

People's Daily, 1 July 2004

DPRK demands US aid in exchange for nuke freeze

Pyongyang will freeze its nuclear program only after the United States provides energy aid equivalent of 2 million kwt, the Democratic People's Republic of Korea (DPRK)'s Ambassador to Russia Pak Ui Chun said in Moscow Wednesday. Before Pyongyang starts freezing its nuclear program, the United States "must provide our country with compensatory energy assistance in the amount equivalent to 2 million kwt, remove the DPRK from the list of countries supporting terrorism, and also lift sanctions and the economic blockade from our country," Pak Ui Chun was cited by the Interfax news agency as saying. "The freeze will begin when the granting of compensations begins," the ambassador noted. Pak Ui Chun would not say whether the DPRK might rejoin the Nuclear Nonproliferation Treaty, which it abandoned in January 2003 after Washington accused Pyongyang of secretly running a nuclear program in violation of the 1994 Agreed Framework. A third round of talks on the Korean nuclear crisis closed Saturday, with participants from the two Koreas, Japan, Russia, China and the United States agreed to meet again by September.

The News, 1 July 2004

Iran persists building centrifuge

Mexico: Iranian Foreign Minister Kamal Kharrazi said his country will not halt work on centrifuges for its nuclear program despite US and international pressure to do so. Kharrazi defended the centrifuge program saying it was for energy purposes. Speaking to reporters during an official visit to Mexico he defended Iran's plan to build seven nuclear energy facilities over the next 20 years. But he added that Iran will keep working closely with the International Atomic Energy Agency and said that they have the assurance we are not trying to develop nuclear arms. The agency earlier this month approved a resolution rebuking Iran for past nuclear cover-ups. Mexico is

among the 30 countries that sit on the agency's board of directors.

The Hindu, 1 July 2004

Big missile test soon: Musharraf

Islamabad, June 30: The Pakistani President, Pervez Musharraf, today vowed to test a new missile within two months, the State-run Pakistan Television reported. "We will show you a big test within the next two months or so," he told reporters here, according to the report. Gen. Musharraf gave no other details, but only said that Pakistani scientists were continuing to work on missiles and that he would not roll back the nuclear programme. Pakistan had recently indicated that it would test fire a "longest range" missile to strengthen its defence.

The Times of India, 1 July 2004

Indian Army may raise nuclear unit

Mumbai: The Indian Army's plan to have a 'dedicated' nuclear force was gathering momentum, an Indian official said during an army-media interaction. Army officials, who requested anonymity, said that need had been felt to expedite the formation of the new nuclear unit because of geo-political factors. "These need not be Pak-specific," an official reportedly told Times of India, hinting at countries in Asia without identifying them. He refused discussion due to diplomatic reasons. The army's move to quicken the formation of the unit also assumes significance in the context of the Indian Navy wanting to possess nuclear submarines, that can launch nuclear weapons. This has been made explicitly clear in the Navy's latest doctrine released last week. There is a race among the three wings of the armed forces to be the first to induct nuclear weapons. The navy appears confident that it will win this competition. The indigenous light combat aircraft is also capable of carrying nuclear weapons. The official said that the nuclear force in the Indian Army would basically handle the nuclear-capable intermediate range ballistic missiles Agni-1 and Agni-2.

Daily Times, 2 July 2004

Pakistani missile tests revive dangers in South Asia: US

Washington: The United States warned on Thursday that Pakistan's move to conduct a key missile test revived dangers posed by nuclear weapons and ballistic missiles as well as of an arms race in South Asia, reported AFP. "On the issue of missile tests, we clearly remain deeply concerned about the dangers that continue to be posed by both nuclear weapons and ballistic missiles in South Asia," US State Department deputy spokesman Adam Ereli told reporters. The United States continued to urge Pakistan and its neighbour and nuclear-rival India to take steps to prevent an arms race and to guard against possible nuclear use, Ereli said. "I would note that in this regard, we are encouraged that India and Pakistan have just agreed to work toward a number of measures to reduce risk in the region, including a more advanced agreement on notification of missile tests," Ereli said. Asked whether he was especially concerned about Pakistan, as his statement sounded he was worried about the general situation in South Asia, Ereli said: "I would say there is no marked change in our level of concern. "Regarding this issue, it is an issue that we continue to raise with both countries, and that I would note, both countries discuss between themselves. And that is a good thing. It is something that we see as a positive development, in the sense that sources of tension are being addressed in a bilateral and cooperative way, and that's to be welcomed," he said.

Daily Times, 2 July 2004

US leaves open chance for talks with N Korea

Jakarta: US Secretary of State Colin Powell left open the possibility he would meet North Korea's foreign minister on Friday in what would be the highest-level contact for two years between two nations locked in a nuclear standoff. Powell also said on Thursday he would assure Foreign Minister Paek Nam-sun, during a larger meeting of nations in Jakarta, that the United States will

carefully study a North Korean proposal to freeze its nuclear activities. "It remains to be seen what other discussions he and I may or may not be participating in," Powell told a news conference, when asked if he would meet his North Korean counterpart one-on-one on Friday. Offering North Korea a carrot, the top US diplomat also predicted the communist nation would quickly be rewarded for taking concrete steps to dismantle its suspected programmes. But he insisted on Washington's bottom line for negotiations - that North Korea scrap all of its programmes, even though Pyongyang disputes US accusations on the extent of its activities. Powell met over coffee with Paek in 2002 during a conference of South East Asian nations and dialogue partners - the same forum in which the two will participate on Friday. The possibility of another meeting follows six-party talks last week in Beijing on North Korea's nuclear ambitions that ended with signs of a start to real negotiations.

Daily Times, 2 July 2004

'Tehran will continue building centrifuges'

Mexico: Iranian Foreign Minister Kamal Kharrazi, on an official visit here, said on Wednesday his country was determined to continue building uranium enrichment centrifuges, but that the work was not aimed at producing nuclear weapons. "The work we're doing is not illegal," he told a press conference concluding a three-day visit to Mexico. "We have decided (to use) nuclear energy for peaceful purposes and, as we are building seven nuclear installations over the next 20 years, it is natural that for fuel we should produce (the centrifuges) within our own country." He added that the centrifuges were being built "under the supervision of the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA), and they are assuring that we have no intentions towards nuclear arms and that our work is legal." But Iran claims the European commitments were not honoured and, "therefore we have not kept our promise to suspend the construction of the centrifuges," said Kharrazi. Meanwhile Iran's

new conservative-controlled parliament is considering pushing through a bill that would force the Islamic regime to resume uranium enrichment activities, a senior deputy told.

The News, 2 July 2004

Steps for nuclear talks (Zia Mian, A H Nayyar, R Rajaraman, M V Ramana)

It is talking time again. Pakistani and Indian government officials met in New Delhi on June 19 and 20 to talk. The Foreign Ministers met briefly in China on 21 June, the Foreign Secretaries will apparently talk sometime in late July, and there are suggestions of a possible summit meeting between President Pervez Musharraf and India's new Prime Minister Manmohan Singh. But while talking is better than fighting, it is important to remember the fact that India and Pakistan have met and talked many times since the 1999 Lahore summit, where the Prime Ministers claimed that they shared "a vision of peace and stability between their countries, and of progress and prosperity for their peoples". Leaders on both sides seem to recognise that their nuclear weapons and ballistic missiles cast a dark, potentially fatal shadow over the future of both countries. India's new Foreign Minister Natwar Singh recently declared, "To me personally, the most important thing on our agenda should be the nuclear dimension". President Musharraf claims, "We have been saying let's make South Asia a nuclear-free zone". He also suggested, "If mutually there is an agreement of reduction of nuclear assets, Pakistan would be willing". These are hopeful indications.

The Hindu, 2 July 2004

When early warning is no warning (Zia Mian, R. Rajaraman & M.V. Ramana)

Early warning systems in South Asia have no significant utility. Rather, they increase the danger of inadvertent nuclear war. As a concrete step that would reduce nuclear dangers in South Asia, we have suggested that both India and Pakistan agree not to install nuclear early warning systems (The Hindu, June 4, 2004). This may seem

counter-intuitive in that such systems are supposed to give advance notice of a nuclear attack; it is often argued that this warning time is vital for responsible decision-making. For example, in his letter to the editor, (The Hindu, June 21), S. Lakshminarayanan worries that "Without an effective early warning system, we will be taken unawares." The notion of early warning, like the deeply flawed notion of deterrence, is a carryover from the nuclear confrontation between the United States and the Soviet Union.

Boston Globe, 2 July 2004

US can aid India-Pakistan dialogue
(Thomas W. Simons)

India and Pakistan are resuming "composite dialogue" after a hiatus of nearly three years. Recent expert-level meetings on nuclear confidence-building measures made some encouraging progress, and last weekend the top foreign ministry officials began talks on a range of issues between the two countries. If these talks are to help stabilize the region's security situation they need to become a sustained process. That means India and Pakistan must become responsible nuclear powers, after a half-decade of dangerous instability following their nuclear explosions in May 1998. The United States has a stake in the outcome, and a chance to help India and Pakistan.

Daily Times, 3 July 2004

India reconstitutes N-security board
(Iftikhar Gilani)

New Delhi: In a major step towards overhauling the nuclear management structure, India on Friday reconstituted the National Security Advisory Board (NSAB). Former diplomat JN Dixit had already taken over as the National Security Adviser, the custodian of nuclear buttons on behalf of the prime minister, and the government was now looking for heads of other nuclear related bodies. The new government is now deliberating on the heads for the Strategic Policy Group (SPG), Strategic Forces Command (SFC) and the National Security Council Secretariat (NSCS). Heads of all these nuclear bodies have either completed

their term or have retired from service. Prime Minister Manmohan Singh's office said he had approved the reconstitution of the NSAB. The NSAB, a multi-disciplinary body consisting of distinguished people from outside the government is an important element of the National Security Council (NSC) system.

Daily Times, 3 July 2004

Security forum backs bid to solve N-crisis

Jakarta: A major Asia-Pacific security forum gave strong support Friday to new efforts aimed at ending the North Korean nuclear crisis, as the US and North Korean foreign ministers held rare talks on the sidelines of the meeting. Members of the ASEAN Regional Forum (ARF), in a statement after their annual meeting, "emphasised the importance of a step-by-step process of 'words for words' and 'action for action'." The ARF foreign ministers also condemned terrorism as a worldwide threat, agreed to work together to improve transport security and urged army-ruled Myanmar to move towards democracy. Their statement on the North Korean issue followed a promise from US Secretary of State Colin Powell on Thursday to match North Korea "deed for deed" in the process of dismantling its nuclear weapons programme. Powell and his North Korean counterpart, Paek Nam-Sun, met privately early Friday and both sides indicated some progress was made.

The Washington Post, 3 July 2004

Powell, N. Korean Talk, But Progress Is Elusive (Glenn Kessler)

Jakarta, July 2: Secretary of State Colin L. Powell's decision to meet with the North Korean foreign minister at a regional economic conference here Friday signifies a growing willingness by the Bush administration to demonstrate diplomatic progress in the impasse over North Korea's nuclear ambitions. But, despite months of negotiations, it appears that neither the United States nor North Korea has altered its bottom-line demands, leaving a wide gap between the two countries. Both sides profess to want a nuclear-free Korean

Peninsula and have shelved their harsh rhetoric. But the administration insists it will not provide any tangible benefits to North Korea until after the insular communist state has renounced nuclear weapons, identified its programs and had its claims verified. North Korea, by contrast, has said it wants the United States to reward it immediately for formally pledging to freeze and ultimately dismantle its programs.

China Daily, 4 July 2004

IAEA chief to visit Israel

UN nuclear watchdog chief Muhammad al-Baradai will be visiting Israel next Tuesday to press for a nuclear-free zone in the Middle East. The visit by the director-general of the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) is significant, particularly since Israel is widely believed to have a clandestine nuclear weapons arsenal. Although Israel refuses to either confirm or deny it has the bomb, it is suspected of having up to 200 nuclear weapons. But al-Baradai last week said Israel should "clarify" its nuclear activities and start working towards ridding the Middle East of nuclear weapons. IAEA spokesman Mark Gwozdecky on Saturday said Israel's supposed nuclear arsenal would figure prominently during talks with al-Baradai.

The New York Times, 4 July 2004

Israeli Atomic Commission Unveils Web Site (Greg Myre)

Jerusalem, July 4: Israel's Atomic Energy Commission unveiled today a Web site on the country's highly secretive nuclear program, though it is limited to the most basic information and a few long-distance photos. The launching of the Web site came just two days before a visit by the head of the International Atomic Energy Agency, Mohamed ElBaradei, who last week called for talks on a nuclear-free Middle East. As noted on the new Web site (www.iaec.gov.il), Israel's Atomic Energy Commission was established in 1952 by the prime minister, David Ben-Gurion. Since then, Israel has sought to say as little as possible about its nuclear program. Israel has always refused to confirm or deny

whether it possesses nuclear weapons, though various estimates have said the country has enough plutonium to make about 200 such weapons. In an interview last December with the Israeli newspaper Haaretz, Mr. ElBaradei said he presumed that Israel had a nuclear arsenal. The Web site notes that Israel has two nuclear research centers, including a nuclear reactor in the Negev Desert, outside the southern town of Dimona.

The Hindu, 5 July 2004

Agni A-1 successfully test-fired (T.S. Subramanian)

Chennai, July 4: India's surface-to-surface missile, Agni A-1, was successfully test-fired today from the Interim Test Range at Wheelers' Island in the Bay of Bengal near Balasore, Orissa. It took off from a mobile launcher around 10.10 a.m., climbed to an altitude of more than 300 km, re-entered the atmosphere and plunged into the sea. The missile, with a range of over 700 km, can carry nuclear warheads. The 15-metre single-stage missile weighs 12 tonnes and is powered by solid propellants. This is the third flight. The Agni A-1 is said to be India's reply to Pakistan's Ghauri missile. It fills the gap between the Prithvi-2 missile, which has a range of about 250 km, and the Agni-2 with a range of 2,500 km.

Dawn, 5 July 2004

Pakistan not concerned: Mushahid

ISLAMABAD, July 4: Pakistan on Sunday said it was not worried by India's test of a short-range nuclear capable missile as it was a "sovereign right" for any country to enhance its defence and military capability. "Both countries (Pakistan and India) do the tests. It is a sovereign right of a country to take any measure for its defence," chairman of Senate foreign relations committee Mushahid Hussain told AFP. "We reserve the sovereign right to improve our defence capability and same right be granted to other countries," Mr Mushahid said. "We do not take exception to that, any other country can

do it also." Asked if Pakistan was concerned over Sunday's testing of 700 kilometres range surface-to-surface Agni missile by India, he said "absolutely not." "We have a strong deterrent and defence capability," he added. He said Pakistan stood for a reduction of the arms race and had been "proposing various initiatives based on reciprocity." Early last month, Pakistan successfully test-fired a Hatf V ballistic missile, which has a range of 1,500 kilometres. The missile would be able to carry nuclear warheads deep inside India. The South Asian neighbours held nuclear tests two weeks apart in 1998. –AFP

The News, 5 July 2004

ElBaradei wants Israel to discuss scrapping nukes

Vienna: Head of the UN nuclear watchdog Mohamed ElBaradei goes to Israel on Tuesday to try to persuade the Jewish state to open up its nuclear programme, but officials said Israel was not ready to scrap its atomic arsenal. Under its policy of "strategic ambiguity", Israel neither admits nor denies having nuclear weapons. But it is assumed to have up to 200 warheads, based on estimates of the amount of plutonium Israeli reactors have produced. While no breakthroughs are expected, one Western diplomat close to the IAEA said ElBaradei would meet senior Israeli officials, possibly including Prime Minister Ariel Sharon. IAEA spokesman Mark Gwozdecky said it would be partly a "routine visit", but added that ElBaradei intended "to promote the concept of a nuclear weapons-free zone in the Middle East"-clearly the central point of his talks. Israel welcomes the idea of a Middle East free of weapons of mass destruction but says disarmament has to come after peace has been achieved in the region, which has been plagued by violence and conflict for decades.

