

China, North Korea discuss n-issue

By P. S. Suryanarayana

SINGAPORE, DEC. 27. The Chinese Vice-Foreign Minister, Wang Yi, and the North Korean three Vice-Ministers of Foreign Affairs have agreed to "make appropriate preparations" for the convening of the next round of multilateral talks to ensure a nuclear-weapons-free Korean peninsula.

The understanding was reached after two days of extensive talks that concluded in Pyongyang on Friday and assumes importance in the context of the delay in holding the second round of the six-party parleys. The first round was held in Beijing last August, and China played the prime mover in trying to convene the second round before the end of this year.

China indicated, only a few days ago, that the second round might be held only in the new year. The U.S., South Korea, Japan and

Russia are the other four parties to the negotiations.

While regional diplomats point out that the delay could be traced to the complexities of evolving a formulation to introduce the idea of some "U.S. security assurances for North Korea" as an agenda item, China noted that Pyongyang's 'reasonable' security concerns should be addressed. China said that it attached importance to the DPRK's willingness to give up its "nuclear programmes".

The Chinese version can be interpreted to indicate the DPRK's willingness to denuclearise its facilities on the basis that its legitimate security concerns would be met.

Non-proliferation rules

China's Ministry of Commerce and General Administration of Customs has announced "interim measures" to tighten

controls in regard to the export of sensitive items and technologies that could be used for the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction and their delivery systems. These measures relate to the "operational rules" designed to implement the non-proliferation laws and other regulations that China has already put in place.

The field-level rules are aimed at facilitating export registration under a licensing system in respect of sensitive products and know-how relating to the proliferation of nuclear as also biological and chemical weapons besides missiles and their parts.

The rules are said to empower the customs authorities to enhance checks with a view to promoting lawful trade and preventing the contraband exports.

'Self-discipline' on the part of entrepreneurs would also be a norm under this framework.

Kim and The Great Game

THE ground is shaking under the feet of North Korean dictator Kim Jong Il. The situation in West Asia is posing an unparalleled crisis to his policy of developing weapons of mass destruction as a means of gaining recognition and economic survival. The surprising decision by Iran and Libya to forgo secret nuclear weapons programmes leaves Pyongyang the only member of the "axis of evil" still defying the Bush doctrine of preemption.

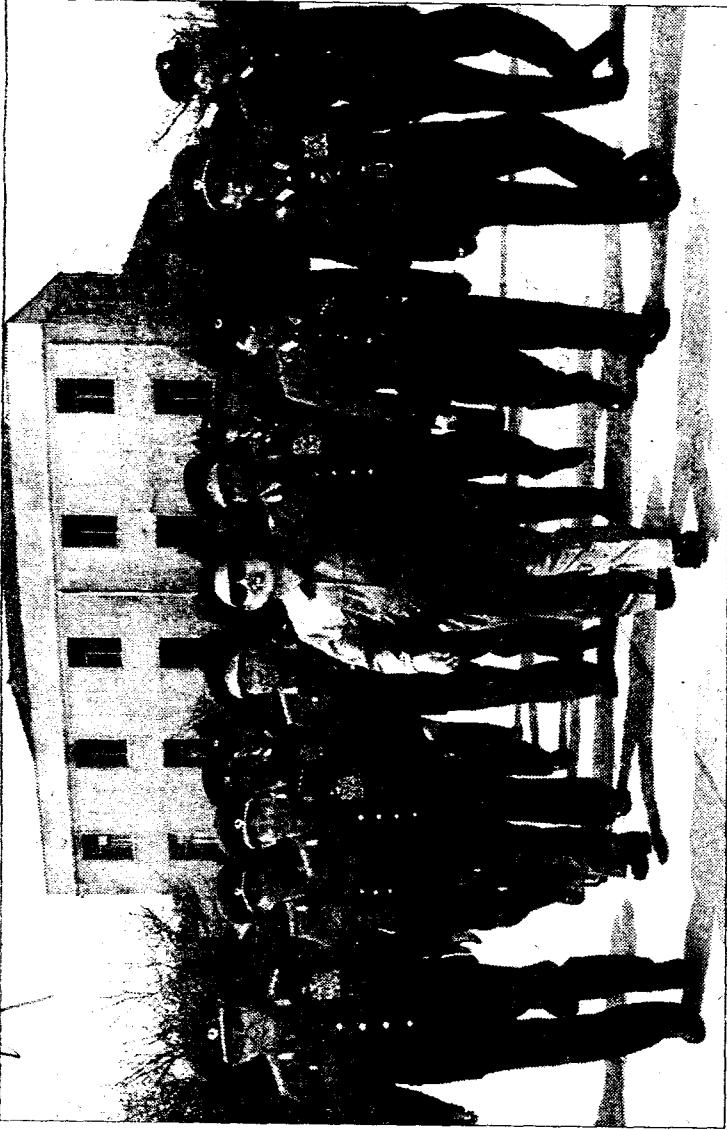
That's a highly perilous course. UN officials say his Stalinist regime again has trouble feeding its 22 million people after a decade of famine that has already killed an estimated two million. His economy is in a shambles under the intermittent and half-hearted experiments with reform.

So far, the North's only significant foreign exchange earnings have come from weapons sales to rogue states like Iraq, Iran, Syria, Libya and Yemen. Yet, these markets are fast drying up in the widening war against terror. In the words of Libyan dictator Muammar Gaddafi, it's time to replace swords with ploughshares. A wise decision indeed.

Kim is ill advised to ignore this trend. Luckily, he has South Korea to help him make the jump and land on the right course of action. Also, his absolute control over the army and party gives him leverage to take the kind of initiatives followed by his wiser friend, Gaddafi. For a start, Kim can buy more time by accepting the next round of six-party talks in Beijing in the new year if he seeks to parlay his pledge to scrap his nuclear weapons programme for diplomatic recognition and economic aid.

But he needs to take the first critical steps toward survival. In doing so, he need not be overly concerned - at least for the fore-

Kim's route for breaking out of isolation is through Seoul and he should accept Gaddafi's advice that holding on to weapons of mass destruction will only worsen his current difficulties, writes SHIM JAE HOON



Kim Jong Il, accompanied by his military staff. — AFP

seeable future - over the possibility of his grip on power weakening in the face of change and reform. The challenge of *perestroika* (restructuring) and *glasnost* (accountability) that caused the ousting of Soviet leader Mikhail Gorbachev has little chance of succeeding in Pyongyang, which has never known a Khrushchev or an Andrei Sakharov.

And here's how the South already helps ease his way: by assuring Kim and his top cadres that a precipitous collapse of the Pyongyang regime is the last thing it wants to happen, at least for now. The Roh Moo-hyun administration has no wish to

speed up the collapse of the Kim regime, as it would only have catastrophic implications for Seoul's economic, social and political stability. If anything, Seoul wants Pyongyang to evolve into a more acceptable kind of authoritarian system.

In order to achieve a soft-landing, the North needs to develop light industries with foreign investments. It can hardly attract them without a reduction of tension along the misnamed Demilitarised Zone borders, nor can it by sticking to selling missiles or trafficking in drugs.

They will come under stricter control and monitoring under the newly launched Proliferation

party can signal this readiness by speeding up construction of the Gaeoseong Industrial Park for investments by South Korea and other countries.

There is no better way for the North to reduce tension than to take up arms control talks with Seoul by showing its readiness to honour the 1992 basic accord, in which the two sides agreed to launch the military affairs commission to deal with armistice violations and other military issues. Readiness to tackle conventional arms issues, like reduction of forces and withdrawal of forward deployed weapons from the Demilitarised Zone, will go a long way to building confidence with Seoul.

Taking these preliminary steps helps to improve the atmosphere for dismantling the nuclear programme, which is essential in developing normal relations with the USA and Japan. Without help from these two countries, it's impossible to resume work on building two nuclear reactor plants under the Korean Peninsula Energy Development Organisation international consortium.

In short, Kim's route for breaking out of isolation opens through Seoul. He should accept the advice of Colonel Muammar Gaddafi - his erstwhile client - that keeping his weapons of mass destruction programme will only worsen his current difficulties.

Gaddafi evidently made up his mind after seeing the precipitous fall of the Saddam government and his ignominious capture by the US forces. To be sure, Kim has a bigger army and more weapons, but that hardly ensures his survival in the absence of help from other countries. That brings him face to face with a stark choice between being Saddam Hussein or Muammar Gaddafi.

— The Korea Herald/Asia News Network

N. Korea rejects US proposal to ease N-crisis

Seoul: North Korea on Monday rejected a US proposal to ease the nuclear crisis, saying the United States was delaying six-party talks and forcing Pyongyang to "steadily" build up its nuclear deterrent force.

North Korea's ruling Worker's Party newspaper, *Rodong Sinmun*, said the US proposal ignored North Korea's own offer for "simultaneous actions" including a nuclear freeze in return for concessions from the United States.

"The US wasting time would do the DPRK (North Korea) nothing bad," *Rodong* said. "Its delaying tactics would only result in compelling the DPRK to steadily increase its nuclear deterrent force". North Korea said that Washington still had time to accept Pyongyang's own proposal for the resumption of talks. "It is an invariable stand of the DPRK government on the six-way talks that it is a key to the solution of the nuclear issue and a core point to be agreed upon between the DPRK and the US to seek a package solution based on the principle of simultaneous actions," the newspaper said. The call from North Korea came amid dimming hopes for a new round of six-nation talks this month on the Communist state's nuclear weapons drive. The newspaper indicated that the sticking point in the US proposal was Washington's long-standing demand for verification of a North Korean agreement to scrap its nuclear weapons drive.

"As the US urges the DPRK (North Korea) to dismantle its nuclear weapons completely, verifiably and irreversibly, the latter has the same right to demand the US, the dialogue partner, give it complete, verifiable and irreversible security assurances," *Rodong* said. AFP

EU summit sinks in voting power standoff

Bryssels, December 13

THE EUROPEAN Union's crucial summit, meant to approve a first constitution, broke down on Saturday after leaders were unable to bridge major differences over voting rights in an enlarged bloc.

"At this time, the conference takes note of the fact that there is no accord," an official of the Italian EU presidency told reporters after less than two days of negotiation over the treaty which pitted France and Germany against Spain and Poland. Leaders were meeting over

lunch to draft a statement on what had been achieved so far in talks on a charter designed to ensure that the bloc can still function after 10 new members join the existing 15 next May.

Many governments fear gridlock when the bloc expands into eastern Europe with a total population of 450 million.

Officials say the failure could paralyse an enlarged bloc and lead to a two-speed Europe with France, Germany and the other founders increasingly going it alone. Some sceptics say it might even be the beginning of the end

for the Union. EU diplomats said Italian Prime Minister Silvio Berlusconi would announce that the negotiations were "postponed" and would resume next year but would not set any precise timetable.

A bare-knuckle fight over voting power triggered the breakdown, sooner than many diplomats had predicted.

The row stemmed from a treaty agreed at a summit in Nice in 2000, which gave Poland and Spain nearly the same voting rights as Germany, whose population is twice as large as theirs.

The new constitution would have replaced it with a system under which decisions would need to be backed by a majority of more than half of EU states, representing over 60 per cent of its population.

France and Germany had both said they would rather have no agreement and risk a crisis than accept a bad deal.

EU diplomats immediately began damage control over the breakdown, which came less than a month after the bloc's budget rules were trampled on by suspending disciplinary ac-

tion against France and Germany over their excessive deficits. "It is not good, but no disaster," a senior diplomat said.

But one of the European Parliament's negotiators at the summit, Klaus Haensch, warned that public confidence in the EU would be severely dented.

"Politically, the Union cannot live a long time with Nice," he told reporters. "The failure of this summit will have its impact on public opinion, and confidence in the future of Europe will decrease."

"It is a very bad signal and a

failure of one of the most important summits we have had, and that is not a good sign for the European Union," the German Social Democrat said.

Earlier Italy cancelled a formal summit session to keep exploring compromise possibilities in bilateral talks.

News of the breakdown came minutes after a last-ditch meeting between Spanish Prime Minister Jose Maria Aznar and Berlusconi and four-way talks between the leaders of Britain, France, Germany and Spain.

Reuters

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Taiwan to go ahead with referendum

Taipei: Undaunted Taiwan President Chen Shui-bian said on Wednesday he would press ahead with plans for a referendum next year that provoked a stern rebuke from the US and angered China.

Mr Chen denied he was trying to alter the cross-strait status quo by holding the "anti-missile, anti-war" vote on the same day as March 20 presidential elections, insisting the move was intended to avoid war. "Referendum is a normal practice in democratic countries and is a basic right of the people which they cannot be deprived of," Mr Chen told a press conference.

Mr Chen, leader of the pro-independence Democratic Progressive Party, said on Sunday the referendum would ask China to dismantle ballistic missiles targeting Taiwan and to renounce the use of force against the island.

The proposed vote has outraged China,

which regards Taiwan as a part of its territory, and on Tuesday saw US President George W. Bush voice Washington's strong disapproval of the ballot. "We oppose any unilateral decision by either China or Taiwan to change the status quo," Mr Bush said after talks with Chinese Premier Wen Jiabao. "And the comments and actions made by the leader of Taiwan indicate that he may be willing to make decisions unilaterally to change the status quo, which we oppose," the US president added.

Washington has observed the One-China policy since it switched diplomatic recognition from Taipei to Beijing in 1979. It also insists cross-strait disputes must be resolved through peaceful means. Mr Wen said China would not tolerate any moves towards independence by Taiwan. China has repeatedly threatened to invade the island should it try to declare independence. AFP

6 Asia (Cau)

US doesn't want friction with China over Taiwan

By Jal Taraporevala
TIMES NEWS NETWORK

Mumbai: The visit of Chinese Prime Minister, Wen Jiabao, to the US has highlighted the vexed issue of Taiwan in their bilateral relationship. President George Bush has asserted that the US is opposed to any unilateral move to change the status quo on the question of Taiwan. This is an attempt on the part of the US to allay China's concerns in the aftermath of last month's decision of the national assembly in Taipei to confer on President Chen Shui-bian the power to hold referendums on key issues. Mr Bush's comment should be interpreted in terms of three factors.

First, from Washington's perspective, any crisis on the status of Taiwan would be an unnecessary distraction at this stage when it is seeking to keep the focus of attention fixed on its so-called war on terror and on events in Afghanistan and Iraq. Second, the Bush administration is anxious not to antagonise China since it needs Beijing to urge Pyongyang to demonstrate flexibility in order to defuse the tensions that have been created by North Korea's nuclear programme.

Finally, Washington is trying to win certain concessions from Beijing on such subjects as human rights and the \$100 billion US deficit in trade with Chi-

na. This task will be complicated if differences increase over Taiwan.

Even so, the extent to which Taipei remains an irritant in the Sino-American relationship in the coming months will hinge on the amount of pressure that Washington brings to bear on Mr Chen not to hold the proposed referendum in March 2004 on the threat posed by the Chinese missiles pointed at Taiwan. For the present, Mr Chen appears committed to holding the referendum, not least because he is using the issue to build public support for his re-election in the presidential polls which are also slated to be held next March.

Chinweekend

THE TIMES OF INDIA

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South Korean Opp leader goes hungry to protest Roh's 'injustice'

Korea Herald/ ANN

SEOUL, Nov. 26. — Mr Choe Byung-yul, leader of the main South Korean Opposition Grand National Party, began an indefinite hunger strike today, calling for President Mr Roh Moo-hyun to reverse his veto of the independent counsel Bill to investigate his former aides over corruption allegations. "The President should immediately withdraw his rejection of the Bill and

carry out reform measures in state administration," Mr Choe told reporters before starting the sit-in protest at his party office.

The rejected Bill originally mandated a special prosecutor to look into corruption allegations surrounding three of the President's former assistants during the presidential election last December.

"Mr Roh cloaked himself in such a manner that he appeared most ethical, but everything was a lie," Mr Choe said.

The Opposition leader also demanded that Mr Roh hold a one-on-one televised debate with him to discuss his veto of the Bill, which the GNP-led National Assembly passed early this month.

