

The Tribune, 1 September 2006

US affirms move to sell F-16 to Pak

The recent assassination of a Baluchi leader will not affect the sale of F-16 fighter jets by the US to Pakistan, according to a State Department official. Speaking to The Tribune on the condition of anonymity, the official said the jets were intended to ensure Pakistan's security. "We have a clear understanding with the Pakistani government on the use of the F-16s," the official said, declining to elaborate. The US has provided Pakistan with weaponry with the understanding that this would be used against al-Qaeda and Taliban militants. US-made Cobra helicopter gunships were used to kill Baluchi leader Nawab Akbar Bugti on August 26. Meanwhile, a South Asia scholar noted that by ordering Mr Bugti's assassination, Pakistan's President Pervez Musharraf had 'outlived his usefulness' as an ally in the US-led war on terror. Writing in foreign policy magazine's online edition, Frederic Grare, a visiting scholar at the Carnegie Endowment for International Peace, said with Nawab Bugti's killing 'the Pakistani strongman may have finally tipped the scales too far.' "The elimination of a leader of Pakistan's most strategically important border regions threatens the country's territorial integrity, the war on terror and Gen Musharraf's own political future. In one deftstroke, Gen Musharraf has made himself an ally no longer worth the effort," Mr Grare said.

Asia Times, 2 September 2006

The knife at Pakistan's throat

The tribal areas bordering Afghanistan's volatile southern and southwestern provinces are once again a focus of the "war on terror" and are likely to soon become as significant to the United States as Afghanistan itself. The Americans are pointing directly at the two Waziristans as the primary conduit for the suicide bombers who are currently playing havoc with the US-NATO-led war machine in Afghanistan, and a safe haven for enemy combatants. The US now has come up with a plan to confront the strategic arm of the Taliban based on the Pakistani side of the border. The anti-US forces, meanwhile, are taking countermeasures, and the Pakistani government is trying to find a safe position for itself between the antagonists.

Daily Times, 4 September 2006

Post-9/11, US Muslims insist they're American too

WASHINGTON: Ihsan Saadeddin is proud to be an American. But he's tired of having to prove it just because he's a Muslim too. The Palestinian grocery store owner in Phoenix has called the United States home for 25 years and feels as American as the next guy. He met his wife in Arizona, sent his three children to public school and has a weakness for McDonald's. But Saadeddin says the September 11 attacks were a tragic watershed which turned US Muslims from ordinary citizens into objects of suspicion and discrimination overnight. He believes it is why he was questioned at the airport for 45 minutes last month and asked repeatedly if he supports terrorism.

The News, 5 September 2006

PPP demands review of F-16 aircraft deal

ISLAMABAD: The Pakistan People's Party has expressed reservation over the proposed purchase of F-16 fighter aircraft from the United States and called for a review of the

decision through an open parliamentary debate in a bipartisan committee. In a statement Monday, party spokesman and former senator Farhatullah Babar said the PPP is committed to a strong and viable defence of the country but its reservations are based on the premise that the cost of the aircraft and the terms and conditions of the sale are not in the national interest of the country.

The Statesman, 5 September 2006

Lobbyists on overdrive as US Senate reconvenes

NEW DELHI, Sept. 4: Come Tuesday, and the race for getting the India-US civil nuclear cooperation deal through the Senate begins gathering urgency, with only a month left before Congress adjourns for the November mid-term elections. On 26 July, the House of Representatives had passed HR 5682 by a majority of 359-68, but the Senate could not take its own bill up before it closed for holidays on 6 August. In Washington, lobbyists of the Indian-American and corporate interest groups have been practicing their spiel to catch the Senators who will start trickling into Washington after the long summer vacation ends. The only problem is that there is still no sign of when the draft bill, S. 3709, will be laid on the floor.

The Nation, 5 September 2006

Pak, US navies hold anti-terror exercises

KARACHI (AFP) - Pakistan and the United States embarked on a two-week joint naval exercise Monday to enhance their skills in counter-terrorism, and human and drug smuggling, an official said.

The Hindustan Times, 6 September 2006

India should accept minor changes in N-deal: US daily

Prime Minister Manmohan Singh should be expected to secure approval for minor changes made by US Congress to the nuclear deal with India, says the Washington Times, as it overall clearly benefits both countries. Manmohan Singh had said recently that his country would accept no changes to the original agreement, it noted in an editorial on Tuesday, but suggested US Senate discussion of the bill should be minimally influenced by what it called "Singh's bluster". At the same time, it said, "Certain political realities will prevail: Demanding India sign the Nuclear Nonproliferation Treaty, for instance, is a non-starter so long as neighbouring Pakistan remains uncommitted to it."

The Hindustan Times, 6 September 2006

Ahead of vote, Albright backs N-deal

As the US Senate reconvenes after the summer recess and prepares to vote on a bill enabling the Indo-US civil nuclear deal, former Secretary of State Madeleine Albright made a strong pitch on Tuesday for the deal. Praising India's track record as a non-proliferator of nuclear technology, Albright said the deal provided an opportunity for India and the US to work together on "one of the great challenges of our time, nuclear proliferation." She was speaking on America, India and Democracy in the 21st century at an interactive meeting organised by the Aspen Institute's India chapter and the Confederation of Indian Industry (CII). While she remained concerned about the non-proliferation regime, which had "broken," she said it could be fixed "if India can be a part

of the solution rather than being outside."

The Telegraph, 7 September 2006

Training in Hawaii for urban warfare - Indo-US exercises take off

New Delhi, Sept. 6: Indian and US soldiers today began the latest in a series of military exercises by their armies and air forces at Schofield Barracks in Hawaii. The second edition of the Yudh Abhyas (training for war) series of exercises will last nearly three weeks and will focus on urban warfare. In an earlier edition of the exercise this year, a unit of the US Army's 25th infantry division participated just before being deployed in Iraq. India-US military exercises are drawn up in a programme drafted under the defence policy group and have been institutionalised. Earlier this year, a defence ministry advisory urged senior bureaucrats and officers to spread foreign tie-ups around after criticism that India was pursuing military relations with the US at the cost of its ties with other - mainly west European - countries.

Dawn, 7 September 2006

US agencies operating in Pakistan: NA told

ISLAMABAD, Sept 6: The opposition in the National Assembly Wednesday alleged that US agencies were operating in Pakistan and had picked up a number of people from different parts of the country. They castigated the government in its failure to secure early release of the Pakistanis languishing in Guantanamo Bay prison, including a businessman from Karachi Saifullah Piracha. The matter was raised in the House by members belonging to Muttahida Majlis-e-Ammal (MMA) including Dr Farid Ahmad Piracha, Muhammad Hussain Mehanti, Mrs Aisha Munawar, Asadullah Bhutto and Liaquat Baloch through a calling attention notice.

Dawn, 7 September 2006

US wants Pakistan to exercise sovereignty across country

WASHINGTON, Sept 6: The United States on Wednesday cautiously welcomed a truce between Pakistani authorities and tribal militants but also reminded Islamabad that it should not allow any part of the country to stay outside the government's writ. "It is in the interest of Pakistan and the Pakistani people that the government be able to exercise its sovereignty throughout all of Pakistan," said US State Department's spokesman Sean McCormack when asked to comment on the truce.

The Nation, 8 September 2006

Pact is part of Pakistani efforts to secure Afghan border: Bush admin

WASHINGTON: -- The United States views the pact between Pakistan and tribal leaders of north Waziristan, bordering Afghanistan, as part of Islamabad's efforts to eliminate extremism in the border areas, White House press secretary Tony Snow has said. Snow told reporters Wednesday that the cease-fire "is part of an integrated effort to bring security, political stability and economic development to Waziristan" by addressing "root causes" blocking development in those areas. Analysts say the language used by the spokesman suggested that the 'peace deal' has the blessing of the Bush administration. The press secretary said the deal will not diminish efforts by the government of President Pervez Musharraf to apprehend and bring to justice al-Qaeda leader Osama bin Laden,

and said neither Osama bin Laden nor members of his organization would "get a free pass if they keep their noses clean" under the terms of the agreement.