The News, 5 July 2004

Russian FM arrives in N Korea for nuclear talks

Seoul: Russian Foreign Minister Sergey Lavrov arrived in Pyongyang on Sunday for

a two-day visit focusing on the 20-month standoff over North Korea's nuclear ambitions, state media said. Lavrov "arrived here today to visit the DPRK (North Korea) at the invitation of Paek Nam-Sun, foreign minister of the DPRK," Pyongyang's official Korean Central News Agency said. "He and his party were met at the airport by Kung Sok-Ung, vice-minister of Foreign Affairs, officials concerned, Andrei Gennadievich Karlov, Russian ambassador to the DPRK, and staff members of his embassy here," it said in a brief dispatch, monitored here. Lavrov's trip to North Korea followed a 24-hour visit to Seoul during which he met with his South Korean counterpart Ban Ki-Moon and President Roh Moo-Hyun. Lavrov said here Saturday that he would have talks with top North Korean officials on bilateral ties and the outcome of recent six-nation talks aimed at defusing tensions over the Stalinist state's nuclear weapons programme. The third round of the talks in Beijing last month ended without a breakthrough, although the United States, the two Koreas, China, Japan and Russia agreed to meet again by the end of September.

The News, 5 July 2004

Iran's N-intentions unsure: Straw

London: British Foreign Secretary Jack Straw said on Sunday he was unsure whether to believe Iran's insistence that it has no intention of trying to build nuclear weapons. "I'm not sure, is the answer. And nobody is," Straw said in an interview with BBC radio. "Where they have not helped themselves is in not providing full and frank disclosures to the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA)," he added. Iran insists a site in Tehran, alleged by the United States to have been used for developing weapons of mass destruction, was in fact a former research and development military installation, IAEA chief Mohammed ElBaradei said last week. Meanwhile, Iran's new conservative-controlled parliament is considering pushing through a bill that would force the Islamic regime to resume uranium enrichment

activities, a senior deputy told AFP on July 1.

Daily Times, 5 July 2004

European's nuclear deal with Iran 'falling apart'

Tehran: There was plenty of diplomatic drama last October when the foreign ministers of Britain, France and Germany jetted into Tehran to bring Iran back from the brink of sparking a major nuclear crisis. But nearly nine months on, diplomats are cannily admitting their bid to strip Iran's ruling clerics of gaining A-bomb potential is falling apart. And perhaps more alarmingly, there does not appear to be a great deal that they can do about it. The problem, say diplomats who were close to hammering out the "Tehran declaration", lies not so much with Iran's recent backing away from certain technical aspects of it, but with its firm rejection of the accord's more ambitious premise. "We wanted the same kind of agreement with Iran as what we had with Libya. Iran had an opportunity to abandon its more sensitive nuclear work, and in return win greater trade and better relations with the West," recalled the senior diplomat.

Dawn, 6 July 2004

Nuclear surveillance system

It is reassuring to note that the federal government is planning to set up a monitoring mechanism under the aegis of the Pakistan Atomic Energy Commission to minimize the threat of radiation leaks and nuclear terror in the country. The aim is to enhance radiological surveillance at the national level. This will fill the gap created by the absence of an early warning system that can keep tabs on radiation leaks from the country's nuclear facilities and also help contain the damage resulting from a nuclear accident. Using high-tech and advanced scientific methods, the Rs160 million project will cover the whole country. Besides, it will provide the atomic energy commission with an effective mechanism to monitor radioactive material present at the nuclear sites as well as in the environment and the atmosphere 24 hours a day. An essential

component of the project is also to detect possible nuclear emergencies and provide guidelines for safe use and disposal of radioactive materials.

The News, 6 July 2004

Asian countries warned of chemical terrorism

Kuala Lumpur: Asian governments were warned on Monday to prepare for possible chemical or biological terrorism after a manual on launching such attacks was discovered recently in the Philippines. The warning came at a conference attended by more than 70 chemical weapons experts, security officials and policy makers from 12 countries including Japan, China, Canada, the United States, Singapore and Thailand. "There is a growing concern of the potential threat posed by chemical, biological, radiological and nuclear weapons (CBRN) in the hands of terrorists," said Zainal Abidin Zain, director-general of the Southeast Asia Regional Centre for Counter-terrorism. Chemical weapons were the easiest to manufacture out of the CBRN arsenal, he said, pointing to the sarin gas attack in the Tokyo subway by a religious cult in 1995 which killed 12 people and made thousands ill. Rohan Gunaratna, head of the Singapore-based International Centre for Political Violence and Terrorism Research, addressed the conference on a "Recently Recovered Jemaah Islamiyah Chem-Bio Manual". Jemaah Islamiyah (JI) is seen as the Southeast Asian wing of Osama bin Laden's Al-Qaeda group and has mounted a string of attacks, including the Bali bombings in October 2002 which killed 202 people.

Khaleej Times, 6 July 2004

Israel will not change 'no show, no tell' nuke policy: Sharon

Jerusalem: Prime Minister Ariel Sharon was quoted on Tuesday as saying Israel would not change its "no show, now tell" nuclear policy, and that he would ensure the country had all the necessary weapons to protect itself. Sharon was quoted on Israel's Army Radio hours before a visit by International

Atomic Energy Agency chief Mohamed ElBaradei. The Israeli leader was scheduled to meet ElBaradei, who has said Israel should start talking seriously about a nuclear free Middle East whether or not it admits to having such weapons. Israel has an official policy of "nuclear ambiguity," under which it neither confirms nor denies having such weapons. Experts assess Israel has the world's sixth-largest stockpile of nuclear weapons, including some 300 warheads and the ability to rapidly expand.

The Associated Press, 6 July 2004

IAEA Head Likely to Press Israel on Nukes (George Jahn)

Vienna: In his pitch for a Middle East free of nuclear weapons, the head of the U.N. atomic watchdog agency is likely this week to press for at least tacit acknowledgment from Israel that it has such arms or the means to make them. Israeli does not directly comment on its nuclear capacity, and the International Atomic Energy Agency will not specify how hard IAEA head Mohamed ElBaradei will push officials during his two-day visit to Israel starting Tuesday. But ahead of the trip ElBaradei has said that Israel should start talking seriously about a nuclear arms-free Middle East whether or not it owes up to owning them. Earlier this year, he condemned the imbalance caused in the Middle East because of "Israel sitting on nuclear weapons." On the eve of ElBaradei's trip, IAEA spokesman Mark Gwozdecky linked it to the need "for a strategic dialogue at nuclear issues, aimed at building up ... mutual confidence, and in the long run, making the region free of weapons of mass destruction."

People's Daily, 7 July 2004

Iran to resume nuclear talks in mid-July: FM

Iranian Foreign Minister Kamal Kharrazi said on Tuesday that Iran would resume nuclear talks with France, Germany and the UK in mid-July, the official IRNA news agency reported. "The three European countries were to announce their readiness

for the talks last week but failed to arrange it," Kharrazi was quoted as saying. Kharrazi reiterated that Iran's nuclear technology is peaceful. "We will not compromise our right for peaceful use of nuclear energy and what has been done so far is solely for the purpose of confidence-building," he said. Kharrazi also noted the project on uranium enrichment resumption approved by the National Security and Foreign Policy Commission of Parliament (NSFPCP). "The government has suspended the project for a period of time to develop confidence-building. However, we are determined to make peaceful use of nuclear energy," he stressed. NSFPCP on Tuesday gave the go-ahead for the resumption of uranium enrichment activities.

Daily Times, 7 July 2004

Pakistan's missile programme defensive: Kasuri

Islamabad: Foreign Minister Khurshid Mehmood Kasuri has said that the missile programme of Pakistan was purely for self-defense. "India has tested many more missiles. We are not in a race with India. Pakistan has its own timetable of missile testing. The tests were being conducted for scientific and technical reasons," he told PTV. Pakistan has done more than any other nation in the world in the fight against terrorism. Pakistan has arrested as many as 600 Al Qaeda operatives. A major operation has also been launched in the tribal areas, he added. "We never escaped from our responsibilities towards the international community. "Pakistan will never allow its territory to be used by the foreigners for hostile purposes," he said.

Dawn, 7 July 2004

Tel Aviv not to change nuclear policy: PM

Tel Aviv, July 6: Israeli Prime Minister Ariel Sharon said on Tuesday his country's policy of refusing to confirm or deny that it has nuclear weapons would continue. The statement preceded the arrival of the UN's atomic energy agency chief. Mohamed ElBaradei, the director general of the

Vienna-based International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA), is expected to ask for help in ridding the Middle East of nuclear weapons during his visit, despite Israel allegedly being the only state in the region to have the bomb. Mr Baradei's chief spokesman Mark Gwozdecky said that the IAEA chief would not hesitate to be "forthright" in his discussions with Israeli leaders, including Sharon, but played down expectations of a dramatic breakthrough. Mr ElBaradei "is a very forthright interlocutor, wherever he travels around the world. He is one of the few people who could travel to Tripoli, Tehran, Baghdad as well as Tel Aviv. The point is how many guys can do that," Gwozdecky told reporters covering the visit. "He doesn't have a standard that he has to reach for this visit. He understands the objectives are ambitious and are not going to be achieved overnight but he is willing to invest the time necessary to make progress," Mr Gwozdecky added.

Daily Times, 7 July 2004

ElBaradei to urge Israel to keep Middle East nuke free

Jerusalem: Prime Minister Ariel Sharon said his country's policy of refusing to confirm or deny that it has nuclear weapons would continue on Tuesday ahead of the arrival of the UN's atomic energy agency chief. Mohamed ElBaradei is expected to ask for help in ridding the Middle East of nuclear weapons during his visit, despite Israel allegedly being the only state in the region to have the bomb. Experts said the mission of ElBaradei, the director general of the Vienna-based International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA), had almost no chance of succeeding and was more of a political gesture to convince Arab states the IAEA is as concerned about Israel as it is about Iran, which it is investigating on suspicions of Tehran's hiding a secret nuclear weapons program.

The News, 7 July 2004

Needless crisis in NE Asia (M B Naqvi)

It is a triumph of the Chinese diplomacy that both North Korea and the US have started

giving hopeful signals. North Korea has let it be known that they are ready to 'freeze' their nuclear programme, provided the US, Japan, South Korea and the rest of the West ensures adequate economic aid to Pyongyang, especially food and fuel supplies. The US side has said it would consider giving economic aid, including food and fuel, provided North Korea stops its nuclear programme 'irreversibly and transparently or verifiably'. In theory, both want a peaceful resolution of Nuclear Crisis in the Korean peninsula. Only, both will do the needful - viz Pyongyang will stop the nuclear programme in lieu of economic aid and the US will give the needed aid provided North Korea stops its nuclear programme on US terms - when their terms are met, or a compromise on them is arrived at.

Khaleej Times, 7 July 2004

IAEA chief takes conciliatory stand on Israeli nuke policy on arrival

Tel Aviv: The head of the UN atomic watchdog agency is using a visit to Israel, thought to be the Middle East's only nuclear power, to urge it and its foes to resume contacts that would ultimately lead to a region free of weapons of mass destruction. Arriving on Tuesday, Mohamed ElBaradei, director general of the International Atomic Energy Agency, acknowledged he had no "magic wand" to change Israel's policy of not acknowledging any possession of nuclear arms. "But I believe the Middle East needs to have a security dialogue, needs to have a vision of how security could be built in the Middle East," he told reporters. "I have no illusion that things could happen overnight, but I believe the earlier we start ... the better." Israel is widely believed to have a considerable nuclear arsenal but does not comment on it. Israeli leaders have said they see no reason to change that policy. Middle East dialogue on confidence-building measures meant to reduce the threat of new wars in the region petered out in the mid-1990s with no major concrete results.

Boston Globe, 7 July 2004

An interim N-freeze for N. Korea, Iran
(Daniel Poneman)

While the world watches the vital transition in Iraq, the other wheels of the "axis of evil" keep dangerously turning. Last week Iran signaled that it would resume its uranium enrichment activities, and North Korea hinted it might detonate a nuclear device. US officials properly seek the verifiable termination and dismantlement of all nuclear weapon-related activities and facilities. But pursuing it through an all-or-nothing approach imperils US security by effectively sidelining diplomacy while Tehran and Pyongyang step up their nuclear activities. Irreversible closure of a nuclear weapon program generally flows from profound political changes in a regime. In Libya, for example, Moammar Khadafy decided he needed cooperation with the outside world more than his weapons of mass destruction. No one expects a Libyan-style epiphany in Tehran or Pyongyang. Further, regime change may not occur before those regimes have assembled substantial nuclear arsenals. Iranian hard-liners have been strengthened in this year's parliamentary elections, while Kim Jong Il has outlasted every political leader who has sought to contain his nuclear ambitions.

Daily Times, 8 July 2004

DPRK on war alert, says South Korea

Seoul: North Korea has beefed up its combat readiness since the US-led invasion of Iraq, fortifying military facilities, digging tunnels and testing new missiles, South Korea's defence ministry said Wednesday. The ministry said in a report that North Korea had dug trenches and camouflaged bases near the front line. It had also been developing weapons of mass destruction at a five-megawatt nuclear reactor in Yongbyon. "North Korea has been building up its combat preparedness along the front lines and in the rear as well," the ministry said in the report. "Following the outbreak of the war on Iraq, construction projects have been underway at more than 80 sites to build tunnels and trenches and to camouflage (military facilities)," it said. North Korea

regularly accuses the United States of plotting a surprise attack on North Korea. The report also said North Korea was seeking to develop weapons of mass destruction, missiles and long-range artillery. "It is continuing its efforts to develop missiles, testing missile engines," it said, adding the North has also been deploying new medium-range missiles.

The News, 8 July 2004

'Iran will abandon nuclear obligations if attacked'

Tehran: Iran's defence minister has warned that the Islamic republic will abandon its commitments to the UN atomic watchdog if its nuclear installations are attacked, the official news agency IRNA reported on Wednesday. "Today the IAEA (International Atomic Energy Agency) holds every detail on Iran's nuclear programme," Rear Admiral Ali Shamkhani was quoted as saying. "If there is a military attack, that would mean that the IAEA has been collecting this information to prepare for an attack. Naturally, after such an action, it would be necessary to renounce all of our nuclear commitments," he said. The IAEA is investigating Iran's ambitious bid to generate atomic energy, but has been critical of the regime's level of cooperation. The United States and Israel accuse Iran of seeking nuclear weapons. Shamkhani warned them of a fierce retaliation if they decided to attack. "The United States and the other enemies of the Islamic republic must know that we will respond to a military action against our country with all our force," he said, adding the retaliation would be "unlimited by time and space". Although alluding to a possible threat of US or Israeli missile strikes against Iran, the minister said he did not fear a full-scale invasion. Before trying to take over Iran, Shamkhani said Washington would have to wait the same amount of years that separated the end of the Vietnam war and the invasion of Iraq — virtually three decades — given its current woes in Iraq.