The 65-year-old GNP chairman said he would not break his fast as long as the President does not accept his demands.

After Mr Choe's announcement, the parliamentary majority group, the GNP, said it would stage a four-phase struggle

holding outdoor rallies to denounce him.

But the presidential office rebuffed the GNP's demands, urging the majority party to return to parliament in order not to shelve Bills related to the livelihood of citizens. "The GNP leader has been stoking public unrest by fasting and refusing to attend parliamentary sessions," presidential spokesman Mr Yoon Tai-young said.

Concerns are rising that parliamentary deliberations on important Bills,

including next year's Budget and a Free Trade Agreement with Chile, are expected to stall for the foreseeable future.

Analysts said Mr Choe took an uncompromising stance in a bid to maintain a political grip in and outside his party, ahead of the April general elections. But Mr Choe, they added, might consider putting the vetoed Bill to a floor vote again after weighing the potential backlash from the public, or if he thinks he can secure a two-thirds

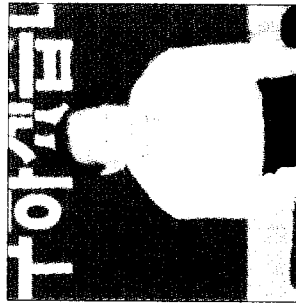
majority to overturn the veto with the support of other Opposition parties.

An opinion poll found that the public disapproved of Mr Roh's veto as well as the GNP's decision to wage an outdoor protest.

According to the poll, conducted by KBS TV station yesterday, 54.6 and 71 per cent of those who responded said they were against both the President's rejection and the Opposition party's rallies, respectively.

The pro-government Uri Party lambasted the GNP for obstructing state affairs. "The dinosaur party is just moaning about its failure to secure enough votes to override Mr Roh's veto," Mr Chung Dong-chea, the Uri Party's chief publicist, said.

Other opposition parties, the Millennium Democratic Party and the small United Liberal Democrats, criticised the President and the GNP and called for a revote on the counsel Bill.



Opposition leader Choe Byung-yul in Seoul on Wednesday. — Korea Herald/ ANN

OPP DECLARES 'WAR' AGAINST ROH

S Korea President vetoes graft Bill

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Korea Herald/ ANN

SEOUL, Nov. 25. — South Korean President Mr Roh Moo-hyun today vetoed a Bill on a special probe into corruption allegations against his former aides, which the National Assembly authorised earlier this month.

The majority Grand National Party immediately vowed to wage an "all-out struggle" against the Roh government in retaliation against the President's rejection of the Bill, calling it "an act of violence against democracy" and threatening to impeach him.

"I decided today to ask the National Assembly to reconsider the special counsel Bill involving the President's aides," Mr Roh told the weekly Cabinet meeting.

Mr Roh said he rejected the Bill calling for the appointment of an independent counsel, "in order not to set a bad precedent" in handling state affairs and laws. He reiterated that it was inappropriate to launch the special investigation before state prosecutors completed the ongoing probe into the alleged corruption scandals. "A special counsel investigation is a supplementary tool needed when a prosecution probe falls short of expectations." He also urged the Opposition GNP to stop relying on "black-mail politics".

If the National Assembly does not review the vetoed Bill, Mr Roh added, the government would submit its own Bill to the Assembly to investi-



President Roh Moo-hyun

The Vetoed Bill

It called for a special probe into corruption allegations against the President's former aides

Don't excuse

'It is inappropriate to launch a special investigation before state prosecutors completed the ongoing probe into the alleged corruption scandals'

Parliamentary power

'The President's move can only be translated as a denial of parliamentary power. It is an act of violence against democracy'

gate his aides after the prosecution probe ends.

Condemning Mr Roh's decision, the majority GNP said it would promote an "all-out struggle" against the President, even suggesting an impeachment motion. "The President's move can only be translated as a denial of parliamentary power. It is an act of violence against democracy," said GNP spokesman Mr Park Jin. "We strongly urge

the President to withdraw his decision."

The main Opposition party said Mr Roh should take all responsibility for any political turmoil and possible disruption to state affairs. "Our party is open to all options," the spokesman said.

Later in the day, senior GNP members held an emergency meeting on how to respond to the veto. As an initial step, the GNP decided to refuse deliberations on major Bills and launch an anti-Mr Roh campaign.

Samsung chief grilled

Authorities have interrogated the president of Samsung Electro-Mechanics about allegations the company raised slush funds by fabricating records and delivering the money to major parties during last year's presidential race.

Mr Kang Ho-moon, the SEM president, was summoned right after prosecution investigators searched the company headquarters in Suwon yesterday, and was sent home after two days of questioning.

The prosecution has also interrogated Mr Choi Byung-soo, president of Dongyang Electronics Co., a parts supplier for SEM, the first subsidiary of Samsung Group to be searched by the prosecution in connection with the probe into the illegal presidential campaign funds.

Mr Lee Hak-soo, a senior Samsung official, will be summoned soon for questioning over the improper political donations made by the nation's largest business group.

China warns Taiwan not to cross the 'red line'

By P. S. Suryanarayana

SINGAPORE, NOV. 19. China has warned Taiwan's 'President', Chen Shui-bian, against risking war by crossing the "red line" towards a bid for independence. Wang Zaixi, Vice-Minister in the Taiwan Affairs Office of China's State Council, said at a seminar in Beijing on Tuesday that "if the Taiwan authorities collude with all splittist forces to openly engage in pro-independence activities and challenge the mainland and the One-China principle, the use of force may become unavoidable". He warned the separatist forces in Taiwan that they "are set to pay a high cost if they think we (the Chinese authorities) will not use force against their conspiracy to promote formal independence".

The warning, seen as one of the most serious admonitions in recent times, has come in the context of some moves by Mr. Chen to set time-lines for the drafting of a new 'constitution' by December 10, 2006, and for the promulgation of such an independence-oriented statute by May 20, 2008. Taiwan is home to the 'nationalists' and their descendants, with the 'nationalists'

having lost to the Communist Party of China that founded the People's Republic of China (PRC) over half a century ago.

Beijing continues to regard Taiwan as part of the PRC, a position that the international community, inclusive of the U.S., has recognised by acknowledging the validity of Beijing's One-China principle.

Mr. Wang prefaced his warning with the comment that Beijing would still like to reunify Taiwan with the mainland through peaceful means in the interests of the people on that island, who were but Chinese compatriots.

Describing any move by Mr. Chen to rely on the U.S. for gaining independence as "a very naive and extremely dangerous idea", Mr. Wang said: "The Americans will protect their own national interests [and] are expected to neither protect Taiwan independence nor shed blood for Taiwan independence".

According to Sheng Lijun, an expert on the China-Taiwan issue, Beijing hopes that China's 'momentous' rise as a power would "not only change the balance of power across the (Taiwan) Strait" but also weaken the U.S. 'commitment' to Taiwan.

North Korea 'willing' to abandon nuclear programme

Associated Press
 SEOUL, Nov. 16. — North Korea today said it was willing to abandon nuclear development if the USA discontinued with its hostile policy and eliminates "threats" against the communist country, a South Korean news agency reported. The vaguely worded remarks by an unnamed spokesman for North Korea's foreign ministry

were carried by the communist state's official KCNA news agency, and were monitored by Seoul's Yonhap news agency.

"North Korea is willing to realistically abandon nuclear development at the phase when the US hostile policy towards North Korea is removed and threats against North Korea is eliminated," the North Korean spokesman was quoted as saying.

He said a resolution of the

standoff over North Korea's nuclear weapons programs depended on whether the USA was willing to accept its demand for "simultaneous actions".

North Korea has demanded that Washington give assurances that it will not attack the North, will provide economic and humanitarian aid, and open diplomatic ties. In exchange, North Korea would allow nuclear inspections, give up missile exports and dismantle

its nuclear weapons facilities. North Korea's comments came hours ahead of the arrival in South Korea of US Defence Secretary Mr Donald H Rumsfeld, who is expected to discuss security issues, including Iraq and North Korea. North Korea has accused Washington of planning a preemptive attack against it, after labeling the communist country part of an "axis of evil" along with Iran and Iraq. The

North has been insisting for months that the USA sign a nonaggression treaty, which Washington has rejected.

In a policy shift last month, North Korea said it would consider Mr George W Bush's offer of written security assurances from the USA and North Korea's neighbours.

The North also agreed last month "in principle" to resume six-nation talks aimed at ending the nuclear crisis.



A new gameplan? North Korean President Mr Kim Jong-il.

N Korea holds Hiroshima-like nukes: CIA

Press Trust of India

WASHINGTON, Nov. 9. — North Korea has one or two nuclear weapons similar to the bomb dropped on Hiroshima, the CIA has concluded.

North Korea has been able to validate its nuclear weapons designs without a nuclear test, CIA told Congress, according to an unclassified letter to the Senate Select Committee on Intelligence in August.

The CIA believes, according to the letter, that conventional explosives tests conducted by North Korea since the eighties, have allowed the country to verify that their nuclear designs would work.

It believes that North Korea has one or two nuclear weapons similar to what America dropped on Hiroshima, Japan during the second World War.

A minority of US intelligence analysts believe North Korea may already have made more.

North Korean reactor project to be suspended

Korea Herald/ ANN

SEOUL, Nov. 5. — A US-led international consortium building nuclear reactors in North Korea reached a tentative agreement to suspend the project for a year and will make a final announcement before 21 November, officials said here today.

The provisional decision was made when the Korean Peninsula Energy Development Organisation and South Korea, the USA, Japan and the EU unofficially discussed the fate of

the \$3.72 billion construction project early this week.

Analysts expect this will adversely affect the ongoing diplomatic process to resolve the nuclear crisis on the Korean Peninsula by provoking North Korea, which has softened its hard-line stance in recent weeks.

The decision comes at a critical time as hopes of a peaceful settlement to the nuclear dispute are rising following Pyongyang's agreement to resume six-way talks over its nuclear weapons programme last week.

But South Korea's top

Musharraf denies N-ties

SEOUL, Nov. 5. — All reports linking Pakistan to North Korea's nuclear programme "are totally incorrect and malicious in nature", General Pervez Musharraf said in an exclusive interview with *Korea Herald* today. The Pakistani President added that Nuclear nonproliferation was the "central pillar of our nuclear policy and we have the strictest standards in this regard". As a responsible nuclear power, Pakistan is aware of the great perils of nuclear technology falling into the wrong hands, he said. "I have issued a public denial of any link whatsoever between Pakistan and North Korea in conventional or unconventional fields." — ANN

foreign policymaker tried to resume after one year." "What was discussed at the meeting was suspended-

ing the project for one year. Nothing more, nothing less," foreign minister Mr Yoon Young-kwan said in a weekly press briefing.

KEDO agreed in 1994 to construct two light-water reactors in North Korea and provide heavy fuel oil in return for a freeze on the communist state's nuclear activities. But the deal has all but broken down, with the USA halting its fuel shipments to the energy-deprived country following Pyongyang's revelation of a fresh weapons programme.

Washington, a key supplier of construction materials for the reactors, sought to terminate the scheme, but Seoul and Tokyo opposed the demand, fearful of provoking their belligerent neighbour and reluctant to write off the huge sums of money they have already invested in the installation. Seoul has been struggling to keep the project alive single-handedly of late, as Japan edged toward the US stance amid Pyongyang's continued nuclear threats. The one-year suspension was viewed as a compromise between the three countries.

N. Korea ready to 'restart' n-talks

By P. S. Suryanarayana

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SINGAPORE, OCT. 31. Multilateral talks on North Korea's nuclear weapons 'programme' are likely to start as per a message from its supreme leader, Kim Jong-il.

The talks, first held in Beijing in August, involved the U.S., the Democratic People's Republic of Korea, China as host, Japan, Russia and South Korea.

Mr. Kim told China's second-ranking leader and top legislator, Wu Bangguo, in Pyongyang on Thursday that the DPRK was "in principle" agreeable to re-launching the talks. Mr. Wu is understood to have played a pivotal role in securing this assurance in the context of remarks by the U.S. President, George W. Bush, that he would consider giving the DPRK some security-related assurances within the framework of the talks.

The DPRK has consistently demanded that its security concerns be addressed if its nuclear weapons 'programme' were to be rolled back.

Nukes for food

Pyongyang's challenge to world order

There is hope for multilateral negotiations on North Korea's nuclear weapons programme with Pyongyang reversing its rejection of Washington's offer of a written security guarantee. Pyongyang now says it is considering the offer, which would require it to dismantle its weapons programme in a verifiable manner, in return for a promise that North Korea will not be attacked. The offer itself is a shift from Washington's earlier stance that Pyongyang shut down its nuclear programme before anything else can be put on the table. The part-acceptance, part-rejection by Pyongyang implies that it would like the talks to go on, but may hold out for better terms that would mark an improvement on the "agreed framework", the 1994 deal concluded with the Clinton administration. The secret of President Bush's new-found flexibility is that the military option is singularly unattractive here as Pyongyang is capable of a devastating response which would lay waste Seoul and perhaps, Tokyo.

It is quite possible that Pyongyang is willing to parley its nuclear weapons for a security guarantee, plus food, energy and other forms of aid it desperately needs to prop up a failing economy. Such a propensity ought to be encouraged if the non-proliferation regime is not to fall apart altogether — Pyongyang's weapons could tempt Seoul and Tokyo to follow suit and there is no doubt that both have the necessary technical proficiency. But even if the best possible deal within grasp works out — Pyongyang accepts Washington's offer and everyone, including Pyongyang's neighbours, is happy — some subtle challenges will be posed to world order as it exists today. What will prevent poor nations that have no food or exportable items, from following Pyongyang's example and throwing everything they have into the development of nuclear weapons, expecting the world, particularly America, to come up with the economic aid as recompense? It must be remembered that in the current international order where there is little either of aid or trading concessions available to poor nations unless they serve "strategic" needs. The message is not reassuring.

North Korea and Pakistan a nuclear family since 1996, says defector

Yomiuri Shimbum/ ANN

Mr Hwang (81), a former secretary of the Workers' Party of Korea, who defected to South Korea in 1997, made the remark during an exclusive interview with *Yomiuri Shimbum* at a restaurant near the White House yesterday.

Referring to North Korea's nuclear program, he said he believes Pyongyang "has plenty of nuclear weapons," noting that he heard about the

nuclear arsenal "from a (Workers' Party of Korea's) secretary in charge of munitions factories".

Regarding the future of the six-party meeting over North Korea's nuclear crisis, Mr Hwang said: "If the USA comes out with a proposal for giving North Korea a guarantee of its security in written form, Pyongyang will most likely accept the proposal." Prospects are good that



Mr Hwang Jang Yop

the next round of the six-party talks will lead to some concrete agreement,

he said. Since his arrival in Washington on Monday, Mr Hwang has had a series of talks with such high-ranking US officials as Assistant Secretary of State James Mr Kelly, as well as influential members of Congress.

The former North Korean official has made a point of stressing the need to remove the Kim Jong Il regime.

Pyongyang, Beijing agree to nuke talks

BEIJING, Oct. 30. — China and North Korea today agreed "in principle" to meet for a second time under the six-party format to peacefully resolve Pyongyang's nuclear weapons programme, the official Xinhua news agency reported.

The significant breakthrough came during the high profile mission by China's second-ranking official, National People's Congress Chairman Mr Wu Bangguo, to North Korea.

The North Korean "side expressed its willingness to take part in the future talks if they provide a process of putting into practice the proposal for a package solution based on the principle of simultaneous actions," a North Korean news agency reported. According to observers, North Korea's latest softening of policies is a tactical change to take advantage of the power shifts within the Bush administration. — China Daily/ ANN & PTI

US calls talks, N. Korea tests missile

Bangkok, Oct. 20 (Reuters): US President George W. Bush, in a policy shift to re-energise talks with North Korea, joined his South Korean counterpart today in calling for a new round as Pyongyang test-fired a short-range missile.

A top aide to Bush, however, cautioned that consultations were just beginning and it would take some time to come up with security guarantees to offer North Korea in exchange for it abandoning its nuclear weapons programme.