Dawn, 8 September 2006

Commercial, geo-political gains behind US move: Ban on direct flights

ISLAMABAD, Sept 7: Parliamentary secretary for defence Major (retd) Tanveer Hussain Syed on Thursday alleged that the United States had banned direct flights from Pakistan on the pretext of security concerns but for "commercial and geo-political gains."

Responding to various supplementary questions during the question hour in the National Assembly, he regretted the US move, saying Pakistan was surprised by the decision as the country was a frontline state with Washington in the war against terrorism. He said it was strange that PIA was operating direct flights to Canada with the same security measures but only the US had objections to the security arrangements at Pakistani airports. He claimed that the security arrangements in Pakistan were at par with international standards. He said it seemed that the US had some commercial interests behind the decisions as there were several big airlines in the country. He said a team of the US had arrived in Pakistan to hold talks on the issue.

Times of India, 9 September 2006

'A Q Khan's network still alive'

WASHINGTON: A US think tank has disputed official claims that what president George Bush calls the "world's most dangerous nuclear trading cartel" run by the father of Pakistan's atomic bomb has been dismantled. "Working with Great Britain and Pakistan and other nations, the United States shut down the world's most dangerous nuclear trading cartel, the A Q Khan network," Bush said in a speech in the run up to the fifth anniversary of the terrorist attacks of September 11, 2001. "US officials claim the Khan network has been dismantled and the Pakistani government says the case is closed, but according to testimony before the House Subcommittee on International Terrorism and Non-proliferation, that is not the case," the Council on Foreign Relations noted in a newsletter.

The Telegraph, 9 September 2006

US politicking places nuclear deal hurdle

Washington, Sept. 8: The Indo-US nuclear deal, in which New Delhi and Washington have invested thousands of working hours and a fund of political capital since July 18, 2005, is threatening to unravel days before a final vote in the US Senate. The new threat, ironically, has nothing to do with India. The legislation is getting caught up in internecine warfare within the Republican Party and domestic US politics weeks before America's mid-term Congressional elections. Yesterday, Prime Minister Manmohan Singh asked foreign secretary Shyam Saran to rush to Washington on Monday to rescue the deal, but then had second thoughts about appearing to interfere in a domestic US political dispute and decided to put off Saran's visit, sources in the external affairs ministry said.

The Indian Express, 13 September 2006

Discount for Pak on F-16s deal: US

Islamabad, September 12 : US President George W Bush plans to announce a 'substantial

discount' on the \$5 billion deal to sell F-16s to Pakistan during President Pervez Musharraf's visit to Washington as a gesture of approval of his handling of the war on terror, a media report said today. Musharraf, who left for Brussels yesterday on his way to the US, is "understood to be carrying private assurances from President Bush that he may receive a cut in the price of the F-16 aircraft Pakistan is currently in the process of purchasing from Washington," The News reported. "The first indication of a substantial price reduction, or compensation in lieu of such a cut, was given by General Musharraf himself to his military colleagues in recent weeks after a telephonic talk with President Bush, who acknowledged only two days ago that he keeps talking to Musharraf frequently," the report said. "While technically it may not be possible for Bush to 'reduce' the price of the F-16 aircraft as manufacturers have to get their price with the profits, it may be possible for the US President to compensate Pakistan in some other way, either by an increase in the direct US economic or military aid or writing off existing loans or in some other financial arrangement," the newspaper said.

The Hindu, 14 September 2006

U.S. honour for Indian scientist

WASHINGTON: An Indian scientist, Mala R. Chinoy, has been chosen for the 2006 Science Spectrum Trailblazer award for her pioneering work in cardiopulmonary defects in newborns. Dr. Chinoy, Professor of Surgery at the Penn State College of Medicine, is one of the five scientists of Indian origin to be honoured with the award this year.

The Times of India, 15 September 2006

India, US may cooperate at WTO: Boucher

WASHINGTON: The United States on Friday raised the hopes of revival of stalled WTO talks by hinting at cooperation on contentious agriculture and services negotiations with India, an advocate of developing countries' stance in the trade negotiations. "There are a lot of areas, services and agriculture, where I think we have good potential of working together with India for some progress and we are going to keep trying to do that," Assistant secretary of State for South and Central Asia Richard Boucher said. The WTO talks hit an impasse with the key trading nations failing to arrive at a consensus on the important issue of agriculture subsidies and tariffs. "There is still a basis for India and the United States cooperating on the WTO talks," Boucher added. While EU has more or less agreed to the demand of developing countries on cuts in agricultural tariffs, the US has stuck to its stand on subsidies while seeking more market access from developing countries.

The Indian Express, 15 September 2006

US medal for Dalai Lama irks China

BEIJING, September 14: China on Thursday denounced a decision by the US Congress to award the Dalai Lama a Congressional Gold Medal, its highest honor. The House of Representatives passed the bill on Wednesday, which recognises the exiled spiritual leader for 'his many enduring and outstanding contributions to peace, nonviolence, human rights, and religious understanding'. It was also passed by the Senate in May but now requires the signature of US President George W. Bush. Qin Gang, a spokesman for China's Foreign Ministry said on Thursday that the decision "seriously interferes with

China's internal affairs and damages China-US relations". "We express our strong dissatisfaction and firm opposition," he said at a regular briefing. The Dalai Lama, one of the figures most reviled by the Beijing leadership, fled to India following a failed uprising nine years after Communist troops marched in Tibet in 1950. The Chinese government accuses the Dalai Lama of waging a clandestine campaign for formal independence, though he says he wants only greater autonomy in hopes of preserving Tibet's Buddhist culture.

Hindustan Times, 15 September 2006

US trade delegation to visit India in November

New York, September 15: With American businesses showing an increasing interest in India, United States Under Secretary of Commerce for International Trade Franklin L Lavin will lead a trade delegation to India in November to explore avenues for expanding business ties between the two countries. As many as 54 companies across all sectors, including plastic mould manufactures, medical equipment manufacturers, food and beverage providers and insurance companies have registered and more were expected to do so in the next few weeks, Lavin said. "The time is right for the US companies to visit and start to figure out how they can fit into the picture. It should be no surprise that this is an unprecedented trade mission because India at the moment is undergoing unprecedented growth," he said. He said to maximise fruitfulness, talks with Indian entrepreneurs would be broken down with concentration on generic issues such as taxes, tariffs and legal questions as well as in depth discussions. Lavin said development of rural areas which offer vast opportunities would be area of particular interest.

The New York Times, 15 September 2006

U.S. Criticizes China Arms Sales

WASHINGTON: Top U.S. officials are criticizing what they call China's indiscriminate sale of weapons to rogue countries, suggesting that Beijing's shortsighted policies has had made the world more dangerous. Peter Rodman, assistant secretary of defense for international security, urged China to re-evaluate its relationship with Iran and North Korea, two countries with which the United States is locked in tense nuclear standoffs. "China's actions seem to us dangerously shortsighted," Rodman told the U.S.-China Economic and Security Review Commission, an advisory panel created by Congress. "China's proliferation behavior, past and present, can come back to haunt it, even placing its own political interests in jeopardy." Chinese Foreign Ministry spokesman Qin Gang called the criticism "groundless and irresponsible," the official Xinhua News Agency said Friday. No other details were given. Beijing has said that it opposes the spread of weapons technology and materials, and that it forbids Chinese companies from transferring such material. The United States, Rodman said Thursday, sees in China "a general willingness to transfer a wide variety of technologies to customers around the world."

