

The New York Times, 1 March 2006

**Editorial: Bush goes to India**

Relations between the United States and India have never been more important, thanks to global terrorism in the post-Sept. 11 world, the search for sustainable energy resources and the United Nations' pledge to halve world poverty by 2015. More than 500 million of the world's poor are Indian villagers. India is also home to one the largest Muslim populations in the world. So it's a pity that this trip, which should focus U.S. attention on such a rich array of issues, now revolves largely around whether India and America will manage to conclude a nuclear deal that shouldn't have been initiated to begin with. Bush's wrongheaded decision last year to make an end run around the Nuclear Nonproliferation Treaty by agreeing to share civilian nuclear technology with New Delhi took America's contain-China-by-building-up-India strategy a step too far. Congress would have to approve this nuclear deal, and it should kill it. If lawmakers approved the arrangement with India, other countries that signed on to the nonproliferation treaty would be tempted to reconsider the cost-benefit bargain that kept them from developing nuclear weapons.

The Indian Express, 1 March 2006

**Iran defies world on enrichment**

VIENNA, FEBRUARY 28: Iran is forging ahead with a nuclear fuel enrichment programme in defiance of world pressure and stonewalling UN probes spurred by fears it secretly wants atomic weapons, a UN watchdog report said on Monday. The report by IAEA director Mohamed ElBaradei was circulated to IAEA board members before they meet on March 6 to discuss it. The report will be forwarded to the UN Security Council, which could consider sanctions. "It is regrettable and a matter of concern that the uncertainties related to the scope and nature of Iran's nuclear programme have not been clarified after three years of intensive agency verification," said the report adding that Iran had begun vacuum-testing a cascade of 20 centrifuges-machines that purify uranium UF6 gas into fuel suitable for nuclear power plants or, if enriched to high levels, for bombs-at its Natanz Pilot enrichment plant. Iran had also begun substantial renovations of Natanz's system handling UF6.

The Hindu, 1 March 2006

**IAEA says no evidence of Iranian n-weapons plan (Atul Aneja)**

DUBAI: As the countdown for a crucial meeting on Iran on March 6 gets under way, the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) has revealed that it has not found any evidence that Teheran had diverted material towards making atomic weapons. In its report which has been circulated to its 35 board members, the IAEA said that its three years of investigations had not shown "any diversion of nuclear material to nuclear weapons or other nuclear explosive devices", the Associated Press reported. However, it called upon Iran to substantially increase its cooperation with the IAEA inspectors as the agency has not been able "to conclude that there are no undeclared nuclear materials or activities in Iran."

The Indian Express, 2 March 2006

**Iran says no to moratorium on enrichment**

MOSCOW, MARCH 1: Iran's top nuclear negotiator today rejected Moscow's demand for the reimposition of moratorium on uranium enrichment as part of the package for floating nuclear joint venture on Russian soil. "A moratorium is needed if something dangerous exists. We are at the research stage and all our activities are transparent," said Ali Larjani, who arrived here today to carry forward Moscow-Tehran talks on setting up a joint venture for uranium enrichment in Russia to allay fears of the international community over Iran's nuclear programme. Larjani said Iran was ready for any inspections by the IAEA if the inspections complied with international law. He said questions from the UN nuclear agency that Iran was answering were not related to the moratorium.

The Hindu, 2 March 2006

**Australia will not supply uranium till India signs NPT (K. Venugopal)**

Canberra: Australia will not supply natural uranium to India as long as it does not sign the nuclear non-proliferation treaty (NPT), Alexander Downer, Australia's Minister for Foreign Affairs, said in an interview here on Wednesday. He was responding to a question whether Australia saw a role for itself as a supplier of uranium to India in the event of the United States and India coming to an agreement that would help lift international sanctions on the Indian nuclear energy programme. Speaking to a couple of visiting Indian journalists ahead of Prime Minister John Howard's trip to New Delhi next week, Mr. Downer recalled that the foundation of his country's policy on nuclear supplies was that it would export uranium only to countries that had signed the treaty. Since India had not signed the NPT, and was not going to do so soon, the export could not happen.

The Washington Post, 3 March 2006

**U.S., India Reach Deal On Nuclear Cooperation (Jim VandeHei and Dafna Linzer)**

NEW DELHI, March 2 -- President Bush and Indian Prime Minister Manmohan Singh announced Thursday an unprecedented agreement that would provide U.S. nuclear power assistance to India while allowing the country to substantially step up its nuclear weapons production. The agreement, which marked a significant break from

decades of U.S. nuclear policy, highlighted the increasingly close relationship between the world's two largest democracies and enabled both leaders to declare Bush's visit a success. But it also drew protests from some politicians in both countries. In Washington, where the pact is subject to approval by Congress, some lawmakers said the goal of improved bilateral relations must be balanced against the need to curb nuclear proliferation. In India, a number of protests were held to oppose Bush's visit, and socialist groups warned that India should not succumb to U.S. pressure on nuclear issues. Under the agreement, India is to separate its civilian and military nuclear programs over the next eight years in order to gain U.S. expertise and nuclear fuel to meet its rapidly rising energy needs. India's civilian facilities would be subject for the first time to permanent international inspections.

The Hindu, 3 March 2006

#### **IAEA chief welcomes Indo-U.S. understanding**

NEW DELHI: International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) Director-General Mohamed ElBaradei welcomed the announcement of a civilian nuclear cooperation understanding between India and the United States on Thursday. "This agreement is an important step towards satisfying India's growing need for energy, including nuclear technology and fuel, as an engine for development. It would also bring India closer as an important partner in the non-proliferation regime," Dr. ElBaradei said in a statement posted on the IAEA website. "It would be a milestone, timely for ongoing efforts to consolidate the non-proliferation regime, combat nuclear terrorism and strengthen nuclear safety," the IAEA chief said hours after the India-U.S. understanding was announced. "The agreement would assure India of reliable access to nuclear technology and nuclear fuel. It would also be a step forward towards universalisation of the international safeguards regime," Dr. ElBaradei said.

The New York Times, 3 March 2006

#### **Bush and India Reach Pact That Allows Nuclear Sales** (Elisabeth Bumiller and Somini Sengupta)

NEW DELHI, March 2 - President Bush and Prime Minister Manmohan Singh of India announced here on Thursday what Mr. Bush called a "historic" nuclear pact that would help India satisfy its enormous civilian energy needs while allowing it to continue to develop nuclear weapons. Under the agreement, the United States would end a decades-long moratorium on sales of nuclear fuel and reactor components and India would separate its civilian and military nuclear programs, and open the civilian facilities to international inspections. The pact fills in the broad outlines of a plan that was negotiated in July. In Washington, Democratic and Republican critics said that India's willingness to subject some of its nuclear program to inspections was meaningless so long as the country had a secret military nuclear program alongside it, and that the pact would only encourage rogue nations like North Korea and Iran to continue to pursue nuclear weapons. They predicted a bruising fight in Congress over the pact, which needs its approval.