Bush and South Korean President Roh Moo-hyun called for a fresh round of six-party talks with Pyongyang on its nuclear programme at an early date and urged reclusive North Korea to refrain from any action that could exacerbate the crisis.

"We're making good progress on peacefully solving the issue with North Korea," Bush said before meeting Roh on the sidelines of an Asia-Pacific Econom-

ic Cooperation (Apec) summit in Bangkok.

Within hours, North Korea fired a surface-to-ship missile in the sea between the Korean peninsula and Japan in what South Korea said appeared to be part of military exercises by the isolated communist country.

US officials said they regarded the North Korean move as a provocative action aimed at grabbing attention during the Apec summit, but they contend-

ed it would only serve to further isolate Pyongyang. "We do not take this as a positive attitude on the part of North Korea," a Japanese foreign ministry spokesman in Bangkok said.

Bush has ruled out the formal non-aggression pact North Korea wants but has said the US was exploring a possible compromise with its allies in the talks, which include China, South Korea, Russia and Japan.

North Korea is the only partici-

pant not at Apec. However, officials had no details of possible assurances and said none had been outlined by Bush in any meetings.

South Korea's Roh has wanted the US to make a gesture to jump start the talks on the nuclear crisis that erupted a year ago when Washington said North Korea had admitted to developing atomic weapons.

"The two Presidents shared the view that it is desirable to

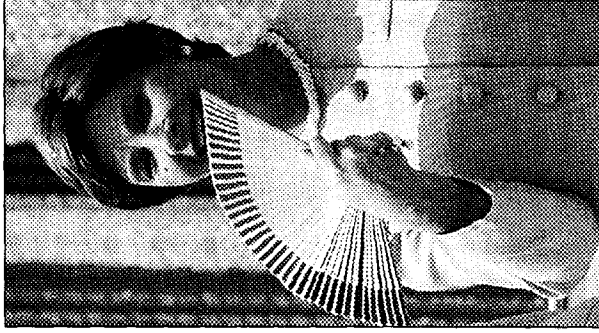
hold the next round of the talks at an early date and to make concrete progress," they said in a statement after their meeting.

The first round of six-party talks was held in Beijing in August. But they ended inconclusively and officials say China is anxious to hold another round before the end of the year. Mid-November is seen as a target period.

"The two Presidents also urged North Korea to respond positively to the other parties' diplomatic efforts and to refrain from any action which would exacerbate the situation," the US-South Korean statement said.

North Korea has been reluctant to commit itself to new talks and has issued a series of increasingly inflammatory statements, including a threat to prove it possesses a "nuclear deterrent".

Besides Roh, Bush has discussed North Korea with the leaders of Japan and China.



US First Lady Laura Bush fans herself during a visit to the Grand Palace in Bangkok. (Reuters)

Baby Apec declared brain-dead

Bangkok, Oct. 20 (Reuters): A baby boy abandoned in a Bangkok trash can and nicknamed "Apec" is brain-dead and has only two or three days to live at most, hospital officials said today.

The 3.2 kg baby, named after the 21-member Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation (Apec) sum-

mit in the Thai capital, would remain on life support until he died a natural death, they said. "He is brain-dead," Surapee Ruangsawan, director of the Queen Sirikit National Institute of Child Health said. "We will not disconnect him from the respirator and keep him alive until his heart stops beating on its

own, which is likely in the next 48 to 72 hours, maybe sooner."

The boy, deprived of water for nearly a week, was found wrapped in two plastic bags by a policeman near the Apec venue.

Police yesterday arrested the baby's 23-year-old mother in her hometown of Roi-et, 280 km northeast of Bangkok.

Bush hijacks Apec agenda with N Korea crisis



ANN & AP

BANGKOK, Oct. 20. — The US President today pushed for Asian support on a new overture to end a North Korean nuclear standoff that has cast a shadow over the region for more than a year. A new North Korean missile test underscored the prickly issue.

The test was conducted as 21 Asian-Pacific leaders prepared to announce a new crackdown on terrorists and a bid to restart stalled trade talks.

North Korea was not on the official agenda of the Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation summit, but Mr George W Bush raised the issue in hopes of gaining support for a new proposal to end the year-old standoff.

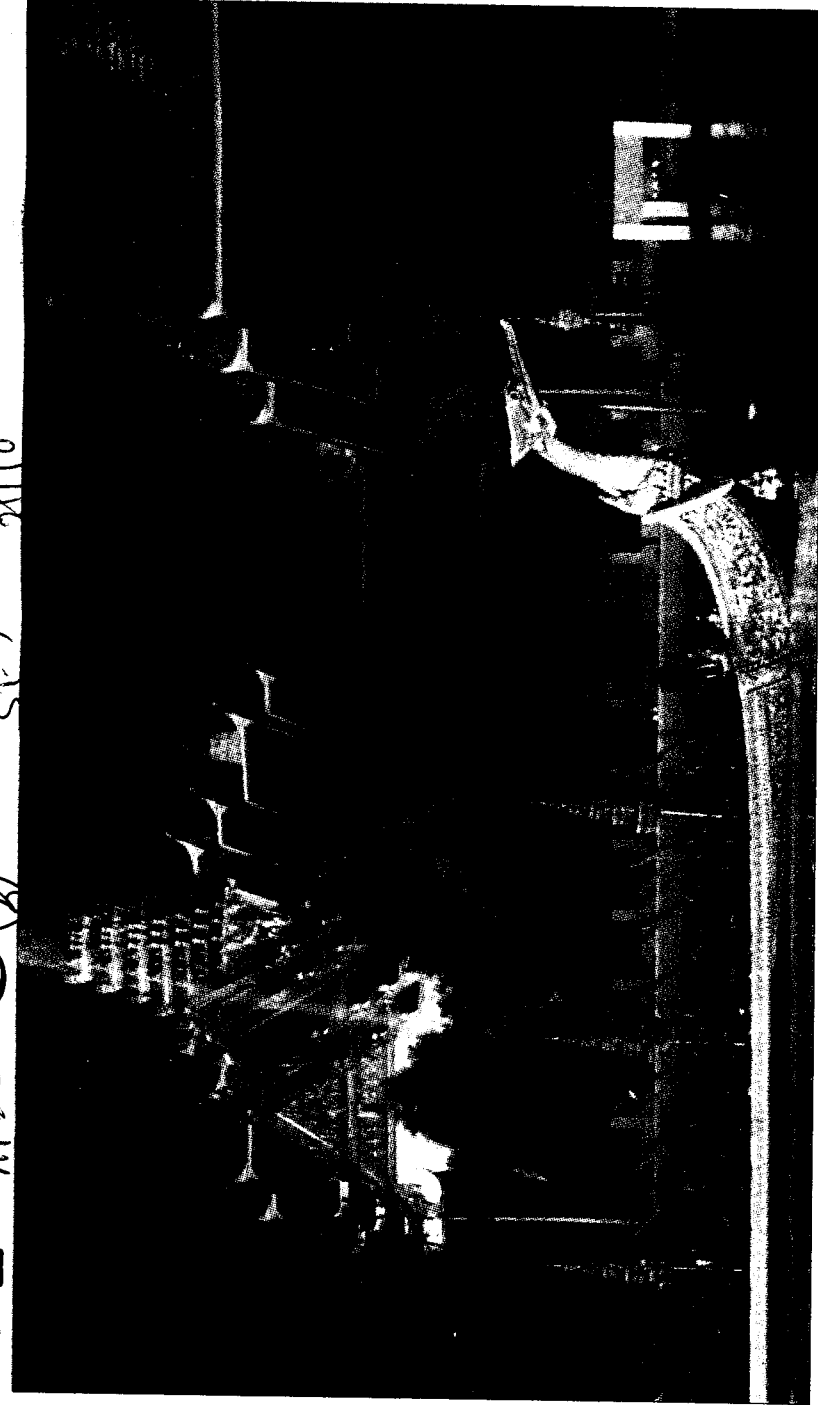
South Korean military officials said North Korea test-fired an anti-ship missile in the Japan Sea yesterday as part of its annual military exercise. "We don't see it as a positive sign," an official said.

Some participants in the forum complained that terrorism and security issues threatened to draw attention away from economic and trade issues.

Adding to the divisions among Apec delegates was condemnation by Mr Bush of Malaysian Prime Minister Md Mahathir's claims last week that "Jews rule the world by proxy". Earlier, Mr Bush met with South Korean President Mr Roh Moo-hyun. They issued a joint statement calling for a quick resumption of six-nation talks to deal with North Korea's nuclear ambitions. Hours later, Pyongyang fired the missile.

"The two Presidents urged North Korea to respond positively... and to refrain from any action which would exacerbate the situation," their joint statement said.

Mr Bush rode to the summit on Bangkok streets that had been cleared of the city's normally heavy traffic. His motorcade slowed to allow Russian President Mr Vladimir Putin



A traditional Thai boat parades down the Chao Phraya river during a cultural show put on for Apec leaders in Bangkok's Grand palace on Monday. — AFP

to speed by so he could arrive ahead of Mr Bush, under protocol rules requiring leaders to show up in alphabetical order by name of their country.

Security surrounding the meeting in the Thai capital was tight. Fighter jets escorted the planes of arriving VIPs and helicopters flew over motorcades.

The Asia-Pacific leaders will promise to intensify an effort to dismantle terror groups, according to a draft communiqué. They will also promise to more tightly control production of weapons that can be used to down commercial aircraft — but stop short of calling for an outright ban.

Apec will also call on the World Trade Organization to restart talks for a new global commerce deal following the collapse of negotiations last month in the Mexican resort of Cancun. And leaders will pledge to be better prepared for any future outbreaks of SARS, other infectious diseases or bioterrorist attacks.

On the sidelines

Japanese Prime Minister Mr Junichiro Koizumi and Russian President Mr Vladimir Putin agreed on the need to "properly" address North Korea's security concerns in a meeting on Monday.

Taiwan complained on Monday today that its exclusion from regional security talks creates a gap that weakens the global anti-terrorism network. Partially sidelined from the Apec summit although it is a member of the group, the Taiwanese delegation insisted anew it should be allowed to fully participate.

An agreement among Asia-Pacific countries to control the production and sale of portable anti-aircraft missiles would not stop Malaysia buying more of them, the Malaysian defence minister said on Monday.

In graceful counterpoint to discussions about modern-day terror and tariffs, leaders at the Asian-Pacific summit are being treated to a feast from Thailand's still enduring royal past. The 21 leaders are being hosted in an inner palace sanctum where kings once housed their numerous concubines. On Monday night, the 600-year-old past will come alive as 50 boats, paddled by 2,082 Thai Navy sailors in period costumes, glide down Bangkok's Chao Phraya River in a rarely staged royal barge procession. — Agencies

N Korea threatens to bare nuke arsenal

AFP & AP

SEOUL, Oct. 18. — North Korea's foreign ministry today reiterated the Stalinist state's intention to "prove" its status in regard to nuclear weapons.

"When an appropriate time comes, the DPRK's (North Korea's) increased nuclear deterrent force will be proved in practice," said a foreign ministry statement carried by the official Korean Central News Agency.

The statement blamed the USA for the year-long nuclear crisis and said it would never disarm — North Korea's term for scrapping its nuclear weapons — while Washington maintained a hostile policy towards it.

On Thursday, North Korea's foreign ministry had said Pyongyang would display the "physical force" of its nuclear deterrent, an apparent threat to test a nuclear device.

The US believes Pyongyang has one or two nuclear weapons but evidence is scant and some officials believe that North Korea's repeated boast in recent weeks about its nuclear deterrent is no more than bluster.

North Korea today also said it would rejected any talks offer to end the nuclear dispute. "The fundamental resolution to the nuclear dispute between North Korea and the United States relies on the US switchover of its hostile policy and the conclusion of a non-aggression treaty," the North's state-run Pyongyang Radio said.

The radio, monitored by South Korea's Yonhap news agency, said the Communist country is "neither interested nor has expectations" in talks that refuse its demands.

Pyongyang has made such demands many times, but Washington rejects a formal treaty.

N Korea sets terms for nuke quid pro quo

UNHQ/Seoul, October 3

NORTH KOREA said it is committed to abandoning its nuclear weapons programme if the United States promises not to strike at it, the top UN envoy to the region said after talks with a senior North Korean diplomat. At the same time, keeping the world guessing, Pyongyang said it was redirecting plutonium extracted from thousands of spent fuel rods to enhance its deterrent force.

The United States, China, Russia, South Korea and Japan are seeking to draw Pyongyang back to the negotiating table for more talks on ending its nuclear programme. The six countries held an inconclusive first round of talks in Beijing in August.

Maurice Strong, the UN's lead envoy to North Korea, met Vice Foreign Minister Choe Su Hon for about 30 minutes at the United Nations on Thursday, the same day that Pyongyang said it was using plutonium extracted from some 8,000 spent nuclear fuel rods to make atomic bombs.

That announcement alarmed South Korea and other Asian countries and raised fears that North Korea had turned its back on the possibility of giving up its nuclear capabilities. But Strong said Choe told him the North still believed in a nu-

clear-free Korean peninsula. "He made it very clear that his government is committed to abandoning its nuclear weapons programme, to subjecting itself to internationally agreed inspections and verification procedures, and that their primary concern is their security."

But Choe reiterated the stand that a "hostile" USA would only ensure that the North would continue with its weapons programme. The North Koreans believe that is "the only way that they can try to ensure their own security in the absence of a viable commitment by the USA that it does not intend to attack them," he said.

The North's official KCNA news agency said on Friday that scientists at its nuclear complex at Yongbyon had completed the reprocessing of some 8,000 spent fuel rods last June and that the reprocessing plant was ready to resume operations at any time.

The North also claimed it had overcome a technical obstacle to making atomic bombs from plutonium from spent nuclear fuel rods. It said it had begun to use the weapons-grade plutonium obtained in the course of reprocessing those spent fuel rods to make atomic bombs.

Likening this announcement to a bombshell, South Korean President Roh Moo-hyun again

linked progress in resolving the nuclear issue to Seoul's pending decision on Washington's request that it send combat troops to help stabilise Iraq.

Analysts said Pyongyang's comments fitted a familiar pattern used to try to force concessions from the USA and put pressure on ally China and, if anything, added strength to the view that talks could take place soon.

In Washington, however, Secretary of State Colin Powell said the United States had no evidence that North Korea had reprocessed nuclear fuel rods. "This is the third time they have told us they have just finished reprocessing the rods. We have no evidence to confirm that," Powell told reporters.

Japanese foreign ministry sources in Tokyo said a top ministry official was visiting Beijing to brief China on this week's North Korea talks involving Japan, South Korea and the United States.

JoongAng Ilbo, a South Korean newspaper, said in an editorial that Seoul should avoid excessive optimism about possible further talks because North Korea might not be bluffing. "It is early to judge whether or not such a North Korean move is a threat to elicit concessions from the United States or a sophisticated tactic to admit its possession of nuclear arms."

AP & AFP

North Korea raises stakes

in N-row ✓



N Korean President Kim Jong Il:
Upping the ante

The Times, London

BEIJING, Oct. 2. — North Korea claimed today that it had finished reprocessing 8,000 plutonium fuel rods in a move that increases pressure in the Cold War-style stand-off with the USA, but could also signal the start of a new round of talks.

If the claims are true, Pyongyang would now be in a position to make five or six nuclear weapons in addition to the two that US experts believe it already possesses. A statement by the KCNA news agency explicitly claims for the first time that North Korea is using the spent fuel rods to produce nuclear weapons.

A North Korea foreign ministry spokesman said in a statement that the Stalinist state had successfully completed reprocessing 8,000 spent fuel rods, guaranteed to yield enough plutonium for around six nuclear weapons. "As we have already declared, the DPRK (North Korea) resumed nuclear activities for a peaceful purpose" the statement said. "As part of it, the DPRK successfully finished the reprocessing of some 8,000 spent fuel rods... We will reprocess more spent fuel rods to be churned out in an unbroken chain from the five megawatt nuclear reactor in Nyonbyon (Yongbyon) without delay when we deem it necessary."

The North Korean claims cannot be verified since North Korea last year forced international observers at its nuclear facility to leave the country. But experts say it is plausible that the long-expected reprocessing has been completed.