The New York Times, 15 September 2006

China Rips U.S. Claims on Weapons Sales

BEIJING: China on Friday denounced accusations by top U.S. officials that it was selling weapons to Iran and North Korea amid nuclear tensions with the two regimes. Foreign

Ministry spokesman Qin Gang called the criticism "groundless and irresponsible," the official Xinhua News Agency said. No other details were given. Peter Rodman, assistant secretary of defense for international security, on Thursday urged China to re-evaluate its relationship with allies Iran and North Korea, two countries with which the United States is locked in tense nuclear standoffs. He said Washington sees in China "a general willingness to transfer a wide variety of technologies to customers around the world." He linked China to North Korea's test launches in July of seven missiles and to Hezbollah's use of Chinese-designed cruise missiles against an Israeli naval vessel, also in July. In recent years, China has become a key manufacturer of machinery and technology and its products are valuable worldwide to groups and nations seeking weaponry and weapons technology.

The Indian Express, 16 September 2006

India, US, China agree to sign new energy pact

NEW DELHI, September 15 : For the first time, the world's five major crude oil buyers, including India, United States and China, are likely to meet next month to sign a pact on 'collective efforts' to check the recent price volatility in crude oil. The energy ministers of India, US, China, Japan and South Korea - these five nations together account for half of the world's total oil consumption - are slated to meet in Beijing between October 23-26 to sign a joint statement on "ways to promote the stability of international oil market and ensure energy security". Their draft statement avoids any direct confrontation with the oil producers' cartel OPEC by pinning the oil price spiral to a host of "complicated and manifold" reasons but it does call on consuming countries to take a combination of measures to reduce their dependence on oil. For the producers, the direct message is that they increase investment and expand oil supply capacity. "The international community should work together to send a correct signal to the oil market so as to let the oil prices move on a reasonable track and maintain the stability of oil market," says the draft statement.

The Indian Express, 16 September 2006

At NAM kick-off, Raul blasts US

Havana, September 15: Heads of 116 states gathered in the Cuban capital here to kickstart the NAM summit today. The chairmanship of the NAM is back with Cuba after 27 years at a time when President Fidel Castro is indisposed and has handed over charge temporarily to brother Raul Castro. Speaking at the inaugural ceremony, Raul spoke of the need for unity at a time, which is 'characterised by the one superpower's irrational attempts to control the world.' Speaking with the 'experience of a country that has witnessed more than 45 years of blockade and aggression of all kinds,' Raul said the world needed to be united in defence of the principles and purposes upon which the Non-Aligned Movement was established. Referring to the US phrase of 'sixty or more dark corners of the world', Raul said the majority or all of these countries 'cited as possible targets of future attacks are here.' He defended the right of Iran to the 'peaceful use of nuclear energy' and denounced what he called the 'hypocrisy of the US Government, which while supporting Israel's bid to increase its nuclear store, is threatening Iran in an attempt to prevent the peaceful use of nuclear energy.' Earlier, on his way to Havana, Indian PM Manmohan Singh had told accompanying media that 'in case there were

questions about Iran's nuclear programme, those doubts should be resolved through dialogue rather than coercive action.'

Dawn, 16 September 2006

US criticises Pakistan over 'discriminatory' laws

WASHINGTON, Sept 15: The US on Friday blamed Pakistan for failing to protect the right of religious minorities and for allowing discriminatory legislation to continue. In a 22-page, 14,000 words report on Pakistan, the US State Department once again underlined a 1974 constitutional amendment that places legal bars on the Ahmadiyya community and also listed the blasphemy and Hudood laws among these that discriminate against religious minorities. 'These laws are often used to intimidate reform-minded Muslims, sectarian opponents, and religious minorities, or to settle personal scores,' the report claimed. The State Department was particularly critical of Hudood Ordinances that 'impose elements of (Islamic) law on both Muslims and non-Muslims and different legal standards for men and women.' The report also censured the NWFP government for continuing to - pass directives and legislation in accordance with the conservative - vision of its supporters. The State Department, however, credited the Musharraf government for giving public calls for religious tolerance and for working with moderate religious leaders to organize programmes on sectarian harmony and interfaith understanding.

The News, 16 September 2006

US forces won't enter into Pakistan to hunt Osama: Bush

WASHINGTON: US President George W Bush has dismissed as an "urban myth" the idea that his administration has become distracted from the effort to track down al Qaeda leader Osama bin Laden. "You know, there is a kind of an urban myth here in Washington about how this administration hasn't stayed focused on Osama bin Laden," Bush said at a news conference. "Forget it. It's convenient throw-away lines, you know, when people say that." Pressed on why he opposed the idea of sending a large contingent of Special Forces to Pakistan to hunt bin Laden, Bush said his strategy was to work with Pakistan's government. "First of all, Pakistan is a sovereign nation," Bush said. "In order for us to send thousands of troops into a sovereign nation, we've got to be invited by the government of Pakistan. US forces won't enter into Pakistan to hunt Osama, he added. "Secondly, the best way to find somebody who is hiding is to enhance your intelligence and to spend the resources necessary to do that."

The Hindu, 17 September 2006

"Hindutva" still influences politics in some regions: U.S. report

Washington: "Hindutva" continues to influence government policies and societal attitudes in some regions at the State and local levels in India despite the United Progressive Alliance Government's rejection of the ideology, says a U.S. Government report. The U.S. State Department's annual report on religious freedom worldwide, released here on Friday, however, said, "Hindutva-based policies could not be implemented without passing court review to determine whether they were consistent with the principles enshrined in the country's secular constitution." Despite the Government's 2005 action to withdraw textbooks espousing a Hindu nationalist agenda,

the report says, continuing problems with biased textbooks in some States led the Government to take action by recommending formation of a National Textbook Council to ensure such books no longer appear in the curriculum.

The Times of India, 18 September 2006

American graffiti

Can any country afford to be anti-American? That's the question being asked in different parts of the world. Tony Blair has last week in a foreign policy paper blasted the 'anti-Americanism' of certain European leaders. At around the same time, at the NAM summit in Havana, several heads of state, including the Iranian and Venezuelan presidents, have appealed for an anti-US front. The sharp polarity between Blair's view and that held by some of the leaders present in Havana represent two competing visions of the world. Which way the debate goes is of some importance to New Delhi, now involved in a complicated tango with Washington. Blair's rant against the 'anti-Americanism' of some European politicians is nothing new. Earlier this year, he had made a similar point in a speech to Australian parliament. In both his paper and his speech, Blair suggests that Europe's and America's vision of the world is identical, and that it is in everybody's interest that the US does not follow an isolationist policy. Blair writes, "The strain of, frankly, anti-American feeling in parts of European politics is madness when set against the long-term interests of the world we believe in".

Dawn, 18 September 2006

US welcomes accord to resume talks

WASHINGTON, Sept 17: The United States on Sunday welcomed the Musharraf-Singh talks saying that meetings like this were a 'good investment' in the long-term resolution of the differences between the two countries. President Musharraf, who is now in New York to attend the UN General Assembly, has described the meeting as a victory for the India-Pakistan peace process. "One should not term the outcome as a victory or defeat. It is a victory for the peace process," he said. A State Department official, when contacted by Dawn said: "We are supportive of these talks and endorse any effort for dialogue regarding Kashmir." He said the US encourages such exchanges and hopes that this would lead to a resolution of the differences between the two countries through dialogue as opposed to violence. "Discussions like this ease tensions and help create a dialogue to redress the issues," he said.

The Indian Express, 19 September 2006

Nepal MPs want US ambassador recalled

Kathmandu, September 18: At least two members of Nepal's Parliament have criticised US ambassador James Moriarty for what they called brazen 'interference' in Nepal's domestic affairs, and asked the government to send him back urgently. The demand to recall Moriarty was made in the State Affairs Committee of Parliament and comes in the wake of his recent visit to western Nepal, where he visited, among others, an army barrack. Moriarty, on his visit to Kathmandu, issued statements against the Maoists to the effect that they were continuing with executions, torture and extortion in gross violation of the code of conduct. Moriarty has come out openly against the Maoists in the past as well saying that the US would not support a government that included Maoists without

their laying down arms'a position India has also publicly taken. Lilamani Pokhrel of Janamorcha, an ally of the Maoists, said Moriarty was behaving more like a political leader than a diplomat, and exercising privilege that "our diplomats in the US are not be entitled to", adding "he should be asked to leave the country forthwith". Nepal Mazdoor and Kisan party leader Narayan Man Bijukshe also objected to Moriarty's utterances and his visit to the barrack.

