's parliament president Kim Yong-nam, second only to top leader Kim Jong-il, and other North Korean

officials last week. Speaking at the American Center in Tokyo, Weldon said the timing of Pyongyang's return to stalled talks depended on two factors.

Khaleej Times, 19 January 2005

Britain says no alternative to Iran nuclear talks

LONDON: British Foreign Secretary Jack Straw said on Wednesday there was no alternative to Europe's approach of using diplomacy to try to persuade Iran to give up any technology that could be used to make nuclear weapons. In an interview with the Financial Times, Straw defended the policy of Britain, France and Germany to talk to Iran rather than adopt Washington's more hardline stance. The European Union's so-called "Big Three" have sought to persuade Teheran to stop technology that could be used to make atomic weapons in return for incentives such as trade deals and help with a civilian nuclear programme. "Those who said we'd be split apart by the Iranians are wrong," said Straw.

Daily Times, 20 January 2005

US trying to disrupt EU talks, says Iran

TEHRAN: Iran accused the United States on Wednesday of trying to disrupt its nuclear negotiations with the European Union by evoking the threat of a military strike, and warned Washington it would respond to any "unwise measure." "With reliance on enormous popular support, diplomatic capacity and full military capability, the Islamic Republic of Iran will firmly respond to any unwise measure or plan," foreign ministry spokesman Hamid Reza Asefi said in a statement responding to "recent comments by US officials". On Monday US President George W Bush said he could not rule out a resort to military action if the United States failed to persuade Iran to abandon a nuclear energy programme it charges is a cover for developing the bomb.

Daily Times, 20 January 2005

Britain says no alternative to Iran nuclear talks

LONDON: British Foreign Secretary Jack Straw said on Wednesday there was no alternative to Europe's approach of using diplomacy to try to persuade Iran to give up any technology that could be used to make nuclear weapons. In an interview with the Financial Times, Straw defended the policy of Britain, France and Germany to talk to Iran rather than adopt Washington's more hardline stance. The European Union's so-called "Big Three" have sought to persuade Tehran to stop technology that could be used to make atomic weapons in return for incentives such as trade deals and help with a civilian nuclear programme.

Daily Times, 20 January 2005

North Korean nuclear talks to resume soon, says Russia

MOSCOW: Talks aimed at ending North Korea's nuclear weapons programme are expected to resume soon, Russian Foreign Minister Sergei Lavrov said on Wednesday. "We expect we will be able to resume the six-party negotiations in the near future," Lavrov told a news conference. Russia is one of the parties to the talks, along with South and North Korea, the United States, Japan and China. Pyongyang is boycotting the negotiations over what it has called Washington's "hostile policy". US officials say communist North Korea may have more than eight nuclear weapons and US President George W Bush once branded the North as part of "an axis of evil".

The Hindu, 20 January 2005

Trishul test-fired

BALASORE, Jan. 19: India's most sophisticated short range, surface-to-air missile, 'Trishul', was successfully test-fired today from the Integrated Test Range at Chandipur-on-Sea, about 15 km from here. The missile lifted off from a mobile launcher at 12.53 p.m.

The Hindu, 20 January 2005

U.S. aware of Pakistan's nuclear plan dangers: Rice (Sridhar Krishnaswami)

WASHINGTON, Jan. 19: The Secretary of State designate, Condoleezza Rice, has said the U.S. is "very aware" of the danger of Pakistan's nuclear weapons falling into the hands of radicals and that Washington has a contingency plan to prevent it. She did not disclose the plan at the open hearings session at the Senate Foreign Relations Committee. She faced some tough questioning over three sessions on the first day. The former Democratic presidential nominee, Senator John Kerry, asked her about the fail-safe procedures in the event of a coup in Pakistan. "If you were to have a successful coup in Pakistan, you could have conceivably, nuclear weapons in the hand of a radical Islamic state automatically, overnight," he said. To which Dr. Rice replied: "...we have noted this problem and we are prepared to try to deal with it. I would prefer not in open session to talk about this particular issue.

The News, 21 January 2005

Israel may attack Iran nuclear facilities: Cheney

WASHINGTON: US Vice President Dick Cheney said that Iran was "right at the top of the list" of global trouble spots and worried that Israel might strike to shut down Tehran's nuclear programs. "One of the concerns people have is that Israel might do it without being asked," Cheney, who led the chorus of voices calling for Saddam Hussein's ouster ahead of the March 2003 invasion of Iraq, told a tv in an interview. "Given the fact that Iran has a stated policy that their objective is the destruction of Israel, the Israelis might well decide to act first, and let the rest of the world worry about cleaning up the diplomatic mess afterwards," he said. The vice president said he was "very concerned" about Iran's nuclear program, which Tehran says is for the purpose of civilian energy production but Washington charges is cover for a nuclear weapons program.

Daily Times, 21 January 2005

Iran vows to respond to US threats

TEHRAN, Jan 20: Iran issued a new warning on Thursday that it would respond to any threat by the United States in an escalating war of words over Tehran's nuclear activities which Washington claims is a cover for developing the bomb. Foreign Minister Kamal Kharazi said during a trip to Uganda that his government would answer a threat of any kind from its arch foe, adding: "We are not afraid of that country's threats," the state news agency, IRNA, reported. Iran vehemently denies it is developing nuclear weapons, insisting that its nuclear programme is merely directed at generating electricity. Kharazi, touring Africa with President Mohammad Khatami, said Washington was using 'psychological warfare' against Iran.

