

Dawn, 1 September 2007

12 dead in attacks on US-led forces

ASADABAD (Afghanistan), Aug 31: At least 10 people were killed when rockets fired by Taliban at a US base in Kunar hit a nearby village on Friday, while two Afghan soldiers died in a suicide bombing outside Kabul airport. "The Taliban fired several rockets on the base but they fell short and landed on civilian homes," police official Abdul Sabour Allahyar told AFP. Another five people were wounded in the attack in Chawkai district. "There's a base up there which received 10 rounds in indirect fire. We did not return fire," coalition spokesman Sergeant Dean Welch said. Earlier, a suicide attacker rammed his explosives-packed car nose-to-nose with an international military vehicle which was leaving the Nato military gate of Kabul airport. The vehicle did not explode immediately and the foreign car sped off before the blast, which caught a group of Afghan soldiers preparing to fly to Italy for military training, witnesses said.

Hindustan Times, 1 September 2007

Naval exercise with US bad for India: Karat

Within a day of the UPA and the Left deciding to form a joint political committee to look into the impact of the Hyde Act on the 123 Agreement, the CPI (M) launched a fresh attack against the Indo-US joint naval exercise, which is starting on September 4. The CPI (M) said that the Indian armed forces' increasing involvement with the US forces would push the country to become America's "subordinate military ally." Party General Secretary Prakash Karat, in a strongly worded article in People's Democracy, said: "The nuclear deal, the military agreement and the economic policies designed to advance the interests of US capital are parts of the trio which are harmful for India's sovereignty, independent foreign policy and the people's economic interests." Karat said that it was for the first time that a naval exercise with the US, and also Australia, Japan and Singapore, was being held off the east coast.

People's Daily, 2 September 2007

U.S.lawmakers end China tour

A U.S. congress delegation concluded their week-long visit to China on Saturday. The delegation of the U.S.-China Working Group under the House of Representatives of the United States was led by Mark Steven Kirk and Rick Larsen, co-chairmen of the working group. Besides working talks with their Chinese counterparts, the U.S.lawmakers also visited China's training center of astronauts, and held talks with officials of the Foreign Ministry, the Ministry of Public Security and the General Administration of Quality Supervision, Inspection, and Quarantine. The delegation, invited by the foreign affairs committee of the National People's Congress (NPC), China's top legislature, also visited Shanghai and Xinjiang.

Dawn, 3 September 2007

Nawaz reassures US over war on terror

WASHINGTON, Sept 2: Former Prime Minister Nawaz Sharif assured the United States on Sunday that if elected, he would be more effective than President Pervez Musharraf in fighting terrorism. "It's very simple: we're all against terror," said Mr Sharif in an interview with CNN. "I am against terror as much as anybody else in this world."

Political analysts see this statement as an effort to improve his image in Washington where his previous links to Pakistan's religious political parties are often over emphasised. US media reports - including some in mainstream newspapers - claim that Mr Sharif also had contacts with Al Qaeda while in power, a charge he denies.

Dawn, 3 September 2007

Taliban fighting with new tactics: NYT

NEW YORK, Sept 2: A year after Canadian and American forces drove hundreds of Taliban fighters from the Panjwai and Zhare districts south-west of Kandahar, the rebels are back adopting new tactics and have driven government forces out of roughly half of a strategic area in southern Afghanistan, said the New York Times in a report published on Sunday quoting Afghan officials. The newspaper said the setback is part of a bloody stalemate between Nato troops and Taliban fighters across southern Afghanistan this summer. Nato and Afghan Army soldiers can push the Taliban out of rural areas, but the Afghan police are too weak to hold the territory after they withdraw. At the same time, the Taliban are unable to take large towns and have generally mounted fewer suicide bomb attacks in southern cities than they did last summer.

The Hindu, 4 September 2007

Joint naval exercises begin today

NEW DELHI: The biggest-ever naval exercise in the Bay of Bengal will begin on Tuesday and end on September 9. The war games in the international waters between Visakhapatnam and the Andaman and Nicobar Islands will have the participation of the United States, Japan, Australia and Singapore. The last time such a large flotilla of U.S. warships entered the region was in 1971 during the war for liberation of Bangladesh. However, the conflict ended by the time the U.S. Navy's Seventh Fleet positioned itself in the Bay of Bengal. This will also be the first time when 26 warships from other nations practise not far from the Indian coastline.

Dawn, 5 September 2007

Attacks not to affect Pakistan's progress: US

WASHINGTON, Sept 4: The United States said on Tuesday that there's a broad consensus in Pakistan for a moderate vision for the country's future and the extremists who carry out violent attacks on innocent civilians cannot affect this vision. At a briefing in Washington, State Department's deputy spokesman Tom Casey also emphasised that such attacks should not affect Pakistan's progress towards democracy and the country should be able to hold fair and free elections as scheduled. "There is a broad political consensus in Pakistan to support a moderate vision of Pakistan's future," he said, "one that allows for economic development; and one that allows for education for all its children, one that allows for the people to express themselves through democratic elections."

Daily Times, 6 September 2007

Pak-US ties represent commitment to peace, says US envoy

ISLAMABAD: The broad-based relationship between the United States (US) and Pakistan represented a series of long-term commitments to progress and peace, said US

Ambassador Anne W Patterson. She was addressing Pakistani diplomats at Foreign Service Academy on Tuesday. "We can't talk about democracy or education or economic growth as a one-time event. These are processes that will yield results over time." Patterson said foreign policy of all nations was based on national interests. "For us, the US-Pakistan long-term relationships mean a reduced terrorist threat and a strong, democratic and prosperous Pakistan. I believe this relationship will also yield substantial benefits for Pakistan," she said.