Deccan Herald, 19 September 2006

India, Pakistan on US drug list

Washington, UNI: India and Pakistan figure in the list of 20 countries which the United States has designated as major drug- transit or illicit drug-producing countries. Deputy Assistant Secretary for International Narcotics and Law Enforcement Affairs Christy McCampbell, while briefing the press yesterday after the White House, released the findings of the annual US government report on the global drug trade, said, "to be designated on the majors list does not necessarily mean that the country is supporting drug-trafficking or lacking in counter- narcotics efforts." "The designation is simple, which comes from a combination of geographical, commercial or other economic factors that allow drugs to transit or to be illegally produced," Mr McCampbell said. Each year at this time the President is required under the Foreign Relations Authorisation Act to notify Congress of countries that are either illegal transit countries or considered drug producing countries. Mr McCampbell said the President had determined that Burma and Venezuela, failed demonstrably during the last 12 months to make substantial efforts to adhere to their obligations.

Daily Times, 19 September 2006

Manmohan says US not behind Indo-Pak talks

NEW DELHI: Indian Prime Minister Manmohan Singh denied on Monday that pressure from the US was behind weekend talks with Pakistani President Pervez Musharraf that led to an agreement to resume the deadlocked peace process. "The world likes neighbours to work with each other," Manmohan Singh told reporters onboard his aircraft en route home from the Cuban capital, according to the Press Trust of India news agency. "I totally deny any insinuation that whatever was done with Pakistan is at the behest of the US or any other country. It is a question of our own sovereign national interest," Manmohan said. India and the US have grown increasingly closer in recent years, with relations bolstered by a landmark civilian nuclear agreement. The US is also close to Islamabad, a key ally in its war on terror. Indian prime minister and Musharraf, who met on the sidelines of a Non-Aligned Movement summit in Havana, agreed to resume peace talks that had been suspended since the July bombings in Mumbai. India accused Pakistani-based militants of the attack.

Hindustan Times, 20 September 2006

Indian troops training with US Army in Hawaii

Schofield Barracks (Hawaii): As 40 Indian soldiers descend on a mock village in the Oahu mountains to hunt for insurgents, they are watched by US Army officers looking for lessons they can apply when leading their units through the same exercise. The troops are on the island for the biggest joint drills the Indian and US armies have had to date, the

latest sign of growing military relations between the two nuclear powers. The bilateral exercise, called Yudh Abhyas, or "training for war" in Hindi, started four years ago with a handful of Indian and US soldiers. It has since ballooned to feature hundreds of troops, including 140 Indians who flew to Hawaii, which hosts the U.S. Pacific Command whose reach extends to their homeland. "It's a tremendous expansion," said Col. Dinesh Singh, of the Indian army's 3rd Battalion, 9th Gurkha Rifles. He added the exercises were now teaching platoons from the two nations how to talk to each other in the field. "If you're talking about interoperability, this is the basic thing. We should be able to understand each other's actions," he said. After the Sept. 11 terrorist attacks, the US cultivated India as a partner in the war against terror.

The Tribune, 20 September 2006

BJP smells "American hand" behind Havana statement

New Delhi, September 19: The Bharatiya Janata Party suspects an "American hand" behind India's "unprecedented capitulation" before Pakistan on the issue of cross-border terrorism. It asked: "If the joint mechanism suggested by India in Havana is the first step towards joint Indo-Pakistan control over Jammu and Kashmir." "Are unseen powers pushing India towards a solution of Jammu and Kashmir that India has rejected all along" former External Affairs Minister Yashwant Sinha asked here today and admitted in response to a question that 'it could be an American hand'. Giving his party's third reaction to the Indo-Pak joint statement issued in Havana, Mr Sinha said the BJP felt that the statement "is an unprecedented capitulation of India before Pakistan on the issue of cross-border terrorism. It has wiped out in one stroke all that had been achieved by India in its war against terror through years of hard work with the international community, and bilaterally with Paksitan". "On the basis of reports emanating from Pakistan's responsible quarters, it appears that India has, through back channels, given a non-paper to Pakistan, making suggestions for the resolution of the Jammu and Kashmir issue".

Daily Times, 20 September 2006

President asks US to put its weight behind Pakistan-India peace process

New York: President Pervez Musharaff has asked the United States to put its weight behind the Pakistan-India peace process. He was addressing a select group of what were described by an official as "policy influentials and opinion-makers" at a meeting held under the auspices of the Nixon Centre. They included Newsweek editor Fareed Zakaria, CNN's chief diplomatic correspondent Christiana Amanpour, John Huey, editor-in-chief of Time magazine, Jonathan Klein, president of CNN, Dimitri Simes and Paul Saunders, president and executive director respectively of the Nixon Centre, Bill Siegel, president of News America, Jacob Weisberg, editor-in-chief of Slate magazine, Mortimer Zuckerman, editor-in-chief of US News and World Report, Farooq Kathwari, chairman of Ethan Allen and various senior executives of HBO television. Musharraf spoke for about 20 minutes or so and spent the next hour and a half answering questions. He began by providing his audience with an overview of Pakistan-US relations since their inception. He spoke about the post-9/11 relationship between the two countries, going over what he called the 'milestones'.

Dawn, 21 September 2006

Bush asked to press Musharraf on democracy, rights

NEW YORK, Sept 20: US President George Bush should press President General Pervez Musharraf to restore civilian rule, hold free and fair elections and end legal discrimination against women during their meeting on Friday, the Human Rights Watch said on Wednesday. In a statement, the New York-based watchdog group urged President Bush to stop turning a blind eye to Gen Musharraf's use of torture and "disappearances" in the fight against terrorism and in Pakistan's political conflicts. "If Bush is serious about fostering democracy in the Muslim world, how can he support Musharraf's refusal to end military rule in Pakistan" said Brad Adams, Asia Director of the Human Rights Watch. "President Bush should make it clear that the US won't stand by, as it did in the past, when Musharraf subverted the Pakistani constitution and staged flawed elections," he said. According to Adams, the Pakistani constitution prohibits the chief of the army from holding a political office. In 2003, Gen Musharraf promised to step down as either army chief or president, but reneged the following year. Recent statements by Gen Musharraf and military-backed politicians have made clear that he intends to stay on as army chief and president beyond the date set for elections in 2007. They have also suggested that he could be somehow re-elected president by the outgoing parliament, which may try to extend its term unilaterally by one year to do so in 2008.

The Indian Express, 22 September 2006

US may hunt for bin Laden in Pak: Bush

Washington, Sep 21 : In a rare face off, US President George W Bush has threatened to send American forces in pursuit of Osama bin Laden. But Pakistan on Thursday vowed to not let foreign forces enter its territory. Responding to a question if Bush would order US forces to go after bin Laden in Pakistan if he received good intelligence on the al-Qaeda leader's location, President Bush in an interview to CNN said yesterday, 'absolutely'. "We would take action necessary to bring him (bin Laden) to justice," said Bush, who is meeting Musharraf at the White House next week. Later addressing a press conference, Musharraf said that he would not allow the sovereignty of his country to be breached by the US. "We will do it ourselves... we are able to do everything, wherever we locate anybody... there have been many such occasions where we have located al-Qaeda or Taliban activity and we have struck with full force very successfully," Musharraf told reporters when asked about Bush's comment.

The Tribune, 22 September 2006

Pak called 'client state for sale to highest bidder'

New Delhi: True to the American sense of timing, as Pakistan President Pervez Musharraf prepares to meet US President George W. Bush tomorrow, a leading American daily has described Pakistan as a 'client state for sale to the highest bidder'. The Wall Street Journal carried a stinging article on September 19 queerly entitled 'Musharrafistan' wherein the author, Mansoor Ijaz, says Pakistan has lost its identity and calls on General Musharraf to 'stop being all things to all people'. The author's brief counsel to the General is to step down from power. Ijaz's most relevant observation, from the Indian point of view, is that General Musharraf is continuing to court Iranian mullahs in the hope of

building an Iran-Pakistan-India gas pipeline "that could fund the revival of insurgency in Kashmir". The author has a long list of advice for General Musharraf, including that he should end his "hypocritical alliance" with Islamist activists; change the direction of the country's nuclear programme; build a real economy that integrates Pakistan into the world; and construct real peace, not mirages that mask tension.