Daily Times, 21 January 2005

Egypt's N-lab under probe, say diplomats

VIENNA, Jan 20: United Nations inspectors investigating undeclared nuclear activity in Egypt are checking out a reprocessing lab for making plutonium, diplomats said. The lab, apparently put together in the 1980s but never used, raises questions about an Egyptian nuclear program which is peaceful, but may also be carefully structured to be able to move towards weapons development if Cairo decided to take this step, diplomats said in recent comments. "It's not empty, the Egyptian story," a diplomat close to the UN's nuclear watchdog International Atomic Energy Agency said, commenting on the ongoing investigation and hinting there are more undeclared activities than inspectors of the Vienna-based IAEA had originally thought. But the diplomat said Egypt's undeclared work was small-scale and not even comparable to South Korea, a non-atomic-weapons state which has admitted to carrying out small-scale "rogue" nuclear experiments.

The Washington Post, 21 January 2005

Cheney targets Iran as top threat to peace, stability

WASHINGTON: Vice President Dick Cheney said Thursday that Iran is a top threat to world peace and Middle East stability, accusing Tehran of sponsoring terrorism against Americans and building a "fairly robust new nuclear program." In an interview aired on MSNBC's "Imus in the Morning" show a few hours before President Bush's inaugural address yesterday, Cheney warned that Israel "might well decide to act first" militarily to eliminate Iran's nuclear capabilities if the United States and its allies fail to resolve the standoff with Iran diplomatically. "Given the fact that Iran has a stated policy that their objective is the destruction of Israel, the Israelis might well decide to act first and let the rest of the world worry about cleaning up the diplomatic mess afterwards," Cheney said.

The Times of India, 22 January 2005

'India, Pak on high nuclear-drive' (Srinivas Laxman)

MUMBAI: India and Pakistan are maximising production of nuclear weapons even as they talk peace. This startling disclosure was made by Pakistani nuclear physicist Parvez Amirali Hoodbhoy, who has been closely monitoring the nuclear weapons programme of both countries for more than two decades. Hoodbhoy, who has been actively campaigning against the nuclearisation of India and Pakistan, is attached to the physics department of Islamabad's Qaid-e-Azam University. He is visiting India for a month on an invitation from the Department of Science and Technology. His strong views on the dangers of nuclearisation have been published in several international journals and newspapers in Europe, the US and Japan.

The New York Times, 23 January 2005

Danger Zone That Wasn't, and a Sub's Hidden Peril (Christopher Drew)

Satellite images of the area where a nuclear submarine grounded two weeks ago clearly show a wedge-shaped undersea mountain that stretches across more than a mile of a desolate expanse of the South Pacific. Military officials have said the mountain, which rises within 100 feet of the surface, was not on the navigation charts that the Navy uses. One sailor was killed and 60 were injured when the submarine, the San Francisco, smashed into the mountain, or a reef jutting out from it, at high speed on Jan. 8. The satellite images, taken in 1999 and early 2004, suggest that the mountain is part of a larger range of undersea volcanoes and reefs. And they show that it sits more than three miles to the northwest of the nearest possible hazard on the charts. Scientists who have studied the images say it is likely that the submarine's officers believed they had safely skirted the danger zone - with the vessel about 500 feet below the surface - only to crash head-on into the mountain.

Reuters, 23 January 2005

Iran Says U.S. Attack Would Be a Strategic Error

TEHRAN: Iran, responding to comments by senior U.S. officials, said Sunday any U.S. military attack on the country would be a strategic mistake and dismissed the U.S. remarks as "psychological warfare." President Bush last week said military action against Iran's nuclear program had not been ruled out and Vice President Dick Cheney said Iran topped the list of world trouble spots and Israel could decide to bomb its nuclear facilities. But Iran's Foreign Ministry spokesman Hamid Reza Asefi said: "We think the chance (of a U.S. military attack) is very low unless someone wants to make a major strategic mistake." "Logically speaking, we don't think this is going to happen," he told a weekly news conference. Iranian officials, including President Mohammad Khatami, said last week Iran would respond vigorously to any attack.

The Korean Times, 23 January 2005

NK Uses Nuke Claim as Bargaining Chip (Ryu Jin)

North Korea recently declared it possessed nuclear arms to U.S. congressional delegates who visited there, a U.S. radio station said Saturday. But experts said the claim seems aimed at enhancing the North's leverage ahead of the upcoming negotiations. Radio Free Asia said Curt Weldon, vice chairman of the U.S. House Armed Services Committee, delivered the

North's claim to Washington last week while briefing the U.S. administration on the outcome of his trip to Pyongyang Jan. 11-14. The radio station said Kim Kye-gwan, North Korea's vice foreign minister and chief nuclear negotiator, told the U.S. delegation that his country possessed nuclear weapons, stressing they are "only for defense" and that Pyongyang had "no intention to possess them forever." North Koreans have sometimes claimed in vaguely worded statements to possess a nuclear deterrent, but they have never officially announced the North's status as a nuclear-armed country.

Daily Times, 24 January 2005

N Korea tells US lawmaker it has atom bombs

SEOUL: A top North Korean official has told US legislators that the communist state possessed nuclear weapons, Radio Free Asia reported on Friday. North Korea's Vice Foreign Minister Kim Kye-gwan said the country was a nuclear weapons state but its nuclear arsenal was defensive in nature and Pyongyang did not intend to possess it forever, Radio Free Asia quoted U.S. Rep. Curt Weldon as saying. Weldon, Republican of Pennsylvania, led a six-member congressional delegation to North Korea last week and met with its senior officials. North Korea aimed to denuclearise itself and it was willing to move toward that end in a transparent manner, Weldon quoted the North's Foreign Minister Paek Nam-sun as saying.