The Hindu, 7 September 2007

Pakistan may use U.S. arms against India, says Pranab

NEW DELHI: India is apprehensive that U.S. weapons being supplied to Pakistan could be used against it in the event of a war. Citing a study, External Affairs Minister Pranab Mukherjee said, This assistance is often justified as playing a critical role in the war on terrorism, whereas, in reality, the weapons systems are often "prestige items" to help Pakistan in the event of a war with India. "The study emphasises that few of these weapons are likely to provide much help in rooting out the Al-Qaeda or the Taliban." Quoting the study conducted by a Washington-based think tank, Mr. Mukherjee said that of the \$10-billion assistance provided by the U.S. to Pakistan over the past five-plus years, roughly 18 per cent or \$1.8 billions had gone towards security assistance. This assistance was often justified as playing a critical role in the war with Pakistan but India did not subscribe to this view, he said.

The Hindu, 7 September 2007

China, U.S. pledge to foster ties

SINGAPORE: Chinese President Hu Jintao and his United States counterpart, George W. Bush, on Thursday affirmed their reciprocal commitment to advance the relationship between their countries. The two leaders, who met in Sydney in the run-up to an Asia-Pacific summit there over the weekend, expressed their shared sentiments in a nuanced fashion, each emphasising the importance of different aspects of these ties. In a diplomatic cameo of comments after the talks, Mr. Hu said he was "committed to further advance our constructive and cooperative relations." Describing the meeting as "a constructive and cordial conversation," Mr. Bush said they exchanged ideas on "a lot of interests that we want to work together on." He cited, in particular, their "desire to work together on climate change."

People's Daily, 7 September 2007

It's time to 'get tough on Taiwan'

SYDNEY: Beijing has to send tougher warnings to the Taiwan authorities as the situation across the Taiwan Straits has entered a "highly dangerous period", President Hu Jintao told his US counterpart George W. Bush yesterday. The two leaders met on the sidelines of the annual economic leaders' meeting of the Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation (APEC) forum in Australia. "This year and next year are going to be a highly dangerous period for the situation in the Taiwan Straits," Hu said. Regardless of warnings from different quarters, the island authorities have flagrantly pursued secessionist activities, such as proposing a "referendum on UN membership" and "seeking to join the UN under the name of Taiwan".

Daily Times, 8 September 2007

Boucher arrives to discuss ties

ISLAMABAD: US Assistant Secretary of State for South and Central Asia Richard Boucher reached Islamabad on Friday, ahead of a US delegation arriving for strategic dialogue next week, Daily Times has learnt. Sources said Pakistan and the US delegation will undertake a comprehensive review of cooperation in various fields, including defence. They will discuss counter-terrorism, education, science and technology, and expansion of economic opportunities. They will also consider new proposals under the strategic dialogue initiated during US President George W Bush's visit to Pakistan in March last year, sources said.

Daily Times, 8 September 2007

US renews fighter exports to Pakistan

LAHORE: The United States recently delivered two used F-16B jets to Pakistan and announced plans to donate another two dozen, reports Arms Control Today. In a deal announced last September, the US is also set to sell Pakistan 18 new F-16C/D fighters for delivery in 2010 and upgrades for its current fleet of 34 F-16 combat aircraft. US Ambassador to Pakistan Anne W Patterson said at a July 10 transfer ceremony at the Pakistan Air Force's Sargodha base, that the planes are "symbolic of our commitment to assist Pakistan in improving its ability to secure its territory."

Daily Times, 8 September 2007

Bin Laden mocks US "weakness"

DUBAI: Al Qaeda chief Osama Bin Laden appearing in a video on Friday, in his first public showing in three years, mocked the "weakness" of the United States. "America is weak despite its apparent strength," he said in a short extract broadcast by satellite channel Al-Jazeera. The SITE intelligence group also obtained the 26-minute video, "The Solution". In the video, Bin Laden speaks at length about the American "failure" in Iraq, it said. He said US President George Bush was repeating the mistakes of Soviet leaders by refusing to acknowledge losses in Iraq, reported Reuters. "How similar is your position today to their position approximately two decades ago," he said in a reference to the former Soviet Union's operations in Afghanistan. He also said US Democrats had failed to stop the war in Iraq because of the power corporations wield in the United States.

Hindustan Times, 8 September 2007

US sees India as partner in global naval alliance

The United States hopes to build an alliance with friendly navies such as India's to form a global force of 1,000 ships and boost maritime security, a top US naval commander said on Friday. But Washington's naval cooperation with New Delhi is not intended to send a signal to Beijing and the US navy was not looking to build a base in the Indian Ocean region, Vice-Admiral Doug Crowder said. The comments by Crowder, commander of the Seventh Fleet, came midway through wargames involving five nations, led by the United States and India, in the Bay of Bengal, one of the biggest such peacetime exercises which has raised the hackles of China.

The Hindu, 9 September 2007

U.S., allies for stronger ties with India

Melbourne: Viewing India as an emerging "great power," the U.S., Australia and Japan on Saturday expressed keenness to strengthen ties with New Delhi but ruled out immediate plans to include it in their three-way strategic dialogue. In their landmark security talks, U.S. President George W. Bush, Australian Prime Minister John Howard and his Japanese counterpart Shinzo Abe focussed on how to boost ties with India as they met over breakfast on the sidelines of the Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation (APEC) summit in Sydney.