The Indian Express, 3 March 2006

#### **Before crucial IAEA meeting, Iran will talk to EU troika** (Dadan Upadhaya)

MOSCOW, MARCH 2: Iranian Supreme National Security Council secretary Ali Larijani said today Iran would hold negotiations with the European "troika" on its nuclear programme, ahead of the IAEA Board of Governors meeting on March 6. "We will hold negotiations with the European 'troika' in the near future," Larijani said. "We are willing to demonstrate our openness at any time and at any moment," he said, referring to the dialogue to be resumed with the European "troika" including Britain, France and Germany. Larijani said that Iran would express "willingness to accept any sensible approach" to the Tehran's nuclear programme at talks with Britain, France and Germany. He made it clear that Tehran wanted its nuclear issue to be resolved within the framework of the IAEA. "It would be improper and fallacious to pass Iran's nuclear dossier from the IAEA to the UN Security Council," he stressed adding that he also welcomed "inspections" on the part of the IAEA.

The Times of India, 3 March 2006

#### **N-deal between US, Pak not possible at this juncture'**

NEW DELHI: A nuclear deal between Washington and Islamabad is not possible at this juncture as there were 'concerns' over Pakistan's proliferation record, US Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice said tonight. "Everyone knows that there have been concerns in terms of proliferation with Pakistan. Pakistan itself is aware of it. We are working with Pakistan to improve on proliferation," Rice said in an interview to an Indian news channel. Asked whether the US could sign a nuclear deal with Pakistan as it did with India when President George W Bush visits that country, she said "this is not a stage Pakistan is currently in ..... This is not the time for such an arrangement with Pakistan".

The Indian Express, 4 March 2006

#### **Last bid to strike EU-Iran deal fails; N-Talks With just three days to go to the IAEA meet, UNSC action seems certain** (George Jahn)

VIENNA, MARCH 3: Talks between European Union negotiators and Iran over its nuclear ambitions broke up on Friday without any agreement, paving the way for potential UN Security Council action against Tehran as early as next week. "Unfortunately we were not able to reach an agreement," said French Foreign Minister Philippe Douste-Blazy. He said the EU continues to demand "full and complete suspension" of uranium enrichment and

related activities that have fed fears that Iran may be seeking nuclear arms. Germany's Frank-Walter Steinmeier said the meeting ended "without achieving a result." The sides met for just over two hours. The talks took place just three days before a meeting of the IAEA's 35-nation board. The board put the Security Council on the alert on February 4 after Iran refused to heed requests to reimpose a suspension on enrichment, which can make either nuclear fuel or the fissile material for warheads.

The Washington Post, 4 March 2006

**U.S. Plans to Modernize Nuclear Arsenal** (Walter Pincus)

The Bush administration is developing plans to design and deploy refurbished or replacement warheads for the nuclear stockpile, and by 2030 to modernize the production complex so that, if required, it could produce new generations of weapons with different or modified capabilities. Referring to goals established two years ago, Ambassador Linton F. Brooks, administrator of the National Nuclear Security Administration (NNSA), told the House Armed Services subcommittee on strategic forces Wednesday that "we will revitalize our weapons design community to meet the challenge of being able to adapt an existing weapon within 18 months, and design, develop and begin production of a new design within three to four years of a decision to enter engineering development." A study by NNSA for restructuring the aging weapons complex, which includes dealing with facilities that dismantle retired weapons, should be sent to Congress this spring, Brooks said. Although there is some updating and modernizing of the present complex, "full infrastructure changes . . . will take a couple of decades," Brooks said.

The New York Times, 6 March 2006

**Russia and West Split on Iran Nuclear Issue** (Elaine Sciolino)

VIENNA, March 6 - A serious rift emerged Monday when Russia split with the United States and Europe over Iran's nuclear program after the Russians floated a last-minute proposal to allow Iran to make small quantities of nuclear fuel, according to European officials. The reports of the proposal prompted Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice to call Mohamed ElBaradei, the director of the International Atomic Energy Agency, and according to an administration official who was briefed on the conversation, "she said the United States cannot support this." Ms. Rice's call came after Dr. ElBaradei suggested to reporters that the standoff with Iran could be resolved in a week or so, apparently an allusion to the Russian proposal. Washington's strategy is to get past the meeting of the I.A.E.A. that opened Monday and, under a resolution passed by the agency's board in February, have the issue turned over to the United Nations Security Council immediately. But officials clearly fear that the Russian proposal is intended to slow that process.

The Hindu, 6 March 2006

**Iran not to give up n-research** (Atul Aneja)

DUBAI: Disregarding exhortations from key western countries to freeze uranium enrichment, Iran on the eve of a crucial meeting of the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) Board has reiterated that it would not give up nuclear research. It signalled that talks with Moscow over conducting mainstream enrichment on Russian soil had not reached a dead-end. But it pointed out that the resumption of uranium enrichment in minute quantities for research purposes at Natanz had also come under sharp focus. The U.S. and the European Union have spearheaded a campaign demanding that Iran should not be permitted to conduct enrichment for research as it could give it the "breakout capacity" or the know-how to make atomic weapons, though not the material itself. Iran's Foreign Office spokesman Hamid Reza Asefi said on Sunday that conducting research was Teheran's bottom line.

The Indian Express, 7 March 2006

**Iran nuclear deal is still possible, says ElBaradei**

VIENNA, MARCH 6: The head of the UN nuclear watchdog agency said on Monday that a deal on Iran's suspect nuclear programme could be only a few days away, making UN SC action unneeded. International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) head Mohamed ElBaradei's optimism was believed to be linked to a confidential Russian proposal to allow Iran to enrich some uranium domestically, diplomats said on condition of anonymity because they were not authorised to speak to reporters. "I am still very much hopeful that in the next week an agreement could be reached," ElBaradei told reporters, without elaborating. However the plan - which Russian Foreign Minister Sergey Lavrov planned to discuss with officials in Washington later on Monday - was expected to meet strong US resistance over fears it could be misused to make nuclear weapons.

The Times of India, 7 March 2006

**Australia rejects India's uranium plea**

NEW DELHI: Australian Prime Minister John Howard on Monday said no to India's request to reconsider a ban on exporting uranium, but agreed to set up a group of officials to discuss the possibility of civil nuclear cooperation with New Delhi. "We have no current intention of selling uranium to countries who have not signed the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT)," Howard told reporters at a joint press interaction with Indian Prime Minister Manmohan Singh at the Hyderabad House here. "We have had a long-standing policy on this. We are not going

to suddenly and dramatically change it. We can't change this policy at a press conference," he said, while admitting that the India-US nuclear pact was "a significant agreement". "We look at it positively. It shows that India sees the need to interact with other countries on the issue," he said.