Daily Times, 22 September 2006

Aftermath of 9/11 attacks

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The Indian Express, 22 September 2006

US threatened to bomb Pak: Musharraf

New York, September 21: President Pervez Musharraf of Pakistan said that after the Sept 11 attacks the United States threatened to bomb his country if it did not cooperate with America's campaign against the Taliban in Afghanistan. Musharraf, in an interview with CBS news magazine show '60 Minutes' that will air on Sunday, said the threat came from Deputy Secretary of State Richard Armitage and was given to Musharraf's intelligence director. "The intelligence director told me that (Armitage) said, 'Be prepared to be bombed. Be prepared to go back to the Stone Age,'" Musharraf said. "I think it was a very rude remark." Armitage was not immediately available to comment, and US State Department spokesman Tom Casey declined comment on the remarks by Musharraf, who is now in Washington and is due to meet President George Bush in the White House on Friday. The Pakistani leader, whose remarks were distributed to the media by CBS, said he reacted to the threat in a responsible way. "One has to think and take actions in the interest of the nation, and that's what I did," Musharraf said.

Daily Times, 22 September 2006

US views relations with Pakistan cynically: Krepon

WASHINGTON: Washington places far too much optimism on its geostrategic relationship with India as against cynicism vis-a-vis Pakistan, according to Michael Krepon, founder president of the Stimson Centre. Krepon writes that excessive optimism or pessimism was unwise and unhelpful, as both partnerships could produce mutual dividends when national interests and domestic politics are in alignment. But at present, significant divergences remain in both cases, he argues. The extent of these divergences

was on display in Havana last week, where Prime Minister Manmohan Singh and President Musharraf attended the non-aligned summit meeting. In Havana, the Indian prime minister had a photo opportunity and a meeting with Fidel Castro, while foregoing a trip to the United States and a meeting with President Bush. This speaks volumes about his government's political sensitivities in the wake of signing the nuclear cooperation agreement. The Indian prime minister's primary need at this hour is to distance New Delhi from the Bush administration's agenda.

The News, 22 September 2006

US to meet Pakistan's economic needs

WASHINGTON: The United States has assured Pakistan its complete support for its economic needs. These assurances have come up during President General Pervez Musharraf meetings with US Vice President Dick Cheney, US Secretary of Defence Donald Rumsfeld, Secretary Energy Samuel Botman and Secretary of Commerce Carlos M. Gutierrez. The sources told The News that all the four meetings were significant as they took place on the eve of meeting between President Gen Pervez Musharraf and US President George W Bush. It is believed that these have paved the way for an important meeting today. Foreign Minister Khurshid Kasuri said the vice-president has eulogised Pakistan role in combating terrorism and bringing peace in South Asia. He said the vice-president has assured General Pervez Musharraf that the Bush administration would adhere to the requirements of the strategic partnership. Talking about the US defence secretary meeting with President Musharraf, he said Rumsfeld has assured the president that America will fulfil Pakistan defence needs. The sale of F 16s to Pakistan also came up during discussion. Minister for information and broadcasting Mohammad Ali Durrani was also present on the occasion.

Dawn, 23 September 2006

US arrogance & Pakistan

The Pakistan government took a decision after 9/11 to side with Washington and abandon its support for the Taliban regime in Afghanistan which was accused of harbouring Osama bin Laden. Whether the decision was right or wrong can be endlessly debated: there will be many who will think that our backing for the Taliban regime was wrong in any case as was our involvement with the entire Afghan jihad episode. We also had no choice: "you are with us or against us", we were told by Mr George Bush and his satraps. But to learn now of the arrogant way in which the US demands were put is to squirm with embarrassment and wonder at our own capacity to suffer humiliation. Gen Musharraf has disclosed in an interview during his current visit to the US that deputy secretary of state Richard Armitage had called in the ISI chief, then in Washington, immediately after the 9/11 attacks and told him, "Be prepared to be bombed. Be prepared to go back to the Stone Age" if Islamabad didn't do America's bidding. Gen Musharraf said it was a very rude remark, but claimed he had acted responsibly. Mr Armitage had also spelt out several conditions that Pakistan had to meet, some of which Gen Musharraf has described as ludicrous. Mr Armitage is said to have wondered, according to the CNN on Friday, how his remarks could have been relayed so differently to Gen Musharraf, but stressed that the message the US wanted to convey to Islamabad went through.

The Hindu, 23 September 2006

Bush taken aback by "bomb attack" report

WASHINGTON: United States President George W. Bush said on Friday he was "taken aback" by a purported U.S. threat to bomb Pakistan back to the Stone Age if it did not cooperate in the fight against terrorism after the September 11 attacks. He praised Pakistan President Gen. Pervez Musharraf for being one of the first foreign leaders to come out after the attacks to stand with the U.S. to "help root out an enemy." At a joint White House news conference, Gen. Musharraf said a peace treaty between his Government and tribes along the Pakistan-Afghanistan border is not meant to support the Taliban. He said news reports had misinterpreted the deals. "The deal is not at all with the Taliban. This deal is against the Taliban. This deal is with the tribal elders," Gen. Musharraf said. Said Mr. Bush: "I believe him." He said that Gen. Musharraf had looked him in the eye and vowed that "the tribal deal is intended to reject the Talibanisation of the people and that there won't be a Taliban and there won't be Al-Qaeda [in Pakistan]."

The Hindu, 23 September 2006

Pakistan defers F-16 deal: paper

ISLAMABAD: Pakistan delayed signing the Letter of Acceptance (LoA) for the F-16 deal with the United States on the issue of the aircraft being stripped down for this sale and on conditionalities of usage, a newspaper said on Friday. The weekly Friday Times reported that the Ministry of Defence had asked the U.S. Secretary of Air Force International Affairs, who is co-ordinating the \$3-billion sale, for time till December 31, 2006 to sign the LoA. The decision not to sign the letter of acceptance in a hurry came after the Pakistan Air Force briefed President Pervez Musharraf that the F-16s would be minus certain crucial electronic/digital systems that would render them incapable of delivering nuclear weapons or of penetrating "well-defended" foreign airspaces. According to reports, the F-16s will not be able to detect NATO aircraft. In a testimony before the House International Relations Committee in July on the F-16s deal, John Hillen, Assistant Secretary, in the State Department's Bureau of Political-Military Affairs said the U.S. had included "approved security plans for their F-16-related bases and facilities before we release any systems in the sale".

Newindpress.com, 24 September 2006

Indian Americans making a mark in US politics

WASHINGTON: Five Indian Americans have qualified to run in the November 7 elections in the US for various legislative offices. "Indian American and South Asian community's involvement in US mainstream politics will continue to grow," Clinton administration appointee Rajen Anand told India West, an ethnic Indian newspaper. In Arizona, Democrat Rano Singh won her primary unopposed to contest the state treasurer's race. In Minnesota, incumbent state Senator Satveer Chaudhary was elected unopposed in the Democratic primary. A law student at the University of Maryland, Neil B Sood, was elected unopposed in the Republican primary for the House of Delegates.