Daily Times, 24 January 2005

UN inspectors visit Egypt plutonium lab

VIENNA: Inspectors from the UN nuclear watchdog are in Egypt inspecting a laboratory that was designed to reprocess plutonium, a substance that can be used to fuel atomic weapons, Western diplomats said on Friday. Egypt is the most recent country to become the focus of an investigation by the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) for failing to inform it of activities and facilities that could be used to produce fuel for atomic bombs. The IAEA dispatched the inspectors after learning that Egyptian scientists had been conducting undeclared experiments with uranium. The experiments partly came to light after some of the scientists involved in the project published their research.

Daily Times, 24 January 2005

North Korea source says talks could resume in February

MOSCOW: North Korea could return to six-way talks on its nuclear programme next month, Russia's Interfax news agency quoted a North Korean diplomatic source as saying on Friday. "There exists a definite possibility that the fourth round of six-way talks could take place in the second half of February," the source told Interfax in Beijing, adding there had been "some positive developments in the US position". He cited statements by US congressmen who visited Pyongyang this month as examples of such positive developments. The six-way talks, attended by North and South Korea, the United States, Russia, Japan and China, have stalled since last June, with Pyongyang saying it was boycotting the negotiations because of Washington's "hostile policy". But the White House said earlier this week that it was hopeful North Korea would return to the negotiating table soon.

The Hindu, 24 January 2005

Britain, U.S. differ over Iran? (Hasan Suroor)

LONDON, JAN. 23: Britain and America are reported to be heading for a diplomatic standoff over Iran as the British Government is said to be determined not to back any Iraq-like U.S. military adventure against Teheran. The British Foreign Secretary, Jack Straw, has prepared a detailed and closely-argued document setting out the case for a negotiated solution to the controversy over Iran's nuclear programme. The document, extensively quoted in a Sunday newspaper, describes the efforts being made by Britain, France and Germany to resolve the issue as being "in the best interests of Iran and the international community." Making clear that an "imposed solution" was not the answer, it says: "We have worked hard to achieve agreement with Iran on the way in which this issue is handled, to give the international community the reassurance we seek, while safeguarding Iran's right to the peaceful use of nuclear technology."

The Times of India, 24 January 2005

Tightrope Walk: India's Nuclear Programme at the Crossroads (P R Chari)

India and Russia are keen to cooperate in areas such as information technology, combating global terrorism and running oilfields. However, a cloud of uncertainty hangs over a much earlier arrangement - the transfer of nuclear technology. In supplying nuclear reactors and fuel to India, Russia would not like to rub other members of the nuclear club the wrong way. The joint declaration signed by the Russian Federation and India after president Putin's recent visit to New Delhi expresses this intent: "Both sides are determined to continue their cooperation in the field of nuclear energy, incorporating innovative technologies to ensure energy security, with due regard to their commitments to non-proliferation norms". According to the Russian deputy prime minister, the declaration aims at expanding bilateral linkages in the civilian sector beyond the present two-reactor Koodankulam power project. In the same breath, Russia also drew India's attention to international treaty commitments made to the Nuclear Suppliers' Group (NSG).

Dawn, 25 January 2005

India, China begin talks on WMDs

NEW DELHI, Jan 24: India and China kicked off their first strategic dialogue here on Monday, highlighting regional stability as a key objective while sharing the fear that weapons of mass destruction could fall into the hands of non-state players. The talks between Chinese Vice-Foreign Minister Wu Dawei and Indian Foreign Secretary Shyam Saran were the first in a series that will look beyond boundary disputes between the Asian rivals and focus on regional and global security issues and growing economic cooperation. "Among the important international and regional issues discussed were the issues of globalization,

democratization of international relations, UN reforms, non-proliferation, terrorism, situation in the Korean Peninsula," Indian Foreign Ministry spokesman Navtej Sarna said after Monday's talks.

Daily Times, 25 January 2005

Egypt denies UN plutonium lab visit report

CAIRO: Egypt on Monday denied a report that inspectors from the UN nuclear watchdog body were in Egypt last week to inspect a laboratory designed to reprocess plutonium, a substance that can be used to make atomic weapons. Western diplomats said on Friday that inspectors from the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) were in Egypt at that time after learning that Egyptian scientists had been conducting undeclared experiments with uranium. "At the date reported, there (were) no inspectors... There are no inspectors in Egypt right now," Aly Islam, president of the Egyptian Atomic Energy Authority, told Reuters. He said that, as president of the authority, he should have been informed if any such inspections had been taking place.

Daily Times, 25 January 2005

Israel for mobilisation against Iran N-plan

JERUSALEM: Israeli Deputy Prime Minister Shimon Peres called on Monday for an international mobilisation against Iran's nuclear ambitions, which he said, threatened the stability of the whole Middle East. "The world must mobilise against the Iranian nuclear option," Peres said in an interview with army radio. "Iran has become the focal point of all the dangers of the Middle East ... This problem should be of concern to the whole world and not just Israel." Last Monday, US President George W Bush said he could not rule out using force if Tehran failed to rein in its nuclear plans, which he said was a cover for the production of a nuclear bomb. And then US Vice President Dick Cheney said Iran was "right at the top of the list" of global trouble spots and warned that Israel might launch a pre-emptive strike on its own to shut down Iran's nuclear programme.