The Indian Express, 8 March 2006

#### **N-deal doesn't recognise India as nuclear weapon state, says Burns**

WASHINGTON, MARCH 7: The US has made it clear that the Indo-US nuclear deal does not amount to recognition of India as a nuclear weapon state. "India has a strategic programme. The US and other countries have not recognised that programme. This agreement does not recognise that programme," said Under Secretary of State for Political Affairs Nicholas Burns while launching a campaign to drum up support for the deal from sceptical lawmakers. Burns, who played a key role in clinching the deal, said the pact would bring India into the "non-proliferation mainstream" and dismissed any comparison between the Indian and Iranian programmes. Giving a preview of the Bush Administration's decision, he said here yesterday that the deal was good for India and America, and brought "India into the non-proliferation mainstream." The agreement finalised during Bush's visit to New Delhi last week "will allow India for the first time in the life of its nuclear programme... To be able to submit itself in a transparent way for international inspections. We think this is a major gain for the non-proliferation community."

The Hindu, 8 March 2006

#### **No curb on nuclear facilities: Manmohan**

NEW DELHI: Asserting that India's ability to sustain a minimum credible nuclear deterrent remains adequately protected, Prime Minister Manmohan Singh on Tuesday assured Parliament that the India-U.S. nuclear deal and the 'Separation Plan' of civil and military nuclear facilities will not adversely affect the country's strategic programme. In identical statements in both Houses of Parliament, the Prime Minister said no constraint has been placed on India's right to construct new facilities for strategic purposes. "The integrity of our Nuclear Doctrine and our ability to sustain a minimum credible nuclear deterrent is adequately protected," Dr. Singh said. The Prime Minister announced that the CIRUS (Canadian-Indian-U.S.) reactor would be permanently shut down in 2010. The fuel core of the Apsara reactor was purchased from France and the Government was ready to shift it from its present location and make it available for placing under the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) safeguards in 2010.

The Indian Express, 8 March 2006

#### **Iran talks delicately poised** (Atul Aneja)

DUBAI: Amid a flurry of diplomatic activity, Iran, Russia and China have stepped up efforts to keep negotiations on Iran's controversial nuclear programme confined to the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA). The Russians are playing a lead role in identifying the basic elements of a deal which can block the United Nations Security Council from becoming the key forum for addressing the crisis. After hectic diplomacy in recent weeks, progress in negotiations is hinging on one key issue - whether Iran should be allowed to conduct small-scale uranium enrichment for research purposes. Russia feels that Iran should be allowed to do so, provided it does not get access to technology that can be used for making atomic weapons. Foreign Minister Sergei Lavrov headed for Washington on Monday where discussions on this proposal are taking place. He met U.S. Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice on Monday night and will call on President George Bush later on Tuesday. The U.S. is firm that Iran must cease all nuclear work, including small-scale uranium processing for research.

The Indian Express, 8 March 2006

#### **Russia-Iran plan under US threat**

VIENNA (AUSTRIA), MARCH 7: A strong US opposition appeared close to sinking a Russian initiative that would leave Iran with a small-scale uranium enrichment programme, diplomats said today as Moscow and Washington struggled to find common ground on what to do about Iran's nuclear ambitions. One of the diplomats, who spoke outside a meeting of the IAEA's 35-nation board, said Germany remained open to the proposal, which would allow the Iranians to run 20 uranium enriching centrifuges domestically while ceding control of large-scale enrichment to Moscow, on Russian soil. As the board meeting entered its second day, German representatives met their counterparts from France and UK-which both back the US in opposing the plan-to try to re-establish a common European stance on enrichment, said the diplomats.

The New York Times, 7 March 2006

#### **White House Issues Warning on Iran's Nuclear Ambitions** (Christine Hauser)

Bush administration officials reiterated their firm opposition to Iranian nuclear ambitions today, with Vice President Dick Cheney lashing out at Iran as the Russian foreign minister started talks in Washington that included his country's proposal to enrich uranium for Iran's energy needs. During a speech in Washington at the annual gathering of the nation's top pro-Israel lobbying group, the American Israel Public Affairs Committee, Mr. Cheney volunteered his assessment of Iran as continuing to defy the world with its nuclear ambitions and said that the United States was keeping "all options on the table." "The Iranian regime needs to know that if it stays on its present course, the international community is prepared to impose meaningful consequences," Mr. Cheney said.

The New York Times, 9 March 2006

**Threats Rattle at Nuclear Meeting on Iran** (Elaine Sciolino)

VIENNA, March 8 - Negotiating over Iran's nuclear program has come to resemble an endless session of global poker. In the latest round, played Wednesday in the boardroom of the international nuclear agency here, distrust beat diplomacy. The Iranian side upped the ante by blaming the United States for Iran's predicament - consideration of its nuclear activities in the United Nations Security Council next week - and threatened retaliation. "The United States may have the power to cause harm and pain," Javad Vaeedi, a senior Iranian nuclear negotiator, told reporters at the end of the meeting. "But it is also susceptible to harm and pain. So if the United States wants to pursue that path, let the ball roll." The threat did not seem to be an off-hand remark. The threat was contained, in almost the same wording and with the same mixed metaphor, in Iran's speech to the 35-nation board of the International Atomic Energy Agency and in a separate formal statement. In Iran meanwhile, President Mahmoud Ahmadinejad vowed that those who wanted to "violate the rights of the Iranian nation will quickly regret their actions."

The Indian Express, 9 March 2006

**IAEA sending Iran report to UNSC today**

VIENNA, MARCH 8: The end of Wednesday's meeting of the 35-member board of the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) set the path for Security Council action on the Iranian nuclear issue. The IAEA chief, Mohamed ElBaradei, said his staff would send his report on Iran's nuclear programme to the council by Thursday. The US and its European allies said Iran's nuclear intransigence left the world no choice. The Security Council could impose economic and political sanctions on Iran. Wednesday's meeting was in effect the last step before the Security Council begins considering Iran's nuclear activities and the international fears they could be misused to make weapons. It began with both Iran and the nations opposing its enrichment plans sticking to their positions.