The News, 8 July 2004

Iran wants N-arms, Israel tells ElBaradei

Tel Aviv: Israel stressed its fear that Iran is pursuing nuclear weapons and might use them against it, the visiting head of the UN nuclear watchdog said on Wednesday. "They (the Israelis) were expressing concern about Iran," International Atomic Energy Agency chief Mohamed ElBaradei told reporters after meeting Israel's nuclear energy commission director, other officials and a former head of the Mossad secret service. ElBaradei is on a three-day visit to the Jewish state, which refuses to admit or deny having nuclear weapons under a policy of "strategic ambiguity". International experts believe it has 100-200 warheads, based on estimates of the amount of plutonium its reactors have produced. ElBaradei said his attempts to promote the idea of a nuclear weapons-free zone in the Middle East ran up against Israeli concern about Iran's nuclear ambitions and about the hostility to Israel of some states in the region.

Reuters, 8 July 2004

Rice to Discuss Urgent Issue of N.Korea in China

Beijing: U.S. national security adviser Condoleezza Rice expects the crisis over North Korea's nuclear programs to top her agenda in China on Thursday, after talks on what she termed the urgent issue in meetings in Japan. Sino-U.S. relations, tested in recent months by tensions between arch-foes China and Taiwan, would also figure prominently, Rice told reporters in Tokyo on Thursday before leaving for Beijing. "I expect we will have a chance to talk about six-party talks," Rice said. The United States, Russia, Japan, North and South Korea and host China have held three rounds of inconclusive talks on how to resolve the nuclear crisis in North Korea, which the United States has branded as part of an "axis of evil" along with Iran and pre-war Iraq. Rice met Japanese Prime Minister Junichiro Koizumi in Tokyo on Wednesday and vowed to pursue a diplomatic solution to the standoff with North Korea, which may already have built one or two nuclear bombs.

The New York Times, 8 July 2004

In Talks, U.N. Nuclear Chief Says, Israel Turns Focus on Iran (Greg Myre)

Jerusalem, July 7: The director of the International Atomic Energy Agency, Mohamed ElBaradei, said he came to Israel this week looking to open a dialogue on making the Middle East a nuclear-free zone. But senior officials in Israel, the only country in the region believed to have nuclear weapons, sought to put the focus on Iran's nuclear program during talks on Wednesday, he said. "They're expressing concern about Iran," Dr. ElBaradei told reporters after talks in Tel Aviv with members of Israel's Atomic Energy Commission, including the chairman, Gideon Frank. Israeli security officials often refer to Iran's nuclear program as potentially the most serious threat facing Israel, though Iran asserts that its program is intended solely for peaceful power generation. Under its policy of "strategic ambiguity," Israel has always refused to say whether it has nuclear weapons, and government officials have made it clear that Dr. ElBaradei's two-day visit will not bring about any change in that policy.

Khaleej Times, 8 July 2004

Iran pursuing nukes, Israel tells Baradei

Tel Aviv: Israel, pressed to consider a nuclear weapons-free Middle East, stressed its fear that Iran is pursuing nuclear weapons and might use them against it, the visiting head of the UN nuclear watchdog said yesterday. "They (the Israelis) were expressing concern about Iran," International Atomic Energy Agency chief Mohamed El Baradei told reporters after meeting Israel's nuclear energy commission director, other officials and a former head of the Mossad secret service. Mr El Baradei is on a three-day visit to the Jewish state. International experts believe it has 100-200 warheads, based on estimates of the amount of plutonium its reactors have produced. Mr El Baradei said his attempts to promote the idea of a nuclear weapons-free zone in the Middle East ran up against Israeli concern

about Iran's nuclear ambitions and about the hostility to Israel of some states in the region.

Hindustan Times, 8 July 2004

Vive la deterrence! (K. Subrahmanyam)

Some anti-nuclear fundamentalists advocate that the minimum credible deterrence accepted in the Congress manifesto is at variance with continuous advocacy of nuclear disarmament by successive Congress governments and the Rajiv Gandhi Plan in the UN in 1988 and, therefore, should be reconsidered. A casual suggestion about India, China and Pakistan having a common nuclear doctrine has been seized upon and pressed as the right way forward. This is a case where ideological fervour has overtaken both historical facts and rationality.

Southasianmedia.net, 8 July 2004

No talks with Pak, China on doctrine: India

New Delhi: India has said that it held no discussion so far with China or Pakistan specifically on a common nuclear doctrine even though Islamabad has described the idea recently floated by External Affairs Minister Natwar Singh as “innovative”, Lok Sabha was informed Wednesday. Pakistani official spokesman described the idea as contained in the External Affairs Minister’s media statement on June 1, as innovative and requiring further and deeper examination,” Minister of State for External Affairs Inderjit Singh said during Question Hour. He said China, in response to a query, reiterated its position on “complete prohibition and thorough destruction of nuclear weapons”, reports PTI. To a related question, Minister of State for External Affairs said India and Pakistan, at their expert-level meeting on nuclear confidence building measures (CBMs) last month, had decided to implement CBMs on communication links and conclude an agreement with technical parameters on pre-notification of flight testing of missiles, a draft of which was handed over by the Indian side. The two sides had also made a

joint call for start working level discussions with other nuclear powers.

Southasianmedia.net, 8 July 2004

ElBaradei: Pakistan gave nuclear know-how to at least 20 countries (Ze'ev Schiff)

Israel must take the spread of nuclear technology into account and remember that terror is getting more sophisticated: Other countries could get nuclear weapons, and the ordinary deterrence that worked in the past may not be effective any more. Israel must therefore think about a different regional security concept and lend a hand to it. The above was the key message in an interview granted to Haaretz by Mohammed ElBaradei, director-general of the International Atomic Energy Agency, during his brief visit to Israel. He is a practiced diplomat and a top-flight professional, but he does not always get what he wants as the IAEA's top executive - as has been evident in Iran and North Korea. Nevertheless, ElBaradei is very attentive to what is happening. Summarizing what he no doubt heard in his closed meetings in Israel, he said that there is a very strong sense of existential threat in Israel. ElBaradei, who visited Israel several times in the context of previous positions he held at the IAEA, noted that this strong sense of insecurity has remained unchanged in recent years.

Dawn, 9 July 2004

IAEA expects talks with Israel on N-free zone

Jerusalem, July 8: UN nuclear chief Mohamed ElBaradei said he had won a promise from Israel on Thursday to consider discuss establishing a nuclear weapons-free zone in the Middle East. But Mr Ariel Sharon did not set a timeframe for Israel to back off on its refusal to discuss such issues while it still faces attacks from Palestinian groups and hostility from Iran, International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) head ElBaradei said after talks with the prime minister. Mr ElBaradei said Mr Sharon had told him "Israel's policy continues to be that, in the context of peace in the Middle East, Israel would be looking favorably to the

establishment of a nuclear weapons-free zone.

Dawn, 9 July 2004

IAEA head fails to budge Israel: 'Strategic ambiguity'

Jerusalem, July 8: Israel held fast to its policy of ambiguity about whether it has nuclear weapons and its refusal to sign the nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty as UN nuclear chief Mohamed ElBaradei concluded a visit on Thursday. International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) chief ElBaradei had come to Israel on Tuesday urging the Jewish state to "clarify" whether it has nuclear weapons and to join the non-proliferation regime which his agency is mandated to verify. But speaking after ElBaradei met with Israeli Prime Minister Ariel Sharon, a senior Israeli nuclear official said there would be no change in the government's longstanding "strategic ambiguity" policy. "For now, we see no reason, justification or requirement to change it," the official with Israel's Atomic Energy Commission told reporters, referring to the policy of neither confirming nor denying Israel's nuclear weapons capability.

The Associated Press, 9 July 2004

Rice Caps Asian Tour Focused on Nukes

Seoul: U.S. National Security Adviser Condoleezza Rice said Friday that North Korea could reap "surprise" rewards if it dismantles its atomic weapons program, as she capped an Asian tour focused on easing the nuclear standoff. In Seoul after stops in Japan and China, Rice also thanked South Korea for sticking to its planned troop dispatch to Iraq despite the beheading of a South Korean hostage on June 22. Speaking with South Korean Foreign Minister Ban Ki-moon, Rice said "North Korea will be surprised to see how much will be possible" if the communist nation agrees to abandon its nuclear ambitions, South Korea's Yonhap news agency reported. "So much is possible if North Korea just does that," she said. She cited the example of Libyan leader Moammar Gadhafi, who agreed to give up his nuclear weapons program, which helped

pave the way for last month's resumption of diplomatic ties between Tripoli and Washington.

Dawn, 10 July 2004

A positive response (Afzaal Mahmood)

The third round of six-nation talks on ending Pyongyang's nuclear ambitions, which concluded in Beijing on June 26, have been described as "the most productive session so far." Besides China, North and South Korea, Japan, Russia and the United States attended the talks which have now entered a sensitive and crucial stage. For the first time the United States put forward its detailed proposals for what North Korea would receive in return for dismantling all its nuclear programmes. The Americans offered security guarantees and South Korean aid if Pyongyang completely and speedily puts an end to its nuclear ambitions. The North Korean response was that it found "some common elements" in the American proposals but there was really "little new" in them. The encouraging development is that instead of rejecting the American proposals, as the North Koreans have done in the past, their response this time, though restrained, was somewhat positive.

The News, 10 July 2004

N Korea to get 'surprise' rewards for nuclear dismantlement: Rice

Seoul: US National Security Advisor Condoleezza Rice said on Friday North Korea would be surprised at "how much will be possible" if the Stalinist state abandons its nuclear ambitions, South Korean officials said. The remarks came when Rice met with South Korean Foreign Minister Ban Ki-Moon in Seoul on the final leg of her Asian tour which also brought her to Japan and China, they said. "North Korea will be surprised to see how much will be possible (if it abandons its nuclear programs)," Rice told Ban, according to official Kim Eun-Seok, who attended the 30-minute meeting. "So much is possible if North Korea just does that." A nuclear stand-off erupted in October 2002 when the United States said North Korea acknowledged it was

developing nuclear weapons, violating a 1994 international agreement. The third round of six-way nuclear crisis talks in Beijing last month ended without a breakthrough, although the United States, the two Koreas, China, Japan and Russia agreed to meet again by the end of September.

The Hindu, 10 July 2004

Sharon for nuclear-free West Asia (Chris McGreal)

Jerusalem, July 9: Israel and the U.N.'s nuclear watchdog reached a public understanding on Thursday with Ariel Sharon committing himself to the vision of a West Asia free of nuclear weapons. Mohammed ElBaradei, the International Atomic Energy Agency chief, described the development as a "glimmer of hope" for the region, but left aside the sensitive question of Israel's own atomic weapons. "The Prime Minister affirmed to me that Israeli policy continues to be that, in the context of peace in the Middle East (West Asia), Israel will be looking favourably to the establishment of a nuclear weapons-free zone in the Middle East (West Asia)," said Mr. ElBaradei. "It is not a new policy, but affirming that policy at the level of Prime Minister I thought to be quite a welcome development." But peace appeared no closer on Thursday as two senior Israeli army commanders were wounded amid further violence in the Gaza Strip that left at least nine Palestinians dead, one of them a woman. Mr. Sharon's plans to withdraw settlements from Gaza has left his Government vulnerable, and on Thursday he indicated that he was exploring bringing the Opposition centre-left Labour party into a broader coalition.

The Associated Press, 10 July 2004

U.S. Firm Supplied Nuclear Black Market

Vienna: An investigation of the black market supplying nations wanting nuclear arms has spread to more than 20 firms -- some of them North American -- the chief of the U.N. atomic agency told The Associated

Press Friday. A senior diplomat identified one of the firms as U.S. based. Demanding anonymity, the diplomat also said the Syria and Saudi Arabia are also being investigated as possible buyer nations, beyond Iraq, Iran, Libya and North Korea -- the countries known to have been in contact with Pakistani scientist A.Q. Khan and members of his procurement network. But the diplomat, who is familiar with the Vienna-based IAEA told The AP that beyond suspicions prompting a continuing investigation, "there has been no proof" on Syria and Saudi Arabia that would warrant them being reported to the board of governors of the International Atomic Energy Agency.

Dawn, 11 July 2004

Uranium project among 24 schemes approved (Ihtasham ul Haque)

Islamabad, July 10: The Central Development Working Party (CDWP) of the Planning Commission has approved 24 development projects at a cost of Rs 46.2 billion, including exploration of uranium resources project to build indigenous nuclear power plants. Official sources told Dawn here on Saturday that the CDWP meeting held on June 24 approved all the 24 development projects which will be undertaken during 2004-05. The finance division has been directed to release timely funds for the projects after their formal approval by the Executive Committee of the National Economic Council (ECNEC). Uranium resources project, which will cost Rs614.1 million, has been approved to ensure indigenous supply of uranium against abrupt suspension of such foreign supplies in the future.

Daily Times, 12 July 2004

'Tehran is not afraid of Security Council'

Tehran: Iran, facing allegations it is secretly trying to build an atomic bomb, dismissed on Sunday calls by its arch foes for the dossier on its nuclear activities to be sent to the UN Security Council. "Iran is not afraid of threats regarding the possible referral of its nuclear dossier to the UN Security

Council,” said foreign ministry spokesman Hamid Reza Asefi. “We are not worried about such threats, although we are trying to sort out the problem through the IAEA and its board of governors,” he told a press conference, referring to the International Atomic Energy Agency. The United States and Israel, which both accuse Iran of seeking to make an atomic bomb, want the case sent to the Security Council — which could impose sanctions on the Islamic republic. But IAEA director Mohamed ElBaradei said during a visit last week to Israel — widely believed to be the only nuclear power in the Middle East — that such a referral would only complicate matters.

The New York Times, 12 July 2004

Bush's Pre-emptive Strategy Meets Some Untidy Reality (David E. Sanger)

Even as President Bush turns his doctrine of pre-emptive action against powers threatening the United States into a campaign theme, Washington is using a far more subdued, take-it-slow approach to the dangers of unconventional weapons in Iran and North Korea. There are many reasons for the yawning gap between Mr. Bush's campaign language and the reality. One of the most important is woven throughout the searing, 511-page critique of the intelligence that led America to war last year, released Friday by the Senate Intelligence Committee. The report details, in one painful anecdote after another, misjudgments that the C.I.A. and other intelligence agencies made as they put together what the committee called an "assumption train" about Iraq's nuclear, biological and chemical weapons programs. That same train powered Mr. Bush's own justification for a pre-emptive strike against Saddam Hussein, down to his now-discredited argument that the Iraqi leader was developing unmanned aerial vehicles capable dropping biological weapons on American troops in the Mideast, or perhaps even the United States itself.