Daily Times, 9 September 2007

US should value Musharraf, says former US general

LAHORE: Anthony C Zinni, a retired US Marine general, has defended President General Pervez Musharraf and said the United States is lucky to have an ally like him willing to take on terrorism. Writing in the Washington Post, Zinni recalls an incident in December 1999, when he was in charge of US Central Command, that Jordanian officials uncovered a terrorist plot to attack American tourists in the Middle East. The US State Department asked him to contact Gen Musharraf, to see whether he would conduct operations to seize the leaders of an Al Qaeda cell in Pakistan who had been identified by the terrorists in Jordanian hands.

Dawn, 10 September 2007

Bush administration must not support one man: Nawaz

WASHINGTON, Sept 9: Former prime minister Mian Nawaz Sharif has urged the Bush administration not to support "one man" against the wishes of the people of Pakistan. "I think the American administration needs to rethink its policy toward Pakistan," said Mr Sharif in an interview to the Newsweek magazine. "The US must not equate Pakistan with Musharraf. It will not go down well with 160 million Pakistanis if the US continues to support one man against the people's wishes," he said. Mr Sharif also tried to assuage the Bush administration's fear that without Gen. Musharraf, the fight against extremism would falter. "Pakistan must never again allow anyone to use its territory for promoting terrorism," he said.

Daily Times, 11 September 2007

Deportation against SC verdict: US

WASHINGTON: A US State Department press briefing on Monday said Pakistan's decision to deport former prime minister Nawaz Sharif ran contrary to the decision of the country's Supreme Court, while mildly rebuking the government for the act. State Department spokesman Sean McCormack said the decision to deport Sharif back to Saudi Arabia went against the Supreme Court's ruling last month that Sharif had the right to return and the government should not stop him. "The decision to deport him runs contrary to the Supreme Court's decision but as I said it is still a pending legal matter," McCormack told reporters, when commenting on Sharif's deportation.

Daily Times, 11 September 2007

Negroponte, Boucher visit unrelated to Pakistan's political situation: US

WASHINGTON: The State Department spokesman, fielding a flurry of questions on Monday over the deportation of Nawaz Sharif stressed that the visits of John Negroponte, deputy secretary of state, and Richard Boucher, assistant secretary of state, were coincidental and unrelated to the current political situation in the country. Sean McCormack said, "As a matter of fact, it's coincidence that the timing of this particular strategic dialogue takes place right now. Ambassador Negroponte, our deputy secretary, and Richard Boucher are going to be in Pakistan for the strategic dialogue with their Pakistani counterparts. This is something that had been scheduled prior to the political calendar, shall we say, that's unfolding now in Pakistan."

Daily Times, 12 September 2007

Pak-US strategic dialogue today

ISLAMABAD: The second round of Pak-US strategic dialogue between senior officials of the two countries begins here today (Wednesday) at the Foreign Office (FO) to expand and deepen bilateral relations and cooperation in various sectors. Diplomatic sources said that though technically it would be the second round, it formed the first substantial round, as the earlier round held last year in Washington was mostly ceremonial and both the sides used it to formulate the mode of dialogue and discussion in the next meetings. Sources also attach great importance to the current round due to presence in Islamabad of Deputy Secretary of State John Negroponte, who would lead the US side in the talks.

Daily Times, 12 September 2007

US not behind talks with Musharraf: BB

LAHORE: Pakistan People's Party (PPP) Chairwoman Benazir Bhutto has denied any US role in her talks with President Pervez Musharraf. She told Indian television channel CNN-IBN in an interview that some people were trying to create a misunderstanding that the US was backing the PPP-Musharraf talks. "Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice, Negroponte and Ambassador Boucher have visited Pakistan many times because Pakistan is a key ally in the war on terror," she added. She said that her political opponents feared her popularity and were launching a smear campaign. "It's in the best interests of the people of Pakistan that there should be credible elections and a civilian president and people get a representative government to deal with their problems," she added.

The News, 12 September 2007

Pakistanis oppose US forces to hunt terrorists in Pakistan: Poll

WASHINGTON: Only a quarter of Pakistanis support their military working with U.S. forces to pursue terrorists inside Pakistan, and even fewer favor letting American forces mount such operations on their own, a poll released on Tuesday said. In a broader measure of America's unpopularity in its erstwhile ally against terrorism, 19 percent of Pakistanis see the U.S. favorably, half the number with a positive view of India, a bitter rival Pakistan has fought in three wars since 1947. Pakistani president, Gen. Pervez Musharraf has been shown with less popularity than Osama bin Laden, though both are far better liked than President George W. Bush.

People's Daily, 12 September 2007

China, U.S. share almost the same stance on Darfur issue: Chinese envoy

China and the United States, at the governmental level, share almost the same stance on the Darfur issue, China's special representative for Darfur said in United Nations on Tuesday. "The U.S. government appreciates the positive efforts made by the Chinese government on the settlement of the Darfur issue and has also given us an appropriate remark," Liu Guijin, who has just ended a visit to Washington, told reporters at the UN Headquarters. It is only on some specific issues that the two sides have different perspectives and have some differences in viewing the priorities, he said.

The Indian Express, 13 September 2007

After Russia, Indian troops head to US, China for anti-terror exercises

New Delhi, September 12: After conducting airborne anti-terror exercises with Russia in the icy plains of Pskov this month, the Indian troops will head to Alaska for the latest round of "Yudh Abhyas" series of joint training maneuvers with the US Army on September 24. A company level force of Indian soldiers, with a "special forces component", will participate in a simulated anti-terror drill with as many as 700 US soldiers at the Donnelly training area in Alaska. The final modalities are still being worked out at joint planning meetings between the countries, but sources say that the duration of the exercise is likely to be close to two weeks.