The Indian Express, 9 March 2006

**Bush seeks Congress backing for India deal** (Lalit K Jha)

NEW YORK, MARCH 8 : US President, George Bush, who has made Congressional approval of the Indo-US nuclear deal as a "high priority" for his administration, on Tuesday met influential members of the Congress seeking their views and soliciting support on the civilian nuclear agreement with India. "The entire meeting was all nuclear. That was the discussion all about," Gary Ackerman, co-chair Congressional Caucus on India and Indian-Americans, told The Indian Express, after the meeting. Seven "key" members each from the House and Senate were invited for the presidential meeting held at White House. Bush was aided by the Secretary of State, Condoleezza Rice, and the Under Secretary of State for Political Affairs, Nicholas Burns, in his briefing to the Congressmen about trip to South Asia. Among House members were Duncan Hunter, Chairman of Armed Services Committee; Tom Lantos, ranking minority member of the International Relations Committee; David Obey, ranking minority member of Appropriations Committee; John Kolbe, Chairman of Appropriations Committee; Ike Skelton, ranking minority member of the Armed Services Committee and Ros-Lehtinen, who is co-chair of the Congressional Caucus on India and Indian Americans along with Ackerman. These are considered to play to "key role" in the Congressional committees, which would approve the Indo-US civilian nuclear agreement and the related legislative amendments to be carried out by the Congress.

The Washington Post, 9 March 2006

**N. Korea Sets Terms for Return to Nuclear Talks** (Glenn Kessler)

In a rare meeting between U.S. and North Korean officials this week, North Korea pressed the United States to end efforts to stem alleged money-laundering and counterfeiting activities, warning that otherwise it would not return to the six-nation talks on its nuclear programs. Li Gun, the senior North Korean official at the meeting, made four requests, according to a U.S. official familiar with the talks, including demanding that the United States remove what he called "financial sanctions," form a joint U.S.-North Korean task force to examine the counterfeiting concerns, give North Korea access to the U.S. banking system, and provide North Korea with technical help on identifying counterfeit bills. The U.S. officials viewed the meeting as only a briefing, not a negotiation, and rejected any link between Treasury Department actions to thwart alleged counterfeiting and the six-party talks. D. Kathleen Stephens, the principal deputy assistant secretary of state for East Asia, opened the meeting, but the briefing was led by Daniel Glaser, a deputy assistant Treasury secretary.

The Guardian, 10 March 2006

**Iran is only months from bomb technology, says Britain** (Simon Tisdall and Ian Traynor)

The west's confrontation with Iran over its nuclear activities intensified yesterday after Britain claimed that Tehran could acquire the technological capability to build a bomb by the end of the year. A day after the International Atomic Energy Agency referred the dispute to the United Nations security council, British officials also indicated that London would back Washington's efforts to impose a UN deadline of about 30 days for Iran's compliance with international demands. The five permanent members of the security council began consultations on an expected statement on Iran on Wednesday after Russian-led attempts to broker a compromise at the IAEA in Vienna failed. A deadline could be set as early as next week and would cover a period "of weeks, not months", officials said. A senior Foreign Office official said that while it could take Iran several years to build a serviceable nuclear weapon,

it might gain the technical knowhow within months. "By the end of the year is a ... realistic period," said the official. "It would be really damaging to regional security if Iran even acquired the technology to enable it to develop a nuclear weapon."

The Hindu, 10 March 2006

#### **Nuke deal will not affect strategic programmes: Kakodkar**

Mumbai, March 10. (PTI): Atomic Energy Commission Chairman Anil Kakodkar on Thursday said the Minimum Credible Nuclear Deterrent (MCND) will be kept intact as per the country's original Nuclear Doctrine. "The separation plan of civilian nuclear plants will not adversely affect country's strategic programme and there will be no capping of our strategic programme," he asserted recalling the statement made by Manmohan Singh in Parliament. The proposed separation plan ensures enough fissile material and other inputs to meet the current and future requirements of country's strategic programme, based on "our assessment of the threat perception," he said adding "no constraints whatsoever is placed on our right to construct new facilities for strategic purposes." "The integrity of India's nuclear doctrine and our ability to sustain a Minimum credible nuclear deterrent is adequately protected. Our nuclear policy will continue to be guided by the principles of restraint and responsibility," he reiterated. "The separation plan does not come in the way of the integrity of country's three-staged indigenous nuclear development programme," Kakodkar added.

The Hindu, 10 March 2006

#### **Deal will not fuel arms race: U.S.**

Washington: In an exercise aimed at silencing critics of the India-U.S. nuclear deal, the Bush administration has rejected charges that the pact would fuel an arms race in South Asia and set the stage for recognition of India as a nuclear weapons state. As the administration faced an uphill task of getting the accord approved by Congress, the White House on Wednesday rebutted criticism of the pact, especially by those in the non-proliferation community a day after President George Bush met top lawmakers to discuss the agreement and seek their support. The White House said the deal does not set a bad precedent for countries like Iran, North Korea or Israel, fuel an arms race in the region, assist India's nuclear weapons programme or set the stage for its recognition as a nuclear weapons state. "This is a historic agreement that brings India into the non-proliferation mainstream and addresses its growing energy needs through increased use of nuclear energy in cooperation with the international community."

The Indian Express, 11 March 2006

#### **EU sees sanctions on Iran as inevitable**

SALZBURG, MARCH 10: EU's foreign ministers were to take stock on Friday of international efforts to get Iran to resolve concerns over its nuclear programme. A senior EU official cautioned sanctions may lay ahead. "At a later stage, sanctions of some kind can't be excluded. Let's wait and see what the Security Council does," the EU's foreign policy chief, Javier Solana was quoted as saying by the Austrian daily Der Standard in an interview published on Friday. "We are only at the beginning. I don't exclude sanctions but it depends on the type of sanctions. We certainly don't want to target the Iranian people," said Solana. French Foreign Minister Philippe Douste-Blazy urged Iran on Friday to return rapidly to "reason" as the standoff over its nuclear programme moved to the Council. "The hand is extended. Negotiations are possible," Douste-Blazy said on RTL radio in France. "Iran must understand that it has no choice. It has the right to civilian nuclear energy, it does not have the right to something else."

The Times Of India, 11 March 2006

#### **India reaches out to nuclear deal naysayers** (Indrani Bagchi)

NEW DELHI: As the Bush administration sent a draft legislation on the US-India nuclear agreement to the Congress, there were apprehensions in India about whether Beltway politics could kill the deal. After George Bush lost the political battle on the Dubai ports deal on Thursday under pressure from Republicans, 'spinmeisters' in the Indian government are considering an extensive "outreach" campaign, particularly among the high-profile naysayers in Washington. The UPA government initially felt that after expending so much political capital in India, they would let the 'Bushies' do their own thing in Washington, to bring Congress around. But Bush's loss on the Dubai deal, one where he even invoked the presidential veto, clearly shows that the US president may need a hand in getting the India deal through. Reluctantly, the Indian government will shed its hesitancy and pull out the old elbow grease. It's not an approach that has wide support within the Indian establishment - a large section of opinion would prefer to let the Americans do their own convincing.