THE STATESMAN

3 OCT 2003

N Korea sets terms for nuclear freeze

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UNHQ, October 1

HARDENING ITS stand in the face of US pressure, North Korea has blamed Washington for the latest standoff and threatened to pull out of nuclear talks unless the USA takes "simultaneous" action on its demands, including signing a non-aggression treaty.

In his address to the United Nations General Assembly, Vice Foreign Minister Choe Syu Hon asserted that Pyongyang would not return to talks aimed at resolving the nuclear crisis unless the USA takes "simultaneous action" on its demands.

North Korea says the USA must sign a non-aggression treaty, provide it with economic aid and establish diplomatic ties simultaneously as it dismantles its nuclear weapons programme. Washington contends that North Korea must dismantle its weapons programme first. Pyongyang had only recently said



Kim Jong-il

Iron fist in velvet glove

it was taking "practical measures" to beef up its nuclear programme as a "deterrent" against a possible US invasion.

In Seoul, South Korean President Roh Moo-hyun expressed hope that talks to end the crisis over North Korea's nuke programmes will continue despite the communist state's insistence that it's no longer interested.

PTI

Taiwan President hints at independence

The Times, London

BEIJING, Sept. 30. — Taiwan plans to write a new Constitution that will set up the island as a sovereign state separate from the Chinese mainland by 2006.

It is expected to cause anger in Beijing, which regards Taiwan as a renegade province. China has threatened to invade the island if it declares independence formally. President Chen Shui-bian of Taiwan said yesterday that he favoured moves by advocates of independence to draw up a new Constitution. Opposition politicians said Mr Chen was now openly advocating independence.

His announcement is seen as part of a risky re-election strategy by a government with strong independence credentials but with several supporters who have been disappointed by its surprisingly pro-China policies in recent years. Preparing for the election in March, Mr Chen antagonised Beijing by changing the title on Taiwanese passports from Republic of China, inherited after the end of the civil war in 1949, to Taiwan.

He also plans to hold a referendum on the future use of nuclear power on the island. Beijing has denounced the referendum as a forerunner to a vote on independence. Several Taiwanese acknowledge that their Constitution, which was designed for the mainland, needs to be revised. It states that all of



Taiwan President Mr Chen Shui-bian. — AFP

China be ruled from Taipei, the Taiwanese capital.

Earlier this month, thousands of protesters, including former President Mr Lee Tenghui, marched through Taipei demanding that the Constitution be revised to eliminate the Republic of China title.

The new Constitution is unlikely to be written if Mr Chen loses the election. Newspaper polls reported yesterday that several

Taiwanese believe that Mr Chen's party favours big business and has strayed from its core ideals since taking power three years ago.

Mr Chen's apparent change of course will cause headaches in Washington. America is committed to defending Taiwan against any Chinese invasion as long as it does not declare independence formally. "It is obvious President Chen has declared his timetable for Taiwan's Independence," Chou Hsiwie, an opposition parliamentarian, said.

Mr Chen made his remarks at the 17th anniversary celebration of his Democratic Progressive Party. He said: "What should we do when the DPP celebrates its 20th anniversary? I hereby want to clearly and solemnly tell you that the 23 million people and the DPP want to push for the birth of a new Constitution."

Won't succeed: China

BEIJING, Sept. 30. — Activities of "gradual independence of Taiwan" by Taiwan authorities with an aim to deliberately create opposition along the Taiwan Strait is unpopular and will never succeed, said state councillor Mr Tang Jiaxuan here yesterday.

Mr Tang was speaking at a reception to celebrate the 54th founding anniversary of New China, which was attended by over 1,600 people, including overseas Chinese, Hong Kong, Macao, and Taiwanese compatriots.

The accomplishment for the complete reunification of the motherland is the common aspiration and historical responsibility of the entire Chinese people, including Taiwan compatriots, Mr Tang said. And China will consistently adhere to the principles of "peaceful reunification" and "one country, two systems" and Mr Jiang Zemin's eight-point proposal to resolve the Taiwan issue. — China Daily/ANN

Rumsfeld is a psychopath'

ASSOCIATED PRESS

SEOUL, Sept. 27. — North Korea today called US secretary of defence Donald H Rumsfeld a "psychopath" and a "stupid man", denouncing him for saying that one day freedom would come to the isolated Communist state.

Speaking before a group of US and South Korean businessmen last week, Rumsfeld predicted freedom would eventually "light up that oppressed land with hope and with promise", casting aside the dictatorship that has ruled the North Korea for more than half a century.

North Korea, whose media regularly churns out anti-American denunciations, is especially thin-skinned when outsiders attack

its political leadership. KCNA, North Korea's official news agency, said today that Rumsfeld's "unsavory remarks intended to tarnish the image of the dignified DPRK and destroy its steel-strong political system". "His remarks only go to prove that he is just an old man, politically illiterate," it said. "His outbursts ... cannot be construed otherwise than a desperate shrill cry of a psychopath on his death bed."

KCNA accused Rumsfeld and other "neo-conservatives" in the USA of "only harassing peace and security in different parts of the world and igniting wars."

"He is cursed and hated worldwide for this," KCNA said. "This is not the first time that North Korea has launched a per-

sonal attack on a US official. In August, KCNA called US under-secretary of state John R Bolton "human scum" after he said North Korean leader Kim Jong Il was a "tyrannical dictator".

"Rumsfeld, whose political faith is to establish the US style world order by strength, is known to be a typical stupid man," KCNA said. "He is, therefore, not a guy who the DPRK can deal with." It also called Rumsfeld "a dangerous international dictator".

North Korea admitted today that its people are suffering. It has depended on outside aid to feed its 22 million people since flood, drought and bad weather devastated its already inefficient economy in the mid-1990s. By Pyongyang's own admission, at

least 200,000 people died of famine between 1995 and 1998.

"But that is attributable to the economic blockade and sanctions imposed by the US pursuant to its decades-long hostile policy toward the DPRK," KCNA said. "These difficulties are temporary and there are ways to cross over them."

North Korea is engaged in a standoff with the United States and its allies over its nuclear weapons programs. Washington is urging North Korea to abandon its development of nuclear weapons, while North Korea says it will pursue its nuclear programs as a "deterrent" unless the USA agrees to a nonaggression treaty, economic aid and diplomatic ties.

THE STATESMAN

28 SEP 2003

Inter-Korean commercial flight takes off

Agence France Presse

169 1 Am 51-3
SEOUL, Sept. 15. — North and South Korea opened inter-Korean commercial air services today with the first commercial flight between the two lifting off in more than 50 years.

The North Korean Koryo Airline plane flew into South Korea's Incheon International Airport over the Yellow Sea and returned to Pyongyang carrying 114 South Korean tourists, airport officials said.

The two Koreas, divided into rival North and South following the peninsula's liberation in 1945 from Japanese colonial rule, remain technically at war half a century after their 1950-53 conflict.

The maiden flight launched a commercial charter service for South Korean tourists wishing to visit the North and will be operated until the end of the year by a South Korean tour agency.

Although North Korean planes are employed, there are no plans to bring North Koreans to the South, organisers said.

The tourists are scheduled to return home on South Korea's Asiana Airline flight on Friday on the same inter-Korean air route after touring the North Korean capital.

The route over the Yellow sea by-passes the tense inter-Korean border that has divided the two Koreas since the war. The five-day Pyongyang tours costing \$1,900 per person will run until 25 December.

16 SEP 2003

THE STATESMAN

Japan within Korean missile range: report

Associated Press

5 AM 5-2 9/9

SEOUL, Sept. 8. — North Korea has developed a long range missile capable of targeting all of Japan and the US territory of Guam, a South Korean newspaper reported today on the eve of the communist state's 55th anniversary that will be marked with a lavish military parade.

Chosun Ilbo, one of South Korea's leading newspapers, quoted an unidentified government official as saying that the ballistic missile, with a range of 3,000 km to 4,000 km, was developed last year but has not yet been deployed. The missile's range makes it more powerful than the 2,500-km range *Taepodong-1* missile that it test fired in 1998, which flew over Japan before falling into the Pacific Ocean.

The North is believed to have an arsenal of up to 700 Rodong missiles, which can hit targets as far as 1,300 km away.

South Korea's defence ministry said it could not confirm the *Chosun Ilbo* report, which comes amid speculation in Washington that North Korea could carry out a nuclear test tomorrow, the anniversary of the formation of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea. Some 20,000 troops, 150 tanks and other military vehicles are expected to be paraded through the reclusive nation's capital, Pyongyang, tomorrow. Some 50,000 participants including the country's leader Kim Jong Il will attend.

South Korea's *JoongAng Ilbo*, another leading newspaper, said the parade is likely to feature the *Rodong* missile.

9 SEP 2003

THE STATESMAN

Hong Kong withdraws security Bill

China Daily/ANN

HONG KONG, Sept. 5. — Hong Kong's chief executive Mr Tung Chee-hwa said today that his government has decided to withdraw the drafted National Security Bill, known as the Article 23 of the Basic Law.

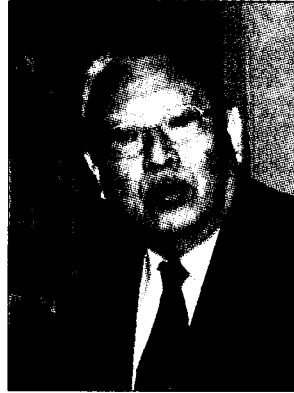
Tung said his decision was made amid lingering worries among the public over the Bill, and because he felt Hong Kong should focus on making an economic recovery.

"I have listened to a lot of opinions, what our citizens care about the most at the moment are economic matters," Tung said.

Hong Kong was hit by the 1997-98 Asian financial crisis, and is currently battling record unemployment of 8.7 per cent and deepening deflation.

This past year's SARS outbreak, which killed 299 people in Hong Kong, worsened the situation by prompting travel warnings that hit hard Hong Kong's tourism and other business.

Legislative support for the Bill unravelled following a public protest on 1 Ju-



Hong Kong chief executive Mr Tung Chee-hwa. — AFP

ly, and the Bill was put on hold. The failed first attempt to pass the Bill shook Mr Tung's administration, spurring the resignations of financial secretary Mr Antony Leung and security chief Ms Regina Ip.

Mr Tung said the government will not introduce a new version of the Bill until it has consulted thoroughly with the public and gained support. He said the government has no timetable to introduce a new Bill. "We won't begin a new legislative process if we do not have a thorough consultation or extensive support from the public."

THE STATESMAN

6 SEP 2003

6 SEP 2003

N. Korea says talks a 'useless' exercise

By P. S. Suryanarayana *3/1/8*

Asia
SINGAPORE, AUG. 30. The Democratic People's Republic of Korea (DPRK) today dubbed the six-party talks, which concluded in Beijing on Friday, as a 'useless' exercise. China and the U.S., however, made an earlier assessment and saw the parleys as a 'beneficial' process.

According to the Chinese side, which hosted the three-day talks, China's Foreign Minister, Li Zhaoxing, talked to the U.S. Secretary of State, Colin Powell, by telephone at the conclusion of the Beijing conference. The two leaders agreed that the multilateral dialogue should continue so that a peaceful resolution of the Korean nuclear issue could be promoted. The multilateral process has brought together not only the U.S. and the DPRK, the prime antagonists in this nuclear row, but also the other relevant countries such as China, South Korea, Russia and Japan.

Pyongyang's post-parleys view, as monitored in South Korea (the DPRK's ethnic

kin as also the chief U.S. ally in this nuclear crisis), is as maximal now as before the Beijing talks. North Korea's Foreign Ministry has told that country's official news agency that the six-party talks only "reinforced the belief that we have no other option but to continue to strengthen (the) nuclear deterrent power as a self-defence measure that ensures sovereignty".

Almost all the participants, with the striking exception of the DPRK, have taken a generally positive view of the Beijing talks, although the degree of enthusiasm for further talks varied from country to country. The Chinese Vice-Foreign Minister, Wang Yi, not only made an upbeat assessment of the Beijing talks but also categorically spelt out the six-point consensus that was reached during the discussions.

The six points of broad agreement, as spelt out by Mr. Wang after the talks, are as follows: a basic but collective willingness to resolve the nuclear issue through the peaceful means of a dialogue; a point that the security concerns of the DPRK should

be taken into consideration even while realising the goal of a nuclear-weapons-free Korean peninsula; a move to explore an overall plan to settle the nuclear issue in a just and reasonable manner; the recognition of the need to avoid any action that might only aggravate the situation during the process of negotiations; the point that the dialogue itself should continue to be used (as at present) to establish trust and reduce differences among the countries concerned so as to expand the common ground and the move to fix a specific date and venue for the next round of talks under the current Beijing process.

According to Mr. Wang, the U.S. and the DPRK had enhanced their understanding through the contacts that they established during the Beijing talks. This considered view contrasts sharply with the DPRK's latest 'threat' to pull out of the current dialogue process. Mr. Wang noted further that the concerns of the DPRK as also the U.S. and other participants should be addressed at the same time.

N Korea talks end, nations keep door open for future

REUTERS
BEIJING, AUGUST 29

NORTH Korea nuclear crisis talks closed on Friday with what the six nations had predicted to be the best possible outcome — agreement to meet again — but that didn't stop Pyongyang from taking a parting swipe at the United States. Frustrations had bubbled to the surface during the three days of meetings at a secluded state guesthouse in Beijing amid signs the world's most reclusive communist state had said it would prove its nuclear credentials by carrying out a test.

The only concrete result came when host China said all six countries — the two Koreas,

China deports four

■ TOKYO: China has deported two South Korean reporters and two Japanese who had been held for three weeks in connection with an attempt to smuggle nine North Korean refugees out of China, according to municipal authorities in Shanghai, where they had been held. There was no news about the fate of the refugees, who were also arrested. In a related case, a Chinese judge has agreed to review the appeal of Seok Jae-Hyun, a South Korean news photographer who was sentenced in May to two years in jail for "people smuggling". —NYT

Japan, Russia, the US and China — were in agreement to work towards a Korean peninsula free of nukes and would meet again within two months.

It set no place or date and predicted future talks to end a nuclear standoff that erupted 10 months ago would not be easy. "The talks saw progress and also differences, but all parties thought the talks were beneficial," Chinese Vice Foreign Minister Wang Yi told a closing ceremony at which he read out a six-point agreement.

Under the agreement, no party would aggravate the situation while talks proceeded and all recognised the need to address North Korea's security concerns, Wang said.

INDIAN EXPRESS

INDIAN EXPRESS

30 AUG 2003

BEIJING MEET / A NEW START, SAYS CHINA

Talks on N. Korean n-plan take off

By P. S. Suryanarayana

SINGAPORE, AUG. 27. The six-party talks on the Korean nuclear issue began on a note of seriousness in Beijing today, with China setting the tone for the deliberations as both the host and a principal interlocutor.

A unique 'handshake', involving the representatives of the participating countries, marked the 'ceremonial' part of the inauguration of the three-day parleys. The delegations from China, the U.S., Russia, South Korea, the Democratic People's Republic of Korea (DPRK) and Japan took their seats at a hexagonal negotiating table, in alphabetical order, at the Diaoyutai State Guest House in the western sector of Beijing.

With the discussions expected to be highly contentious in the in-camera mode, the stage for the substantive talks was set by the statements of formal positions by each side. While no real surprises came into focus, there was also no immediate sign of any new thinking on the main issue at stake — the transformation of the entire Korean peninsula into a nuclear-weapons-free zone.

In his opening remarks, China's Vice-Foreign Minister and chief delegate, Wang Yi, said these talks would mark a "new start" towards a peaceful resolution of the nuclear issue, besides being a 'continuation' as also an 'expansion' of the trilateral discussions that were held in Beijing last April among the U.S., the DPRK and China itself.

At the keynote state, the U.S. Assistant Secretary of State, James Kelly, is understood to have reaffirmed the line that the DPRK should scrap its nuclear weapons 'programme' completely as also irreversibly and in a verifiable manner.