The Indian Express, 12 July 2004

India's nuclear tests angered Clinton: Talbott

Washington, July 11: India's nuclear tests in 1998 had angered then US President Bill Clinton, leading him to personally suggest to his Russian counterpart Boris Yeltsin that the two of them and China should jointly pressure India on the nuclear issue. However, both leaders were dissuaded by advisers from carrying out the proposal, who pointed out that China might regard it as a “harebrained idea”, former US Deputy Secretary of State Strobe Talbott says in his forthcoming book *Engaging India - Diplomacy, Democracy and The Bomb*. Talbott also disclosed that a Security Council resolution drafted by the Chinese was so anti-Indian that the Americans wanted it changed but it was too late as the Americans had been negligent at the drafting stage. Giving details on Clinton's proposal to Yeltsin to control India on the nuclear issue, Talbott described that the American President told his Russian counterpart that “I think India has made a terrible mistake”. “But I also think India should get credit for fifty years of democracy. The ruling party there seems particularly to feel that earning the full respect of the world depends on India being a nuclear power.” Clinton then suggested that he and Yeltsin coordinate their approaches, since both were planning trips to New Delhi in the fall.

The News, 13 July 2004

Iran tells IAEA to hunt for nuclear weapons elsewhere

Tehran: Iranian President Mohammad Khatami on Monday accused the UN nuclear watchdog of double standards and told it to pay closer attention to countries that had not signed up to global anti-proliferation safeguards. In a meeting with visiting Singaporean Prime Minister Goh Chok Tong, Khatami reaffirmed that nuclear weapons had "no place" in the Islamic republic's defence doctrine and that he was campaigning for a Middle East free of such arms. According to the IRNA news agency, Khatami "expressed regret over the double standards approach towards those countries

possessing nuclear weapons", a reference to Iran's view that it is being unfairly targeted by the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) while Israel has escaped major pressure. "If atomic weapons are dangerous, then the world should be concerned about atomic programs of those countries that are not members of the International Atomic Energy Agency," Khatami was quoted as saying.

Dawn, 13 July 2004

Iran rules out direct N-talks with US

Tehran, July 12: Iran ruled out on Monday holding direct talks with the United States on its nuclear programme. "There is no justification for accepting suggestions to hold negotiations with a country which adopts a bullying attitude towards others," Hassan Rohani, secretary-general of Iran's Supreme National Security Council, told state television. Washington accuses Iran of trying to develop nuclear weapons. Tehran says its ambitions are limited to generating electricity from nuclear reactors. Mohammed ElBaradei, head of the UN nuclear watchdog the International Atomic Energy Agency, had told US policymakers in March that Iran might be open to a deal and suggested direct US contacts with Tehran, US officials said. Washington broke ties with Tehran following its Islamic revolution in 1979. Mr Rohani also played down negotiations with Germany, France and Britain and said Iran held talks with them in the past year because the big three European powers initiated the dialogue.

Khaleej Times, 13 July 2004

Iran and the nuclear issue

One issue that rattles and disturbs America and the western powers constantly is the nuclear threat posed by certain countries inimical to their interests. After the US dubbed Iran, Iraq and North Korea as the 'axis of evil' before it went to war in Iraq, it is the nuclear issue that keeps popping up again and again. Now, Iran has become America's new bugbear as it has continued to produce centrifuges, which can be used for peaceful purposes like generation of

electricity. But America's contention is that Iran could be using centrifuges for producing bomb-grade uranium. The issue remains deadlocked as the Iranian foreign ministry spokesman Hamed Reza Asefi has said that Iran is not afraid of threats regarding the 'possible referral of its nuclear dossier to the UN Security Council.' He said Iran was trying to sort out the problem through the International Atomic Energy Agency and its Board of Governors.

People's Daily, 14 July 2004

Iran capable of nuclear power generation: minister

An Iranian minister said on Tuesday that Iran has possessed the capability of generating electricity using nuclear power, the official IRNA news agency reported. "Iran is now capable of nuclear power generation, which marks a colossal progress in its industry sector," Es'haq Jahangiri, Minister of Industries and Mines, was quoted as saying. "At present, technical capacity in the field of electricity generation from nuclear energy has been built and we hope that it will be used in a favorable way," Jahangiri added. Jahangiri also reiterated Iran's legitimate right to nuclear power generation and dismissed the US allegation that Iran is secretly developing atomic weapons. The Islamic Republic insists that its nuclear program is for peaceful purposes, saying it is in accordance with the country's bid to produce 7,000 megawatts of electricity in the next 20 years. Iran has been working on building a full nuclear fuel cycle and has already announced that it can produce nuclear fuel by its own. Actual nuclear power generation, however, is expected to take place when a Russia-aided plant in the southern city of Bushehr becomes operational by the end of 2005.

Dawn, 14 July 2004

Iran to hold N-talks with EU 'big three'

Tehran, July 13: Iran's top national security body said on Tuesday that talks with Britain, France and Germany on the Islamic republic's nuclear programme would resume later this month. The Supreme National

Security Council, which is headed by nuclear negotiator Hassan Rowhani, made no reference to where the talks would be held or, more importantly, at what level. European diplomats here would only say that officials from the two sides had been in "regular contact" on the nuclear issue anyway, and went on to rule out ministerial-level negotiations unless Iran was open to making more concessions to the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA). Last October the foreign ministers of Britain, France and Germany - the European Union's "big three" - converged on Tehran to secure Iran's cooperation with the UN nuclear watchdog. Iran agreed to suspend sensitive uranium enrichment activities, allow tougher IAEA inspections and file a comprehensive declaration of its nuclear activities. But since then the deal has been under pressure, with inspectors discovering omissions in Iran's reporting, inspection visits delayed and Tehran backing away from a pledge to suspend all enrichment-related activities.

The New York Times, 14 July 2004

How Niger Uranium Story Defied Wide Skepticism (James Risen)

Washington, July 13: Soon after the Central Intelligence Agency heard in 2001 that Iraq was seeking to buy uranium from Niger to build nuclear bombs, the first doubts about the account were raised. But the story was included in President Bush's State of the Union address last year despite sustained skepticism by the State Department, disclaimers by another intelligence agency, assertions that key documents were faked and a dearth of evidence that eventually led C.I.A. officials to grow wary. The Senate Intelligence Committee, in a report released Friday, has provided the most comprehensive review of what went wrong in the Niger case, which became a major political issue last year after documents that described the uranium deal were discredited as forgeries. The Senate report disclosed deep concerns among intelligence agencies about the credibility of the information. It concluded that the C.I.A. had failed to

aggressively investigate the Niger matter, described the agency's assessments as "inconsistent, and at times contradictory" and noted that the agency had allowed the uranium claims into intelligence reports to policy makers - and the president's speech shortly before the war - without proper vetting.

The Indian Express, 14 July 2004

At the pyramid's summit (Jasjit Singh)

Defence Minister Pranab Mukherjee's statement that the government is not thinking of creating a CDS (chief of defence staff) any time soon should put at rest the normal rise in expectations and interpretations revolving round individuals which seems to gather momentum closer to the retirement of service chiefs. Seen dispassionately, this is one issue that has been far more at the root of a great deal of misunderstanding among the three services than any other single factor. It is apparent that the basis on which the Group of Ministers took their decision (in February 2001) to create a CDS is doctrinally flawed. So it is good that the new government is giving itself time to address the issue because it is necessary that any change should be based on sound principles so that the institution of CDS is created for the right reasons, at the right time and in the right way.

Daily Times, 15 July 2004

Khatami accuses Europeans of damaging nuclear talks

Tehran: Iran's President Mohammad Khatami on Wednesday blamed Britain, France and Germany for a downturn in their nuclear talks, but pledged that negotiations would nevertheless continue. "In Brussels in February, there was an accord with the Europeans that we would suspend the assembly of centrifuges and in return they would close our dossier at the IAEA," Khatami told reporters after a cabinet meeting. According to the Iranian account of the February deal, the EU's so-called "big three" promised to help remove Iran's dossier from the top of the International

Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) agenda. But instead the three co-sponsored a resolution at the UN nuclear watchdog that criticised Iran's failure to fully comply with an IAEA probe into whether Iran is seeking merely atomic energy or nuclear weapons.

The News, 15 July 2004

North Korea refuses to freeze peaceful nuclear programme

Seoul: North Korea refused Wednesday to freeze its nuclear programme for peaceful and civilian purposes, saying it was a matter of sovereignty and should not be included in any freezing or dismantling of its weapons programme. In a statement issued through the official Korean Central News Agency, a North Korean foreign ministry spokesman added that Pyongyang would only return to the nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT) if it opted out of "if the Korean peninsula is denuclearised". He said North Korea's peaceful nuclear programme was "pertaining to its sovereignty and this should never be included in the objects to be frozen or dismantled". At six-party talks in Beijing last month, the United States offered Pyongyang three months to shut down and seal its nuclear weapons facilities in return for economic and diplomatic rewards. It was the first significant overture to Pyongyang since US President George W Bush took office in early 2001 and branded the North part of an "axis of evil" alongside Iran and pre-war Iraq. But Pyongyang has rejected the US plan as unrealistic. On the issue of allowing its nuclear facilities to be inspected, the spokesman said it could only happen once the dismantlement of its nuclear programme had been agreed upon and begun.

Southasian.net, 15 July 2004

No line of control for Indo-Pak hotline

New Delhi: India and Pakistan are now good neighbours with a bad hotline. When the two sides talk, as Brahm Chellani of the Centre for Policy Research warns, a third country can listen to the conversation. "The hotline is not secure," the doctor confides. The talk-time is now restricted to once a week, on

Tuesdays, when the two director generals of military operations (DGMOs) exchange words for a stipulated duration. Despite Business Standard's repeated requests to the Indian DGMO's office to comment on the so-called livewire line, there was no response. However, old Signals hand Brig. PK Ghosh, now the head of surveillance and simulation, Mahindra Defence Systems, has obliged with a first-hand account of how the hotline really works. At the DGMOs office, there is a totally sealed black box. A wire runs from one end of the box, and the other end has a channel for conversation, much like the old-fashioned black telephone boxes. When the two parties talk, analog data is converted digitally in this box, which then scrambles the data by an algorithm.

Dawn, 16 July 2004

Detention of KRL officials extended (Nasir Iqbal)

Islamabad, July 15: A Supreme Court review board on Thursday extended the detention of four officials of the Khan Research Laboratories (KRL), accused of being involved in the transfer of nuclear technology, till the next meeting of the board. The accused officials were not presented before the board as its members were not present in Islamabad and the extension was ordered in Lahore, Supreme Court registrar M.A. Farooqi told Dawn. However, he did not say when the next meeting of the board would be held. The four KRL detainees are; Dr Mohammad Farooq, Director-General Procurement, Dr Mohammad Nazir, Director-General Science and Technology, Brig (retd) Sajawal Khan, Director-General Maintenance and Construction Division, and Major (retd) Islamul Haque, Personal Staff Officer of Dr A.Q. Khan. Dr Farooq was detained on Nov 23, 2003, while the other three were arrested on Jan 17, 2004, for their alleged involvement in the proliferation of nuclear technology. The review board, constituted under article 10 (4) of the Constitution, had on April 16 extended their detention period till Thursday.

The News, 16 July 2004

Key U.S. nuke lab loses secret data

SAN FRANCISCO: The Los Alamos National Laboratory, a key U.S. centre for nuclear weapons research, has temporarily ceased all classified work after vital data was reported missing last week from a research area, citing lab officials a foreign news agency reported on Friday. Such a precaution at Los Alamos, the New Mexico birthplace of the first atomic bomb during World War Two, has not occurred in recent memory, lab officials said, highlighting the seriousness of the breach. The lab said it learned of two missing data storage disks on July 7 during an inventory check. At a news conference, the lab director and other officials declined to detail the nature of the data, citing national security concerns.

The News, 16 July 2004

North Korea admits its N-programmes are weapons related: US

Washington: North Korea acknowledged that most of its nuclear programmes are weapons related, during the recent six-party talks to resolve the nuclear crisis on the Korean Peninsula, US Assistant Secretary of State James Kelly told a Senate committee on Thursday. "While they said they wanted to maintain a civil nuclear programme, they also acknowledged that most of their nuclear programmes are weapons related," Kelly told the Senate Foreign Relations Committee. North Korea has refrained from stating publicly that it has nuclear weapons, although it speaks of an existing "nuclear deterrent." Kelly, briefing senators on the third round of the six-party talks in Beijing last month, said the North Korean delegation "clearly identified" a five-megawatt reactor at Yongbyon as a nuclear weapons facility. Pyongyang began to reactivate the Yongbon reactor after expelling International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) inspectors in 2002.

The Japan Times, 16 July 2004

A functional defense and more

Japan's Self-Defense Forces, which came into existence 50 years ago, was described at the time as "armed forces with no war potential." Although that remains essentially true, the SDF is no longer a "passive" organization devoted only to national defense. As this year's defense report, issued earlier this month, points out, it is developing into a "functional" organization capable of performing a wider range of duties at home and abroad. The annual report gives three reasons for improving or updating the SDF's functions. First, Japan faces a host of new security threats, such as weapons of mass destruction, ballistic missiles and terrorist attacks. Second, the SDF's international role has increased. The aim is to cooperate in international efforts for peace and stability, such as U.N. peacekeeping operations, counterterrorism campaigns, and humanitarian and reconstruction activities. Third, existing defense buildup plans and weapons systems -- which assume conventional, large-scale military attacks on Japan -- need a wholesale review. The report says the possibility of such aggression has "diminished." All this represents a strategic change for the SDF. During the Cold War, its primary objective was to prepare for a possible "full-scale invasion" by the Soviet Union. Now, however, emphasis is placed on how to meet "new threats" and how to promote international cooperation. In the background is the transformation of the post-Cold War international security environment, as evidenced by the Sept. 11, 2001, terrorist attacks in the United States and North Korea's programs to develop nuclear weapons and ballistic missiles.

Dawn, 17 July 2004

N-technology at any cost, vows Iran

Tehran, July 16: One of Iran's top ruling scholars vowed on Friday that the Islamic republic will continue to pursue its nuclear programme "at any cost" and is determined to become fully self-sufficient. "Even if some officials are taking it easy on gaining the technology, the people will not give up," Ayatollah Ahmad Jannati said in a Friday

prayer sermon in Tehran. "We are resolute. It is worth achieving it at any cost," said Jannati, who heads the supreme council and screens all of the Islamic republic's laws and candidates for public office. "Nuclear technology is the issue of the day, and neither our officials nor our people will give up this scientific growth," he said.

The News, 17 July 2004

Nuclear agreement with N Korea would not lead to normal relations: US

Washington: Citing concerns over human rights, a top State Department official said Thursday the United States will not establish normal relations with North Korea even if that country fully meets US demands for nuclear disarmament. Assistant Secretary of State James Kelly made that point during a Senate Foreign Relations Committee hearing that focussed on international efforts to convince North Korea to dismantle its nuclear weapons programs. After four negotiating sessions with North Korea dating back to April 2003, Kelly said, "It is clear we are still far from agreement." If North Korea takes substantial steps toward disarmament, the United States would be willing to extend trade and aid benefits to North Korea but not full normalization of relations, Kelly said. That step could be taken only after North Korea improves its human rights performance and ends objectionable activity in other areas, he said. The disarmament talks have concentrated solely on the nuclear impasse.