The Hindu, 11 March 2006

#### **U.K. helped Israel get nuclear bomb** (Hasan Suroor)

LONDON: It has been called Britain's "dirty secret" - and now it is out, much to the embarrassment of Prime Minister Tony Blair as he leads the U.S.-orchestrated campaign against Iran over its nuclear programme. According to classified documents obtained by the BBC under the Freedom of Information Act, Britain helped Israel with its secret nuclear programme in the 1960s by supplying it small but significant quantities of plutonium despite intelligence warnings that it was likely to make a "material contribution to an Israeli weapons

programme". The disclosure, coupled with previous revelations that Britain sold Israel heavy water - a key substance in building a bomb - has prompted accusations that it tried to "cover up" its role in facilitating Israel's nuclear programme. The latest revelation is particularly embarrassing for the Blair administration because it relates to the period when Labour was in power with Harold Wilson as Prime Minister. Ironically, the Ministry of Technology, which did the secret deal with Israel despite opposition from the Defence Ministry and the Foreign Office, was then headed by Tony Benn, a leading Left-wing figure and an indefatigable champion of nuclear disarmament.

The Hindu, 12 March 2006

#### **Nuclear deal with India a right step for U.S.: Burns**

Washington: United States President George W. Bush and senior members of his administration, including Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice, will be personally involved in the legislative process regarding the civilian nuclear energy agreement with India that has to formally clear Capitol Hill, Under-Secretary of State for Political Affairs Nicholas Burns said on Saturday. The legislation would be formally introduced in about two weeks, he added. Speaking at the Coalition for Partnership with India (CPI), a forum created and managed by the U.S. Chamber of Commerce and having as its major player the United States India Business Council led by Ron Somers, he said the civilian nuclear deal was the right thing for the U.S. "We are confident that it is the right step for the United States," Mr. Burns told the audience, stressing that Washington is confident that the arrangement strengthens the non-proliferation regimes.

The New York Times, 13 March 2006

#### **Russia Accuses Iran of Blocking Nuclear Diplomacy**

TEHRAN (Reuters) - Russia on Monday accused Iran of obstructing its diplomatic efforts to settle Tehran's nuclear dispute with the West, but the Iranians said they were still interested in a Russian compromise. "We are extremely disappointed with the way Iran is behaving in the course of these talks," Russia's RIA news agency quoted Foreign Minister Sergei Lavrov as saying. "Iran is absolutely no help to those who want to find peaceful ways to solve this problem." A senior Iranian official earlier insisted Tehran wanted a diplomatic way out of the nuclear standoff and was still considering the Russian proposal, apparently retracting remarks by the Iranian Foreign Ministry spokesman a day earlier. Tehran has sent mixed signals on Russia's offer to enrich uranium for Iran on Russian soil to supply Iranian nuclear power reactors and ensure no fuel is diverted to bomb-making.

The Washington Post, 13 March 2006

#### **Iran Rejects Russia's Proposal on Uranium (Karl Vick)**

TEHRAN, March 12 -- Iran rejected an offer from Russia to enrich uranium on its behalf Sunday, closing the door on what had been the most promising diplomatic resolution to international concerns over its nuclear program. "The Russian proposal is not on our agenda anymore," a Foreign Ministry spokesman, Hamid Reza Asefi, told reporters at a conference on energy and security in the Iranian capital. "The situation has changed. We should wait and see how developments will go on among different states, including the five permanent members of the United Nations Security Council." Foreign Minister Manouchehr Mottaki told reporters in Tehran that Iran would not use oil as a weapon in the dispute over its nuclear program, but suggested that it might withdraw from the nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty.

The New York Times March 14, 2006

#### **Showdown at U.N.? Iran Seems Calm**

PARIS, March 13: After trying for years to prevent having its nuclear program judged in the United Nations Security Council, Iran has shifted course and decided to confront the Council head on. Iran is gambling that the 15 members, who plan to take up the Iranian dossier this week for the first time, will be too divided to inflict meaningful punishment. Sanctions against Iran, the second largest oil producer in OPEC, could further destabilize the oil markets. Military force, at least for the moment, is unlikely, with American troops stretched thin in Iraq and Afghanistan. So Iran's leaders have stopped trying to woo the world and now say they want the process to take its course.

Reuters March 14, 2006

#### **Congress may set terms on U.S.-India nuclear deal**

WASHINGTON: Congress may seek to put unspecified conditions on a landmark U.S.-India nuclear-energy agreement despite Bush administration warnings that such moves could scuttle the deal, a key lawmaker said on Monday. The disclosure by Rep. Henry Hyde, chairman of the House of Representatives International Relations Committee, could presage more trouble for the controversial accord, which has come under sharp attack from lawmakers and others concerned about the proliferation of nuclear weapons. "This is a complex agreement with profound implications for U.S. and global interests. Congress will need to take a close look at its many provisions in order to come to an informed decision," Hyde was quoted as saying. The administration on Thursday formally asked Congress to begin implementing the deal by changing U.S. laws to permit nuclear sales to India, ending a three-decades-old ban. The 45-nation Nuclear Suppliers Group, which oversees nuclear transfers, also must

change its rules.

The Statesman, March 16, 2006

### **Govt defends Russian fuel**

NEW DELHI, March 15: India has said that there is no violation of NSG guidelines in the proposed Russian supply of fuel for Tarapur. This clarification came after the US yesterday noted that any deal to supply fuel to India should be a joint initiative on the basis of steps that India will take that it has not yet taken. It effectively censured India and Russia for jumping the gun before the NSG guidelines had been modified to make an exception in transfer of technology under the civilian nuclear energy agreement. The safety exception clause allows fuel transfers if it is feared that a nuclear hazard could result from a reactor being kept non-functioning due to lack of fuel. India has had to seek urgent and limited supplies of uranium fuel to enable Tarapur to continue its operations in safety, Mr Sarna was quoted as saying. Russia had used the same safety exception clause to explain its proposal to supply 58 tons of low-enriched uranium to Tarapur in 2001. But the Nuclear Suppliers Group had convened a special session and censured Russia, noting that the use of the clause in this particular case was not in its spirit. Russia had thereafter given an undertaking not to do such a thing, again.

The Hindu, March 17, 2006

### **India a non-proliferator, says U.S President**

Silver Spring (United States): United States President George W. Bush asserted that India had been a non-proliferator, and said Congress should pass a law that would allow sale of nuclear technology to New Delhi. "India is a non-proliferator. It has been a non-proliferator for the past 30 years. They have got a record, and in my judgment, [the record] should cause Congress to pass old law. Treat them as a new partner, as India wants to be a part of international agreements that will deal with proliferation," Mr. Bush said on Wednesday. He said he did not think the July 18, 2005 civilian nuclear energy pact between India and the U.S. would harm Washington's relations with Pakistan.