Dawn, 25 January 2005

Mossad chief sees a nuclear Iran

TEL AVIV, Jan 24: The chief of Israel's Mossad intelligence agency said on Monday arch-foe Iran was on the brink of enriching uranium, a process key to building a nuclear bomb. "The assessment is that by the end of 2005 the Iranians will reach the point of no-return from the technological perspective of creating a uranium-enrichment capability," Mossad head Meir Dagan told parliament's Foreign Affairs and Defence Committee. Iran, which says its nuclear programme is for energy needs only, agreed in November to suspend uranium enrichment under a European Union-brokered deal. Israel and the United States suspect Iran of buying time while it covertly seeks the bomb. "The Iranians are striving to secure from the Europeans an agreement that would allow them to continue enriching uranium, even on an intensified level, under supervision and with guarantees," Dagan said.

The News, 25 January 2005

Iran rules out direct talks with US on N-issue

TEHRAN: Iran ruled out direct talks with Washington on Monday as Israel urged the world to take action against the Islamic republic's nuclear programme, warning it could destabilise the Middle East. US President George W Bush, just into his second term of office, has warned Tehran not to develop nuclear weapons or risk possible military action. "We have said before that if anyone wants to talks to us in a threatening language, we will adopt the same tone," Iranian government spokesman and cabinet secretary Abdollah Ramazanzadeh told reporters. While Iran insists its nuclear activities are strictly for peaceful energy purposes, the European Union's "big three", Britain, France and Germany, are engaged in a diplomatic effort aimed at securing long-term guarantees the clerical regime will not seek the bomb.

The Hindu, 25 January 2005

Cap the nuclear arsenal now (R. Rajaraman)

If we in South Asia do not act now we will bequeath succeeding generations hundreds of nuclear weapons, in the shadow of whose hazards they will have to live. Notwithstanding the lip service that they periodically pay to the goal of a nuclear weapon-free South Asia, in practice the Governments of India and Pakistan are not taking serious steps to move towards it. Most of our national security experts also seem to consider nuclear disarmament to be no more than a pipe dream of peace activists. Admittedly, given the state of India-Pakistan relations and the proximity of a nuclear China, the prospects for ridding our country of these weapons do seem bleak. But I do not believe they are hopeless. However in order to achieve disarmament people advocating it have to go about it in graduated steps, rather than demand immediate disarmament on an all-or-nothing basis.

Dawn, 26 January 2005

Threat to Iran

Israel now seems to be preparing the ground for an attack on Iran on the nuclear issue. Two statements in this respect, one from Deputy Prime Minister Shimon Peres and the other by the Mossad chief, are revealing. In an interview with the army radio on Monday, Mr Peres said the world must mobilize against Iran because it had become "the focal point of all the dangers" in the Middle East. The Iranian nuclear capability, he said, was a danger not just for Israel but for the whole world. The same day, the Mossad chief told the Knesset's foreign affairs and defence committee that Iran was on the brink of achieving the uranium enrichment capability and that by the end of the year Tehran would reach "the point of no return".

The News, 26 January 2005

N-talks between Iran, Europe deadlocked

DAVOS: Talks between European powers and Iran are deadlocked on the key issue of uranium enrichment, with Iran refusing to consider scrapping such programmes even while acknowledging they make no economic sense, according to a confidential document obtained on Tuesday by The Associated Press. The summary of the last meeting between representatives of France, Britain, Germany and Iran states that Tehran intends to maintain its enrichment programme, whereas, the European powers continue to insist on its "cessation" or "dismantlement." The United States and several other countries fear Iran is seeking to enrich uranium not to the low level needed to generate power, but to weapons-grade uranium that forms the core of nuclear warheads.

The News, 26 January 2005

China denies knowledge of N Korea nuclear plan

BEIJING: China said on Tuesday it had no knowledge of the existence of a uranium-enrichment programme in North Korea, reiterating a long-standing position and debunking a Japanese newspaper report that Beijing's stance had changed. The issue is at the heart of the two-year-old deadlock over North Korea's nuclear ambitions. The United States says it has evidence Pyongyang has a covert programme to enrich uranium for nuclear arms and says North Korean officials admitted as much in November 2002. North Korea has publicly denied the existence of such a programme since. Japan's Nihon Keizai business daily reported on Monday that China, in a policy turnaround, was urging North Korea to declare it possesses enriched uranium and has a nuclear development programme.

The Associated Press, 26 January 2005

Energy Dept. Issues Nuke Safety Rules

WASHINGTON: The government would be able to fine contractors who violate worker safety standards at federal nuclear facilities under rules proposed Wednesday by the Energy Department. The proposal comes a year after withdrawal of a much-criticized draft rule that failed to set minimum safety standards for all department sites. The old proposal would have allowed contractors to pick and choose which safety rules they should be required to follow, something that was criticized by lawmakers, workers and the Defense Nuclear Facilities Safety Board, an advisory board that oversees safety throughout the Energy Department weapons complex. "We felt there was too much leeway given to contractors rather than requiring the government to set the standards," John Conway, chairman of the advisory board, said of the old rule.

Reuters, 26 January 2005

Iran Must Dismantle Nuke Enrichment Program - EU

VIENNA: France, Britain and Germany have told Iran they will not settle for anything less than an end to sensitive nuclear processes key to the production of atomic bombs, according to a confidential EU document. Iran has temporarily frozen its enrichment program, a process of purifying uranium for use as fuel in nuclear power plants or weapons, but insists that atomic fuel production is a sovereign right it will never abandon. The document, which summarizes this month's talks between the European Union's "big three" -- the EU3 -- and Iran, said Tehran would only allow increased inspections by the U.N.'s International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) and "certain restrictions on the level and extent of the uranium enrichment program."