The News, 17 July 2004

Secret work halted at top US nuclear arms lab

San Francisco: All secret work at a top US nuclear weapons facility, Los Alamos National Laboratory, was halted on Thursday after classified data went missing in a fresh security breach, officials said. The unprecedented step was taken at the top-secret birthplace of the atomic bomb after two classified computer storage discs possibly containing nuclear secrets were reported missing from the plant in the

western state of New Mexico on July 7. The suspension of secret work will allow for staff retraining and other measures aimed at boosting crucial security measures at the facility, where several high-profile security breaches have occurred in recent years. The crackdown was announced after Los Alamos director Peter Nanos appeared before the board of regents of the University of California, which has run the laboratory since it was founded during World War II. "These types of incidents are unacceptable and must come to an end immediately," University of California President Bob Dynes said after the meeting in San Francisco. He demanded the full cooperation of laboratory staff - 20 of whom have been denied access to the facility - as investigators search for the discs and overhaul security.

The Washington Post, 17 July 2004

How to Stop Nuclear Terror (Spencer Abraham)

The collapse of Soviet communism was the greatest advance for the cause of freedom in the late 20th century, but it left behind a legacy that could complicate the 21st century struggle to overcome terrorism. While the United States and Russia work to dismantle nuclear arsenals, terrorists and rogue states are seeking to obtain materials - from former Cold War armaments and other sources -- to make nuclear weapons and "dirty bombs." Securing this nuclear and radiological material is a top priority for the United States, Russia and many other nations. While much of it is concentrated in the former Soviet states, it is also found in other countries around the world. It constitutes a formidable threat if it falls into the wrong hands. In the early aftermath of the Cold War, nuclear nonproliferation programs were appropriately focused on reducing and securing nuclear weapons and weapons material in the former Soviet Union. In 2001 President Bush broadened and accelerated these programs. Both he and Russian President Vladimir Putin have made nonproliferation a personal priority. The United States has developed much better

working relationships with our counterparts in the Russian government, and we have been successful in bringing other countries into the effort.

Daily Times, 18 July 2004

North Korea bigger threat than Iraq, says Clinton

Amsterdam: Former US President Bill Clinton sees North Korea as more of a threat than Iraq was, but thinks another “pre-emptive” war by the United States is unlikely, he was quoted on Saturday as saying. Clinton told the Dutch daily NRC Handelsblad in an interview that US difficulties in Iraq meant President George W Bush’s doctrine of pre-emptive strikes would not be used against other states like North Korea or Iran despite the threats they posed. “North Korea has almost a million people in the army. They have powerful rockets and if we attacked pre-emptively, they would no longer have a reason not to attack South Korea,” Clinton said, according to a Reuters translation from the Dutch. “There are circumstances under which I would support the president if he attacked North Korea. In Europe, perhaps nobody would do that, but I would,” Clinton told the Dutch newspaper during a visit to Amsterdam to promote his memoir “My Life”. Pyongyang accuses Washington of preparing to attack North Korea despite diplomatic negotiations to try to end a nearly two-year-old impasse over its nuclear weapons programmes.

The New York Times, 18 July 2004

Pilot on Nagasaki Atomic Bomb Mission Dies at 84 (Richard Goldstein)

Maj. Gen. Charles W. Sweeney, who flew the B-29 Superfortress that dropped the atomic bomb on Nagasaki, the second atomic strike on Japan in the final days of World War II, died Friday at Massachusetts General Hospital in Boston. General Sweeney, who lived in Milton, Mass., was 84. The cause was pulmonary complications of congestive heart disease, his son-in-law Brian Howe said. On the morning of Aug. 6, 1945, Major Sweeney, his rank at the time in

the Army Air Forces, flew his bomber the Great Artiste to Hiroshima, accompanying the Enola Gay, piloted by Col. Paul W. Tibbets Jr. When the Enola Gay dropped its uranium bomb on the city, unleashing the awesome power of atomic energy for the first time as a weapon of war, Major Sweeney's plane dropped instruments to detect the heat, blast and radiation.

Dawn, 19 July 2004

N-safety talks with US held (Anwar Iqbal)
Washington, July 18: A team of Pakistani nuclear scientists left for home on Sunday after participating in the first-ever talks on nuclear safety between Pakistan and the United States. During the three-day talks, the two sides reviewed safety arrangements at civilian nuclear reactors and other similar facilities in Pakistan, US official sources told Dawn. The talks did not cover defence-related installations, such as the KRL, the sources said. The seven-member team included scientists, safety experts and other officials and was headed by chairman of Pakistan Nuclear Regulatory Authority, Jamshed Hashmi. Dr. Nils Diaz, Chairman of the US Nuclear Regulatory Commission, headed the eight-member American team. "The talks focused on issues like preventing nuclear accidents and devising a regulatory code for nuclear installations," a source who did not want to be identified told Dawn.

The News, 19 July 2004

Benazir denies her govt swap N-secrets for N Korean missiles

Tokyo: Former prime minister Benazir Bhutto said her country bought long-range missiles technology from North Korea in the 1990s, but decided against offering nuclear secrets in exchange, a major Japanese newspaper reported on Sunday. In an interview with the national Asahi newspaper, she said military officials proposed in 1988, just after she took office, that Pakistan swap its nuclear technology for the missiles. But her administration decided instead to pay North Korea for the missile technology, she said. "There were people who proposed securing massive funds by

selling nuclear technology," Benazir was quoted as saying. "But there were actually only two or three countries that would be buyers, amounting to only about \$ 200 billion or \$ 300 billion. So I persuaded them to drop the idea." Ms Bhutto spoke with the Asahi in London. Asked about speculation that Pakistan had exported nuclear technology, she said that it was true that while she was in office there were unspecified people who had proposed this to the government as a way of raising foreign currency, but that she persuaded them not to.

The New York Times, 19 July 2004

Los Alamos Lab Prepares for Visitors

Los Alamos: A security probe got under way at the troubled Los Alamos National Laboratory, even as more allegations of security lapses rolled in. Deputy Energy Secretary Kyle McSlarrow was expected to visit Monday, joining Linton Brooks, director of the National Nuclear Security Administration, who arrived Sunday. They are among the federal officials inquiring into the disappearance of two electronic data storage devices that were reported missing at the lab earlier this month. Brooks' visit came as the lab responded to yet another report of security lapses -- an unconfirmed, anonymous tip released by the Project on Government Oversight, or POGO, reporting that classified information had been sent over the lab's unclassified e-mail system 17 times in recent months.

The New York Times, 19 July 2004

Lack of Iran Contacts Said Harming U.S. Interests

Washington: The lack of sustained engagement with Iran over the last 25 years is harming U.S. interests at a time when America is engaged to an unprecedented extent in the Middle East and Central Asia, according to a panel of experts and former U.S. officials. In a report published on Monday by the Council on Foreign Relations, a think tank, the panel warned that "overcoming the absence of any U.S.-Iranian contacts may be the only alternative to ... force" to assuage U.S. concerns about

Iran's behavior. It recommended that Washington change its approach to a "selective" engagement with Iran that includes incentives, like the prospect of U.S. commercial ties, as well as penalties, in an effort to resolve a growing nuclear problem and stabilize the Middle East,

The Washington Post, 19 July 2004

Weapons Alert: 9/14/04

Anyone seeking weapons of destruction inside the United States may find it considerably easier after Sept. 13. Unless Congress wakes up and votes to do something about it, the federal ban on the manufacture of certain military-style assault weapons will expire that day, and the mad marketing of these dangerous firearms will resume across the homeland. Though lawmakers in both parties, and President Bush on alternate days, have looked at the polls and supported renewal of the ban, the gun-lobby-controlled leadership on Capitol Hill won't lift a finger unless prompted by the president. Mr. Bush, in turn, is said to be waiting for Congress to send him legislation. It's a deadly runaround. This is no anti-gun-owner law. Ten years ago, when the ban was enacted, Rep. Henry J. Hyde (R-Ill.) explained his support for it: "I'm sensitive to the right of people to own a weapon. You have the right to defend yourself, especially in times when law and order seems to be very much under siege. But the proliferation of weapons whose only purpose is to kill a lot of people in a hurry seems to me not to be justified." Another prominent figure who lobbied for passage of the ban was former president Ronald Reagan.

People's Daily, 20 July 2004

China's nuke industry: 5 strides in 5 years

Compared to five years ago, the number of staff was cut by half and main business income increased 78 percent, these are the "visible changes" brought to us by China Nuclear Engineering and Construction (Group) Corporation (CNECC) over the past five years. However, the changes are far more than that: China's nuclear industry has

made five strides by "developing nuclear industry with science and technology", said Kang Rixin, general manager of CNECC, during a recent interview by a journalist of People's Daily.

Dawn, 20 July 2004

Pyongyang's bomb and media hype (Jonathan Power)

The main thing we've learnt so far about the Bush administration's self-proclaimed ambitions to curb nuclear proliferation is its all too obvious ability to influence how the press treats the issue. If it wanted to whip up hysteria on Iraq's "weapons of mass destruction" the press was a willing, if now rueful, victim. If it wants to blow hot about North Korea's ambitions to have a nuclear-armed rocket that can strike Alaska it can do that too. It can also do cold. Watch it right now as it moves, after three years of outright hostility to North Korea, to start using the soft touch in time to meet the imperatives of the electoral calendar when it wants to be crisis-free. Too much of the media (European too) follows its given cues as meekly as a well trained circus dog. The latest round of talks with North Korea, when for the first time the Bush administration offered negotiating concessions, was thriftily covered. Yet the North Korean bomb has not gone away. And North Korea's bomb research is much more advanced than it was when Bush first characterized the regime as part of the "axis of evil". Nuclear bombs are a good scare story--when the administration wants it to be. It plays on fears we all have. I'm embarrassed to say that years ago I wrote a column saying if North Korea got a nuclear weapon it should be bombed.

Daily Times, 20 July 2004

Israel accuses Iran of resuming nuclear weapon activities

Jerusalem: Israel on Monday accused its archfoe Iran of resuming suspect nuclear activities linked to the production of enriched uranium which can be used to build atomic bombs. A military intelligence officer also told a parliamentary committee

he could not rule out the possibility that the Lebanese fundamentalist Shiite movement Hezbollah could acquire non-conventional weapons from Iran, military radio reported. The officer said Iran's activities — which he did not specify — contravened commitments by Tehran to the UN nuclear watchdog the International Atomic Energy Agency. Iran has announced it would resume the assembly of centrifuges — used to enrich uranium in the most sensitive part of the fuel cycle — but said it was committed to an accord to allow tougher

The New York Times, 20 July 2004

'94 Deal With North Korea Holds Lessons for Today (Graham Allison)

As Henry A. Kissinger has noted, a defining challenge for statesmen is to recognize "a change in the international environment so likely to undermine national security that it must be resisted no matter what form the threat takes or how ostensibly legitimate it appears." North Korea's acquisition of a nuclear arsenal would constitute just such a transformation for the United States. Thus the stark contrast between the Clinton administration's frenetic intervention that froze North Korea's nuclear program in 1994 and the Bush administration's paralysis since North Korea withdrew from the Nuclear Nonproliferation Treaty in early 2003 offers powerful lessons not just about history but about political choices today. "Going Critical: The First North Korean Nuclear Crisis" presents an authoritative account of the 1994 deal with North Korea, known as the Agreed Framework, by three participants in the negotiations. Robert L. Gallucci served as chief negotiator of the Agreed Framework, with his co-authors, Joel S. Wit at the State Department and Daniel B. Poneman at the National Security Council fine-tuning the nuts and bolts. Their book provides a gold mine of previously undisclosed decision memorandums, cabinet meeting minutes and scribbled notes from talks with the North Koreans.

People's Daily, 21 July 2004

Nations team up on arms control

As terror groups' access to weapons of mass destruction (WMD) have become more of a major threat to world security, China is teaming up with other countries such as the United States to improve global non-proliferation, Vice-Foreign Minister Zhang Yesui said. He made his remarks at the opening ceremonies of a two-day 5th Sino-US Conference on Arms Control, Disarmament and Nonproliferation that opened Tuesday in Beijing. Zhang said China has already participated in the Nuclear Suppliers Group (NSG) and is willing to take part in the Missile Technology Control Regime (MTCR). He said China has formulated and enacted a number of laws and regulations, which form a complete system for export controls on nuclear, biological, chemical, missile and other sensitive items and technologies. Looking back on co-operation between China and the United States on such issues anti-terrorism, chemical and biological weapons, mines and small weapons, Zhang noted that the Taiwan question is at the core of Sino-US relations and also a most delicate one.

The News, 21 July 2004

US touts Libya model for North Korea nuclear weapons standoff

Seoul: Washington's top arms control official touted Libya as a model for tackling the prolonged standoff over North Korea's nuclear weapons drive during talks here Tuesday with senior South Korean officials. Libya, long considered a 'rogue' state by Washington, established diplomatic relations with the United States last month after renouncing its quest for weapons of mass destruction. "We had some success in the area in the case of Libya renouncing its pursuit of weapons of mass destruction," said US envoy John Bolton ahead of a meeting with South Korean Foreign Minister Ban Ki-Moon. "(As) we prepare for the next round of six-party talks, it's important to keep those lessons in mind." The US under secretary of state for arms control and international security arrived in Seoul Monday on a four-day visit and

reinforced the message delivered here earlier this month by US national security adviser Condoleezza Rice. Rice said Pyongyang should follow the lead of Libyan leader Moamer Qaddafi who agreed in December to dismantle the country's nuclear, chemical and biological warfare programs and renounce the pursuit of such weapons. In return Washington lifted most sanctions against Libya in April.

The Indian Express, 21 July 2004

US, Pak hold nuclear safety talks

Washington, July 21: Pakistani and US officials have met for the first time to discuss the safety of Pakistan's civilian nuclear reactor programme, a US official said on Tuesday. Senior members of Pakistan's nuclear authority held three days of talks in Washington last week with Nuclear Regulatory Commission chairman Nils Diaz and other US officials and plan to meet again next year, NRC spokesman Eliot Brenner said. The meeting reflected closer cooperation between Washington and both Pakistan and India, including on their civilian nuclear programmes, which stalled after the two nations tested nuclear weapons in 1998. Since that time, especially under President George W. Bush and after the Sept. 11 attacks on America, the United States has reached out to both countries. Pakistan has been a key ally in the US war on terror. Some US experts worry that helping civilian nuclear programs may also advance nuclear weapons programmes that the international community seeks to limit. Brenner said the US and Pakistani experts "discussed basically reactor risk issues, matters involving research into aging materials, the license renewal process, fire safety matters, inspection and enforcement activities." NRC officials and their Indian counterparts met for the first time last September and plan a follow-up meeting in Washington at the end of August, Brenner said.

Daily Yomiuri, 21 July 2004

Govt to boost security steps at N-facilities

The government plans to make it a crime for private-sector officials to reveal confidential information about the nation's nuclear power facilities, The Yomiuri Shimbun has learned. The move is aimed at protecting the facilities from terrorist attacks. To this end, the government would extend laws related to confidentiality requirements concerning nuclear power facilities that already apply to public servants so they include private-sector workers. The government plans to revise the law concerning nuclear power plant regulations next year in line with the plan, a government source said.