The Hindu, March 17, 2006

### **Bill in U.S. Congress for India-specific waiver**

Washington: The United States on Thursday introduced legislation in Congress, setting in motion the process of implementing the Washington-New Delhi civilian nuclear agreement, which will allow the flow of nuclear technology and equipment to India. The Bill seeks to amend the Atomic Energy Act of 1954 to provide for an India-specific waiver to enable the country to get nuclear technology for its growing energy needs. The Bill, based on the Bush administration's draft proposal sent last week to the House and the Senate, is the first step towards amending laws such as the Atomic Energy Act, which bars trade in nuclear technology and dual-use items with countries that do not accept full scope safeguards on their nuclear facilities.

The Times of India, March 17, 2006

### **India ready to shoulder global role: US report**

WASHINGTON: India is now poised to shoulder global obligations in cooperation with the United States "in a way befitting a major power," the Bush administration said on Thursday in a sweeping overview of American strategic interests worldwide. The administration's National Security Strategy document for 2006 built on its 2002 report which first identified India as a "growing world power with which we have common strategic interest." In effect, the latest report said New Delhi has arrived and spoke more glowingly about India than any other country. While the 2002 report spoke about residual differences over development of India's nuclear and missile programme, the new report released Thursday referred only to the "bold agreement" of July 2005, calling it a "a roadmap to realize the meaningful cooperation that had eluded our two nations for decades."

The Times of India, March 17, 2006

### **'N-fuel supply doesn't violate guidelines'**

NEW DELHI: Russian Prime Minister Mikhail Fradkov, who on Thursday began a two-day visit to India, has said Moscow's decision to supply uranium fuel to New Delhi did not violate any international guidelines. Admitting that his government was willing to supply enriched uranium for two Indian reactors, Fradkov said: "This doesn't contradict any international commitment." Speaking at a business dinner meeting here with India's Commerce Minister Kamal Nath, Fradkov said Russia had informed the Nuclear Suppliers Group (NSG) about the supply of uranium to the safeguarded reactors at Tarapur. Moscow's decision to supply nuclear fuel has faced flak from Washington, which has demanded that New Delhi first fulfill its voluntary obligation of separating civilian and military nuclear facilities before it is given fuel by NSG members.

The BBC, March 18, 2006

### **Iran confrontation moves to next stage**

The United Nations Security Council is to take up the issue of Iran's nuclear activities, heralding the start of a new phase in the confrontation. The move follows a report on Iran by the UN's nuclear watchdog, the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA), which said that it could not "conclude that there are no undeclared nuclear materials or activities in Iran". It takes the crisis to an arena where Western powers are determined to put Iran in

the dock, and where they will try to muster support for sanctions. But sanctions are a long way off, and might not come at all. Russia and China, which hold veto powers in the council, are reluctant to see sanctions applied.

The Washington Post, March 18, 2006

### **Russia Rejects U.N. Proposals on Iran**

UNITED NATIONS -- Russia's U.N. ambassador on Friday rejected proposals for the U.N. Security Council to demand a quick progress report on Iran's suspect nuclear program, saying - only half in jest - that fast action could lead to the bombing of Iran by June. The latest drafts retain many elements that Russia and China have opposed. A key sticking point for Russia is a proposal asking Mohamed ElBaradei, the chief of the International Atomic Energy Agency, to deliver a progress report in two weeks on Iran's progress toward clearing up suspicions about its nuclear program. Russia and China say two weeks is far too soon. The ambassadors of Britain, France and the United States said they were flexible on the 14-day deadline, and diplomats suggested that the council could ultimately ask for a report in 30-45 days as a concession to Russia and China.

The Washington Post, March 18, 2006

### **Bush Adviser Says Iran Bluffing on Iraq**

WASHINGTON - President Bush's top foreign policy adviser said on Friday that Iran's new willingness to talk about Iraq with the United States is probably a ploy designed to "divert pressure and divert attention" from international concern that Tehran wants a nuclear bomb. The United States has accused Iran of using a civilian nuclear program as a cover to build atomic weapons, an allegation Tehran denies. The U.N. Security Council is expected to discuss Iran's nuclear program this month, with Washington pressing for penalties. The Bush administration views Tehran's acceptance of an American offer to talk about Iraq, made months ago, as an indication that Iran is feeling the international heat, national security adviser Steven J. Hadley said.

Khaleej Times, March 19, 2006

### **US-India civil nuclear deal will upset balance of power**

ISLAMABAD - Pakistan has expressed its concerns over the US-India civil nuclear deal saying it would upset the balance of power in the region. Addressing Army soldiers at Darbar-e-Mahal in Bahawalpur, President Gen. Pervez Musharraf said US-India deal on civil nuclear technology cooperation will upset the balance of power in the region but added Pakistan is fulfilling its defence needs with Chinese cooperation. Gen Musharraf said Pakistan's nuclear arsenal is in safe hands and there is no need to worry about it.

The Times of India, March 20, 2006

### **India, US begin process of finalising N-deal**

NEW DELHI: Having taken a breather after hyperactive negotiations of the past few months, India and US will now start work on the next phase of the nuclear agreement. As the draft legislation by the Bush administration makes its tortuous way through the US Congress, the two countries have begun the outline of a final bilateral civil nuclear agreement, imaginatively called the "123 agreement". India received the first draft of the agreement last week. Foreign secretary Shyam Saran will now travel to Washington at the end of this month to work out the details of the document with US undersecretary of state Nicholas Burns. This will be a much easier agreement to work through than the separation plan, which was presented to the US side during US president George W Bush's visit. Since most of the thorny issues between the two countries have already been resolved the "123" will simply be reflected in the agreement.

The Times of India, March 21, 2006

### **Indo-US nuclear deal finds support in Senate**

WASHINGTON: The US-India nuclear deal is set to sail through the US Senate following the backing it has got from Washington's top lawmaker on nuclear issues. Senator Richard Lugar, who heads the Senate Foreign Relations Committee that will review the deal, has said that despite doubts about the agreement in various quarters, he feels "a majority of members of the Senate... are probably going to come down on the side of the legislation" once their concerns are addressed. A preliminary estimate made by lobbying groups suggests that the deal has majority support in the 18-member Senate Foreign Relations Committee (SFRC), with very few lawmakers inclined to oppose it.