People's Daily, 24 September 2006

Strategic dialogue good for China, US to deepen trust

US Secretary of Treasury Henry Paulson and Chinese Vice-Premier Wu Yi announced

the creation of a new "strategic economic dialogue" between China and the United States on September 20, the very day Paulson arrived in Beijing. Both countries would aim to grapple with the long-term issues arising from China's emergence as a leading economic power. Obviously, this is a vital issue that concerns interests of both sides, as Vice-Premier Wu put it: "the strategic economic dialogue will deal mainly with long-range and big-picture issues that affect both the U.S. and China, with its contents focused on the common interests of the two nations." Sino-US dialogue mechanism has gradually taken shape in some areas over recent years, originating from proposals from academic circles. Most of these issues in Sino-US relations come from misunderstanding and suspicions, a couple of Chinese and American scholars have acknowledged, and the dialogue mechanism is favorable for increasing communication and understanding, and it is more crucial and significant to enable the other side to know and understand itself, and this is a more viable way to dispel misunderstanding and mutual suspicions.

The Times of India, 25 September 2006

Most Indians favour better ties with US

WASHINGTON: Seventy percent of Indians believe relations between their country and the US have improved in recent years and those who think so overwhelmingly consider this a good thing. On the other hand, 43 per cent Pakistanis say Indo-US relations have become better, and they are divided over whether this is a positive development, according to a Washington based research centre's survey of global attitudes. Only 16 per cent of Pakistanis think relations between the US and neighbouring India have not improved; 42 per cent are unable to offer an opinion, suggest just released findings of Pew Global Attitudes Project Spring 2006 Survey by Pew Research Center. Most Indians (62 per cent) have heard about the nuclear agreement between the US and their country, while only 25 percent of Pakistanis are aware of this, according to the survey in six nations: India, Pakistan, United States, Russia, China and Japan. In India, three-quarters (75 per cent) of those who have heard of the nuclear deal approve of it, while in Pakistan the reverse is true - roughly three-quarters (73 per cent) of those who are aware of the deal oppose it. There is no consensus in Pakistan about the direction of US-Pakistani relations - roughly half (49 per cent) say relations have improved in recent years, while 20 per cent believe they have not improved and 30 per cent offer no opinion.

Dawn, 25 September 2006

US-China 'strategic dialogue' no panacea

BEIJING: A new Sino-US 'strategic economic dialogue', announced with much fanfare last week, should not be seen as a panacea for all problems in the troubled bilateral trade relationship, analysts say. The dialogue, unveiled while US Treasury Secretary Henry Paulson was given the red-carpet treatment in Beijing, could be short on tangible achievements, even Chinese economists admit. "Although there may be no immediate, concrete results, the dialogue will serve as a platform for consultations between the two parties," said Mei Xinyu, an analyst with China's ministry of commerce. "Neither side would like disputes to spin out of control, but prefer to aim for more rational, responsible and efficient consultations." Meeting twice a year in the US and Chinese capitals, Paulson and Vice Premier Wu Yi will lead policymakers, including their presidents, in talks on longer-term issues. An arrangement like this between the planet's largest

developed and developing economies is long overdue in an ever more globalised world, Chinese state media have argued. "The dialogue provides a needed platform for each country to grasp the other's priorities," the official China Daily said in an editorial.

People's Daily, 25 September 2006

China offers proposal on Sino-US space cooperation

China has offered a four-point proposal to boost Sino-US space cooperation, said Sun Laiyan, administrator of China National Space Administration. Sun was speaking on Monday in an interview. He held formal talks with his U.S. counterpart Michael Griffin, administrator of National Aeronautics and Space Administration (NASA), in Beijing on Sunday. "The two sides both expressed willingness to jointly promote Sino-American space cooperation to further contribute to the constructive and cooperative relations," Sun said. China's proposals, based on this consensus, were: to strengthen exchanges and communication, increase mutual trust, foster friendship and promote cooperation; to hold meetings every year to exchange views and concerns on certain issues in an effort to cement the stable development of bilateral space cooperation; to jointly explore fields where the two sides could cooperate and conduct the preparatory work; to eliminate obstacles and boost mutual trust to develop China-U.S. constructive and cooperative ties, Sun said.

The Hindu, 26 September 2006

'India, US aligned in maintaining open access to sea'

Washington, Sept. 26: Maintaining free and open access to the sea is an important and critical challenge and in this regard the navies of India and the United States are "very closely aligned", Admiral Gary Roughead, the Commander of the American Pacific Fleet, said. Speaking at the Washington Foreign Press Center, he said: "One of the reasons we have been very effective in operating together and looking to the future is because we see the challenges that we face on the Oceans, on the sea lanes and the importance of keeping those open". The top American Navy official was recently in India. He said discussions with his counterparts were comprehensive that included future operations, exercises and exchanges. "I remain very impressed with the Indian Navy", he said. There was a highly personal element to the Admiral's visit to India recently- he wanted to track down the house he lived in as a youngster in Mumbai. "I went to visit my house and I found it. It was wonderful to go back even though I was a young boy. Many memories came floating back" Admiral Roughead recalled even while making the point that his former house is no longer in the remote area of Mumbai it once was. "Mumbai has expanded so much. There is so much energy" he commented.

The Tribune, 26 September 2006

If Pak did not join USA, India would, says Musharraf

Washington: Pakistan's President Pervez Musharraf had 'war-gamed' the United States as an adversary to determine whether his country could afford not to join the USA-led war on terrorism. "There would be a violent and angry reaction if we didn't support the United States," he writes in his autobiography, "In the Line of Fire." "Thus the question was: if we do not join them, can we confront them and withstand the onslaught? The answer was no, we could not, on three counts." He says Pakistan's military forces would be destroyed

in a conflict with the USA, it did not have the capacity to sustain its economy in the face of an attack; and it lacked the 'homogeneity to galvanise the entire nation into an active confrontation.' He notes that India had offered its bases to the United States. "If we did not join the United States, it would accept India's offer. What would happen then? India would gain a golden opportunity with regard to Kashmir. The Indians might be tempted to undertake a limited offensive there; or, more likely, they would work with the United States and the United Nations to turn the present situation into a permanent status quo," he writes.

Daily Times, 26 September 2006

'Strong' words but no bomb threat: Armitage

SEOUL: Former US deputy secretary of state Richard Armitage admitted on Monday having "a very strong conversation" with Pakistan's intelligence chief after the September 11 attacks but denied threatening to bomb the country. The conversation, aimed at getting Pakistan to drop support for the Taliban was the day after the 2001 suicide plane attacks in the United States. But Armitage repeated denials that he had threatened US bombing of Pakistan when he spoke to Lieutenant General Mahmood Ahmed, who was head of the Inter Services Intelligence agency at the time. "This conversation (on bombing) never happened," Armitage told a forum in Seoul, saying he believed the intelligence chief had given an 'inflammatory' account of the exchange to President Pervez Musharraf. "I had a very strong conversation with the intelligence chief," Armitage said in answer to a question at the forum. "I told him that for Americans this was a black and white issue. Pakistan was either with us or against us, that US-Pakistan history would begin on that day." Armitage said he asked Ahmed to report back to Musharraf and come to see him the next day and that "if they agreed to help, then I would give them a list of requirements that were not negotiable." "So it was a strong presentation." Armitage said, "I was not authorised to tell the Pakistani visitor that I would bomb them."

Dawn, 26 September 2006

Good rapport with Bush: Musharraf

NEW YORK, Sept 25: President Gen Pervez Musharraf on Monday said he had complete understanding with President George Bush over the Waziristan peace deal and added that Pakistani forces would continue to hunt Taliban and Al Qaeda terrorists in the region. Appearing on NBC's Today Show, the president said he had a good rapport with the US leader: "We have had complete understanding. We trust each other and have confidence in each other." Gen Musharraf defended his decision to support the war on terror, saying it had been in Pakistan's interest. "Basically it is in Pakistan's interest that I took the decision. It's not the case of somebody pointing the gun on my head or anything," he said. Asked whether he had any knowledge about the reported death of Osama bin Laden, Gen Musharraf said: "I don't know whether he is alive or dead and, therefore, I won't comment." He said he had been able to remove some misperceptions about the Waziristan peace deal, adding that every one was now "on board."