According to a South Korean version, Mr. Kelly is believed to have emphasised that



The U.S. negotiator, James Kelly (left), shakes hands with North Korea's Vice-Foreign Minister, Wang Yi. — Reuters

the DPRK could expect no rewards as such for a renunciation through its security concerns could perhaps be met in some form. The DPRK's chief delegate, Kim Yong-il, called upon the U.S. to abandon its "hostile policy" towards Pyongyang and express willingness to enter into a non-aggression pact. South Korea's Lee Soo-hyuck said that large-scale projects of economic cooperation with the DPRK could come into reckoning on the diplomatic horizon if the nuclear issue could be resolved. Japan's Mitōji Yabunaka is understood to have referred to the issue of the Cold-War-era 'abductions' of some Japanese nationals by the DPRK.

Japan has made no secret of its intention to widen the nuclear-talks agenda, though it might prefer to sort out the kidnap-issue in bilateral talks with Pyongyang. Russia's Alexander Losyukov saw these talks as a realistic option to solve the complex nuclear issue. In his view, the development of mutual trust was a 'task' to be addressed during the talks so that the security, stability and economic development of the region could be guaranteed.

On the eve of the conference, China had opposed sanctions, pressure tactics and war as the means to persuade the DPRK to give up its suspected nuclear-weapons programme.

Iraq is a test of our will, says Bush

By Sridhar Kamaswami

WASHINGTON, AUG. 2. In what is being seen as a major reference of his policy on Iraq that as come to be attacked from both the political left and the right, U.S. President, George Bush, has vowed no retreat from Iraq — or for that matter from West Asia — saying that Iraq is now a "point of testing" in the war against terrorism.

"The remnants of Saddam's regime are still dangerous and terrorists are gathering in Iraq to undermine the advance of freedom. Al-Qaeda and the other global terror network recognise that the defeat of Saddam Hussein's regime is a defeat for them," Mr. Bush said in St. Louis, Missouri.

"Retreat in the face of terror would only invite further and bolder attacks. There will be no retreat. We are on the offensive against the Saddam loyalists, the foreign fighters and the criminal gangs that are attacking Iraqis and coalition forces," he said and added that the U.S. was getting "more vital intelligence from Iraqi citizens" that was being put to good use.

Mr. Bush defended his Iraq policy on the very day the Pentagon announced that more number of American soldiers died since major combat operations were deemed over on May 1 than during the course of the war. Mr. Bush said that no nation could be "neutral in the

struggle between civilisation and chaos" and called on every nation on the side of freedom and human rights to condemn terrorism and "act against the few who would destroy the hopes of the many".

In the course of listing his 'achievements' in Iraq, he pointed out that 31 countries had contributed 21,000 forces to build the security in Iraq.

"Our course is set. Our purpose is firm. No act of terrorists will weaken our resolve or alter their fate. Our only goal, our only option is total victory in the war on terror, and this nation will press on to victory," he said.

The U.S. civilian administrator in Iraq, Paul Bremer, met the National Security Adviser, Condoleezza Rice, and discussed the ground situation in that country. He said rebuilding the Iraqi infrastructure and reviving its economy will require "several tens of billions" of dollars from abroad.

Two U.S. soldiers killed in Iraq

BAGHDAD, AUG. 27. Two more U.S. soldiers were killed in combat on Wednesday. The two were killed on Wednesday in Baghdad and Fallujah, the military reported. A third soldier was reported to have died of a non-hostile gunshot wound in a separate incident. — AP

North Korea repeats no-war pact

ANIL K. JOSEPH
BEIJING, AUGUST 27

NORTH Korea stuck to its demand for a non-aggression treaty from the US today as senior envoys from six countries deliberated on ways to defuse the crisis over Pyongyang's nuclear weapons. Senior envoys from the US, North Korea, South Korea, China, Japan and Russia used their opening addresses on the first day of the three-day talks to reassert their previously-stated positions, Chinese foreign ministry sources said.

An official with the South Korean Embassy here, Han Jae-Heuk told reporters that the six-party talks on the Korean issue were proceeding smoothly. Interestingly, the head of the North Korean delegation, deputy foreign minister Kim Yong Il was seated next to the US delegation leader and Assistant Secretary of State for East Asian and Pacific Affairs James Kelly.

On the first day of the talks, N Korea again called for a non-aggression pact from the US. N Korea says it wants security guarantees from the US before it will begin to dismantle its nuclear weapons programme. Pyongyang has said its "nuclear deterrent force" would not be dismantled until it secured a pact from the US that it would not be attacked.

Head of the Japanese delegation said any develop-



Kim Yong Il, North Korea's Deputy Foreign Minister, at the Beijing meet. Reuters

IAEA chief slams US for double standards

■ HAMBURG: The head of the UN nuclear agency accused the US of effectively breaking a ban on the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction through its research into so-called "mini-nukes". Mohamed Elbaradei of the IAEA told German weekly *Stern*, in its Thursday edition, that double standards were being used. "The US insists other countries do not possess nuclear weapons. While, they are perfecting their own arsenal." —AFP

ment of nuclear weapons by North Korea is "unacceptable". The three days of closed-door talks here at the Diaoyutai State Guest House are being seen as an important opportunity for US and its allies South Korea and Japan, as well as China and Russia, to

Iran N-fears stronger as uranium found

DOUGLAS FRANTZ
ISTANBUL, AUGUST 27

INTERNATIONAL inspectors confirmed on Tuesday that particles of highly enriched uranium were discovered in two separate samples taken at a nuclear facility in Iran, raising the possibility that Tehran is further along in developing a nuclear weapon than experts had predicted.

The finding was contained in a confidential report prepared by the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) in Vienna, Austria, that provided detailed descriptions of numerous contradictions and misstatements by Iran in recent months.

A copy of the report was provided to the *Los Angeles Times* by a source outside the agency. It was clear critical questions about Iran's nuclear programme remained unanswered in the report, particularly about uranium enrichment, the purification process that creates fuel for reactors or material for weapons. Those questions are significant because the answers could indicate a weapons programme and Iran is required under the Non-Proliferation Treaty to disclose any enrichment to the IAEA.

The report did not link the minute traces of highly enriched uranium found at the Natanz nuclear plant in central Iran to any weapons effort. While a diplomat who reviewed the report said the particles were not proof that Iran had enriched uranium, he said that discovery and other findings were strong evidence that Tehran had lied about its nuclear activities. Iran insists that it is only building commercial nuclear reactors to generate electricity and dismissed the particles as contamination from before it acquired the equipment.

—LATWP

present their views to North Korea and hear from Pyongyang its security concerns. Diplomatic sources view the talks as only the beginning of what they see to be a long and drawn-out process on a sensitive issue that has a bearing on the security scenario in north-

east Asia. China and Russia, considered allies of North Korea, stressed the need for talks to continue and for patience and calm to prevail, sources said. Chinese vice-foreign minister Wang said the Beijing six-party talks represent another "important step". —PTI

INDIAN EXPRESS

INDIAN EXPRESS

28 AUG 2003

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Pressure on N. Korea to scrap nuclear programme

By P. S. Suryanarayana

SINGAPORE, AUG. 26. A common denominator that marks the preparations for the six-party talks on the suspected nuclear weapons programme of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea (DPRK) is that there can be no quick-fix solution.

The parleys, the first of its kind, will begin in Beijing tomorrow and last for three days. Indications are that the participants may seek to keep the dialogue process alive, with more talks being scheduled for a later date at a venue to be agreed upon.

Another common denominator is the desire of the interlocutors to turn the Korean peninsula into a nuclear-weapons-free zone. This goal is shared by five of the six participants — the U.S., Japan, South Korea, Russia and also China, which will host the conference. As for the other participant, the DPRK, the question of its “de-nuclearisation”, or indeed “non-nuclearisation” is the very theme of the meeting.

Pyongyang has repeatedly stated, ahead of the upcoming talks, that its nuclear-weapons programme is entirely a question of arming itself with a “nuclear deterrent force” in the context of the perceived threat from the U.S. According to Pyongyang, the U.S. has repeatedly threatened a pre-emptive strike against North Korea, which has been named a member of the alleged “axis of evil”. It is this aspect that separates the DPRK from the rest at the forthcoming talks.

China, which is considered to be the DPRK's main ally, has stated its preference for a nuclear-weapons-free peninsula. It is in this context that the difference in nuance between “de-nuclearisation” of the Korean peninsula and its “non-nuclearisation” — both, no more than goals at present — acquires importance.

While “de-nuclearisation” pre-supposes the existence of a weapons programme, “non-nucle-

arisation” does not necessarily imply it. Also, the reference to the entire Korean peninsula in this connection, as against just the DPRK, is related to the implicit demand that the U.S. should not deploy nuclear weapons in the territory of South Korea, its military ally.

Given these nuances, China has emphasised that the security concerns of the DPRK should be addressed as part of any solution to the question of a nuclear-weapons-free Korean peninsula. In a sense, the DPRK's security concerns, no less than its alleged programme of making and deploying weapons of mass destruction, will be the primary theme of the six-party talks, according to regional diplomats and analysts.

Closely related to this is the status of the DPRK's “programme” of developing, deploying and exporting ballistic missiles.

Japan is eager to raise the Cold War era abductions of its nationals by the DPRK, without losing sight of the nuclear and missile issues. Pyongyang tends to see the kidnap question as extraneous to the theme of the conference.

The U.S. position is that verifiable and irreversible rollback and elimination of the DPRK's nuclear weapons “programme” is the immutable goal. While the U.S. has indicated that the question of incentives to the DPRK would depend on its response to the demand for “de-nuclearisation”, South Korea and Japan have dropped hints of wishing to offer economic incentives to Pyongyang as part of the search for a solution.

China has taken note of all these and maintains that the security fears of the DPRK is an issue that is central to finding a lasting solution.

Those who will represent the six nations at the talks are: James Kelly (the U.S.), Mitoji Yabunaka (Japan), Alexander Losyukov (Russia), Lee Soo Hyuck (South Korea), Kim Yong-il (the DPRK) and Wang Yi (China), who will be the prime mover as both the host and ally of the DPRK.

THE HINDU

27 AUG 2003

KOREAN ROULETTE

Nuclear Tensions Mounting In The Peninsula

By SWAGATO GANGULY

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In many ways, North Korea is Iraq in reverse. Both London and Washington announced that weapons of mass destruction (WMD) were in the possession of Iraq, a charge Iraqis staunchly and consistently denied. Now David Kay, who was appointed by the CIA to lead the US search for WMD in Iraq, has told the House Intelligence Committee that there isn't in fact compelling evidence that Iraq had WMD.

By contrast, Pyongyang keeps raising the ante. When James Kelly, US assistant secretary of state for East Asia and the Pacific, flew there in October last year to confront the government with evidence that North Korea was enriching uranium to build nuclear weapons, Pyongyang confirmed that this was indeed so, triggering the current crisis.

Strategic breakout

Since then Pyongyang has not shied away from steadily escalating its claims about its nuclear prowess. While White House spokesmen like to play down the threat, insisting there is "no crisis"; South Korean experts expect that by the end of this year Pyongyang will attempt what the Americans like to call "strategic breakout" — the actual testing of a nuclear bomb which will confirm that nukes are indeed part of Pyongyang's arsenal. That would dramatically change the strategic map of Asia and indeed the world.

Another paradox: in contrast to the Bush administration's general approach to world affairs its handling of the Korean crisis has been determinedly "multilateral". It is Pyongyang who wants to deal directly with the US and cut out other parties and Washington which is keen to involve Pyongyang's neighbours and work out a six-party format including China, Russia, South Korea and Japan.

What is the dynamic that drives the Korean crisis, and how is it likely to play out? Its genesis can be traced to the end of the Cold War. The North Korean economy based on centralised planning has never been viable. Despite the *juche* ideology of self-reliance of state founder and long-time ruler Kim Il Sung, it could not produce the food or energy that it needed (another paradox: does "self-reliance" always produce basket cases — think of India before 1991). With the Soviet Union melting down and the Chinese turning to ag-

gressive courting of foreign capital, support for North Korea was given the go-by and the latter lost its principal sources of food and energy aid.

In a typical quirk of Soviet-style planning North Korea turned out to be good at missile technology. Blueprints for the medium-range Rodong have been

International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) inspectors.

The fuel shipments came in, but other provisions of the Agreed Framework were bogged down by delays. While Pyongyang dragged its feet over inspections, the power plants at Kumho took their time coming up (they haven't been built yet).



bought by Prime Minister Benazir Bhutto, the missiles built and renamed the Ghauri, which now threaten Indian cities. The long-range Taepodong-2, believed to be in development, could hit the western seaboard of the United States if fired from North Korea.

For the foreign exchange that it desperately needs Pyongyang has taken to missile exports, which is estimated to bring in half its total annual exports of \$1 billion. It has also undertaken a programme of constructing nuclear reactors supposedly for its energy needs, but with uranium — the raw material for nuclear bombs — as a convenient byproduct.

Neoconservative factor

The Korean peninsula came close to war in 1994 over Pyongyang's refusal to permit inspections of suspect nuclear facilities, till the Agreed Framework was signed in October 1994 with the Clinton administration. According to its terms a \$5 billion consortium called the Korean Energy Development Organization (KEDO) was set up. This undertook to provide 500,000 metric tonnes of heavy fuel oil each year, as well as develop light water reactors that were proliferation proof at Kumho on North Korea's east coast, in exchange for Pyongyang's mothballing of its existing nuclear facilities at Yongbyon and acceptance of

Into this scenario full of distrust and suspicion the ideologically driven Bush administration barged in like a bull in a china shop, putting Pyongyang on notice that it was henceforth part of the "axis of evil". Pyongyang responded by confirming American suspicions that it was running a secret uranium enrichment programme for nuclear weapons.

The Bush administration declared the Agreed Framework dead, since when the war of words has steadily escalated. The North threw out IAEA inspectors, withdrew from the nuclear non-proliferation treaty, test-fired missiles that landed in the sea close to Japan, reprocessed some spent fuel rods from the Yongbyon plant. Pyongyang, which has received nuclear technology for its bomb programme from Pakistan in exchange for missile technology, appears also to have borrowed its rhetorical strategies from Islamabad — it threatens "nuclear storm clouds" over the Korean peninsula.

Neoconservatives in the Bush administration have repeatedly described Pyongyang's negotiating tactics as "blackmail". That they may be in control of North Korea policy is indicated by the despatch of under-secretary of state John Bolton as Washington's negotiator for the Korea talks. Bolton is a fire-breathing

hawk with close ties to hardline Vice-President Dick Cheney. He landed in Seoul and sounded off on Kim Jong Il as a repressive dictator, hardly the best line to win the North Koreans over with diplomacy. It would seem that rather than engage North Korea, Bush and Cheney's men would like to contain it, applying strategies similar to those used with respect to the Soviet Union during the Cold War or to Iraq between the two Gulf Wars.

The Japanese and South Koreans, by contrast, favour engagement and diplomacy, which has opened up fault lines between the US and its allies. The US was a major factor in recently concluded South Korean elections, where Roh Moo Hyun, who stood on an anti-US platform and had the support of the young, beat to the presidency Kim Dae Jung, the more conservative candidate. Things have gone so far that Seoul under its new President has even offered to "mediate" the dispute between Pyongyang and Washington.

Frightening scenarios

Given the circumstances a hardline US strategy of containment intended to isolate North Korea and engineer the government's collapse is unlikely to get off the ground, as Washington would need the cooperation of Seoul and Beijing for its enterprise.

There are, however, other scenarios that are even more frightening. What if Pyongyang has decided to test nuclear weapons anyway, stringing along the negotiations process in order to divide Washington from Seoul and Tokyo? Or another variant: what if Washington decides to take out Pyongyang's nuclear facilities in a pre-emptive strike, an act that Pyongyang has repeatedly said will lead to all-out war?

In the latter scenario, even if nuclear weapons don't come into play, Pyongyang has enough artillery and missiles to obliterate Seoul. The former scenario, even if it doesn't result in a war, is not exactly palatable. Pyongyang testing nuclear weapons could prompt Seoul and Tokyo to test their own, which would dramatically alter global strategic equations. Tokyo testing would pressure Beijing to augment its nuclear arsenal, with knock-on effects on Delhi and Islamabad. The lid would definitively be off the global proliferation of WMD, and the possibility that non-state actors like the Al Qaeda will get their hands on some of it can't be discounted.