The Washington Post, March 21, 2006

### **Nunn Urges Congress to Set Conditions on U.S.-India Nuclear Pact**

In a setback for the administration's efforts to win approval of a landmark nuclear pact with India, former senator Sam Nunn said yesterday that he has serious concerns the deal would harm the "United States' vital interest" in preventing nuclear proliferation and urged Congress to set conditions for its support. "Congress has a duty to look at the broader framework," Nunn, a moderate and highly respected Georgia Democrat who still has broad influence in both parties on proliferation and military matters, said in an interview. "If I were still in Congress, I would be skeptical and looking at conditions that could be attached." Nunn, who was briefed on the deal by State Department officials last week, said he is concerned it would lead to the spread of weapons-grade nuclear

material, unleash a regional arms race with China and Pakistan, and make it more difficult for the United States to win support for sanctions against nuclear renegades such as Iran and North Korea.

Daily Times, March 22, 2006

#### **US-India nuclear deal could be bad news for Kashmir**

ISLAMABAD: Nuclear cooperation between the United States and India could have severe implications for the Kashmir issue, lead to an arms race in South Asia and strategic regional instability, speakers at a public talk said. The programme, organized by the Institute of Strategic Studies, Islamabad (ISSI), was chaired by ISSI Chairman Inam-ul-Haque. Prominent defence analyst Lt Gen (r) Talat Masood, and Dr Shireen Mazari, director general ISSI, spoke on the occasion. Lt Gen (r) Masood, expressing concern over the deal, said that the US wanted to develop India into a power to contain China and fight against "radical Islam". Masood said that the deal would open new areas of cooperation between India and the United States including giving India the opportunity to use US intelligence sources against Pakistan. He said that the US had adopted a discriminatory attitude towards Pakistan because it was not providing it with the same technology that it had offered to India.

The Hindu, March 22, 2006

#### **Pakistan test-fires Hatf missile**

ISLAMABAD: Pakistan on Tuesday tested for the second time its 500-km range cruise missile Hatf VII (Babur), which can carry all types of warheads. President Pervez Musharraf witnessed the test, conducted at an undisclosed destination. "All phases of the planned trajectory were extremely successful and the missile impacted with pinpoint accuracy," an Inter-Services Public Relations (ISPR) release said. The indigenously developed Babur was tested for the first time in August 2005. The cruise missile, which was tested in the ground-launched version, could also be placed in submarines and on surface ships, the statement said. Babur, which has near-stealth capabilities, is a low flying, terrain-hugging missile with high manoeuvrability, pinpoint accuracy and radar avoidance features, says the ISPR.

The Indian Express, March 23, 2006

#### **For n-deal, India law too being changed**

New Delhi: Work has begun in Mumbai to give a new shape to the Indian Atomic Energy Act of 1962 for precisely the same reason. Two specific amendments are most essential for benefits of the nuclear deal to fructify. First, the Atomic Energy Act has to be amended to allow private players to set up atomic power plants?under existing rules, they are banned from undertaking this activity. Second, and perhaps more importantly, the regulatory framework which governs atomic energy in India has to be strengthened to build public confidence that safety of nuclear plants will be taken care of while letting in private players. Anil Kakodkar, chairman of the Atomic Energy Commission (AEC), told The Indian Express that amendments in the Atomic Energy Act are necessary and the long process to change the Act has been initiated.

BBC News, March 24, 2006

#### **US lobbies for India nuclear deal**

US officials are trying to persuade the world's nuclear technology providers to back a controversial deal allowing India greater access to advancements. In Vienna, US officials are briefing the 45-member Nuclear Suppliers Group, which along with the US Congress must approve the deal for it to proceed. The US is trying to answer the concerns of those who believe the deal with India renders the NPT obsolete. The Vienna meeting is not expected to come to a decision - that is likely to come at another meeting in June. Critics have accused the US of double standards given its strong opposition to Iran's nuclear programme.

The Hindu, March 24, 2006

#### **Burns hopeful of making convincing case in Congress**

WASHINGTON: President George W. Bush and Undersecretary of State Nicholas Burns have urged Congress to approve a landmark plan to share nuclear technology with India ? a deal that could be a tough sell to lawmakers. "India can be trusted," Mr. Burns said. Mr. Bush said India has proved itself over 30 years to be a non-proliferator. "It's in our interest that India use nuclear power to power their economic growth because ... there's a global connection between demand for fossil fuels elsewhere and price here," he said on Wednesday in West Virginia, where he made remarks on Iraq and the war on terror. Critics, including former Senator Sam Nunn, are sceptical of the recent agreement reached by Mr. Bush and Prime Minister Manmohan Singh. It requires Congress to exempt India from U.S. laws that restrict trade with countries that have not submitted to full nuclear inspections.

The Hindu, March 25, 2006

#### **Iran speeds up n-programme**

Iran is racing ahead with preparations to enrich uranium as the big powers struggle to decide on their next moves aimed at resolving the nuclear crisis surrounding the country. Inspectors from the International Atomic Energy Agency, charged with investigating Iran's nuclear programme, say the Iranians are assembling and making operational dozens of centrifuge machines for enriching uranium at their vast complex in Natanz south of Teheran. According to diplomats, the Iranians are in the process of achieving a "technological leap" by making operational a cascade of 164 centrifuges to enrich uranium for power plants or warheads. A fortnight ago they

were known to have assembled only 34 centrifuges. They are believed to be rushing to assemble dozens more at a time when western negotiations with Teheran have collapsed and big power attempts to develop a coherent policy are deadlocked. The five powers ? the U.S., Russia, China, France and Britain ? are trying to agree a Security Council statement ordering Iran to restore a freeze on its uranium enrichment activities within a fortnight.

The Times of India, March 25, 2006

### **N-tech to India: US fails to sway NSG**

WASHINGTON: The United States has failed to persuade the Nuclear Suppliers Group to include the issue of allowing India to buy sensitive nuclear technology from world market on its agenda for Rio de Janeiro plenary session to be held in May. In what is seen as a setback to Washington, a US delegation led by US Assistant Secretaries of State Richard Boucher and Stephen Rademaker failed to convince countries like Japan and China at the 45-nation NSG's two-day consultative meeting in Vienna on Wednesday and Thursday. Washington is seeking for the NSG to discuss exempting India from nuclear export controls.

Outlook, March 28, 2006

### **India among "few" sovereign nations in modern world: Russia**

Taking pride in its strategic partnership and close defence relationship with India, Russia today said the South Asian country is "one of the few sovereign nations" in the modern world. "India is a major power, our strategic partner, the world's largest democracy and one of the few sovereign nations in the modern world. Mind it that there are lots of independent nations, but only a few are sovereign and India is among them," Deputy Prime Minister and Defence Minister Sergei Ivanov told reporters here responding to a question about possibility of Russia losing Indian defence market as the US was vying to capture it. Ivanov said: "We have very good relations with India, but we have never asked them to buy what and from whom." He noted that India has an established practice of sourcing defence hardware from various channels and it does not affect the ongoing Indo-Russian defence cooperation. He accused the US, which has offered India its F-16 and F-18 fighters, of indulging in "unfair competition" in arms sales to foreign countries. "Iranian nuclear issue is very complex and we want it to be resolved in complexity." "Pakistan has given centrifuges to Iran, Pakistan in its turn received uranium enrichment equipment and centrifuge from the European cartel. Iranian issue has to be resolved in this context also," he said.