Daily Times, 13 September 2007

Kasuri meets Negroponte, stresses wider ties with US

ISLAMABAD: Foreign Minister Khurshid Mehmood Kasuri on Wednesday underlined the importance of a broad-based relationship between Pakistan and the US marked by deeper and wider cooperation in diverse fields. Talking to US Deputy Secretary of State John Negroponte who called on him at the Foreign Office, the two also exchanged views on Afghanistan. Negroponte reiterated the US commitment to a long-term relationship with Pakistan and highlighted the importance of regular exchanges to promote bilateral cooperation. Welcoming the second round of the Pakistan-US strategic dialogue, Kasuri stressed the importance Pakistan attached to the separate dialogues on energy, economy, education, and science and technology.

China Daily, 13 September 2007

US strongly opposes Taiwan's UN referendum

WASHINGTON - The United States on Tuesday expressed strong opposition to the Taiwan authorities' proposed referendum on UN membership in the name of Taiwan, saying that the initiative, with apparent pursuit of name change, is "a step intended to change the status quo" across the Taiwan Strait. "We feel it is our obligation to warn that the content of this particular referendum is ill-conceived and potentially quite harmful. Bad public policy initiatives are made no better for being wrapped in the flag of 'democracy,'" Thomas Christensen, deputy assistant secretary of state in charge of East Asia and Pacific affairs, said while addressing the concluding session of a three-day US-Taiwan Defense Industry Conference held in Annapolis, Maryland.

Indo-Asian News Service, 15 September 2007

'Don't make nuclear deal total litmus test' of Indo-US relationship

Washington, Sep 15 (IANS) Former Indian Ambassador to the US Naresh Chandra says New Delhi is fully committed to the India-US civil nuclear deal, but it should not be made a "total litmus test" of their relationship. "If for some reason the nuclear deal is not concluded satisfactorily and soon, everything will not fall by the wayside," he said while participating in a panel discussion Friday with an Indian delegation visiting here for the US-India Strategic Dialogue. Chandra said while the deal had become the highest visible symbol of the growing partnership between the two countries, one must not forget that there was a whole spectrum of opinion, apprehensions and prejudices surrounding it.

The Times of India, 16 September 2007

US prods India to work out safeguards agreement with IAEA

VIENNA: The US on Sunday said it was "important" for India to negotiate a safeguards agreement with the IAEA to operationalise the nuclear deal even as Atomic Energy Commission chief Anil Kakodkar remained tightlipped on whether he would hold talks with the UN nuclear watchdog. Finalising a India-specific safeguards agreement is one of the key steps for operationalising the deal that has been mired in political controversy with the Left parties threatening to withdraw support to the government if it goes ahead with the negotiations with IAEA.

The Times of India, 16 September 2007

'Improvement in Indo-US ties not at Russia's cost'

MOSCOW: The process of improvement in the Indo-US ties is not being carried out at the cost of Russia which will remain a major defence partner of India, according to outgoing Indian Ambassador Kanwal Sibal. "Dilution of relations with Russia is a wrong perception," Sibal said here on the eve of his departure for home tomorrow after a three-year stint. "Indian political debate is heavily coloured by nuclear deal with the US. This remains in the focus of Indian media also, generating impression of dilution of relationship with Russia," he said, adding there has been no loss of momentum in ties with Moscow.

The Hindu, 17 September 2007

Divergence of views not to affect ties with US: Mukherjee

Seoul, Sept. 17 (PTI): In the backdrop of Left parties' opposition to growing Indo-US ties, External Affairs Minister Pranab Mukherjee today suggested any "divergence" of views in the country would not hamper development of bilateral relations and defended the nuclear deal as a "landmark" agreement. On a three-day visit here since yesterday, he made it clear that the increasing cooperation between India and the US was not aimed at containing China. "I do not visualize any constraint in bilateral relations (between India and the US). It is expanding very fast," Mukherjee said.

Indo-Asian News Service, 17 September 2007

US firm offers India thorium reactors

Bangalore, Sep 17 (IANS) While India is still debating how to make the Indo-US nuclear deal work, an American company, anxious to enter the Indian market, has offered to build commercial nuclear power reactors in the country. These reactors will rely entirely on India's thorium resources -- except at the start - and thereby remove the objections of

critics.

The Hindu, 18 September 2007

Important for India to negotiate with IAEA: U.S.

Vienna: The United States said on Monday that it was "important" for India to negotiate a safeguards agreement with the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) to operationalise the nuclear deal, even as Atomic Energy Commission chief Anil Kakodkar remained tightlipped on whether he would hold talks with the IAEA. Finalising a India-specific safeguards agreement is one of the key steps for operationalising the deal that has been mired in political controversy with the Left parties threatening to withdraw support to the Manmohan Singh government if it goes ahead with the negotiations with the IAEA.

Indo-Asian News Service, 19 September 2007

123 is the India-US nuclear deal: Boucher

Washington, Sep 19 (IANS) The 123 agreement for civil nuclear cooperation "is the deal" between India and the United States, a senior US official has clarified, suggesting it overtakes the Hyde Act whose legal implications have led to a political crisis in India. "We have met all requirements of the Hyde Act. The 123 agreement is in conformity with the Hyde Act" and the Bush Administration does not see anything in the law that would change Washington's relationship with India, Assistant Secretary of State Richard A. Boucher said.

Indo-Asian News Service, 19 September 2007

US urges India to take 'last steps' on n-deal

New Delhi, Sep 18 (IANS) With the India-US civil nuclear deal embroiled in a standoff between the government and its Left allies, US ambassador David Mulford Tuesday asked India to take the "last steps" so that the deal can be endorsed by Congress well in time before Washington moves into election mode next year. "Now we must take the final steps. Time is of the essence," Mulford said here at the fourth India-US economic summit. "This involves India completing the safeguards agreement with the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) and the rule change by the Nuclear Suppliers Group which will permit this initiative to be global in scope," he said.