Khaleej Times, 26 January 2005

'Iran nuclear enrichment unacceptable'

VIENNA: France, Britain and Germany have told Iran it would be "unacceptable" for Tehran to keep its uranium enrichment programme since it could be used to develop atomic weapons, according to a confidential EU document. Tehran has temporarily suspended its enrichment programme, a process of purifying uranium for use as fuel in nuclear power plants or weapons, but insists that atomic fuel production is a sovereign right that it will never abandon. "EU3/EU made clear that the outlined approach was unacceptable," said a summary of this month's EU-Iran talks seen by Reuters. "Iran has to recognise that the fuel cycle programme is the core of the problem."

The News, 27 January 2005

Libya urges N Korea to follow its lead

SEOUL: Libyan leader Muammar Qaddafi told South Korea's foreign minister that North Korea and Iran must follow Libya's lead and abandon their nuclear weapons ambitions, Yonhap news agency said on Wednesday. Colonel Qaddafi also told Foreign Minister Ban Ki-moon in a meeting in Tripoli late on Tuesday that the North and Iran must also receive adequate assistance to help them use nuclear technology peacefully, the Yonhap report said. "We are trying to persuade North Korea," Ban quoted Qaddafi as saying. "The North Korean nuclear problem is a grave and dangerous issue," Qaddafi was quoted as saying. Ban is on the last leg of a four-country tour of Africa, which also took him to Algeria, Tanzania and Kenya.

Dawn, 27 January 2005

Iran warns US, Israel of retaliation

TEHRAN, Jan 26: Iran will carry out an "astonishing" retaliation to any attack against the Iran by Israel or the United States, Iran's Revolutionary Guards warned in comments published on Wednesday. It also responded to Israeli allegations that it was closer to developing a nuclear weapon, saying the latest accusations were designed to shift attention away from Israel's own weapons and its "terror" against Palestinians. "We will counter any stupid action by Israel and its master with firmness and in an astonishing way," Brig-Gen Mohammad-Ali Jafari was quoted as saying by the Shargh newspaper.

Daily Times, 27 January 2005

Analysts believe US should focus on North Korea talks (Paul Eckert)

Secretary of State-designate Condoleezza Rice and her new Asia policy team will have their work cut out for them coaxing North Korea back to nuclear talks after a long stalemate, analysts said. But as Rice moved through her Senate confirmation on Tuesday, North Korea watchers said the United States also must dispel the impression that it doesn't want to negotiate seriously with North Korea to halt Pyongyang's nuclear ambitions. North Korea has joined the United States, China, South Korea, Japan and Russia for three rounds of nuclear talks since August 2003. North Korea scuttled a fourth round scheduled in September, saying it would not meet again until the United States dropped its hostility toward Pyongyang.

Daily Times, 28 January 2005

North Korea bought complete: nuclear bomb from Pakistan?

SEOUL: North Korea appears to have bought a complete nuclear weapon from either Pakistan or a former Soviet Union state, a South Korean newspaper said on Thursday quoting a source in Washington. Seoul Shinmun quoted the source as saying the US was checking the intelligence. The purchase was apparently intended to avoid nuclear weapons testing that could be detected from the outside, the source was quoted as saying. US Congressman Curt Weldon said after a visit to the North this month that its second-ranked leader had told his delegation that it possessed nuclear weapons. Pyongyang has declared that a nuclear reactor at Yongbyon, sealed under a 1994 agreement with the US, had been restarted. Spent nuclear fuel from that reactor could be converted to weapons-grade material.

The Washington Post, 28 January 2005

Korea Talks May Hinge on Bush (Glenn Kessler)

A bipartisan group of lawmakers that recently traveled to North Korea has written President Bush to urge him not to make provocative statements about the reclusive nation in next week's State of the Union address, on the grounds that it will hurt the prospects for resumed talks on North Korea's nuclear programs. Rep. Curt Weldon (R-Pa.), who led the six-member delegation, said senior North Korean leaders had told him they were ready to return to the talks but would be listening closely to statements from top administration officials. North Korea has accused the Bush administration of having a "hostile policy," dating from Bush's first State of the Union address in 2002. In that speech, he labeled North Korea as part of an "axis of evil" that included Iran and Saddam Hussein's government in Iraq.

Hindustan Times, 28 January 2005

Is Egypt making a bomb with AQ Khan's help? (Kanchan Gupta)

The International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA), the Vienna-based UN nuclear watchdog, by letting it slip through anonymous "Western diplomatic sources" earlier this month that it is "investigating undeclared nuclear work in Egypt" that may have been linked to an atomic weapons programme, has unleashed a new storm over covert proliferation in West Asia, easily the world's most volatile region today. Initial reports quoted an unnamed diplomat as saying that Egypt "tried to produce various components of uranium" without declaring it to the IAEA, as that country is bound to do under the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT) which it signed in 1981. Most of the undeclared work was carried out in the 1980s and 1990s, but the IAEA is also examining "evidence that suggests some work was performed as recently as a year ago".

Daily Times, 28 January 2005

Iran denies EU talks at impasse

TEHRAN: Iran has denied that its negotiations with three major European powers over its nuclear programme are at an impasse, the local press reported on Thursday. The comments by foreign ministry spokesman Hamid Reza Asefi came after the emergence of reports that the EU was hardening its stance towards Iran and calling on Tehran to completely dismantle its nuclear fuel programme in order to guarantee that it does not seek atomic weapons. "The publication of such reports is aimed at overshadowing the constructive nature of the negotiations and demonstrates the discontent of those who are not satisfied with their progress and are trying to prevent their success," Asefi was quoted as saying.