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HOTEL BLAST / ATTACK COINCIDES WITH BASHIR'S TRIAL

U.S. interests the likely target: Jakarta

JAKARTA, AUG. 5. The Indonesian Vice-President, Hamzah Haz, said the deadly blast in Jakarta today, in which more than 13 people died, may have been targeted against U.S. interests. "I think it is possible that was what was behind it," he said. The Security Minister, Susilo Bambang Yudhoyono, said the Government had ordered strict security checks at the airport and other public places. "We cannot allow any space for terrorism."

He called the blast a "diabolical and inhumane terrorist attack."

The U.S. Embassy spokesman, Tim Gerhardson, said, "We strongly condemn this attack."

He said the U.S. authorities remained confident in the Indonesian government's ability to rein in terrorism and protect American interests. However, he said a U.S. State Department advisory warning Americans to defer all non-essential travel to Indonesia remained in effect.

"Private Americans are at risk as well as embassy personnel."

An Associated Press photographer on the scene minutes after the blast saw three badly burned bodies lying on the ground outside the badly damaged hotel and the adjacent Plaza Mutiara office building.

No group immediately claimed responsibility for the bombing. But since last year's blasts in Bali, which killed 202 people, authorities have warned



A policeman inspects the impact of the blast in Jakarta on Tuesday. — AFP

that more attacks were likely in Indonesia — possibly by Jemaah Islamiyah, the Southeast Asian terror group linked to al-Qaeda.

Its alleged leader, Muslim cleric Abu Bakar Bashir, took the stand on Tuesday for the first time in his trial in Jakarta for treason over a series of bombings in 2000. He told the

court that he gave his 'blessings' to dozens of Indonesian Muslims in the late 1990s who went to fight alongside militants in the southern Philippines and Afghanistan.

He has denied any wrongdoing, however. About three dozen alleged Jemaah Islamiyah members are also accused in the Bali blasts and could be ex-

cuted if convicted. The bomb rocked the capital just two days before the first verdict is expected in a series of trials in Bali.

A U.S. official, asking that his name not be used, said the latest blast "definitely (has) a trademark of Jemaah Islamiyah to cause as many casualties as possible in high profile attacks."

— AP

0 6 AUG 2003

THE HINDOO

N Korea accuses South of murdering Hyundai tycoon

Korea Herald/ANN

SEOUL, Aug. 5. — North Korea today accused conservatives in South Korea of murdering Chung Mong-hun, former chairman of Hyundai Asan Corporation.

"Chung's death was not a suicide in the true sense of the word, but a murder by South Korea's independent counsel and the main opposition Grand National Party which opposes inter-Korean progress," a North Korean committee entrusted with handling inter-Korean relations said today.

The North Asia-Pacific Peace

Committee also said it will suspend the inter-Korean tour program to Mt Geumgang to mourn Chung's death.

"Due to the death of Chung Mong-hun, who tried so hard to show the nation's noted Mt Geumgang to the South Korean brethren, we cannot help but suspend the resort's tourism for the time being," the committee said in a statement, carried by the North's official Korean Central News Agency.

Chung, who was one of the key figures standing trial in connection with a secretive transfer to North Korea to win the historic summit in 2000, killed himself by jumping from his of-

Texmaco executive kills self

JAKARTA, Aug. 5. — Marimutu Manimaren, an executive of the cash-strapped Texmaco Group, apparently committed suicide early today. Manimaren is thought to have jumped from a room on the 56th floor of the Aston Hotel near the Semanggi in South Jakarta, police said.

The Texmaco Group owes some \$29 million to Bank BNI and another \$3.4 billion to the Indonesia Bank Restructuring Agency, Antara news agency reported.

A top police officer said: "There is the possibility that it was a suicide, but Manimaren was a business and political figure so we have to look into all possibilities." — Jakarta Post/ANN

face window in Seoul yesterday. Expressing condolences for Chung, the North said it will hold large-scale mourning ceremonies in the mountain resort

and in the capital, Pyongyang, without sending a condolence delegation to South Korea. The inter-Korean committee today sent condolences to Chun-

tion projects including the tourism program face danger that nobody can predict."

Analysts said Pyongyang decided to halt the tourism project not only to mourn Chung's death, but also to find out Seoul's interest in sustaining the money-losing program.

Concerns have been mounting that inter-Korean economic cooperation may hit a snag in the wake of the business leader's death as he had played a crucial role in forging business ties with the North.

Some worried that the North may derail the inter-Korean reconciliation process in the aftermath of Chung's death.

g's elder brother Mr Mong-koo, chairman of Hyundai Motor, and Mr Kim Yoon-kyu, president of Hyundai Asan.

The North's National Economic Cooperation Federation and the Kumgangsang (Mt. Geumgang) International Tourism Group sent separate messages of condolence to Hyundai Asan.

Meanwhile, the North Korean committee has threatened that the death will adversely affect inter-Korean ties. "As the person (Chung) who launched the Mt Geumgang tour, the symbol of North-South relations, was (effectively) murdered, inter-Korean cooperation

Scandals behind Chung's death?

By P. S. Suryanarayana

SINGAPORE, AUG. 4. The Hyundai Asan Chairman, Chung Mong-hun, who led a South Korean private-sector initiative for economic cooperation with the Democratic People's Republic of Korea (DPRK), was found dead in the garden of the headquarters of the huge Hyundai conglomerate in central Seoul in the early hours today, according to the South Korean Government.

The local police force is reported to be proceeding on the assumption that Mr. Chung had committed suicide by leaping from the 12th floor of his office. An apparent suicide note by him did not, however, shed light on why he chose to die, it was said.

The South Korean President, Roh Moo-hyun, expressed sorrow over the 55-year-old Mr. Chung's death and pledged to carry forward the ongoing process of inter-Korean economic cooperation. Mr. Roh was quoted as saying that "the Government will make positive efforts so that the inter-Korean economic projects will proceed as intended by the deceased".

Mr. Roh noted that Mr. Chung had "contributed greatly to the South-North economic cooperation projects such as the Mt. Geumgang tourism business and the construction of Gaecheon industrial complex". Such sentiments on the need to sustain inter-Korean economic links

the DPRK, Mr. Chung was also under investigation in connection with his firm's alleged involvement in slush funds. He was summoned by prosecutors three times in the past one month, most recently on Sunday.



South Korean authorities examine the body of Chung Mong-hun (Inset), chief of the Hyundai Asan Co., in Seoul on Monday. — Reuters

did not quite conceal the political climate in which Mr. Chung's death occurred. Cross-border economic projects in the divided Korean peninsula were indeed pioneered by Mr. Chung's late father, Chung Ju-yung. The junior Chung later spearheaded the movement for such cooperation between the two politically divergent countries.

Heading Hyundai Asan, Mr. Chung, his father's heir-apparent for corporate matters, promoted investments in and trade with the DPRK. It was in that role he found himself indicted in June this year for alleged "false accounting" with regard to what has come to be known in South Korea as the "cash-for-summit scandal". At the core of the scandal was the suspected "secret transfer" of \$500 millions to the DPRK. It came to light during an independent judicial inquiry that at least \$100 millions might have been transferred to the DPRK to secure its consent for a historic inter-Korean summit that actually took place in 2000.

Kim Dae-jung, the then South Korean President, who met the DPRK leader, Kim Jong-il, was today reported to have expressed shock over Mr. Chung's death. At the time of his death today, Mr. Chung faced the grim prospect of a jail term of up to three years if found guilty of the charges against him. Aside from the "cash-for-summit scandal" that cast a shadow over South Korea's "sunshine policy" of constructive engagement with

THE HINDU

THE HINDU

05 AUG 2003

North Korea agrees to multi-party talks

Associated Press

SEOUL, Aug. 1. — North Korea today said it has agreed to US-proposed multilateral talks on its suspected development of nuclear weapons. Pyongyang, however, would push for bilateral talks with Washington during the proposed multi-party conclave.

North Korean officials delivered the decision during a meeting with US officials in New York on Thursday, a spokesman of the North's foreign ministry told Pyongyang's official news agency KCNA.

The unnamed spokesman said Pyongyang agreed to multilateral talks after Washington told North Korea that the two sides could meet separately during those multilateral talks. "Some time ago the USA informed the DPRK (North Korea) through a third party that the DPRK-US bilateral talks may be held within the framework of multilateral talks."

North Korea did not say when the proposed talks could take

place. It said its proposal "was now under discussion."

Although the USA and its allies invited to the talks welcomed the North Korean move, Pyongyang's comments indicated that the communist country may try hard to elicit US concessions directly, while stalling multilateral talks involving the other countries.

US Undersecretary of State Mr John Bolton, on a trip to Japan, today said North Korea's apparent willingness to accept Washington's proposal for six-nation talks was encouraging news, but said it doesn't change Washington's demands for Pyongyang to abandon its nuclear ambitions.

Mr Bolton said the timing of talks had yet to be worked out, and stressed that Washington's goal remains the "complete, verifiable and irreversible" dismantling of the communist regime's nuclear programs.

In Seoul, Mr Lee Soo-hyuk, South Korea's assistant foreign minister, said North Korea also informed South Korea, Japan, China

and Russia of its decision on Thursday.

Mr Lee said he did not know when the talks would take place, but that they would likely be held in Beijing. China hosted and participated in talks in April involving the USA and North Korean officials. Recent news reports have said talks could take place in early September.

"We're very encouraged by indications that North Korea is accepting our proposals for multilateral talks," US State Department spokesman Mr Richard Boucher said.

The first public word of the apparent breakthrough came from Moscow, where North Korean ambassador Mr Pak Ui Chun met with deputy Russian foreign minister Mr Yuri Fedotov.

The latest development somewhat eases tensions on the divided Korean Peninsula. For much of the year, North Korea has warned of an impending "nuclear war" on the divided peninsula, while the USA said it will not give in to North Korea's "blackmail" diplomacy.

0 2 AUG 2003

THE STATESMAN

N. KOREAN NUKE ISSUE / BUSH ENVOY IN SEOUL ✓

U.S. for multilateral talks

By P. S. Suryanaryana

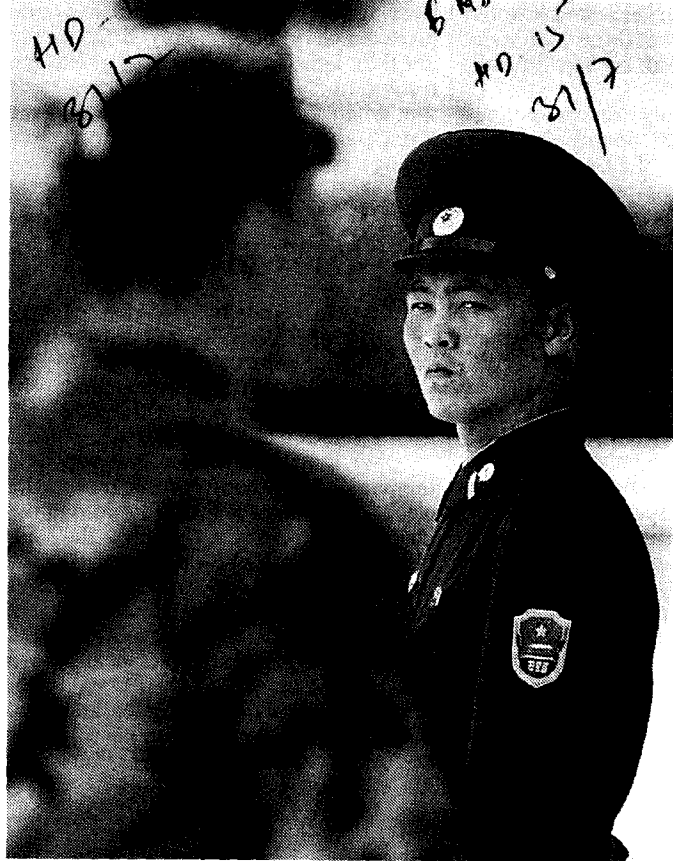
SINGAPORE, JULY 30. As the U.S. Under-Secretary of State for Arms Control and International Security, John R. Bolton, held talks with the South Korean Foreign Minister, Yoon Youngkwan, in Seoul today, nuances of perceptual differences on the North Korean nuclear arms issue came into sharp focus.

Although there was no authoritative word from either side on the road map that the two discussed to bring the Democratic People's Republic of Korea to multilateral talks on its suspected nuclear weapons programme, the question of the U.N. Security Council's relevance appeared to have come into focus in some form or another.

Prior to the talks, Mr. Bolton, who had met top Chinese officials in Beijing during his current tour of East Asia, had said that Washington's "position has been that the five Permanent Members of the U.N. Security Council, who are also the five legitimate nuclear-weapons states, have to look at the Council (itself) as an alternative (to multilateral talks on the North Korean nuclear issue)."

Projecting the relevance of the U.N. Security Council as "an option for proceeding," he had said, "If there are other ways in which the multilateral negotiations could proceed, we are certainly open to that."

The 'option' of taking the DPRK issue to the Security Council is not, however, fa-



A North Korean soldier watches at a U.S. soldier from across the Demilitarised Zone which separates North and South Korea about 65 km north of Seoul, on Wednesday. — AP

voured by South Korea, of China, South Korea, Japan and even Russia besides the U.S. itself in any multilateral talks on the nuclear issue. Ahead of Mr. Bolton's talks in Tokyo later during his visit, the Japanese Prime Minister, Junichiro Koi-

zumi, and the U.S. President, George W. Bush, have held a telephonic conversation on Iraq and North Korea. Mr. Bush told Mr. Koizumi that the U.S. would continue to make efforts towards a "peaceful solution" of the DPRK nuclear issue.

THE HINDU

31 JUL 2003

Tung talks with democrats fail

Hong Kong, July 28 (Reuters). Embattled Hong Kong leader Tung Chee-hwa and Opposition pro-democracy lawmakers failed to bridge differences today in their first meeting since huge protests shook Tung's administration and alarmed Beijing.

"We feel that if we have to rely on Tung to lead Hong Kong towards democracy, our future is gloomy," legislator Albert Ho said after the hour-long meeting. "People will have to fight for themselves to push for democratic reforms."

The 17 legislators, among Tung's most vocal critics, grilled the chief executive on the gov-

ernment's plans to press ahead with a controversial national security bill and urged him to speed up democratic reforms.

But as expected, the meeting failed to reverse years of mistrust and bear any fruit.

"He (Tung) has yet to be seen lowering his drawbridge," said political commentator Andy Ho. "But at least this time he has made a step forward by meeting the democrats."

Tung said after the meeting that he would consider the views of the lawmakers, but declined to give a timetable on constitutional review in the territory. Hong Kong's constitution allows for universal suffrage after 2007, but does not say when.

Some lawmakers had earlier said Tung was merely paying lip service to his pledge to be more open as he struggles to defuse Hong Kong's worst political crisis in years.

While Tung was selected by Beijing to run this former British colony after it returned to Chinese rule in 1997, most of the 17 legislators he met today were popularly elected.

Hundreds of thousands of people took part in big protests this month to denounce the planned anti-subversion law, which many critics fear will stifle basic civil rights and liberties.

The protests forced Tung first to withdraw some of the bill's most contentious clauses and then postpone it, but he has vowed that it will be passed.

North Korea celebrates 'war victory'

SEOUL, JULY 28. The centre of North Korea's capital lit up with fireworks as thousands danced and acted out battle scenes to celebrate what the communist country calls its victory in the Korean War.

North Korean authorities used the massive Sunday night galas in Pyongyang's Kim-Il Sung Square to stir up anti-American sentiment and loyalty to leader Kim Jong-Il.

The square is named after Kim Jong-Il's father, who triggered the war by sending invaders into South Korea in 1950.

A half-century after the war ended in an uneasy cease-fire, tension on the Korean peninsula remains high due to the junior Kim's attempts to build nuclear weapons.