Hindustan Times, 19 September 2007

India should explain its relationship with Iran: US

Press Trust Of India Washington, September 19, 2007 Amid apprehensions expressed by some senior US lawmakers on India's military ties with Iran, the Bush administration has said some of the fears are "exaggerated" but the onus is on New Delhi to explain its relationship with Tehran. "The Indian government is very well aware of the concerns of India's military relationship with Iran. What we are trying to do is for everybody to understand the facts of the matter," Assistant Secretary of State for South Asia Richard Boucher said at a meeting organised by the United States India Business Alliance in Washington. Asked to comment on an apprehensions expressed by senior lawmakers on India's military relations with Iran, he said, "I think that some of the fears are exaggerated. Some of the training it turns out to be cadet level; some of the exchanges

don't lead to a lot...". "But I think it's more on the Indian side to try to explain exactly what is and what is not going on in its relations with Iran, as we are upfront in our relations with other countries, with India," Boucher said. "I'm sure India can explain it better than we can what their relationships are and are not..." he said adding that New Delhi had made it clear that it is not interested in seeing the emergence of another nuclear power in that neighbourhood.

The Hindu, 20 September 2007

Come clean on ties with Iran, U.S. asks India

Washington: The United States has asked India to come clean on its military ties with Iran but New Delhi played down its concerns asserting that friendly relations with one country will not affect ties with others. In remarks that have raised the hackles of the Left, on the back of the growing rift between the UPA and the Communist parties on the India-U.S. nuclear deal, the U.S. has said the onus is on New Delhi to explain its military relationship with Tehran.

The Times of India, 20 September 2007

Ignoring Left, govt marches ahead on N-deal

NEW DELHI: Despite the Left parties' veto, the UPA government is waking up from its Left-induced stupor on the nuclear deal, working in concert with the US to take the agreement past the finishing line. As a first step, US ambassador David Mulford met Shyam Saran, the PM's special envoy on the nuclear deal, on Wednesday afternoon. In Vienna, the US called a meeting of the Nuclear Suppliers' Group (NSG) to discuss the deal amid indications that IAEA's technical team has given an initial draft of a safeguards agreement for the Indian side to work on.

The Hindu, 21 September 2007

"Deal will alter balance to India's advantage"

CHENNAI: The India-U.S. civilian nuclear deal will alter the geo-strategic balance in Asia to the advantage of India, Union Minister of State for Industries Ashwani Kumar said on Wednesday. The '123 Agreement', in fact, is better than the one that China has had with the U.S., and, it is a triumph of sorts for India that Pakistan was denied a similar deal, Mr. Kumar said.

Indo-Asian News Service, 21 September 2007

We have no master plan for India: US

New Delhi, Sep 20 (IANS) As the India-US civil nuclear deal continues to be embroiled in a political debate in India, a top US official Thursday said that Washington has "no grand design or master plan to pull India into a strategic alliance". "The US has no master plan for the world and for India. We don't have a plan to lure you into a subsidiary alliance. Nothing is further than the truth We are not seeking to pull you into an anti-Iranian alliance. We have different conceptions on Iran," US Deputy Assistant Secretary of Defence James Clad said.

Indo-Asian News Service, 21 September 2007

US downplays India's Iran ties

Washington, Sep 21 (IANS) The US has sought to underplay its concerns over India's ties with Iran after reports that Washington wanted an explanation from New Delhi added fuel to the raging political fire over their nuclear deal. "We understand that India is going to have ties with Iran. All countries in the neighbourhood are going to have ties with Iran," said Assistant Secretary of State for South Asia Richard Boucher, whose purported remarks had raised the hackles of the Indian Left already at loggerheads with the government.

The Hindu, 21 September 2007

Fate of 123 agreement not to affect relations: U.S. official

NEW DELHI: In the face of opposition by the Left parties to the India-U.S. civil nuclear cooperation agreement, a senior U.S. official said bilateral defence and strategic partnership would continue to grow regardless of the fate of the pact.

The Hindu, 22 September 2007

Indo-US ties redefined after decades of lack of trust: Sharma

London, Sept. 22 (PTI): India has taken "a bold initiative" to forge a partnership with the US after decades of lack of trust but its relationship with one country is not at the expense of any other nation, Minister of State for External Affairs Anand Sharma said today. "India has fashioned its external policies based on the sole objective of optimising the benefits of much engagements"..."We have redefined our relationship with United States after decades of lack of trust. There is better understanding on both sides of the needs and aspirations of the people". "While India has taken a bold initiative to forge a partnership with USA, as demonstrated by the recently concluded Indo-US civil nuclear cooperation agreement, it has also been steadily strengthening its ties with China both in terms of scope and extent. "In fact, India's trading linkages with China have expanded rapidly over the last few years making China the second largest trading partner of India next only to USA," he said. Its (India's) relationship with one country is not directed against any other country nor is it at the expense of any other country," Sharma said...