The New York Times, 28 January 2005

NYT warns against US strikes in Iran

WASHINGTON: The New York Times editorial board warned the US administration on Wednesday against military intervention in Iran, insisting it would do "more harm than good." In an editorial entitled "Military Rumbblings on Iran," the daily expressed concern over seemingly bellicose remarks by various administration officials, including Vice President Dick Cheney, who last week placed Iran at the top of a list of issues that concern the United States. "These hawkish rumbblings eerily recall the months before the American invasion of Iraq, when some of the same officials pressed hardest for military action, while the president remained publicly uncommitted," The New York Times said.

Daily Times, 29 January 2005

Indian nuke safety exposed (Faruk Ashrafeen)

India has been boasting of its nuclear command and control regime and high level of nuclear security. Be there a talk about nuclear proliferation, India would be first one to point the finger of suspicion at Pakistan. It has been accusing Islamabad of exporting nuclear technology. But with the recent news of arrest of a Dubai-based Indian national for trying to sell Indian atomic secrets to foreign powers has confirmed that India's nuclear programme is 'susceptible to being peddled for a price'. World intelligence agencies are now gathering proofs as to how India has become the hub of nuclear proliferation. Just recently, Ravindra Singh, a spy of the Research and Analysis Wing (RAW), Indian intelligence agency, mysteriously

disappeared and remained untraceable since then. Singh has been reported missing since May 14, 2004. As a face-saving measure Indian intelligence officials had falsely been informing the media that Ravindra had no information detrimental to Indian security interests, which obviously raised further doubts.

Dawn, 29 January 2005

US should help EU on Iran: IAEA

DAVOS, Jan 28: The head of the UN nuclear watchdog urged the United States on Friday to join forces with the EU to persuade Iran to give up atomic processes that could be used to make weapons. He drew a mixed response from US politicians attending the World Economic Forum in Davos, Switzerland, with Democrats favouring engagement with Tehran while Republicans were more sceptical about any dealing with Iran's religious hard liners. France, Britain and Germany are leading a European Union initiative to push Tehran to abandon its work on producing nuclear fuel in exchange for economic and political incentives. Washington, which accuses Iran of developing nuclear weapons under cover of a civilian atomic energy programme, has given arm's-length support to the EU effort, but some US officials say it is doomed. The United States has called for Iran to be referred to the UN Security Council for possible sanctions.

The New York Times, 29 January 2005

United States and Europe Differ Over Strategy on Iran (Elaine Sciolino)

PARIS, Jan. 28: President Bush's second term has barely begun, and Iran is already shaping up as its most serious diplomatic challenge. But conflicting pronouncements by Mr. Bush and his national security team have left Iran frustrated and angry about the direction of American policy, and the Europeans more determined than ever to push Washington to embrace their engagement strategy. To the outside world, the administration seems divided over whether to promote the overthrow of Iran's Islamic Republic - perhaps by force - or to tacitly support the approach embraced by the Europeans, which favors negotiations and a series of incentives that would ultimately require American participation. "You need to get everybody to read from the same page, the Europeans and the Americans," said Mohamed ElBaradei, head of the International Atomic Energy Agency, in an interview in Davos on Friday.

The News, 29 January 2005

Clinton urges diplomacy on Iran nuclear issue

DAVOS: Former US President Bill Clinton urged the US administration to step up diplomatic efforts towards resolving a stand-off on Iran's nuclear programme. "I personally believe we ought to give some final vigorous push to diplomacy to try to deal with this," Clinton told the World Economic Forum, lending implicit support to European Union efforts at engaging Tehran on the issue. "I am not entirely convinced that what our British and German and French and other friends are trying to do would not work," he said, in reference to the negotiations by the three major EU powers over Iran's nuclear programme. Clinton said he did not think Tehran would use any nuclear weapons that it developed because it would trigger a destructive retaliatory strike, but that radioactive material could fall into the hands of terror networks. "If Iran had a nuclear weapon, the main thing it would do would be to cast a pall over the Middle East, but it would take a long time before they used it because they'd be toast if they used it," he said.

Daily Times, 30 January 2005

Russian scientists ready to help proliferators, claims US expert (Khalid Hasan)

WASHINGTON: Russia's 600 nuclear scientists are a danger to the world since, according to a survey, 21 percent of them are willing to work for anyone if paid the right price, including North Korea, Iran and Syria. This was stated by Prof Michael Nacht of the University of California, Berkeley, at a meeting organised by the Woodrow Wilson Centre on Thursday. According to the professor, who worked for the Clinton administration in a senior advisory capacity, the motives of some Russian nuclear scientists may not be entirely monetary, since they believe that by contributing to nuclear proliferation, they would weaken the unchallenged power of the United States. Russia still considers itself a major player in world affairs and would like to regain the position it had before the collapse of the communist state. Some Russians believe that to make the world safe from proliferation is to make it safe for the United States.

Daily Times, 30 January 2005

Non-proliferation regime not harmed by India and Pakistan's capability (Khalid Hasan)

WASHINGTON: While nuclear proliferation in South Asia has not helped the global non-proliferation regime, it has not greatly damaged it either, according to a British expert. Sir Michael Quinlan, former permanent undersecretary at the UK Ministry of Defence, told a meeting in London on nonproliferation challenges, whose proceedings were published recently by the Woodrow Wilson Centre, that beyond the risk of a direct Pakistani or Indian nuclear weapons use, lies the broader proliferation risk that nuclear technology might leak to other states or non-state actors' programmes.