The Indian Express, 21 July 2004

New round of Chinese whispers (Manpreet Sethi)

At its annual conference in Gothenburg, Sweden, in the last week of May, the Nuclear Suppliers Group (NSG) accepted China as its 41st member. Constituted in 1974 by seven countries, the NSG coordinates nuclear export policies of supplier nations to ensure that nuclear material and technology transfers for commercial and peaceful purposes are not used to make nuclear weapons. Unfortunately though, the efficacy of technology denial has always been dubious and those keen to acquire nuclear weapons have found ways and means to do so, as well demonstrated by North Korea and Libya. Attempts at enhancing the effectiveness of the NSG have regularly been made. Insistence upon full scope safeguards (FSS), adding more dual use materials and technologies to the trigger list and expanding the NSG to include new members are some of them. China is the latest entrant and at this juncture, when proliferation concerns are at their highest, given the revelation of the illegal nuclear network run from Pakistan, it is pertinent to analyse the implications of this membership for China's relationship with Pakistan and non-proliferation.

Asahi Simbhun, 21 July 2004

Letters shed new light on Pakistan's nuclear quest (Shigeki Tosa)

The Asahi Shimbun obtains letters by A.Q. Khan to a former colleague in the Netherlands. Amsterdam: The "father of the Islamic bomb," Pakistani scientist Abdul Qadeer Khan, begged, flattered and sympathized with a former colleague at a Dutch physics laboratory in a bid to prize nuclear secrets in the 1970s. Khan corresponded with Frits Veerman, a technical photographer who shared office space with him at FDO, the Dutch nuclear power-related firm, going as far as to suggest money for information. The Asahi Shimbun obtained copies of three letters Khan wrote to Veerman between 1976 and 1979. Earlier this year, Khan was exposed for having sold nuclear secrets to countries like Libya and North Korea. He is believed to have obtained basic but classified technology for centrifuges, machines used to enrich uranium, from the FDO, where he worked from 1972 to 1975. Although Pakistan tested its first nuclear device in 1998, in response to tests by rival India, Islamabad was believed to have been developing the bomb long before that.

Southasianmedia.net, 21 July 2004

CIA asked to keep watch on Pak nukes

Islamabad: The Bush administration has asked the CIA director general to submit report on Pakistani efforts to curb nuclear proliferation and terrorism. According to recently-approved piece of legislation on the House of Representatives (HR4548) to authorise appropriations for year 2005 for intelligence activities of the US, the Community Management Account and the CIA, a section has been incorporated to make it mandatory by law. This makes it binding for the CIA to submit reports on Pakistani efforts to curb proliferation of weapons of mass destruction and to fight terrorism to the appropriate committees of Congress, starting from the first report within 90 days of the enactment of this law, to be followed by regular reports on April 1 of 2005, 2006, 2007, 2008 and 2009.

22 July 2004

People's Daily, 22 July 2004

China to test launch three mid&long-range missiles: Report

According to a report by Russian TACC, news from the Russian Ministry of National Defense has it that the Chinese Ministry of National Defense has notified the Russian Ministry of National Defense that the Chinese military plans to test launch three ballistic missiles from a missile launching site in Shanxi province to the Lop Nur (Luobubo) testing site in Xinjiang Taklamakan Desert covering a range of 2,500-plus kilometers. The news catches the attention of outsiders on China's missile strength. The Russian TACC cited the 2002 Yearbook published by the Swedish Stockholm International Peace Research Institute as saying that China has ballistic missiles with nuclear capability, which consist of four types with a range ranging from 1,800 kilometers to 13,000 kilometers. China defines the ranges of missiles as: short which is below 1,000 kilometers, mid-range which is between 1,000 and 3,000 kilometers, long-range which is between 3,000 and 8,000 kilometers and intercontinental range which is over 8,000 kilometers.

Daily Times, 2 July 2004

Israel sees 'nuclear capable' Iran by 2007

Jerusalem: Israeli estimates of when Iran will be able to build a nuclear bomb have been shifted two more years to 2007, an intelligence report said on Wednesday and analysts credited the delay to international scrutiny of Tehran. Security sources quoted the report - delivered to Prime Minister Ariel Sharon in private and leaked in part to the media - as saying that within three years Iran would have the means to produce an atomic bomb by itself. Iran vehemently denies pursuing nuclear weapons, arguing its atomic ambitions are limited to generating electricity. Tehran officials have also accused Israel of trying to distract the international community from its own assumed nuclear arsenal and stoking world opinion against the last Middle East foe which could challenge it militarily. In 2000, Israeli security sources told Reuters that Iran

would be nuclear-capable within five years and was developing long-range missiles with which to lob warheads at Tel Aviv. The regional picture has since changed, with a U.S.-led invasion of Iraq bringing neighbouring Iran under closer watch by the West - especially after Tehran admitted in November to buying centrifuges used to enrich uranium from a black market set up by Pakistani nuclear weapons expert Abdul Qadeer Khan. For over a year, the United States has tried to pressure the U.N. International Atomic Energy Agency to report Iran to the Security Council for hiding its uranium enrichment programme.

People's Daily, 22 July 2004

China builds more nuclear power plants to ease power shortage

The Chinese State Council on Wednesday approved two nuclear power plant projects in provinces to ease power shortage. The decision to start construction of the second-phase project of the Ling'ao Nuclear Power Plant in south China's Guangdong Province, and the first-phase project of the Sanmen Nuclear Power Plant in east China's Zhejiang Province, was made at a State Council meeting on acceleration of nuclear power station construction by mainly relying on China itself. "Nuclear power generating is a kind of clean and safe way of power supply with mature technology and good flexibility," the meeting pointed out. "The increase of nuclear energy's proportion in total power supply is of great importance to the development of high-tech and manufacturing industries, the economic growth, adjustment of energy supply structure, safeguarding of energy security as well as the sustainable development strategy," the meeting said. Up to now, China has put into use or is constructing 11 nuclearpower generating units, with quite complete managerial and quick-response systems established in this regard, according to the meeting.

The News, 22 July 2004

US won't be fooled again by North Korea nuclear freeze: Bolton

Seoul: Top US arms control official John Bolton said on Wednesday Washington would not be "fooled again" by North Korea's offer of a nuclear freeze, saying Pyongyang should follow the Libyan model and unconditionally scrap its nuclear weapons drive. Bolton said that 10 years ago North Korea pledged a nuclear freeze under the 1994 Agreed Framework before breaking its word and deciding to "flip a switch and unfreeze its programs." "We have a saying: 'Fool me once, shame on you. Fool me twice, shame on me.' We will not be fooled again," said Bolton, undersecretary for arms control and international security. Last month at six-party talks on the nuclear standoff in Beijing, Pyongyang demanded rewards including a non-aggression pledge in return for a freeze which its says would be a first step in a process leading to the dismantling of its nuclear facilities.

The New York Times, 22 July 2004

Japan, S.Korea Urge N.Korea to Move on Crisis

South Korea: The leaders of Japan and South Korea underscored Thursday a strong trilateral alliance with the United States by calling on North Korea to end a long-running nuclear crisis. Japanese Prime Minister Junichiro Koizumi and South Korea President Roh Moo-hyun, in casual meetings that South Korean media dubbed a "no-necktie shuttle summit," sent a message to North Korea that giving up its nuclear ambitions would bring economic and diplomatic support. "We hope that North Korea can fully understand this message and make a progressive move at the fourth round of six-party talks and at working-group meetings," South Korean Foreign Minister Ban Ki-moon told reporters after Wednesday's summit. The two key U.S. allies in Asia -- part of six-party diplomacy also involving the United States, China, Russia and North Korea -- agreed to push for progress in the 20-month-old crisis before the next round of talks in September.

The Korean Herald, 22 July 2004

'N.K. regime can stay after denuclearization' (Choi Soung-ah)

A "strategic decision" by North Korea to give up its nuclear program would allow the Kim Jong-il regime to remain in power, a senior Washington official here said yesterday. John Bolton, undersecretary for arms control and international security of the U.S. State Department, said North Korea should learn from Libya, stressing that taking a similar path would bring about security for the Kim regime. "It is the case that we have tried to use the example of Libya to show that it is possible for a government to make a strategic decision that it is better off abandoning the search for weapons of mass destruction than continuing to pursue them," Bolton said in a news conference in Seoul.

Dawn, 23 July 2004

Iran's quest for the bomb (Louis Charbonneau)

Vienna: It is two years since a group of Iranian exiles accused Iran of hiding a secret atomic weapons programme from UN inspectors, and diplomats and analysts say Tehran is only getting closer to the bomb. Officials and nuclear experts say that one of the two facilities Iran had not declared to the UN at the time was a uranium enrichment plant that, once completed, could enrich enough uranium for a dozen or so nuclear bombs each year. Several diplomats said Iran began with a plan of developing its nuclear capabilities so that the atom bomb option would always be there - the "break-out" scenario. Later, one said, Iran decided the only solution to the US threat was the bomb. "Iranian leaders got together after the Iraq war and decided that the reason North Korea was not attacked was because it has the bomb. Iraq was attacked because it did not," a Western diplomat said, citing intelligence reports. Iran has vehemently denied pursuing nuclear weapons, arguing that its atomic ambitions are limited to generating electricity and that developing the bomb would violate Islamic law.

Daily Times, 23 July 2004

'North Korea can benefit from scrapping nukes'

Tokyo: North Korea has more to gain by abandoning its nuclear arms programmes than keeping them, US Undersecretary of State John Bolton said on Thursday. "North Korea will clearly benefit more from abandoning its nuclear programmes than possessing them... We must make North Korea understand it," Kyodo news agency quoted Bolton as telling Shinzo Abe, Secretary General of Japan's governing Liberal Democratic Party. Japanese Prime Minister Junichiro Koizumi and South Korea President Roh Moo-hyun also stressed that message at their summit in South Korea on Thursday, telling communist North Korea that giving up its nuclear ambitions will bring economic and diplomatic support. The two key US allies in Asia - part of six-party diplomacy also involving the United States, China, Russia and North Korea - agreed to push for progress in the 20-month-old crisis before the next talks in September. Bolton flew to Tokyo on Thursday for a two-day visit after spending three days in South Korea, part of a drive by the administration of President George W. Bush to breathe life into the six-party talks.

Daily Times, 23 July 2004

Force will not stop any Iran nuke plans

Vienna: A military strike on Iranian atomic facilities would delay but not destroy the development of any nuclear weapons programme, diplomats and analysts said. "Military action is not the answer," said a senior international diplomat involved in the investigation of Iran's nuclear plans. "It would only push them underground, like in Iraq," said the diplomat, who declined to be named. Israel has hinted it could use airstrikes to destroy Iran's nuclear facilities, which it and Washington believe are part of an attempt to acquire atomic weapons under cover of a civilian nuclear power programme. But Iran denies the charge and Iranian Defence Minister Ali Skhamkhani said his country would respond to a military attack "with everything in our power".

Convinced that Saddam Hussein was developing nuclear weapons, Israel bombed Iraq's Osiraq nuclear reactor in 1981. But instead of stopping his quest for a bomb, Saddam went underground and worked in secret until the programme was uncovered by the UN nuclear watchdog in 1991. Several analysts and diplomats said Iran had learnt from Iraq's mistakes and might be hiding nuclear sites from UN inspectors, who have been probing Tehran's atomic programme for nearly two years to verify that it is peaceful as Iran insists.

Daily Times, 23 July 2004

Iran warns EU against 'double standards' over nuclear issue

Tehran: Iran warned the European Union on Thursday to refrain from using "double standards" in its dealings with the Islamic republic over its nuclear activities, the official news agency IRNA reported. Foreign Minister Kamal Kharazi accused the EU of failing to live up to undertakings in a landmark deal with Iran in October which saw Tehran agree to cooperate with the UN nuclear watchdog the International Atomic Energy Agency. But Iran has accused the Europeans of damaging the deal by sponsoring a critical resolution adopted last month by the IAEA, which deplored a lack of cooperation by Tehran. "If the EU is interested in extensive relations with the Islamic republic of Iran as a key player in the establishment of peace and security in the region, it should refrain from double standards and stand firmly committed to its undertakings," Kharazi said after holding talks in Cairo with EU foreign policy envoy Javier Solana.

Khaleej Times, 23 July 2004

Veil of nuclear secrecy

The secretive communist regime of North Korea has fooled the international community for too long over its nuclear programme. On Wednesday, a top US arms control official said that Washington would not be fooled again by North Korea's offer of a nuclear freeze, saying that Pyongyang

should follow the Libyan model and unconditionally scrap its nuclear weapons programme. Bolton said that 10 years ago, North Korea had pledged a nuclear freeze under the 1994 Agreed Framework before breaking its word and deciding to unfreeze its programmes. Pyongyang has been demanding rewards in return for a freeze as a first step in a process leading to the dismantling of its nuclear facilities. Everytime the question of a freeze of the nuclear programme comes up, North Korea demand some concessions from the United States. This is nothing but nuclear blackmail. North Korea is an authoritarian country with no respect for human rights and individual liberties. It has proved to be a threat to its immediate neighbours and the world at large. The country is particularly dangerous for Japan and its southern neighbour, South Korea.

Daily Times, 24 July 2004

Japan and US seek solutions for DPRK

Tokyo: Japan and the United States agreed on Friday to tighten their cooperation on preventing the proliferation of weapons, putting particular emphasis on the problems of North Korea and Iran's nuclear programmes. At a semi-annual arms control meeting in Tokyo, Japanese and US officials reiterated the need for tighter expert-level cooperation to ensure North Korea drops its nuclear ambitions, said a Japanese diplomat who attended the half-day session. Japan also reiterated at the meeting that Washington should ratify the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty and expressed its concerns over US research on so-called mini-nuke small nuclear weapons, the Japanese diplomat said. US Undersecretary of State for Arms Control and International Security John Bolton, who headed the US delegation, told the meeting that North Korea would only benefit by disarming itself, according to the Japanese diplomat.

The New York Times, 24 July 2004

U.S. Halts Secret Work at More Nuclear Laboratories (Kenneth Chang and Sandra Blakeslee)

Repercussions from the loss of two computer disks at Los Alamos National Laboratory spread across the country yesterday as Secretary of Energy Spencer Abraham ordered a halt to almost all classified work using such disks and other removable computer data storage devices at all Energy Department laboratories. The shutdown, which begins Monday, will idle hundreds of workers at Lawrence Livermore National Laboratory in California and Sandia National Laboratory in Albuquerque, the two laboratories that, along with Los Alamos, perform most of the research involving nuclear weapons. Los Alamos has been at a virtual standstill for a week as its managers and 12,000 employees review security and safety procedures. On Thursday, the laboratory's director suspended 19 employees over security and safety violations, and yesterday a spokesman for the laboratory said 20 employees had taken early retirement in the past nine days. In a statement, Mr. Abraham said that while there were no known problems at other laboratories, "we have a responsibility to take all necessary action to prevent such problems from occurring at all." The order allows exceptions for high-priority research approved by Kyle McSlarrow, the deputy secretary of energy, who is leading the investigation into the lost disks at Los Alamos.