The Hindu, 23 September 2007

Left questions Centre's role on Indo-US CEOs' meet

Chandigarh, Sept. 23 (PTI): Taking exception to the Centre's move to accord "official status" to the US and Indian Chief Executive Officers' joint forum in New York, the CPI-M today said this will make the recommendations of the meeting "binding" on the country. "We have serious objections to the Central government dancing to the tunes of the CEOs' joint forum," CPI(M) General Secretary Prakash Karat told reporters on the sidelines of a convention on the Indo-US nuclear deal here. According "official status" meant that the recommendations of the meeting would be "binding" on the government, he claimed and added that the Left would not like India becoming a "subordinate" ally of the US in the forum. "Almost every senior official, including the Finance Minister, are attending the meet," he said. Earlier, addressing a gathering, he said it is a forum of the private sector, "but surprisingly, the government is sending its senior men to attend the meet." Karat said the idea behind such a joint forum being taken so seriously by the Centre was to allow foreign direct investment in banking, insurance and other sectors. "Left is opposed to such an economic alliance by the Centre with US." He expressed

apprehension that "after the forum submits its report, investments by big private foreign business houses will be permitted in agriculture sector by the government." He said the top business houses of both India and US were keen on pressurising the Centre to alter the labour laws. The agenda of the US was to implement the report of the forum, he said adding, if any legislation is brought in Parliament allowing FDI in certain sectors after the meet's recommendations, the Left is prepared to stall it.

Times Of India, 23 September 2007

India to hold talks with the IAEA at the earliest: Kakodar

India will hold talks with International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) "as soon as possible" on an India-specific accord to help implement the civil nuclear deal with the United States, top nuclear scientist Anil Kakodkar has said... Asked when can these talks take place, Kakodkar, the Atomic Energy Agency Chairman told a TV channel "we hope that it can happen soon"...

Times Of India, 24 September 2007

Delaying N-deal can harm Congress approval

WASHINGTON: Delaying the Indo-US nuclear deal will "jeopardise" its getting through Congress and the notion that India will get something better in a new Democratic administration is "misplaced", a senior Indian-American community leader has said. "For Indian leaders to believe that they can wait for the next US President to get a better deal, and they are hoping that it will be Senator Hillary Clinton, need to look at the fact that there were 12 US Senators who voted against the Hyde Bill and they were all Democrats with nine of them chairing the most influential committees in Congress," Ashok Mago, Chairman of the Dallas-based US-India Forum, said. Mago, who has been in the forefront of lobbying for the passage of the Hyde Act last year, said, "Our leaders in India do not understand the system in the US. They think the President sends a Bill to Congress and it is approved and done. In this case, the Bill which became the Hyde Act is actually not the one that President Bush sent." This bill was basically prepared by Tom Lantos (currently Chairman of the House Foreign Affairs Committee), Henry Hyde (former Chairman of the House International Relations Committee), Joseph Biden (current Chair of the Senate Foreign Relations Committee) and Bill Frist (former Senate Majority Leader), he said. "I don't think that the next President can get anything more than what has already been approved by this Congress, because it is not the President alone who decides but also the Congress," he added.

Press Trust of India, 24 September 2007

Convert' Kissinger sees big potential for Indo-US cooperation

M Karthikeyan New York, Sep 24 (PTI) India's foe-turned-friend Henry Kissinger has said he sees a lot of potential for both India and the US to work together across areas, including combating terror, without undermining the other's role. "India and US can walk along parallel roads. This is an exciting prospect," the former US Secretary of State said at a dinner reception hosted by Finance Minister P Chidambaram at the New York Public Library as part of the Incredible India@60 celebration here. Alluding to the unkind comments he had made against India and Indians in 1971, Kissinger said he has since long changed his opinion about the country and its people. "Converts are usually the most

passionate believers," he said. Kissinger, now 84, had shortly before the India-Pakistan war of 1971 called Indians and its then Prime Minister Indira Gandhi names a reflection of the US perception that New Delhi being too close to Moscow.

Press Information Bureau, Government of India, 24 September 2007

INDO-US MOC ON PUBLIC TRANSPORTATION SIGNED

Large scale urbanization in India has put severe strain on urban infrastructure which includes water supply, road and transport, sewerage and sanitation, drainage and solid waste management. If momentum of economic growth is to be maintained, challenges thrown up by large-scale urbanization will have to be addressed without delay. This was stated by Shri S.Jaipal Reddy, Minister of Urban Development here today after signing Memorandum of Cooperation with the United States in the fields of Public Transportation, Intermodal Transportation, Safety Transportation, Transportation for persons with Disabilities, Intelligent Transportation Systems, Traffic Information Centre, capacity building and training in public transportation and other fields of mutual interest. The MoC will facilitate the following: Exchange of scientific and technical information on subjects of mutual interest; exchange of specialists, delegations, and scientific and technical personnel; joint organization of symposia, seminars, training programmes and other meetings; joint research in urban transportation science and technology; other forums of cooperation as mutually agreed. Ms Sherry Little, Deputy Administrator, US Federal Transit Administration led a delegation of five officers. Shri M.Ramachandran, Secretary, Urban Development led the Indian delegation.

Press Trust of India, 25 September 2007

Indo-US economic partnership strongest than ever: US official

New York: Indo-US economic partnership is the strongest it has ever been, according to the top US trade official, who said the Trade Policy Forum set up during Prime Minister Manmohan Singhs visit to Washington in 2005 has achieved results through government-to-government dialogue. The US-India economic partnership is strongest it has ever been and trade has played a vital role in that development, United States Trade Representative Susan C Schwab said at the first meeting of the US-India Trade Policy Forums Private Sector Advisory Group (PSAG) on 24 September....

Economic Times, 25 September 2007

Private sector asked for ways to boost US-India trade

NEW YORK: Indian and US governments have asked a high-powered, bilateral private sector body to recommend incremental steps required to overcome obstacles and enable unfettered trade and investment between the two countries. The request came from Commerce and Industry Minister Kamal Nath and US Trade Representative Susan C Schwab at the first meeting of US-India Trade Policy Forum's Private Sector Advisory Group (PSAG) here on Monday. They asked the group to examine where the two sides want to be over the next two to five years and to provide recommendations on the incremental steps that can be taken to overcome obstacles and enable unfettered trade and investment.