Outlook, March 28, 2006

### **Bush administration gears up for discussions on Indo-US deal**

On the eve of crucial meetings on Capitol Hill on the Indo-US nuclear deal, the Bush administration has said it is open to ideas and suggestions from members of Congress on the agreement provided they are not deal-breakers requiring re-negotiations. It also expressed willingness to show flexibility on the '123 agreement,' which is an outline of a final bilateral civil nuclear deal. Under Secretary of State for Political Affairs Nicholas Burns will take up the 123 agreement with the visiting Indian Foreign Secretary Shyam Saran this week. "The reason why the India issue is not on the agenda of the Board (meaning the NSG) Meeting of late May is because we are not sure when Congress is going to act. But you can call on the NSG at any time...So that is not a barrier to us", the senior official said. Burns also indicated that the administration is willing to show flexibility on the so-called 123 Agreement, that can now come after Congress has approved the civilian nuclear energy legislation currently pending before Congress. Burns that he will be discussing this technical 123 agreement with Saran this week but did not believe there would be a signing ceremony.

The Indian Express, 29 March 2006

### **Sell uranium to India, say Australians**

Australians are divided about whether to sell uranium to China as the two nations finalize an export agreement on the nuclear fuel but were more supportive of selling uranium to India, a poll showed on Wednesday. The Acnielsen poll found 52 per cent of respondents supported the sale of uranium to China. Of them, 49 per cent wanted such sales subject to very strict conditions, while 3 per cent would attach no conditions. Another 44 per cent opposed uranium trade with China while 4 per cent were undecided, according to the poll published in the Sydney Morning Herald newspaper. Prime Minister John Howard said an agreement that would ensure Australian uranium for non-military use by China could be signed when Chinese Premier Wen Jiabao visits Canberra next week.

The Hindu, 29 March 2006

### **No going back on deal, says Burns**

On the eve of crucial meetings on the Capitol Hill on the nuclear deal with India, the Bush administration said it was open to ideas and suggestions from Congress members on the agreement provided they were not deal-breakers requiring re-negotiations. It also expressed a willingness to show flexibility on the '123 agreement,' which is an outline of a final bilateral civil nuclear deal. Under-Secretary of State for Political Affairs Nicholas Burns will take up the agreement with the visiting Indian Foreign Secretary Shyam Saran this week. Mr. Burns, who will discuss the deal with lawmakers on Wednesday, told reporters after his address in the Council on Foreign Relations that "there is a difference between ideas and suggestions that are meant to strengthen the

agreement and ideas and suggestions that make us go back and negotiate it [the treaty]. We are open to the former and not to the latter." The Bush administration would clear these ideas and suggestions with India.

The Indian Express, 30 March 2006

#### **China backs India's N-energy plans**

China backs India's peaceful nuclear energy plans but wants nuclear weapon states to honour their obligations under the Nuclear Non-proliferation Treaty, Premier Wen Jiabao was quoted as saying on Thursday. "India is a friendly neighbour of China and we do not object to its developing nuclear energy for peaceful purposes and co-operating with other countries in nuclear power generation," Wen told *The Australian* newspaper in an interview. "At the same time, we take the position that relevant parties should honour their obligations they have undertaken as parties to the non-proliferation treaty," he told the newspaper ahead of his visit to Australia. The NPT obligates the five nuclear-weapon states - the United States, Russia, United Kingdom, France, and China - not to transfer nuclear weapons, other nuclear explosive devices, or their technology to any non-nuclear-weapon state and to those which haven't signed the treaty.

The Indian Express, 30 March 2006

#### **UN Council calls on Iran to halt N-program**

The UN Security Council on Wednesday formally approved a statement calling on Iran to suspend uranium enrichment efforts that the West suspects are part of a secret nuclear weapons program. The meeting of the 15-nation council took place shortly after the five permanent council members, the United States, Britain, Russia, China and France agreed on the statement, after three weeks of arduous negotiations. The statement, which needed the approval of all 15 council members, was read at a public meeting by Argentine Ambassador Cesar Mayoral, this month's council president. The text made significant concessions to Russia and China, which were anxious to avoid language that might later be used to press for sanctions against Iran, should it remain defiant.

The Times of India, 30 March 2006

#### **'No comparisons between India, Iran on N-issue'**

Vigorously defending the civilian nuclear energy agreement with New Delhi, the Bush administration has maintained that there can be no comparisons between India and Iran on the nuclear issue. "...the Secretary (of State Condoleezza Rice) and the President (George W Bush) as well as other members of this Administration have talked about the importance of this agreement between the United States and India. "And certainly we have talked about it in the past, how we would differ with anybody who tries to make any comparisons between the behavior of Iran and the behavior of India," State Department Spokesman Sean McCormack said. McCormack in essence was repeating what has been consistently said by senior administration officials like Under Secretary of State for Political Affairs Nicholas Burns that the track record of India and Iran cannot be compared and that no one in the international community is really stepping forward to say that the Iranian issue has been complicated because the US entered into a nuclear deal with India.

The Hindu, 31 March 2006

#### **Saran, Rice discuss nuclear deal**

Washington: The implementation of the historic India-U.S. civilian nuclear deal came up during discussions Foreign Secretary Shyam Saran had with U.S. Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice here. The meeting with Rice on Wednesday followed a working lunch Mr. Saran had with Under Secretary of State for Political Affairs Nicholas Burns, at which they discussed "all bilateral issues" with a focus on the civilian nuclear agreement, especially on the kind of steps necessary to take it further, sources said. The Bush administration is understood to have affirmed its commitment to working with the United States Congress and the Nuclear Suppliers Group to advance the civilian nuclear energy agreement between the two countries. Senior officials of the two sides are also said to have discussed the so-called 123 Agreement, seen as a technical one that would have to be approved by the Congress.

The Hindu, 31 March 2006

#### **U.S. defends civilian nuclear deal with India**

The United States on Thursday defended the civilian nuclear deal with India, saying that it materialised only after New Delhi's commitment to meet non-proliferation goals. As Foreign Secretary Shyam Saran was holding crucial talks with lawmakers and officials, State Department spokesman Sean McCormack countered the remarks made by German Foreign Minister Frank-Walter Steinmeier that the deal came at a wrong time, when international efforts were for curbing Iran's nuclear ambitions. Mr. Steinmeier said in an interview to German daily *Handelsblatt* that the deal between the U.S. and India was not helpful given that it came in the midst of talks on curbing Iran's nuclear ambitions.