Reuters, 24 July 2004

U.S. Pledges 50, 000 Tons of Food to North Korea

Washington: The United States pledged 50,000 tons of food aid on Friday for North Korea this year, weeks after the two countries appeared to make some progress toward resolving a two-year-old nuclear weapons standoff. The United States, which is traditionally one of the top food donors to the impoverished, Communist nation, says its aid is independent of its negotiations to persuade Pyongyang to dismantle its nuclear programs. But the Bush administration

acknowledged it would be good if the aid had a positive impact on nuclear negotiations, in which the two governments held their highest-level talks earlier this month. "It's our desire to help the North Korean people," State Department spokesman Richard Boucher said. "If that impresses the North Koreans and makes them adopt a more favorable attitude, then that's good, but our intention is to help the people and not to try to affect the talks." The United States could also pledge more food aid later this year, he added. The aid came in the same week the United States allowed North Korea's U.N. ambassador to attend a conference in Washington, the highest-level visit to the capital by the Pyongyang government during the Bush administration.

The News, 25 July 2004

Ex-KRL scientist, two officials released

Freed men include Dr Nazeer Ahmad, Brig Sajawal Khan, Maj Islamul Haq

Islamabad: Authorities released a former nuclear scientist and two other people after holding them for about seven months on suspicion of leaking nuclear technology to other countries, an army spokesman said on Saturday. The scientist is Dr Nazeer Ahmad, former director-general at the Khan Research Laboratory. He was among 11 men arrested in December after the UN nuclear watchdog reported that some Pakistanis were involved in selling nuclear technology to Iran, Libya and North Korea. The other two who were released Brig Sajawal Khan and Maj Islamul Haq were close aides to Abdul Qadeer Khan, the founder of Pakistan's nuclear programme. Dr AQ Khan was also among the 11 detained.

The News, 25 July 2004

North Korea rejects US offer on nuclear issue

Seoul: North Korea on Saturday rejected US proposals that it follow Libya and scrap its nuclear weapons drive in return for major economic and diplomatic rewards as having "little worthy to be discussed". "The study of the recent policy clarified by (US) high-

ranking officials clearly suggests that the US landmark proposal was nothing but a sham offer," a spokesman for the Stalinist state's foreign ministry said. "The US is foolish enough to calculate that such mode imposed upon Libya would be accepted by the DPRK (North Korea) too," the spokesman told Pyongyang's official Korean Central News Agency (KCNA). Senior US officials have urged North Korea to follow the example of Libya, which renounced the pursuit of its nuclear, chemical, and biological weapons plans. In return, Washington lifted most sanctions against Tripoli. But Pyongyang has demanded rewards for the freezing of nuclear weapons programs as a first step which it says would lead to the eventual dismantling of its nuclear facilities.

Daily Times, 25 July 2004

US fears militants might use WMDs

Texas: US President George W Bush said on Saturday he wanted to carefully examine recommendations from the Sept. 11 commission as pressure mounted on the president to act swiftly. Congress rushed to respond to the panel's findings, announcing rare August recess hearings, while Sept. 11 commission Chairman Thomas Kean warned that security experts expect another Al Qaeda attack on US soil and that time is not on our side. Kean said on Friday security experts believe militants will try to use nuclear, chemical or biological weapons, and added that if Congress and the president delayed making changes they would be held responsible by the American people. Political analysts said Bush needed to embrace some recommendations within a week to 10 days or risk leaving himself open to criticism by Democratic presidential challenger John Kerry that he is not doing enough to prevent another attack. If he wants to nullify it as an issue, he should embrace the findings, said Stephen Wayne, professor of government at Georgetown University.

Reuters, 25 July 2004

N.Korea 'Working Group' May Meet in Late Aug - Report

Tokyo: Six-country "working level" talks on North Korea's nuclear programs could be held in late August, Japanese media said on Sunday, while the foreign minister said Japan hoped to hold bilateral talks with North Korea next month. Such talks would be held before senior-level six-way talks, expected by the end of September. A focal point is a U.S. proposal offering multilateral energy aid to North Korea as part of a solution to the nuclear crisis, the Nihon Keizai daily said. Participants have begun coordination aimed at holding the working-level talks in late August, the newspaper added. China, Japan, North and South Korea, Russia and the United States have held three rounds of senior-level talks, most recently in Beijing in June. The outlook for progress remains murky, with North Korea having dismissed on Saturday U.S. proposals laid out at the June talks that would give the communist state multilateral energy aid after the North first commits to dismantle all of its nuclear programs and begins a verifiable disarmament process.

The News, 26 July 2004

Israel's Dimona plant may become second Chernobyl: Vanunu

Dubai: Israel's nuclear whistleblower Mordechai Vanunu has warned that the Middle East is at risk of a "second Chernobyl" in the event of an accident at the Jewish state's aged Dimona plant, a newspaper reported on Sunday. The London-based Al-Hayat also quoted Vanunu as implicating Israel in the assassination of US president John F Kennedy in 1963. The 40-year-old Dimona nuclear plant in the southern Negev desert could constitute a "second Chernobyl" through any "leaking of nuclear radiation, threatening millions of people in neighbouring countries," following a possible accident, Vanunu said. Jordan should test residents in the border regions with Israel to be sure that they have not already been exposed to any radiation and administer the necessary medicine, he said. The Ukrainian government estimates that 15,000 people died after the number four reactor exploded at Chernobyl power plant

in 1986 in the world's worst civilian nuclear catastrophe. More than three million Ukrainians including 1.2 million children receive disability compensation as a result of Chernobyl and the radioactive contamination it caused. Vanunu's comments were contained in extracts of an interview he gave to the Arabic-language Al-Hayat's weekly supplement Al-Wassat, to be published on Monday. The former technician was jailed for 18 years for revelations on the inner workings at Dimona that he made to Britain's Sunday Times newspaper in 1986, effectively blowing the whistle on Israel's nuclear programme.

Daily Times, 27 July 2004

Nuke whistleblower loses bid to leave Israel

Jerusalem: Israel's top court rejected Mordechai Vanunu's appeal to be allowed to leave the country, saying on Monday the nuclear whistleblower freed in April after 18 years in jail was still a security threat. 'This is a very sad day and shameful day,' Vanunu said after the High Court of Justice rejected his petition that he had no more secrets to tell about Israel's main atomic reactor at Dimona, and that the travel ban violated his civil rights. Vanunu, 49, was abducted by Israeli agents and convicted of treason in 1986 after discussing his work as a mid-level Dimona technician with Britain's Sunday Times newspaper.
Home Foreign

The News, 27 July 2004

Focus on terrorist WMDs causing disarmament stalemate: UN

Tokyo: Fears of terrorists acquiring weapons of mass destruction following the September 11 attacks now dominate the disarmament debate and have resulted in a "stalemate", a senior UN official said on Monday. The resulting delays on measures to tackle the issue were increasing the risk of extremists getting hold of such arms, UN under-secretary general for Disarmament Affairs Nobuyasu Abe warned. The "horrible devastation" of 9/11 and concerns that next time terrorists may try to use weapons of

mass destruction (WMD) were now behind "almost every discussion concerning WMD and other disarmament issues," Abe said in a speech at the opening of a UN disarmament conference in northern Japan. That focus made the adoption in April by UN Security Council of a resolution urging states to keep WMD from terrorists far from easy, Abe said. "While accepting the need to stop the spread of WMD to terrorists, some member states did not want the emphasis to be placed only on proliferation questions while leaving disarmament questions untouched," he said. "This, in a way, reflects the basic confrontation underlying the current disarmament debates, which are largely to blame for the stalemate surrounding disarmament issues." Abe lamented the failure of a committee to agree on an agenda ahead of a review of the Nuclear Non-proliferation Treaty next year, as well as a Geneva disarmament conference's seven-year inability to agree on a negotiating mandate.

The New York Times, 27 July 2004

High Accident Risk Is Seen in Atomic Waste Project (Matthew L. Wald)

Washington, July 26: An Energy Department plant under construction in Hanford, Wash., that is designed to remove highly radioactive waste from leaking tanks and immobilize it in glass has a 50 percent chance of a major accident over its 28-year lifetime, according to an independent government audit. The audit, which drew little notice when issued three years ago by the Nuclear Regulatory Commission, has recently gained prominence through the efforts of Robert Alvarez, an adviser to the energy secretary in the Clinton administration. The regulatory commission, whose report cited several design problems, was the last outside agency to perform an in-depth engineering review of the project. Since then, the Energy Department has altered the design, and has also sped construction in an effort to cut decades and tens of billions of dollars off the cost of solidifying the waste, which is left over from

half a century of nuclear weapons production.

The Asahi Shimbun, 27 July 2004

Japan to hold sea drill to stop WMD smuggling

After seeing progress with Pyongyang, Tokyo decides to host the U.S.-led exercise. Japan, under pressure to take action but wary of an angry North Korean response, will host a multinational drill aimed at preventing the smuggling of weapons of mass destruction (WMD), government sources said. The exercise in waters near Japan, possibly in late October, will be based on the U.S.-led Proliferation Security Initiative (PSI). Vessels and aircraft from the United States, Australia and other core PSI members will take part. Japan also plans to invite China and South Korea as well as members of the Association of Southeast Asian Nations who took part in a PSI meeting in May in Japan. Washington wants to strengthen PSI activities. But Tokyo plans to tread carefully in planning the contents of the drill to avoid triggering an adverse reaction from North Korea that could hamper the planned resumption of bilateral normalization talks with Pyongyang.

Daily Times, 28 July 2004

US wants to isolate DPRK: Pyongyang

Seoul: North Korea issued multiple propaganda attacks on the United States on Tuesday, demanding Washington remove its troops from the South and saying US human rights policies raised doubts about nuclear crisis talks. Pyongyang's state media hurled its latest barrage of invective at the United States on the day more than 200 North Korean refugees arrived in South Korea from Southeast Asia in the largest single batch to arrive from the impoverished communist state. Now that the US makes ceaseless political provocations against the DPRK with such bitter antipathy and hostility toward its political system, the DPRK is compelled to ponder over whether there is any need to continue dialogue with the US for the settlement of the nuclear issue at the moment, said a statement from the

North Korean Foreign Ministry. The statement, carried by the official KCNA news agency, criticised human rights legislation passed last week by the US House of Representatives. The bill was full of lies and fabrications designed to subvert the North, it said. The North Korean Human Rights act, which passed the House unanimously last week, calls for the United States to support North Korean refugees and to lead international pressure on the North to safeguard human rights and endure aid transparency. The US regards the nuclear issue and the human rights issue as two levers in executing its policy to isolate and stifle the DPRK, it said.

Dawn, 28 July 2004

Safe operation of N-facilities to be further enhanced (Ihtasham-ul-Haque)

Islamabad, July 27: Pakistan has decided to further ensure safe operation of its nuclear facilities, especially the nuclear power plants, by strengthening the Pakistan Nuclear Regulatory Authority (PNRA) under a six-year phased monitoring and evaluation programme. Official sources told Dawn here on Tuesday that a 72-month programme (from July 2004 to June 2010) would be undertaken to address the concerns of the United States and the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) about the safety requirements of nuclear power plants including the second Chashma Nuclear Power Plant (CNPP-2). The future of nuclear energy in Pakistan would be guaranteed through safety operation of its nuclear facilities, specially the nuclear power plants. This will be achieved by a strong regulatory control over the nuclear power programme. The government will initially allocate Rs418 million to start a project to be called Institutional Strengthening and Capacity Building of Pakistan Nuclear Authority (PNRA) to help discharge its responsibilities regarding the regulatory activities pertaining to CNPP-2.

The Washington Post, 28 July 2004

Effort to Curb Iran's Nuclear Ambitions on Allies' Agenda (Dafna Linzer)

Senior diplomats from France, Britain and Germany are scheduled to meet with Iranian officials this week in London in an effort to salvage a diplomatic initiative that virtually fell apart last month when Iran announced it would resume building equipment that could be used for making a nuclear bomb, U.S. and European officials said yesterday. Iran had pledged to halt activities consistent with a weapons program in exchange for trade incentives from the European Union. But it backed out of some terms in June after the Europeans supported a toughly worded rebuke of Iran for failing to cooperate with international inspectors. It is unclear whether Iran will have anything new to offer at tomorrow's meeting or how the outcome will affect U.S. policy toward the country. The continued standoff and suspicion surrounding Iran's weapons capabilities has embarrassed the European trio, frustrated Washington and worried international nuclear inspectors.

China Daily, 29 July 2004

China, US envoys meet on DPRK nuke issue

Key Chinese and U.S. negotiators on the Korean Peninsula nuclear crisis are meeting in Beijing on Thursday to hammer out dates for another round of working level talks aimed at resolving the 21-month impasse. The U.S. embassy said Joseph DeTrani, the State Department negotiator on the Democratic People's Republic of Korea (DPRK), was scheduled to meet with his counterpart in the Chinese Foreign Ministry Ning Fukui and possibly other officials on Thursday -- part of a renewed flurry of diplomatic activity revolving around Pyongyang. "Special envoy Joe DeTrani was invited to Beijing to discuss preparations for the next six-party working group session, including dates for the meeting," an embassy spokeswoman said. Negotiators from DPRK, the United States, Republic of Korea (ROK), Japan, Russia and China have met in Beijing for three rounds of slow-moving talks on the crisis that erupted in October 2002.

Daily Times, 29 July 2004

Aziz rules out N-rollback

Islamabad: Finance Minister Shaukat Aziz has ruled out freezing, capping or reducing the capability of Pakistan's nuclear programme. Mr Aziz, who is a candidate in the by-election for NA-59 Attock, was talking to a delegation of electorates of Attock led by MNA Malik Amin Aslam who had called on him at his residence on Wednesday. Mr Aziz dispelled the propaganda and claimed that allocations for the nuclear programme had been enhanced in recent years. Terming the nuclear programme as a deterrent against any foreign aggression, Mr Aziz said the government would never compromise on the country's vital issues and the continuation of the nuclear programme was essential for national security. He said Pakistan would be developed under the able leadership of President Pervez Musharraf in the coming years. He vowed to promote unity in the Muslim Ummah to counter conspiracies against Islam. Mr Aziz vowed to give benefits of an improved economy to the poor by reducing price hikes and unemployment. To a question, he said it would take time to determine whether it was feasible to build the Akhori Dam or not and added that people of the area should not worry that their villages would be inundated. He said the country needs water reservoirs, but the government gives top priority to big dams like Kalabagh and Bhasha to meet the water requirements.

Daily Times, 29 July 2004

Iran unlikely to ratify key N-treaty soon

Tehran: Iran's new conservative-controlled parliament will not ratify a key text giving increased powers to UN nuclear inspectors before the Islamic republic is given the all-clear by the International Atomic Energy Agency, a top MP told AFP. Following major pressure from the IAEA and the international community, Iran signed the additional protocol to the Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT) in December last year but has so far held back its ratification. The deputy head of the Iranian parliament's influential

Foreign Policy and National Security Commission, Mohamoud Mohammadi, said the ratification of the text was conditional to the IAEA approving our use of nuclear technology for peaceful purposes. The majority of my colleagues in the parliament think this way, he added, when asked if this meant Iran was waiting to be given the all-clear by the IAEA and have its dossier been taken off the top of the Vienna-based body's agenda. The fear is that the additional protocol could be used as a tool for political pressure. If they treat our dossier in a purely technical fashion, then we will cooperate, he said in an interview. Speaking late Tuesday, Mohammadi repeated denials that Iran was seeking nuclear weapons but he did acknowledge that some officials in Iran were in favour of acquiring a nuclear deterrent.