Indo-Asian News Service, 25 September 2007

India, US to set up fresh mechanism for bilateral ties

New York, Sep 25 (IANS) India and the US have decided to set up an institutionalised framework for identifying areas of mutual trade and promoting bilateral trade in three key areas - rural industries, agro-products and small and medium enterprises. The decision came Monday at a meeting of the Private Sector Advisory Group (PSAG). "The meeting was useful and both sides have exchanged views on the areas where we can develop mutual cooperation," Commerce Minister Kamal Nath told reporters. "One of the suggestions from the US side was that the insurance companies can offer health services in India, which comes at a cheaper rate," Nath said. The PSAG also discussed about US companies that have Indian partners investing in India's ultra mega power projects. "The US side also wanted a titanium plant. We need to find out whether we can allow 100 percent FDI (foreign direct investment) in it."

Indo-Asian News Service, 25 September 2007

Is India aligning in a new Cold War? (Sreeram Chaulia)

Even as Russo-American tensions smoulder from Eastern Europe and Central Asia to the Arctic seabed, the US Secretary of State is denying the onset of a renewed Cold War. Yet, unmistakable signals of a counter-balancing effort by Russia and China were sent last month through the largest-ever war games of the Shanghai Cooperation Organisation (SCO), a six-nation anti-US alliance. A notable absentee at the exercises was India, which has not applied for full membership of the SCO despite Russia's entreaties that its entry would "lead to stability and security in Asia". The post-games summit meeting of the SCO in Bishkek was attended by heads of states of three observer countries (Iran, Pakistan and Mongolia), but India, a co-equal, could not depute anyone higher in rank than a petroleum minister. The foreign minister was apparently busy allaying Leftist fears of a sell-out on the India-US nuclear agreement. Such prioritisation indicates that India sees potential only for energy deals, not strategic partnership, in the SCO... India's National Security Adviser M.K. Narayanan avers that New Delhi is yet to accept the US as a "benign power". But intentions apart, is the US still the predominant power in capabilities? As long as this myth is not shattered, India will remain tilted in the smugness that it is being pragmatic by courting the strongest party. If India is a "swing state" in the new Cold War, it should not be tilting so obviously on one side. It should engage more seriously with the SCO on one hand, and play harder to get and extract more concessions beyond the civilian nuclear deal from the US on the other...

Hindustan Times, 26 September 2007

US physicians' group to train health workers in India

The Association of American Physicians of Indian Origin (AAPI) will launch a scheme in Bihar and Andhra Pradesh to train local health workers for screening major ailments affecting the population. AAPI President Hemant Patel said, "We will train the trainees for screening diabetes, cardio-vascular diseases and other ailments among the rural population." He was addressing a gathering at the Pravasi Bharatiya Divas, organised by the Ministry of Overseas Indian Affairs in New York on Sunday. The project is expected to start in December. "We also plan to reach other states," Dr Patel said.

CNN-IBN, 26 September 2007

Bush regime anxious about N-deal: Condoleezza

New Delhi: The Bush administration has 14 months to go but still has lots left to do. One of its foremost worries is what it has yet to achieve on the civilian nuclear deal with India, said Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice on Tuesday. I am not worried about my legacy. With 14 months to go, I'm worrying about what we've yet achieved on the Palestinian-Israeli track, the North Korean nuclear issue, the India civil-nuclear deal and trade agreements. We have got a big agenda," Rice told Reuters Editorial Board in an interview...

Reuters, 26 September 2007

U.S.'s Paulson to meet Chidambaram

WASHINGTON (Reuters) - U.S. Treasury Secretary Henry Paulson will meet with Finance Minister Palaniappan Chidambaram on Tuesday in Washington to discuss economic issues, including financial sector reforms, the Treasury said on Monday. The two finance ministers are expected to discuss how the United States and financial regulators can best support India in achieving its economic and development goals. The meeting also will cover Paulson's planned trip to India in late October. Paulson is scheduled to visit Mumbai on Oct. 29 and New Delhi on Oct 30, where he will participate in the Fortune Global Forum.

New Delhi Television, 26 September 2007

Indo-US nuke deal to go ahead: Sources

Despite the Left's warning to put the Indo-US nuclear deal on hold for six months, the government, it seems, is quietly determined to go ahead with its plans. Government sources have told NDTV that it does not plan to delay the next steps, at least not yet. If the Left is not convinced and the government carries on as planned then there is more likelihood of early elections...

Stratfor Intelligence brief, 26 September 2007

India: Calling for a Time Out in the Space Race

India emphasized the need for a robust international mechanism to protect satellites Sept. 24 at the 58th International Astronautical Congress. While the idea is broadly favored within the scientific community, no such mechanism is in the cards. Instead, New Delhi's statement is a reflection of its own need to decrease its vulnerability in space compared to the United States, even as it modernizes its military.

The Hindu, 27 September 2007

Govt. succumbing to U.S. pressure

NEW DELHI: Forward Bloc leader Debabrata Biswas said on Wednesday that the latest reply of the UPA government to the Left parties rejoinder on the India-U.S. nuclear deal was unsatisfactory as it failed to deal with their concern on the impact of the Hyde Act. While we are very serious about the UPA-Left committee on nuclear deal, the Congress does not appear to be so, he felt...

Rediff news, 27 September 2007

India should grab N-deal: Chidambaram

It would be an epic waste if India lets go off the opportunities, including the end to nuclear isolation, thrown open by the civil nuclear deal with the US, feels Finance Minister P Chidambaram. "I think there are lots of factors favouring the agreement," he said. "The 123 agreement is the only one of its kind with a nation that is not a signatory to the Non-Proliferation Treaty. If we can access dual technology and raise nuclear power production from 3 per cent to 10 per cent (of total generation), these are opportunities any intelligent country should seize,"...