Daily Times, 30 January 2005

Anti-proliferation initiative: India open to joining America (Iftikhar Gilani)

NEW DELHI: India indicated on Saturday that it is willing to join the US-led Proliferation Security Initiative (PSI) group to stop nuclear proliferation activity in the India Ocean. Also for the first time, India revealed that it was sharing "information on military matters" with China under the new Sino-India strategic dialogue. In his concluding address to the seventh Asian Security Conference here, Indian Defence Minister Pranab Mukherjee said maritime security has emerged as a common challenge for East Asian nations. He said the PSI proposal needs to be "examined in greater detail".

Dawn, 30 January 2005

Iran at the point of no return: Israel

PARIS, Jan 29: Israeli Defence Minister Shaul Mofaz has told French lawmakers that Iran is at "the point of no-return" on building nuclear weapons, according to a transcript of his remarks to the National Assembly made public on Friday. Mr Mofaz, who warned openly in London this week that Iran would not be permitted to build a nuclear bomb, has in the past said that Israel has operational plans in place for a strike against Iranian targets. Mr Mofaz told the French National Assembly's defence commission that "he ardently hoped that a recourse to military action would not be necessary" in Iran, according to the transcript of the Tuesday meeting. But he said that to avoid this, there would have to be careful inspections aimed at removing any ambiguity about the existence of a military nuclear project.

Dawn, 30 January 2005

Iran has stake in uranium mine: owner

VIENNA, Jan 29: Iran has a stake in the world's biggest open-pit uranium mine in the African state of Namibia, the mine's owner said on Saturday. Rossing Uranium, which is majority owned by Anglo-Australian firm Rio Tinto, sells its uranium to nuclear power plants in the United States, Japan, South Korea and Sweden. Graham Davidson, the general manager for operations at Rossing, said in a letter that the company's board of directors only permits the sale of uranium for use in generating electricity. "The government of Iran has held a 15 per cent shareholding in Rossing Uranium Limited since 1975," he said.

The Associated Press, 30 January 2005

U.S. Official Consults Arabs on Iran Nukes

MANAMA: A senior U.S. official said Monday he was consulting Arab states in the Persian Gulf to coordinate policies in light of the perceived threat of Iran's nuclear ambitions. John Bolton, the State Department's top international security official, said countries in the region were "well aware" of the threat posed by Iran, which maintains its nuclear activities are for peaceful energy purposes. "Their repeated support for terrorism makes it particularly dangerous if they were to acquire a nuclear weapon," Bolton told reporters. "Whether they would use it directly as the government of Iran or whether they would transfer it to a terrorist group leaves us very concerned," said Bolton, undersecretary of state for arms control and international security.

The Associated Press, 30 January 2005

Iranian: 'No Rapprochement' With U.S.

DAVOS: Iran's foreign minister said Saturday that friendly relations with the United States were impossible for the time being but suggested informal contacts through European intermediaries were possible. Foreign Minister Kamal Kharrazi told The Associated Press that even if Washington were interested in improving ties with his country "there can be no rapprochement" in the current climate of animosity. European countries have been negotiating with Iran, but there are no official contacts between Washington and Tehran. President Bush has labeled Iran part of the "axis of evil," and has accused it of trying to build nuclear weapons -- something Iran denies. "I understand that in Europe, there is interest to engage the Americans," Kharrazi said at the World Economic Forum. "So far, our policy has been to engage the Europeans, who can coordinate matters as they wish on the American side."

The Hindu, 30 January 2005

Russia adds submarines, missiles to nuclear arsenal (Vladimir Radyuhin)

MOSCOW, JAN. 29: Russia's armed forces will get two new nuclear submarines, seven long-range nuclear missiles and a range of other weapons in what appears to be the biggest addition to its armoury since the break-up of the Soviet Union. The First Deputy Defence Minister, Colonel-General Alexander Belousov, said on Friday the Russian Navy will induct two fourth-generation nuclear submarines, Dmitry Donskoy and Yuri Dolgoruky, armed with the latest Bulava intercontinental ballistic missiles. He also disclosed that seven Topol-M strategic missile in silo-based and mobile versions will be added to the Russian nuclear arsenal.

The New York Times, 31 January 2005

Nuclear Backers Modify Stance on Waste (Matthew L. Wald)

WASHINGTON, Jan. 30: Nuclear energy advocates who have said a proposed nuclear waste repository at Yucca Mountain in Nevada must be opened before a new power reactor can be ordered are now backing away from that position, as completion of the repository looks later and less certain and the prospect for new reactors improves. The Energy Department describes the Yucca project as essential to the future of nuclear energy, but private sector advocates are trying to decouple the future of the industry from the government's success there. Some nuclear supporters say the industry has made a strategic error by tying its future to the repository, which was once supposed to open in 1998, and is now scheduled for 2010. The departing energy secretary, Spencer Abraham, said earlier this month that the opening would be even further off than that. In the meantime, as pools for spent fuel fill up, utility companies are building giant concrete-and-steel casks near their reactors designed to hold waste for many decades.

The Asahi Shimbun, 31 January 2005

Nuclear plants to be braced for quakes

To calm public fears, Chubu Electric Power Co. said it will strengthen the earthquake resistance of its five facilities, including reactors, at its 30-year-old Hamaoka Nuclear Power Plant in Shizuoka Prefecture, which sits on a plate boundary. Chubu Electric Power officials said the reinforcements will be the first made to nuclear plants in the nation. Chubu Electric said the

five nuclear facilities in Omaezaki were built to withstand quakes of up to magnitude 8.5 on the Richter scale, greater than the projected magnitude of a massive Tokai earthquake. "We have taken sufficient measures (to withstand earthquakes), but these reinforcements will set minds more at ease," Fumio Kawaguchi, Chubu Electric president, told a news conference Friday.