Associated Press, 29 July 2004

Diplomats Worry Iran Resumes Nuke Testing

Vienna: Defying international concerns, Iran has resumed clandestine work linked to uranium enrichment, testing equipment and producing a gas that can be used to make nuclear warheads, diplomats said Wednesday. The diplomats told The Associated Press that Tehran has restarted equipment used to make uranium hexafluoride gas, which, when injected into centrifuges and spun, can be enriched to a level high enough to make the weapons. While Iran only appears to be testing the machinery, it has apparently produced some of the gas as a side effect, said the diplomats, who are either familiar with Vienna-based International Atomic Energy Agency's investigations or privy to intelligence. Speaking on condition of anonymity, they said they did not know how much hexafluoride was made and when the testing resumed. The move -- coupled with revelations Tuesday that Iran had restarted building centrifuges -- heightened concern that Iran was moving toward full uranium enrichment, despite pledges not to do so in the interest of building international goodwill. In Washington, State Department spokesman Adam Ereli said Iran had

launched a direct challenge to the IAEA's call to suspend all enrichment-related and reprocessing activities.

Khaleej Times, 29 July 2004

Iran seeks nuke bomb 'booster' from Russian firm

Vienna: Iranian agents are negotiating with a Russian company to buy a substance that can boost nuclear explosions in atomic weapons, according to an intelligence agency report being circulated by diplomats. The two-page report cited "knowledgeable Russian sources" for the information, which Washington will likely point to as more proof that Teheran wants to acquire nuclear weaponry. "Iranian middlemen ... are in the advanced stages of negotiations in Russia to buy deuterium gas," it said. Iran denies wanting atomic arms and says its nuclear programme is for peaceful purposes. Deuterium is used as a tracer molecule in medicine and biochemistry and is used in heavy water reactors of the type Iran is building. But it can also be combined with tritium and used as a "booster" in nuclear fusion bombs of the implosion type. Envoys linked to the UN nuclear watchdog, the International Atomic Energy Agency, said buying deuterium alone was not evidence of intent to acquire a weapons capability. France, Germany and Britain have been in talks with Iran to persuade it to cooperate fully with IAEA to allay Western doubts and are resisting referring Teheran to the UN. A further high-level meeting is expected in Paris today.

Asahi Shimbun, 29 July 2004

Nuclear fusion reactor

Nuclear fusion is often touted as the ultimate energy source in the 21st century. But talks for a mammoth international research project to realize this dream remain bogged down due to bitter rivalry between Japan and the European Union. At issue is the site of the planned experimental fusion reactor. The estimated construction cost of 500 billion yen is to be shared by the participating countries. These include the United States, Russia, China and South

Korea, as well as Japan and the EU. The contributions by the individual countries have yet to be decided. Japan and the EU, which are vying to host the experimental fusion reactor, keep upping the ante in hopes of securing the support of the other countries for their quest. Tokyo, which has been lobbying to have the reactor built in Rokkasho, Aomori Prefecture, recently announced it would add 57 billion yen to its offer. It now is prepared to shell out 270 billion yen for the project, more than half of the estimated construction cost. In response, the EU, which has been campaigning to have the facility located in Cadarache in southern France, immediately made a similar offer. Both sides are apparently engaged in a bidding war.

Southasianmedia.net, 29 July 2004

Pakistan-China in 2nd nuclear plant deal

Islamabad: Pakistan has formally approved proposals to build a new nuclear power plant with help from longtime ally China, Finance Minister Shaukat Aziz said yesterday. Aziz, who is expected to become prime minister next month, told state-run television the new nuclear plant would cost Rs 51 billion (\$874 million). The 300 megawatt plant will be built at Chashma on the banks of the Indus river, around 280km south of Islamabad, alongside the first plant that China helped build in 1999. An official statement said the project also envisaged the transfer of technology from China to enable the Pakistan Atomic Energy Commission (PAEC) to run the plant itself. The project includes a nuclear steam supply system, a turbine generator and related equipment. The statement said the project will be completed in seven years but did not say when it will be started. PAEC and China's National Nuclear Corporation signed the deal on the construction of a new nuclear power plant in May.

Daily Times, 30 July 2004

Japan's drills could hurt relations with North Korea

Tokyo: Japan is under US pressure to host a maritime drill as part of an initiative to stop

the spread of weapons of mass destruction, but doing so could hurt Tokyo's talks with North Korea, an unspoken target of the exercise. Officials said the government has not decided whether to host the Proliferation Security Initiative (PSI) exercise, which the Asahi Shimbun daily reported this week could be held in late October or early November in waters near Japan. The initiative, launched last year to halt the spread of nuclear, chemical and biological weapons-related materials, has raised hackles in North Korea, which is embroiled in a stand-off with Washington and its allies over its nuclear ambitions. The report of the planned exercise comes at a time when Japan is seeking talks with North Korea on the fate of Japanese abducted by Pyongyang decades ago and is weighing whether to resume stalled talks to establish diplomatic ties. Some analysts said North Korea was unlikely to harden its stance towards the talks even if Japan decided to host the drill. I think North Korea wants to hurry with normalisation talks with Japan including the issue of possible economic benefits, said Tadashi Kimiya, who specialises in Korean politics at Tokyo University.

Daily Times, 30 July 2004

Sharon ties disarming WMDs to ME peace

Jerusalem: Prime Minister Ariel Sharon said on Thursday Israel would only reconsider the need for its deterrent capability when there is a comprehensive Middle East peace and its neighbours abandon weapons of mass destruction. The Jewish state refuses to admit or deny it has nuclear weapons under a policy of strategic ambiguity, but international experts estimate it has an arsenal of 100 to 200 warheads, making it one of the biggest nuclear powers. Sharon noted that longtime foe Libya had agreed to rid itself of weapons of mass destruction and Iran has come under international pressure to come clean on its atomic programme. It could be that one day when we arrive at a comprehensive peace and everyone disarms completely, we will also be ready to consider taking steps, Sharon told a meeting

of his rightwing Likud party in Tel Aviv. But he said Israel still faced an existential danger and that the United States, its main ally, had made clear the Jewish state is not to be touched when it comes to its deterrent capability. Mohammed ElBaradei, director the UN nuclear watchdog agency, said Sharon told him during a visit to Israel earlier this month that he would be could discuss ridding the Middle East of nuclear arms but only as part of a broader peace process in the future.

Daily Times, 30 July 2004

Iran nuke issue may go to UN: Powell

Kuwait: US Secretary of State Colin Powell said on Thursday it was more and more likely the matter of Iran's nuclear programmes would have to be referred to the UN Security Council, which could impose sanctions. The United States accuses Iran of seeking to develop nuclear weapons, a charge denied by Tehran which says its nuclear programmes are for peaceful purposes. Diplomats said Iran had defied international pressure and resumed testing a facility for converting uranium, a key part of the process of enriching the element for use as fuel or in a nuclear bomb. The International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) nuclear watchdog, whose board would have to vote to send the Iran nuclear issue to the Security Council, declined to comment. Iran promised the European Union big three- France, Britain and Germany - in October it would suspend all activities related to uranium enrichment. But Iran says it still has the right to produce uranium hexafluoride and build centrifuges.

Dawn, 30 July 2004

US has given undertaking on Israel's N-capability: Sharon

Tel Aviv, July 29: Prime Minister Ariel Sharon said on Thursday Israel would only reconsider the need for its "deterrent capability" when there is peace across the Middle East and its neighbours abandon

weapons of mass destruction. Mr Sharon said the United States had made clear the Jewish state "is not to be touched when it comes to its deterrent capability". The undertaking was made as part of US endorsement of Israel's plan to withdraw from Gaza Strip and part of the West Bank next year, the prime minister said. Billed as breaking a deadlock in an almost four-year-old conflict with the Palestinians, the "disengagement plan" is facing heavy opposition from Israeli rightists, including inside the Likud and government. Israel refuses to admit or deny it has nuclear weapons under a policy of "strategic ambiguity", but international experts estimate it has an arsenal of 100 to 200 warheads, making it one of the biggest atomic powers. Mr Sharon noted that Libya had agreed to rid itself of weapons of mass destruction and Iran had come under international pressure to come clean on its atomic programme.

The News, 30 July 2004

S Korea will pay dearly for luring defectors: N Korea

Seoul: Pyongyang accused Seoul Thursday of kidnapping more than 450 North Koreans and said South Korea would pay dearly for the biggest mass defection from the Stalinist state since the Korean War. Accusing South Korea of "luring and abducting those northerners like alley cats," a powerful North Korean state body said the action would plunge inter-Korean relations to the point of "acute confrontation". North Korea would extract a high price from South Korea and others who helped stage the "premeditated allurements, abduction and terrorism," Pyongyang's Committee for the Peaceful Reunification of the Fatherland said. Two South Korean chartered flights carried more than 450 North Korean refugees, who had been holed up in a Southeast Asian nation after escaping their impoverished homeland, to South Korea on Tuesday and Wednesday. It was the biggest mass defection to South Korea since the end of the 1950-53 Korean War. The operation was conducted behind a veil of secrecy and

South Korean officials have declined to comment on the defection or say where the North Koreans had been flown.

The News, 30 July 2004

After years of weighing pros and cons, China is now all for nuclear energy

Beijing: Not far from the 500,000-year-old Peking man's cave, hailed by the Chinese as a powerful symbol of the country's glorious past, scientists are hard at work building its even brighter nuclear future. Researchers at the China Institute of Atomic Energy in Tuoli, 40 kilometres (25 miles) from Beijing, are preparing for a new golden age with a recently strengthened mandate. After years of weighing the pros and cons, the government has come down firmly in favour of full-scale development of the country's nuclear energy industry in a bid to alleviate worsening power shortages. "There's a renewed sense of urgency to develop nuclear power in China," said Wu Kang, an energy analyst at the East-West Center, a Hawaii-based think-tank. "Nuclear power is now given high priority." Just this month, the Cabinet approved plans by the China National Nuclear Corp, the industry monopolist that is involved in the Tuoli complex, to build two new nuclear power projects in provinces hard hit by electricity shortages. China has just nine nuclear power units operating in three different locations, accounting for altogether 1.4 percent of the country's total installed capacity. That is even less than India, but the Chinese government hopes to dramatically increase that capacity so that by 2020, it will make up four percent of the total.

The Washington Post, 30 July 2004

No Progress in Nuclear Talks With Iran (Dafna Linzer)

A meeting yesterday between European and Iranian officials over Tehran's suspect nuclear program ended with the sides agreeing to continue discussions, but Secretary of State Colin L. Powell said it is increasingly likely the matter will have to be brought to the U.N. Security Council. The Paris meeting, attended by French, German

and British diplomats, was the first since Iran resumed nuclear work in June that it had promised to suspend 18 months earlier in exchange for European trade incentives. The three European powers, trying to defuse a standoff over Iran's nuclear efforts, want Tehran to work with U.N. nuclear inspectors and halt activities that could lead to weapons development. "The discussions are continuing with Iranian authorities toward obtaining all the guarantees relative to the peaceful nature of the Iranian nuclear program," said Herve Ladsous, spokesman for the French Foreign Ministry. He said the meeting was aimed at reestablishing trust between the sides.

Reuters, 30 July 2004

Iran Said Insisting on Enriching Uranium
Washington: Iran, intensifying a standoff over its nuclear programs, has told European officials it will not back down on its right to proceed with uranium enrichment, a senior U.S. official said on Friday. "The British and the French tell us Iran insists it will not back down on its right to proceed with enrichment," the official, speaking on condition of anonymity, told Reuters. During a meeting in Paris on Thursday that included Germany, the three European delegations responded that halting uranium enrichment was fundamental to a deal negotiated with Tehran last October, the U.S. official said. The Europeans added that "nothing else was coming if Iran didn't get back on the road to suspension, leading to cessation of enrichment and reprocessing," the American said. The European Union trio have given no details of their high-level talks with Iran. But a French spokesman said in Paris on Friday that they would push ahead with talks on Iran's nuclear program, even though Washington says a U.N. Security Council showdown is becoming increasingly likely.

Terror Wire, 30 July 2004

No Way of Nuclear Suitcases Disappearing from Russia

Moscow, July 30: In his book "Osama's Revenge" recently published in the United

States, the foremost writer Paul Williams claims that Al-Qaeda has laid hands on ten "nuclear suitcases" stolen from Russia. Colonel-General Viktor Yesin, first vice-president of the Academy for security, defense, law and order, says from the pages of the Nezavisimaya Gazeta that nuclear devices to be used by Al-Qaeda will anyway be of non-Russian origin. Viktor Yesin was one of those who checked the safety of "nuclear suitcases" and who personally counted their number. He asserts with full responsibility that suitcase-sized nuclear devices could not disappear from Russia (such a mine's nuclear charge with a capacity of up to one ton can completely devastate an area of 1,200-1,600 meters in diameter). It was at the initiative of George Bush, Sr., and Mikhail Gorbachev, says the colonel-general, that all mini nuclear weapons were to be eliminated. They were destroyed in the United States, according to certain data, at the end of 1991 and, according to other information, in 1992. Russia declared about the elimination of all nuclear mines at the conference on progress in implementing the nuclear non-proliferation treaty in the April of 2000.

The News, 31 July 2004

US insists all N Korea's nuclear programmes must be addressed

Beijing: The United States has told China there is no change in its demand that all Pyongyang's nuclear programmes be addressed in the search for a resolution to the festering nuclear standoff, the US embassy said on Friday. US envoy Joseph DeTrani conveyed the message to China's point man on North Korea Ning Fukui in talks here described as "in-depth" by Beijing. "In these meetings, DeTrani is conveying the well-known US position which includes the necessity for any resolution to the North Korean nuclear problem to address all North Korean nuclear programs," said an embassy spokesman. China is North Korea's closest ally and host

of six-party negotiations to resolve the issue. It has called for Washington and Pyongyang to show more mutual trust. According to US Assistant Secretary of State James Kelly, Washington's chief negotiator at the six-party talks, North Korea acknowledged at the last round in June that most of its nuclear programmes were weapons related.

The Washington Post, 31 July 2004

U.S. Shifts Stance on Nuclear Treaty

In a significant shift in U.S. policy, the Bush administration announced this week that it will oppose provisions for inspections and verification as part of an international treaty that would ban production of nuclear weapons materials. For several years the United States and other nations have pursued the treaty, which would ban new production by any state of highly enriched uranium and plutonium for weapons. At an arms-control meeting this week in Geneva, the Bush administration told other nations it still supported a treaty, but not verification. Administration officials, who have showed skepticism in the past about the effectiveness of international weapons inspections, said they made the decision after concluding that such a system would cost too much, would require overly intrusive inspections and would not guarantee compliance with the treaty. They declined, however, to explain in detail how they believed U.S. security would be harmed by creating a plan to monitor the treaty.