NewKerala news, 27 September 2007

'Incredible India' was silent on nuke deal, Bush

By Liz Mathew, New York, Sep 27 : They talked about Indian culture, cuisine, art, the economy and growing trade ties with the US, but politicians and businesspersons here to market India were conspicuously quiet on the hottest topic of the season - the India-US civil nuclear deal. It seemed as if the Left warning the government of serious consequences if New Delhi goes ahead with the deal and the fluid political situation back home have had their effect. Interestingly, there was also not a single reference to US President George W. Bush, whom Manmohan Singh has referred to as 'India's best friend'. All maintained an enigmatic silence - be it External Affairs Minister Pranab Mukherjee, who inaugurated the festival at the historic Lincoln Centre, Commerce and Minister Kamal Nath, who spoke at length about strengthening ties with the US, Finance Minister P.Chidambaram, who painted a rosy picture of the Indian economy or Overseas Indian Affairs Minister Vayalar Ravi...

zee news, 27 September 2007

Mukherjee meets Rice in New York

New York, Sept 27: External Affairs Minister Pranab Mukherjee and US Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice met here and reviewed bilateral relations across "a gamut of items of cooperation" and discussed international issues of concern. It was a "good meeting," Mukherjee said after parleys that stretched for 45 minutes yesterday.....

Rediff news, 27 September 2007

US lawmakers slam govt agency for turban checks

Close on the heels of a blistering missive by Congressman Tom Lantos, founding co-chairman of the Congressional Human Rights Caucus and the chairman of the House Foreign Affairs Committee, warning the Transportation Security Administration not to indulge in religious profiling of Sikhs even as he attacked it for changing the screening procedures to include searches of turbans, several other lawmakers, both in the House and Senate, have also slammed the agency....

Rediff news, 27 September 2007

US ambassador David Mulford interview

United States Ambassador to India David Mulford on Tuesday said it is important that the final steps relating to the completion of the India-United Civilian Nuclear Energy Cooperation are taken within the lives of the current Administration as well as the US Congress. "These final steps are critical for the completion and time is of the essence," Mulford said in New York on Tuesday while making a brief speech to introduce Finance

Minister P Chidambaram an a daylong conference tiled 'India at 60: A New Age for Business....'

The Hindu, 28 September 2007

'CPI(M) will take a unanimous decision on nuke deal'

The Communist Party of India -Marxist (CPI-M) would take a unanimous decision on its stand on the Indo-US civil nuclear deal, a member of the party's Polit Bureau said today. "Everything has been discussed and I am sure we will take a unanimous decision", M K Pandhe said, after a crucial Polit Bureau meeting attended by CPI(M) General Secretary Prakash Karat, party veteran Jyoti Basu and West Bengal Chief Minister Buddhadeb Bhattacharjee among others...

Times Of India, 28 September 2007

Pranab, PC assure US India is on track

Top Indian cabinet ministers met their U.S counterparts here on Wednesday to assure them about New Delhi's commitment to advancing bilateral relations and agreements in the first high-level interaction between the two sides in several months, amid mounting concerns that domestic political pressures are undermining milestones reached between the two countries.....

New Delhi Television, 28 September 2007

Expand Fulbright program: US to India

The United States has said it is time that India be made a "full partner" in its prestigious Fulbright program, under which scholars from both countries visit each others' institutions for further study and research. The proposal in this regard to India was put forth by the Under Secretary of State for Public Diplomacy and Public Affairs, Karen P Hughes, in her meeting with a delegation of Indian educationists in Washington early this week...

Sify News, 28 September 2007

N-deal will help India launch second Green Revolution: Rice

he India-US civil nuclear deal will help New Delhi meet its people's economic aspirations by launching a second Green Revolution, Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice said here on Thursday. Opening a US sponsored meeting of major economies, she cited the agreement as an example of partnerships it has forged with developing countries "to overcome the challenge of climate change and transform our world".

Times Of India, 29 September 2007

N-deal to commence when India is ready: US

In the face of Left opposition, the Bush administration has refused to set a time-line for moving the Indo-US nuclear deal forward, saying it will start work towards operationalising the agreement when New Delhi is ready. "We will deal with it as it comes. We'll deal with it in terms of the opportunities that are there when India is ready to move forward," Assistant Secretary of State for South and Central Asian Affairs, Richard Boucher said when asked if there was any time-line for moving the deal forward.....

Press Information Bureau, Government of India, 29 September 2007

RENUKA CHOWDHURY MEETS CONDOLEEZZA RICE

The present Indian Government is committed for the empowerment of women and has taken up several initiatives in the recent past in this direction. This was conveyed by Smt. Renuka Chowdhury, Minister for Women and Child Development during a meeting with Secretary of State of USA, Ms. Condoleezza Rice in New York today. Smt. Chowdhury told Ms. Rice that Indian women could boast of the achievements, which are still dreams for the women in some of the developed countries. India has a woman as head of the State and its women are leading different fields whether it is education, business or science....

Rediff News, 29 September 2007

Why the UPA cant wait six months by M K Bhadrakumar (Commentary)

What is six months in the life of an ancient nation? This will remain a tantalising question that the United Progressive Alliance government refuses to answer regarding the raison d'etre of the India-United States civil nuclear cooperation agreement. Amidst the cacophony over the deal, the Left has made a modest suggestion. Why don't we pause, take a six-month sabbatical and revisit the deal in a chastened mood? A wide body of public opinion harbours a sense of disquiet over the deal. But the government sidetracks the issue....