"The square turned into a veritable sea of dancers with the will to demonstrate the invincible spirit of heroic Korea once again in the present confrontation with the U.S. ... just as their preceding generation won a victory in the anti-U.S. war in the 1950s," said the North's official news agency KCNA on Monday.

Pyongyang describes the war as a victory for communist forces. The West calls it a stalemate.

North Korean TV footage showed Pyongyang's night sky ablaze with fireworks.

Uniform-clad actors re-enacted battle scenes on a raised



Fireworks light up the night sky as North Korean students celebrate the 50th anniversary of the Korean War truce in Pyongyang on Sunday. — Reuters

platform, while the crowd waved their country's flags and danced in the square.

In Seoul, over 1,200 soldiers from all over the world who fought for South Korea under the U.N. flag commemorated the anniversary, praying for

peace on the peninsula.

They held a separate ceremony at Panmunjom, a border village where the armistice was signed 50 years ago.

The war pitted South Korea and a U.S.-led United Nations force against North Korea,

which was backed by Chinese ground troops and Soviet aid.

The 1950-53 war left up to 5 million people dead, injured or missing. The two Koreas are still divided by the world's most heavily armed border. — AP

Koreas exchange fire

By P. S. Suryanarayana

SINGAPORE, JULY 17. In a politically sensitive but militarily insignificant episode, the troops of the two Koreas today exchanged fire, very briefly though, across the demilitarised zone that separates the two sides of the divided peninsula in China's neighbourhood.

The firing, which caused no casualties insofar as South Korea broke the news, prompted China to urge both Koreas to "remain calm and avoid actions that could lead to a military escalation" on the Korean peninsula, whose non-nuclearisation Beijing has been actively seeking to promote at this stage. The brief exchange of fire, near Yeoncheon some 60 km north of Seoul along the border that separates the two Koreas, has been viewed seriously in the Asia Pacific diplomatic circles, in view of Pyongyang's suspected weapons 'programme'.

It is in this context that China today announced that its Vice-Foreign Minister, Dai Bing-

guo, had gone to the United States to discuss the North Korean nuclear issue with the U.S. Secretary of State, Colin Powell, and others in Washington. Mr. Dai had only a few days ago returned from North Korea, where he met that country's supreme leader, Kim Jong-il, among others to discuss their strategic bottom line concerning their suspected nuclear-weapons 'programme'.

The current Dai mission to Washington is a sequel to his recent talks with the Russian and North Korean leaders. The Chinese Foreign Ministry spokesman, Kong Quan, said in Beijing today that China was now playing the part of "a mediator to promote dialogue" between the U.S. and the DPRK. Detailing the inter-Korean exchange of fire across the demilitarised zone, the spokesman of the South Korean Joint Chiefs of Staff said in Seoul that the DPRK soldiers first fired four machine-gun rounds. In retaliation, the South Korean troops resorted to 17 rounds of rifle-fire after sounding out warnings about the North's "violation of the armistice agreement."

187

Resignations jolt Hong Kong

By P. S. Suryanarayana

SINGAPORE, JULY 16. In a move that might boost the morale of the "pro-democracy" sections of the people of Hong Kong, the territory's Chief Executive, Tung Chee-hwa, today accepted the resignation of the controversial Secretary for Security, Regina Ip.

(Meanwhile, agencies reported that the Finance Secretary, Antony Leung had also resigned.)

Though "personal reasons" have been cited and also accepted as the basis of her resignation move, Mrs. Ip's action has come about as a political interlude, if not also as a "sub-plot" during the unfolding high drama in the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region of China over the territory's plans to pass a national security legislation to meet the possible threats of treason and subversion.

Mrs. Ip, who submitted her resignation on June 25, is widely reckoned, both in Hong Kong and outside, to have played a critical role in the administration's moves, deferred for the present, to pilot and pass the proposed anti-subversion law. The relevant legislative bill has been at focal point of political 'protest' rallies in Hong Kong in recent weeks.

The mass rallies in the former British colony have received wide support in the West. While announcing his acceptance of the resignation, Mr. Tung said he had failed to persuade her to go on long leave first before making up her mind after some rest to sort out her "personal matters".

He said: "After careful consideration, I have decided to respect her wish and accept her resignation. I have recommend to the Central People's Government the removal of Mrs. Ip from the post of Secretary for Security in accordance with Article 48 (5) of the Basic Law".



Anti-subversion bill activists hold a placard of the tough-talking security chief, Regina Ip, in Hong Kong on Wednesday. — Reuters

The Basic Law governs Hong Kong's political and administrative ties with the People's Republic of China (PRC), which had taken possession of the former British colony six years ago under the principle of "one country, two systems".

Under this formula, the PRC's political system of "socialism with Chinese characteristics" does not, therefore, apply to

Hong Kong for a specified period, although the territory belongs to China, politically and historically.

It is this aspect that colours the "pro-democracy" politics of some highly vocal sections of Hong Kong in the present context of a belief in Beijing that the entire population of the territory might not be behind these sections.

THE HINDU

Chinese Minister holds talks with North Korean leader

By P. S. Suryanarayana

SINGAPORE, JULY 15. China's Vice-Foreign Minister and special envoy, Dai Bingguo, has held talks in Pyongyang with the North Korea's supreme leader, Kim Jong-il, and their "in-depth discussion" covered "issues of mutual concern".

Today's disclosure on these lines by China and the official version by North Korea were clearly indicative of a heightened catalytic role that Beijing has begun to play to accelerate the ongoing international process of peacefully resolving the issues concerning Pyongyang's nuclear-weapons 'programme'. The Democratic People's Republic of Korea (DPRK or the North) as also the U.S. and China are engaged in the ongoing "Beijing process" of trilateral talks on Pyongyang's nuclear posture. The talks centre on Washington's diplomatic profiling of the DPRK as a 'proliferator' outside the pale of international law.

Pyongyang's prime contention is that its U.S.-specific nuclear-deterrence 'programme' is in no way an infraction of the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty, which the DPRK has dissociated itself from. The Chinese spokesman, Kong Quan, did not confirm, at a briefing in Beijing today that Mr. Dai's mission to Pyongyang was aimed at exploring the possibility of holding multilateral parleys that could include South Korea as also Japan and possibly Russia too.

The DPRK said Mr. Dai "courteously" handed over a personal letter from the Chinese President, Hu Jintao, to Mr. Kim who, in turn, engaged the special envoy from Beijing in significant talks in a "cordial and friendly atmosphere".

The political message was that the latest China-DPRK talks touched on the "issue" between Washington and Pyongyang on its nuclear profile. Mr. Dai's four-day mission, which ended



South Korean police block anti-North Korea protesters who attempt to carry a mock nuclear missile to the venue of the Inter-Korean Ministerial talks in Seoul in this recent photo.

today, has acquired unusual importance in the context of the recent efforts by South Korea, in conjunction with the U.S., to step up pressure on the DPRK to give up its nuclear-weapons 'programme'.

Mr. Dai met several key North Korean leaders besides Mr. Kim. China chose to conduct its latest sensitive diplomatic intervention by playing all the cards close to its chest, insofar as the ringside observers on the international stage were concerned. However,

China today reaffirmed its primary objectives, which were sought to be promoted through the Dai mission and by other means. These pertain to a peaceful resolution of the nuclear issue, the sustainability of the peninsula as a nuclear-weapons-free zone and the maintenance of stability in that region that borders China. The personal message from Mr. Hu to Mr. Kim should be seen in this context of China's efforts to avoid a nuclear confrontation on the Korean peninsula.

Beijing mulls crackdown in Hong Kong

China ①
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An & Min

Straits Times/ ANN

HONG KONG, July 15. — Beijing has set up a high-powered group to deal with the political crisis in Hong Kong, reaffirmed support for beleaguered Chief Executive Mr Tung Chee Hwa, and is planning for the worst case scenario.

A source told the *Straits Times* that, contrary to Western reports suggesting Mr Tung had lost favour with central government, Beijing would give him its full support for the sake of stability. "I can assure you that the central government will now be 150 per cent behind Mr Tung," the source said.

Speculation began after half a million people took to the streets on 1 July calling for Mr Tung to step down, the worst protest against him since Hong Kong reverted to Chinese sovereignty and became a special administrative region (SAR).

In view of Mr Tung's shaky position, Beijing has set up an ad hoc leading group on Hong Kong, with Premier Mr Wen Jiabao as head and state councillor Mr Tang Jiaxuan as deputy head.

Members include Mr Liao Hui, director of the state council's Hong Kong and Macau office; Ms Liu Yandong, head of the ruling party's Central United Front Department; Mr Xu Yongyue, minister of national security; Mr Zhou Yongkang, minister of public

security; Mr An Min, vice-minister of commerce and trade; as well as Lt-Gen. Xiong Guangkai, deputy head of general staff of the People's Liberation Army.

To pacify the public mood, Ms Liu was asked to reach out to people not normally on good terms with the central government, like the Democratic Party in Hong Kong.

To help Hong Kong's economy recover, which Beijing sees as the basis of political stability, Mr An was asked to help speed up preferential treatment for Hong Kong under the Closer Economic Partnership Arrangement. Mr Xu is to track down "foreign animus elements" while Mr Zhou checks whether the SAR law-enforcement capability is adequate.

Lt-Gen. Xiong is to work on the worst case scenario when the PLA's garrison force in Hong Kong has to be called in. The latter three represent the hard approach. As a last resort, the group is also looking at the possibility of invoking Articles 14 and 18 of the Basic Law, the SAR's mini-Constitution, to allow Beijing's intervention.

Article 14 says: "The government of the Hong Kong SAR may, when necessary, ask the central people's government for assistance from the garrison in the maintenance of public order." Article 18 states that when the Chinese parliament decides the SAR is in a state of emergency endangering national unity or security, central government can apply relevant national laws in Hong Kong.

THE STATESMAN

16 JUL 2003

HONG KONG ON SUNDAY. — AFP

Thousands rally in Hong Kong

14/7 55-3
HONG KONG, July 13. — Thousands of pro-democracy demonstrators rallied outside Hong Kong government buildings today in the latest in a series of protests which have left the former British colony's leaders in crisis.

Protest organisers, the Democratic Development Network, said more than 15,000 people braved blistering temperatures to campaign for a democratically elected leader and universal suffrage. Police were not able to provide an immediate figure for the turnout.

As protesters chanted "power to the people", the DDN handed out thousands of orange balloons symbolising hope that the city will abandon the closed system it currently uses to elect its leaders and replace it with general elections.

Today's demonstration comes less than a month after 500,000 people gathered to voice opposition to a proposed security law, badly rattling the Beijing-backed government of Chief Executive Mr Tung Chee-hwa. — AFP

THE STATESMAN

1 JUL 2003

Taiwan rejects China's solution for reunification

Agence France Presse 6/13/97

TAIPEI, July 13. — A top Taiwan official today rejected Beijing's hopes of reunifying the island under the same arrangements it has with Hong Kong, saying the former colony's crisis over anti-subversion laws showed the it wouldn't work.

Hong Kong's relationship with China is governed by the "one country, two systems" principle that allows it to maintain its open-market way of life for 50 years after the handover of sovereignty in July 1997.

Taiwan foreign minister Mr Eugene Chien, however, said a similar arrangement would not work for Taiwan. "Following Hong Kong's handover in 1997, the Chinese have stepped up their publicity campaign in the international community attempting to use Hong Kong as a window," Mr Chien said at a seminar here. But over the past six years, he said, Hong Kong's press freedoms and once-hailed judicial system have been undermined.

And the passage of Article 23 legislation, required by Hong Kong's constitution to ban treason, sedition, subversion and the theft of state secrets, will only worsen problems, he added.

Taipei has rejected the 'one country, two systems' principle on grounds that Taiwan would be relegated to a local government in any reunification negotiations.

THE STATESMAN

14 JUL 2003

Koreas agree to talks on n-dispute

By P. S. Suryanarayana

SINGAPORE, JULY 12. The two Koreas agreed in Seoul today to "resolve the nuclear dispute peacefully through appropriate dialogue". The coded message of this generalised accord is that the Democratic People's Republic of Korea (DPRK) has refused to yield to South Korea's new pressure tactics of hinting at the possibility of linking their mutual reconciliation itself to the form and substance of the international dialogue on the nuclear issue.

Significantly, in some contrast, the latest inter-Korean joint statement, which spelt out this idea of a suitable form of dialogue, is replete with a few specifics about the future contacts between the two sides to enhance their current process of reconciliation itself. Timelines have been set for not only the next round of inter-Korean Ministerial talks but also the dialogue on economic cooperation. Cultural exchanges and the reunions of divided families have also been underlined. The furtherance of these objectives, considered central to the inter-Korean 'spirit', is

seen, on the Asia Pacific diplomatic circuit, as the primary reason behind the compromise about an "appropriate dialogue". Separated apart, the latest accord, announced at the end of the 11th round of inter-Korean ministerial talks, leaves the door open for further explorations of the exact format of the dialogue. Pyongyang has consistently set its face against the idea of "multilateral talks", which might give Seoul as also Tokyo and perhaps even Moscow a definitive say over the nuclear issue.

However, the South Korean officials have interpreted the formulation of "appropriate dialogue" to mean the possibility of a new search for a format that might yet give them a chance to engage the DPRK over its suspected nuclear-weapons programme. The two Koreas have failed to reconcile their differences over the North's insistence that its nuclear profile was a matter of "bilateral dispute" with the United States. Pyongyang's arguments are derived from its own action of having signed with the U.S. in 1994 an Agreed Framework, whose unraveling is the defining feature of the present

international crisis over the nuclear issue on the Korean peninsula. The current international parleys on North Korea's nuclear status involve Washington and Pyongyang besides Beijing. During the recent visit to Beijing by the South Korean President, Roh Moo-hyun, did not secure an explicit backing from China for his proposal of "multilateral talks", although an implicit endorsement of the idea was evident.

It is in this diplomatic milieu of much sensitive concern to Seoul that it has now "shared the view" with Pyongyang that "it is important to make joint efforts to keep peace and stability on the Korean peninsula". However, the DPRK and its 'ally', China, have not taken kindly to the move by 11 countries, including the U.S., to stop North Korean ships, under a "Proliferation Security Initiative" (PSI), in a bid to prevent Pyongyang from intensifying its nuclear and missile technology programmes.

The PSI is seen by China as a U.S.-inspired alternative to outright economic sanctions against North Korea.

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187

THE HINDU

1 JUL 2003

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N-arms: Seoul to harden stance

By P. S. Suryanarayana

SINGAPORE, JULY 11. With the inter-Korean talks in Seoul running into rough weather, the South today hinted at adopting pressure tactics to bring about a multilateral dialogue on the nuclear weapons 'programme' of North Korea.

The dialogue process involves only the DPRK and the U.S. besides China, while South Korea is very keen to have its definitive say. A multilateral dialogue, which could include Japan and Russia, is therefore being pleaded for. The South Korean Foreign Minister, Yoon Young-kwan, today hinted that Seoul might consider reviewing its policy of reconciliation with the DPRK if it were to block any movement towards multilateral talks.

The DPRK is understood to have reiterated that the nuclear arms was a bilateral dis-

pute with the U.S. At a Parliamentary session in Seoul, Mr. Yoon maintained that "if the North continues to refuse to abandon its existing policy or does not agree to negotiations, it will affect the way the Government (in the South) pursues the 'peace and prosperity policy' or the contents of the policy itself."

The unmistakable reference was to Seoul's policy of reconciliation with the DPRK, originally called the 'sunshine policy', a nomenclature which has not gone out of vogue.

South Korea has indicated its desire to explore whether the U.S. might be inclined to consider sending an envoy to Pyongyang to take the discussions on the nuclear issue forward. It was during the U.S. envoy, James Kelly's visit to Pyongyang last year that the DPRK's nuclear weapons 'programme' first came back under the interna-

tional spotlight. As South Korea's Unification Minister, Jeong Se-hyun, and the DPRK's chief delegate, Kim Ryong-song, tried to figure out a mutually acceptable formula on the modalities of talks, Seoul told Pyongyang that "the international community, including the U.S., would not accept North Korea's position any further."