Daily Times, 31 January 2005

Pakistan pressing Iran to compromise on nukes

DAVOS: Pakistan is exerting behind-the-scenes pressure on Iran to compromise in its acrimonious dispute with Europe and the United States over its nuclear programme, Pakistani diplomatic sources say. Prime Minister Shaukat Aziz and Foreign Minister Khurshid Kasuri passed on their concerns during a meeting at the weekend with Iranian Foreign Minister Kamal Kharrazi. Kasuri, for his part, said Pakistan supported negotiations led by Britain, France and Germany, to reach a lasting deal that would allay US charges that Iran is covertly developing nuclear weapons. "We feel the role the (EU three) are playing is positive, because we feel that a peaceful resolution to this dispute is highly desirable," Kasuri told AFP on the sidelines of the World Economic Forum (WEF) in Davos, Switzerland. "Being their neighbours, and already with the Iraq situation being what it is, we wouldn't want another turmoil on our border," he said. "We paid a big price" in Afghanistan.

Daily Times, 31 January 2005

Complete kit for nuclear bomb given to Libya: ElBaradei

WASHINGTON: Mohamed ElBaradei, director general of the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA), has said that before he leaves, he would like to "get to the bottom of the "AQ Khan network" that provided a "complete kit" for a nuclear weapon to Libya. In an exclusive interview with Lally Weymouth of the Washington Post published on Sunday, the Egypt-born head of the nuclear watchdog agency that he has headed for two terms was repeatedly asked why the United States wants to get rid of him. He is the only candidate for a third term. He replied that it was the US view that no head of an international organisation should serve for more than two terms. He said there was a "security imbalance" in the region. Iran looked at Pakistan, Russia and Iraq and it was clear that more countries were trying to acquire nuclear weapons or nuclear know-how. "So there are going to be 20 or 30 countries with nuclear weapons, or we must move to say nuclear weapons are a recipe for disaster and we need a security system that does not rely on them," he added.

Daily Times, 31 January 2005

Iran said to be making chemical arms (Khalid Hasan)

WASHINGTON: A leading American nuclear watchdog has claimed that Iran's chemical and ballistic missile programmes pose a more "imminent threat" than its nascent nuclear effort, revealing as they do Tehran's determination to develop unconventional weapons. The Wisconsin Project on Nuclear Arms Control's latest 'Iran Watch Bulletin' says that these programmes are being built with the help of Russia and China. A CIA report last year said that Iran's chemical weapons probably include blister, blood and choking agents like mustard, cyanide and phosgene and Iran may be working with more deadly agents like VX nerve gas. Iran is also now ready to mass produce its Shahab-3 missile which is estimated to travel 800 miles. The missile can also deliver a nuclear or a chemical payload.

Daily Times, 31 January 2005

Iran nukes plan a threat to allies in region: US

MANAMA: US Under Secretary of State for Arms Control and International Security John Bolton said on Sunday that the Iranian nuclear programme was a major security threat for Washington's allies in the Middle East. "For the United States, the threat posed by Iran is not direct, in other words they do not at the current level of development have the capacity to launch a nuclear war-headed missile that could strike the United States," Bolton told reporters in Bahrain. "But they can strike our friends and allies in the region and the broader region here," he said. Bolton, a noted hawk in President George W. Bush's administration, reaffirmed Washington's belief that Iran "has been pursuing this strategic decision to acquire nuclear weapons and ballistic missiles delivery systems." Tehran insists that its nuclear programme is purely of civilian nature. The US official, on a tour of the Gulf, said that the issue at stake was whether Iran creates "a new strategic reality in the region and around the world, and whether we will be able to stop it in advance. "We would like to see a peaceful and diplomatic solution to the Iranian efforts," he said. Bolton's comments come amid a hardening of US rhetoric against the Islamic republic, which Bush has already lumped into an "axis of evil".

The News, 31 January 2005

ElBaradei for Iran-US talks on nuclear issue

WASHINGTON: Director-General International Atomic Energy Agency Mohamed ElBaradei has implicitly rebuked US President George W Bush and Vice-President Richard Cheney for discussing military options and urged the United States to engage in dialogue with Iran over its nuclear programme. The IAEA chief said Iran had the know-how for building nuclear weapons and was likely to take its programme underground in case of strikes against its nuclear facilities. He said: "I'd like to see the Americans join a dialogue either with the Europeans or directly with the Iranians. I don't think you will get a permanent solution of the Iranian issue without full US engagement. The US can't afford to sit on the fence."

International Herald Tribune, 31 January 2005

Facing up to the bioterror threat (Daniel Hamilton and Tara O'Toole)

WASHINGTON: Earlier this month in a Washington wargame, 11 former ministers and heads of government from Europe and North America confronted a threat no one should ever have to face: the use of contagious disease as a weapon. Atlantic

Storm was designed to provoke imagination and to prompt action by making the reality of deliberate epidemics more vivid and by underscoring our shared responsibility to prevent, but also to prepare for, such a threat. Faced with tragic choices, Atlantic Storm leaders largely agreed on appropriate responses. Although they worried about sharing the vaccine to the simulated contagion with "have-not" allies, in the end they took courageous steps to vaccinate half the planet. This left the question: How, exactly, could we carry out a decision to immunize three billion people in the real world?