Dawn, 26 September 2006

USS Enterprise deployed in Indian Ocean

WASHINGTON, Sept 25: The USS Enterprise aircraft carrier is deployed in the Indian Ocean and 'prepared for all contingencies', its top commander said on Monday, as speculation rises over possible US military action against Iran. "We're always prepared for any contingency," said Rear Admiral Ray Spicer, speaking to reporters in Washington via teleconference. Spicer commands the Enterprise Strike Group, which includes the nuclear-powered Enterprise and its warplanes, the cruiser Leyte Gulf, the destroyer McFaul, the frigate Nicholas - the last three armed with guided missiles - as well as the attack submarine Alexandria and a combat support ship. He spoke to reporters as US news media speculates on US military preparations for a possible conflict with Iran. According to Time magazine, the Chief of Naval Operations, Admiral Michael Mullen, has ordered a review of US plans to counter a possible Iranian blockade of the Straits of Hormuz. Such a blockade would effectively disrupt the flow of oil tankers in the Gulf region.

Hindustan Times, 27 September 2006

Musharraf backtracks on CIA claims

Washington: Backtracking on the claims made in his just-released memoirs, President Pervez Musharraf has said the American Central Intelligence Agency did not pay money to the Pakistan government for handing over Al-Qaeda suspects. In an interview with a US television channel, Musharraf who read out a passage from his book In The Line of Fire that said, "Those who habitually accuse us of not doing enough in the war on terror should simply ask the CIA how much prize money it has paid to the government of Pakistan." CNN pointed out to General Musharraf that it had broached the CIA with how much prize money it has paid to the government of Pakistan. On this the Pakistani President said, "You know, I don't know whether this is to the government of Pakistan. I don't think I wrote 'the government of Pakistan'." When pointed out that on Page 237 of his book he has in fact written this and asked if he wanted to revise it, Pakistani President said, "Yes. I think that if it is written 'government of Pakistan,' yes," he said. "Certainly not the government, not the government... no, government of Pakistan hasn't received anything," he said.

Hindustan Times, 27 September 2006

Work with India to fight terror: US asks Pakistan

Washington: The United States has asked Pakistan to work with India to reduce threat from Kashmiri separatist groups, many of whom were responsible for terrorist attacks in India. "It is a major problem in South Asia in resolving which the United States has a direct and abiding interest," Under Secretary of State for Political Affairs Nick Burns said on Tuesday. Commenting on Pakistan President Pervez Musharraf's continuing tirade against his Afghan counterpart Hamid Karzai, he said the fact is that Afghanistan and Pakistan must work together militarily and diplomatically to fight terrorism. Asked about his assessment of the Waziristan deal, Burns said they would have to see how it works out. But his advice to Pakistan would be to be resolute in fighting terrorism and use every possible means to go after terrorist cells in that part of Pakistan. As a matter of fact, it needs to work with Afghanistan. "It also needs to work with India to reduce threat from

Kashmiri separatist groups many of whom were responsible for terrorist attacks in India. So this is responsibility that all of us have. It is a major problem in South Asia in resolving which the United States has a direct and abiding interest," Burns added.

Daily Times, 27 September 2006

Opp senators to debate US violation of Pakistani airspace

ISLAMABAD: Opposition members in the Senate on Tuesday submitted several adjournment motions seeking debate on various issues including the alleged violation of Pakistani airspace by US helicopters in North Waziristan on September 20. A motion signed by senators Mian Raza Rabbani, Prof Khurshid Ahmed, Dr Babar Awan and Enver Baig stated that the violation of Pakistani airspace was a matter of grave concern and had put a question mark on Pakistan's sovereignty and therefore should be discussed in the Senate. Media reports stated that US helicopters intruded into Pakistani airspace in the Lawar Mandi area in North Waziristan, about 55 kilometres west of Miranshah, after militants attacked coalition helicopters in the Pipali area of Afghanistan, close to the Pakistan border. In the other adjournment motions, the opposition senators have raised the issues of reported excessive and unchecked mining in the Saindak project and the Baloch grand jirga's decision to move the International Court of Justice on the pre-Partition status of Balochistan. The senators demanded that these issues should be discussed in the Senate to remove citizens' apprehensions and to seek the government's view on these matters of national importance.

The Washington Post, 27 September 2006

Bush Brings Afghanistan, Pakistan to the Table

President Bush met yesterday with Afghanistan President Harmid Karzai and last Friday with Pakistan's president, Gen. Pervez Musharraf. Tonight, joined by Vice President Cheney and Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice, he will bring both men into the old family dining room of the White House for a private chat. "It will be interesting for me to watch the body language of these two leaders to determine how tense things are," Bush told reporters. Bush said he was "kind of teasing" about watching the body language, but the intimate dinner has all the earmarks of a peace conference. Karzai and Musharraf have been sniping at each other from long-distance for months, and Rice was dispatched to Kabul and Islamabad last June to try to ease tensions. The meeting comes as chaos is increasing in southern Afghanistan, as the Taliban grows bolder and the Afghan government's grip on power weakens. Meanwhile, Musharraf recently signed a deal with tribal chiefs that many experts believe turned over much of the area along Afghanistan's border to the control of Pakistani-based Taliban forces. "Our interests coincide," Bush said yesterday, saying both Karzai and Musharraf want Osama bin Laden captured. "There is an understanding that by working together it is more likely that all of us can achieve common objectives, which are stable societies that are hopeful societies that prevent extremists from stopping progress and denying people a hopeful world."

The Tribune, 28 September 2006

US amphibious Navy ship for India

Washington, September 27: With military ties growing, the US is transferring one of its amphibious ships 'USS Trenten' to India to give the Indian Navy the capability to move

troops and equipment to greater distances, a top American Commander has said. The transfer is expected to take place sometime this December, Commander of the American Pacific Fleet Admiral Gary Roughhead told PTI here. 'USS Trenton', the Admiral said, will give capability to the Indian Navy to move troops and equipment to great distances and the ability to remain off shore for a prolonged period of time. He maintained that free and open access to sea was an important and critical challenge and the two navies were 'very closely aligned'. The American Navy official, who was recently in India, said discussions with his counterparts were comprehensive that included future operations, exercises and exchanges.

The Indian Express, 28 September 2006

Pak should work with India to fight terror: US

Washington, September 27: Advising Pakistan to be "resolute" in the fight against terror, the Bush administration has asked the country to cooperate with India to "effectively" reduce the threat from Kashmiri militant groups. "Our advice to the government of Pakistan is to be resolute in fighting terrorism, is to use every ounce of effort that they can possibly muster to go after the terrorist cells in Pakistan," Under Secretary of State for Political Affairs Nicholas Burns told a television news channel. He said the US has asked Pakistan "...also to work with Afghanistan effectively and frankly, also to work with India effectively to reduce the threat from the Kashmiri separatist groups, many of whom have been responsible for terrorist. "So this is a responsibility that all of us have. It's a major problem in South Asia. And it is one in which the United States has a direct and abiding interest," he added. The senior administration official also tried to take the sting out of the public comments made by Pakistani President Pervez Musharraf and his Afghan counterpart Hamid Karzai against each another over the last few days.

The Washington Times, 28 September 2006

At Dinner Table, Bush Plays Role of Mediator

President Bush welcomed the feuding leaders of Afghanistan and Pakistan to the White House last night for an unusual round of personal diplomacy aimed at forging better relations between two key partners in U.S. efforts to hunt down members of al-Qaeda and other Islamic terrorists. Dining on spicy sea bass and pumpkin cake with Bush and his most senior advisers were Pakistan's president, Gen. Pervez Musharraf, and his Afghan counterpart, Hamid Karzai. The two have been sniping at each other for months over what Karzai considers Pakistan's tolerance of Taliban militants crossing the border to mount armed attacks in Afghanistan. Musharraf has testily rebutted Karzai's assertions, but U.S. officials are worried that the deteriorating relations between the two men threaten their effort to pacify Afghanistan and hunt down Osama bin Laden, who is believed to be hiding in the mountainous region of Pakistan bordering Afghanistan. "They really get under each other's skin," said one senior U.S. official who was not authorized to speak publicly about the White House dinner before it got started last night. Administration officials said they hoped at the very least the two men would find less public forums to express their annoyance with each other.

The Hindu, 29 September 2006

"U.S. for rapid economic reform in India"

CHENNAI: The United States is interested in promoting further economic reform in India as this would increase the country's opportunity to attain higher economic growth, David C. Mulford, United States Ambassador to India, said in Chennai on Thursday. In his introductory remarks, before he interacted with students at Madras University, here, Mr. Mulford outlined the paths of Indo-U.S. co-operation in various fields. An economist himself, the Ambassador said the reforms would also be at the macro level - agriculture and liberalisation - and that these would be central to the transformation of India into a superpower. The U.S. and India had developed an important strategic relationship with each other covering a broad range of issues, including science and technology, military and political affairs, and health issues. "There is virtually no area we have not touched," he said, adding that between the two countries, there also existed a very strong people-to-people relationship. Talking about the education exchanges between the two countries, Mr. Mulford said while there were very few American students in India there were over 80,000 Indian students in America, the largest contingent from any country. As part of its initiative towards promoting foreign visitors to the U.S., attention would be paid to reduce the delays that currently plague visa processing for students and business people

The Hindu, 29 September 2006

Bush urges anti-terror allies to cooperate

WASHINGTON: In a White House appearance arranged to show warmth and unity, the leaders of Pakistan and Afghanistan shook hands with President George W. Bush but not with each other. Pakistani President Gen. Pervez Musharraf and Afghan President Hamid Karzai, whom Mr. Bush considers key bulwarks against Islamist radicalism in a volatile region, barely looked at each another as Mr. Bush appealed for cooperation against the common enemy of terrorism. The meeting was a command performance for leaders who have joined their fortunes to Mr. Bush's anti-terror drive since the Sept. 11, 2001, attacks but who for months have picked at each another's efforts to fight terrorists along their long, remote, mountainous border. They actually did shake hands before joining Mr. Bush in appearing before reporters. "These two men are personal friends of mine," Mr. Bush said. "They are strong leaders who have an understanding of the world in which we live. They understand that the forces of moderation are being challenged by extremists and radicals." "They committed to supporting moderation and defeating extremism through greater intelligence sharing, coordinated action against terrorists, and common efforts to enhance the prosperity of the people of Afghanistan and Pakistan," said the statement from press secretary Tony Snow.

The Tribune, 29 September 2006

Top US honour for Dalai Lama

Washington, September 28: President George W Bush has signed into law a Bill to present the Dalai Lama a Congressional Gold Medal, the highest honour bestowed by the US Congress. The decision to honour the Buddhist leader, who is widely revered in the mountainous region ruled by China, caused outrage in Beijing when the House of Representatives passed the measure two weeks ago. At the time, Foreign Ministry spokesman Qin Gang denounced the decision, which he said "seriously interferes with

China's internal affairs and damages China-US relations." The Chinese Government considers the Dalai Lama a political troublemaker who works from his exile in India to push for Tibet's independence. The proposal to honour the Dalai Lama with a Congressional Gold Medal was co-sponsored by 73 of the 100 Senators. It said the Dalai Lama "has struggled for half a century to better the lives of the Tibetan people."

China Daily, 29 September 2006

Threats 'not way to deal with China'

US Treasury Secretary Henry Paulson said on Wednesday that he told two legislators that threatening tariffs is "not the right way to negotiate with China." Paulson met Senators Charles Schumer and Lindsey Graham a day earlier to persuade them to delay a vote on a bill to impose tariffs on Chinese imports if Beijing did not raise the value of its currency. The senators said they needed time to consider Paulson's arguments before deciding whether to call a vote this week. "I'm doing my best job to make the case to Chuck Schumer and Lindsey Graham that their bill wouldn't help anything, and that's not the right way to negotiate with China," Paulson said in a speech to the National Association of Manufacturers in Washington. "I've asked them to give us more time." Schumer, a New York Democrat, and Graham, a South Carolina Republican, are among legislators who say that China artificially depresses the value of its currency, the renminbi, to make its products cheaper on world markets. They argue that the policy is costing US manufacturers sales and jobs. After meeting Paulson, Schumer and Graham said they needed "a few days" to decide whether to push ahead with a vote this week on the bill, which calls for a 27.5 per cent duty on all Chinese imports.

Daily Times, 30 September 2006

Pakistan's help blocked another 9/11: Bush

WASHINGTON: President George Bush said on Friday that 'were it not for information gained from terrorists captured with Pakistan's help, our intelligence community believes Al Qaeda and its allies would have succeeded in launching another attack against the US'. In a speech to members of the Reserve Officers Association at a local hotel, Bush said, "The CIA's questioning of these and other suspected terrorists provided information that helped us break up a cell of Southeast Asian terrorist operatives groomed for attacks inside the US, disrupt an Al Qaeda operation to develop anthrax for terrorist attacks, stop a planned strike on a Marine camp in Djibouti, prevent a planned attack on the Consulate in Karachi and foil a plot to hijack passenger planes and fly them into Heathrow Airport and London's Canary Wharf." Bush said President Musharraf had joined the fight against the terrorists, and "America is grateful for that". He said the US was helping the Musharraf government establish stronger control over the border between Afghanistan and Pakistan and "President Musharraf understands that terrorists hide in remote regions and travel back and forth across this border".

The Nation, 30 September 2006

A stormy visit

General Musharraf's 10-day visit to the US turned out to be much stormier than any previous one. The insurgency in Afghanistan and the accusations by Kabul were at the centre of the debates and discussions. The upsurge in the Taliban militancy has given

birth to fresh worries among the US and its allies who had sent troops five years ago hoping for a quick victory. A perception is inexorably developing that the Taliban have turned out to be much more resilient than had been predicted initially. Fears are being expressed about a deterioration of the situation to the point where it altogether slips out of hand. There is tendency both in the Kabul administration and its foreign supporters to pass the buck onto Pakistan to cover their own failures. Waziristan is being portrayed as the Taliban sanctuary, a springboard for attacks on foreign troops and the prime source of instability in Afghanistan. This explains why the matter was not only at the top of the agenda with President Bush, but also figured prominently in questions put to General Musharraf by the media in all his interactions.

Dawn, 30 September 2006

America grateful to Pakistan, says Bush

WASHINGTON, Sept 29: US President George Bush on Friday praised Pakistan as a strong and steadfast ally in the war against terrorism and vowed to stand with President Gen Pervez Musharraf. Addressing a gathering of the American Reserve Officers Association, Mr Bush said that the capture of key Al Qaeda figures by Pakistan had helped protect American people. He said America was providing high-tech equipment to improve security surveillance capabilities of Pakistani forces so that they could establish stronger control in areas along the country's western border. "Were it not for the information gained from the terrorists captured with the help of Pakistan, our intelligence community believes", Al Qaeda and its allies would have succeeded in launching another attack against the American homeland. "Our close cooperation with the government of Pakistan has saved American lives - and America is grateful to have a strong and steadfast ally in the war against these terrorists," he said. President Bush said the United States was working with President Musharraf to bring security to Pakistan.

The Washington Post, 30 September 2006

Bush Cites Progress in Pakistan, Afghanistan

President Bush highlighted anti-terrorism efforts of Afghanistan and Pakistan yesterday, calling the nations invaluable allies despite a surge of violence in southern Afghanistan that has provoked deep suspicions about their ability -- and appetite -- to battle extremists. Speaking before a Washington audience that included members of the Reserve Officers Association and both countries' ambassadors to the United States, Bush said that 41,000 American and NATO troops in Afghanistan are making progress toward securing and rebuilding the war-torn nation, although significant hurdles remain. While more than 30,000 newly trained Afghan soldiers are working alongside Western troops to secure the country, Bush said, Afghan police "have faced problems with corruption and substandard leadership." Those difficulties have undermined confidence in the police, "and we've made our concerns known to our friends in the Afghan government," Bush said, adding that the police now have new leadership.