The 'position' pertained to the DPRK's reluctance to internationalise the issue of nuclear 'programme'.

South Korea pointed to the moves now being contemplated by several countries to act in concert to exert pressure on the DPRK.

For its part, Pyongyang's delegation blamed the U.S. for the continuing crisis and demanded that Seoul distance itself from Washington's hawkish stand, according to a South Korean official version of today's talks.

Tiananmen II

Can Hong Kong show China the way?

If Beijing's rulers had thought they could incrementally whittle down — while no one was looking — the autonomy granted to Hong Kong as a condition for its 1997 return to Chinese rule, they may have to think again. Hong Kong's chief executive Tung Chee-hwa proposed the anti-subversion bill that would have curtailed civil liberties and brought them closer to the Chinese norm. Half a million angry protestors took to the streets and achieved the unthinkable in China — force the government to defer the desired legislation. The demonstrations were the biggest since Tiananmen Square in 1989, and achieved more than the 1989 protests, which were crushed with brute force. This is 2003, not 1989, and the government cannot be seen to act in the same way in Hong Kong as it did in Beijing — on pain of killing the goose that lays golden eggs. The flap over the security bill was such that even pro-Beijing members of the Hong Kong legislature are distancing themselves from Tung, and smaller numbers of demonstrators, still enough to pack the streets surrounding Hong Kong's legislature, are now demanding that Tung step down and his successor appointed by universal suffrage. Chinese leaders now face a dilemma — continue with the unpopular Tung and watch anti-Beijing sentiment snowball in Hong Kong, or have him step down and perhaps even accede to popular elections in choosing his successor, setting a precedent which may be enthusiastically picked on by demonstrators on the mainland itself. That is an infection that Beijing dreads more than SARS, and it has gone to great lengths to block news of the Hong Kong protests in mainland media. This, though, is the 21st century, and news is bound to filter through via satellite TV and the Internet. If Beijing had thought to reshape Hong Kong in its own image, ironically the reverse may happen as mainlanders develop a taste for the free speech and people power that they see on Hong Kong's streets.

THE STATESMAN

12 JUL 2003

HONG KONG / LIBERALS ENLARGE AGENDA

Stability paramount: Beijing

11/7
By P. S. Suryanarayana

SINGAPORE, JULY 10. China has upheld the principle of "one country, two systems" during the public debate in Hong Kong over the national security bill. However, Beijing is beginning to draw the line in the sand by cautioning the so-called 'democrats' at this critical juncture in the territory's politics.

A clear hint of China's thinking can be gleaned from the commentary carried by the *People's Daily* in Beijing today. While China has allowed Hong Kong to maintain its distinctive political identity during the protests, Beijing is also gradually turning the spotlight on its own support for the territory's besieged Chief Executive, Tung Chee-hwa.

With Mr. Tung having bowed to public pressure and deferred the definitive stages in the passage of the National Security (Legislative Provisions) Bill, the 'democrats' and the 'liberals' within the territory's political spectrum have begun to expand their agenda.

It became obvious, following last night candlelight vigil and other forms of protest in Hong Kong, that Mr. Tung's opponents would want him to quit the centre-stage after burying the bill. It is against this backdrop of an incremental protest in Hong Kong that the commentary in the *People's Daily* acquires importance as a guide to the possible policy direction in Beijing. The point underlined was that many among the estimated half a million people, who took to the streets in Hong Kong on July 1, "were just not satisfied with the way the bill was presented to them and (they) hoped for a longer period of consultation". This theme was expanded on the lines that many of the protesters "were not opposed to the basic principle that laws must be enacted to safeguard national security". Noting that Mr. Tung himself had now acknowledged the "people's discontent



A girl holds a placard against the controversial Article 23 law during a protest in Hong Kong on Wednesday. — AFP

with the Special Administrative Region Government and himself in particular", it said, "We believe that the community will accept this attitude of Tung". The punch line was that the protesters, "after venting their pent-up feelings", would come to realise that the "social and political stability is the essential pre-requisite" for meeting the "pressing tasks" in the economic domain.

ONE HINDS

11 JUL 2003

PYONGYANG NO TO MULTILATERAL FRAMEWORK

North Korea for war, peace and talks

6 Ann
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The Korea Herald/ANN

SEOUL, July 10. — North Korea expressed its willingness to discuss the nuclear issue with South Korea as the two sides opened their Cabinet-level talks in Seoul yesterday.

"Although this is not a dialogue between the North and the USA, let us exchange opinions on the issue," North Korea chief delegate Mr Kim Ryong-song told the South Korean delegation before attending the talks.

The North Korea statement ostensibly contrasts with its earlier position that the nuclear issue should be discussed and resolved through direct talks with the USA.

North Korea had refused to broach the nuclear issue at previous inter-Korean ministerial talks, citing it as a matter between Pyongyang and Washington. North Korea analysts said that Pyongyang might have changed its stance in the face of mounting pressure from the USA to end its nuclear development program.

The change in Pyongyang's policy toward inter-Ko-

Fuel rods reprocessed: Seoul

The Time, London

WASHINGTON, July 10. — North Korea had reprocessed spent uranium fuel rods, a key step towards producing nuclear weapons, South Korea said yesterday.

A report to Parliament by the National Intelligence Service said that the country's Stalinist neighbour had reprocessed "a small portion" of the 8,000 fuel rods at its Yongbyon nuclear facility. The agency's director also said that tests of high explosives, which can serve as triggers in nuclear bombs, had been detected at another site 25 miles away. Reprocessing all of the three-ft long and three inches wide rods would provide enough weapons-grade plutonium to build five or six nuclear weapons within months. North Korea is suspected of already having a couple of nuclear weapons.

North Korea has been implying for months that its plans to expand its nuclear arsenal were well advanced, but US and South Korean officials have until now avoided confirming publicly that reprocessing has begun. South Korea receives much of its intelligence from the US, which spies on North Korea with satellites and surveillance aircraft. The United States is watching for signs of activity at Yongbyon power plant which has yet to confirm that the crucial, and detectable, step of reprocessing has taken place.

rean nuclear talks came two days after President Roh Moo-hyun said in Beijing that "time is nearing for North Korea to make a decision on the nuclear issue."

During the first session of the inter-Korean talks, the South Korean delega-

tion called for Pyongyang to accept a multilateral framework aimed at resolving the nuclear issue peacefully. But the North Korean side refused to accept the demand. Instead, the North urged the South to cooperate in repelling "foreign forces" from the Ko-

rean Peninsula. "We are prepared to engage in both war and dialogue with any outside forces. But our principal position is to resolve the problem peacefully," Mr Kim said.

South Korean chief delegate Mr Jeong Se-hyun said: "It is important to remove the dark clouds of a nuclear war through dialogue." The Northern delegation warned upon their arrival in Seoul on Wednesday that nuclear storm clouds were brewing above the Korean Peninsula.

During the plenary session, South Korea also urged Pyongyang to return to the nuclear Non-proliferation Treaty and abide by the 1992 inter-Korean accord on a nuclear-free Korean Peninsula. South Korea explained to North Korea that Seoul and the international community will provide an "epochal aid" to the near-bankrupt country should it scrap its nuclear development program. South Korean delegation spokesman Mr Shin Eon-sang said. Seoul also proposed that the two sides will hold the second round of defence ministers' talks to ease tensions on the Korean Peninsula.

'Optimism' on N. Korea talks

By P.S. Suryanarayana

SINGAPORE, JULY 9. China and South Korea have agreed that the "Korean peninsula should be nuclear (weapons) free" and underlined the importance of the "dialogue process" to "push the situation on the Korean peninsula towards a positive direction".

The joint statement issued in Beijing late on Tuesday, following the South Korean President Roh Moo-hyun's talks with the Chinese leaders there, does not explicitly call for multilateral talks on the nuclear-weapons programme of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea. The details are definitive in commending the trilateral talks that were held in Beijing last April as being 'helpful'. Also expressed was the 'hope' that the "dialogue process, starting from the Beijing talks, should continue".

This formulation, which referred to the recent Beijing talks as the starting-point for a "dialogue process", amounts to an approximation of indirect support for the idea of multilateral talks. While the Beijing talks involved only the U.S. and the DPRK besides China as the host, South Korea wants those parleys to be expanded into a "multilateral format" that could include Seoul besides Tokyo

and perhaps Moscow too. The Republic of Korea (ROK or the South) and China called for "peace and stability on the Korean peninsula" and expressed conviction that the nuclear issue could be "settled peacefully through talks".

A North Korean delegation arrived in Seoul today for yet another round of talks starting tomorrow at the ministerial level — the 11th in the current series.

Arriving in Seoul the North Korean delegation warned of the risks on account of "the dark cloud of a nuclear war" that was beginning to gather on the horizon of the peninsula.

In some contrast to the North Korean perception, a South Korean intelligence official was reported to have testified in Seoul today that the DPRK was believed to have recently "reprocessed a small number of spent nuclear fuel rods" for deriving weapons-grade material.

This was indicative of a belief in South Korea that the DPRK, no less than the U.S. which is portrayed by the North as 'nuclear-trigger-happy', might need to be watched.

Meanwhile, four North Korean 'defectors' arrived in the South — a sensitive issue concerning the reunification dreams on the peninsula.

10 JUL 2003

THE HINDU

China warns USA over Taiwan

BEIJING, July 8. — China today sternly asked USA to stop upgrading relations with its arch-rival, Taiwan, so as to avoid "impairing" bilateral relations and their common interests.

Stating this, Chinese foreign ministry spokesman Mr Kong Quan asked the USA to recognise the importance and sensitivity of the Taiwan issue, abide by promises, correct mistakes and stop upgrading relations with Taiwan so as to avoid impairing Sino-US relations and the common interests of the two nations.

Mr Kong told Xinhua news agency that the American Institute in Taiwan has recently violated its status by inviting top Taiwanese politicians to a party in Taipei to celebrate the US Independence Day on

4 July. Reports said AIT, the unofficial American office that looks after US interests in Taiwan, had invited Taiwan's political figures from the "executive Yuan" and "legislative Yuan" to attend a party held on 3 July in Taipei to celebrate the US Independence Day. In the absence of an Embassy in Taiwan, the AIT acts as the unofficial mission of Washington in Taipei.

Mr Kong said AIT's actions did

not conform to its status and function as an NGO and violated the principles of the three Sino-US joint communiques and the relevant promises made by USA. China views Taiwan as a rebel province that must be reunified with the mainland, even by force. China has shown strong opposition and dissatisfaction with AIT's actions and made stern representations to the USA, Mr Kong said.

Hu, Roh discuss North Korean nuclear issue

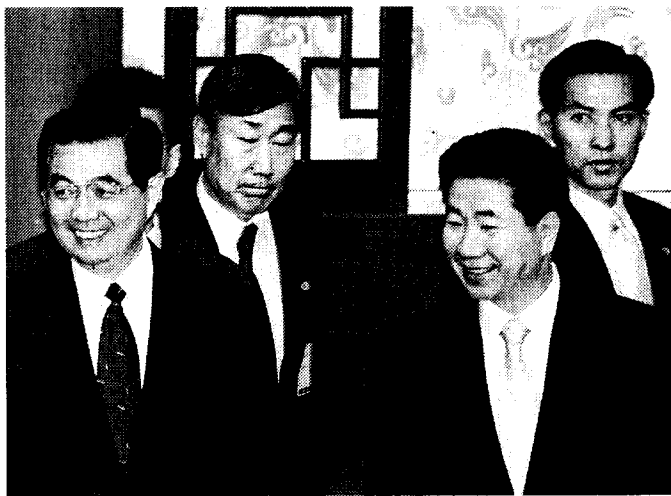
By P. S. Suryanarayana

SINGAPORE, JULY 7. The Chinese President, Hu Jintao, held talks with his South Korean counterpart, Roh Moo-hyun, in Beijing today and underlined the importance of promoting ties between Beijing and Seoul in the regional and global context.

Mr. Hu said he believed that Mr. Roh's visit would help raise the level of trust and understanding on the bilateral front. The North Korean nuclear question and the possibility of South Korea extending a helping hand to China for the Beijing Olympics of 2008 and the Shanghai World Expo of 2010 figured in the talks prominently.

While China made no immediate comment on the discussions on North Korean and on bilateral ties, the South Korean side said the two leaders agreed to "promote full-scale cooperative partnership" in various fields including "security and economy".

The 'economy' dimension included high-tech frontier areas with reference to Pyongyang's



The South Korean President, Roh Moo-hyun (right), and the Chinese President, Hu Jintao, in Beijing on Monday. — AP

efforts to make and deploy nuclear weapons. Mr. Roh said, after the meeting, that South Korea asked China to "continue wielding influence over North Korea so that the reclusive nation would not take actions that would worsen the security situation on the (Korean) peninsula".

With China being committed to the idea of a non-nuclearised Korean peninsula, Mr. Roh is understood to have focussed on the need to enlarge the framework of trilateral talks so that South Korea and other allies of the U.S. could also participate in the parleys aimed at restraining Pyongyang.

Protests mark Hong Kong handover anniversary

the copy
Straits Times/ANN & agencies

HONG KONG, July 1. — Tens of thousands of angry Hong Kong residents today marched in protest against an anti-subversion law they fear will undermine local freedoms of speech, press and Assembly.

Organisers said at least 100,000 marchers turned out for what appeared to have been Hong Kong's biggest demonstration since the backlash over the Tiananmen Square crackdown, when an estimated one million people took to the streets.

The march overshadowed the official commemoration of the sixth anniversary of Hong Kong's handover from Britain to China on 1 July 1997.

The majority of marchers were clad in black t-shirts to symbolise the death of Hong Kong freedoms, as they slowly made their way from the city's Victoria Park to main government offices in downtown Central district.

Earlier, protesters scuffled with police and burned a China Communist Party flag. Police stopped about 20 members of the radical April Fifth Movement from going to a flag-raising ceremony to mark the handover anniversary that was attended by Chinese Premier Mr Wen Jiabao, Hong Kong's chief executive Mr Tung Chee Hwa and about 2,000 dignitaries.

The group, who had wanted to stage a protest against a controversial new security law that Hong Kong is due to pass this

Sf An - Hong Kong
month, later burned a flag of China's Communist party.

"We want an end to the one-party system in China, and Mr Wen being a Chinese leader must listen to the voice of the people," rights activist Mr Leung Kwok Hung said.

There is fear that the new law, which will ban treason, sedition, theft of state secrets and subversion, could stifle freedom of speech and strangle the free flow of information.

There are also concerns it will see an erosion of the "one country, two systems" policy under which Hong Kong was returned to China and which promises a high degree of autonomy for the territory for 50 years. "This will push Hong Kong toward an era of tyranny," a protester said.

Kong handover anniversary, China PM promises to safeguard rights

Sf B . 27



BURNING MESSAGE: Pro-democracy activists burn the Chinese flag during a protest demonstration in Hong Kong on Tuesday. — AFP

HONG KONG, July 1. — China will uphold rights and freedoms in Hong Kong and support the territory's economy, Premier Mr Wen Jiabao pledged here today at an event to mark the former British colony's return to China six years ago.

Mr Wen's comments were delivered shortly before tens of thousands gathered to demonstrate against a new anti-subversion law due to be passed next week that many fear will curtail certain rights and freedoms.

"I wish to take this opportunity to reiterate earnestly that the new central government will, as always, unswervingly implement the policy of 'one country, two systems'... (and) act in strict accordance with the Basic Law," Mr Wen said.

Mr Wen flew in to Hong Kong from Beijing for the three-day visit on Sunday. It was the Chinese Premier's first visit to the territory since taking office in March this year. — AFP

HONG KONG / CRITICS FEAR SUPPRESSION OF FREEDOM

Thousands protest **subversion law**

HONG KONG, JULY 1. Tens of thousands of angry and worried Hong Kong residents marched on Tuesday to protest an anti-subversion law they fear will undermine local freedoms of speech, press and assembly.

"This will push Hong Kong toward an era of tyranny," said W.C. Mak, a 74-year-old retired nurse who said the last time she demonstrated was in June 1989, after Chinese troops crushed a student pro-democracy movement in Beijing.

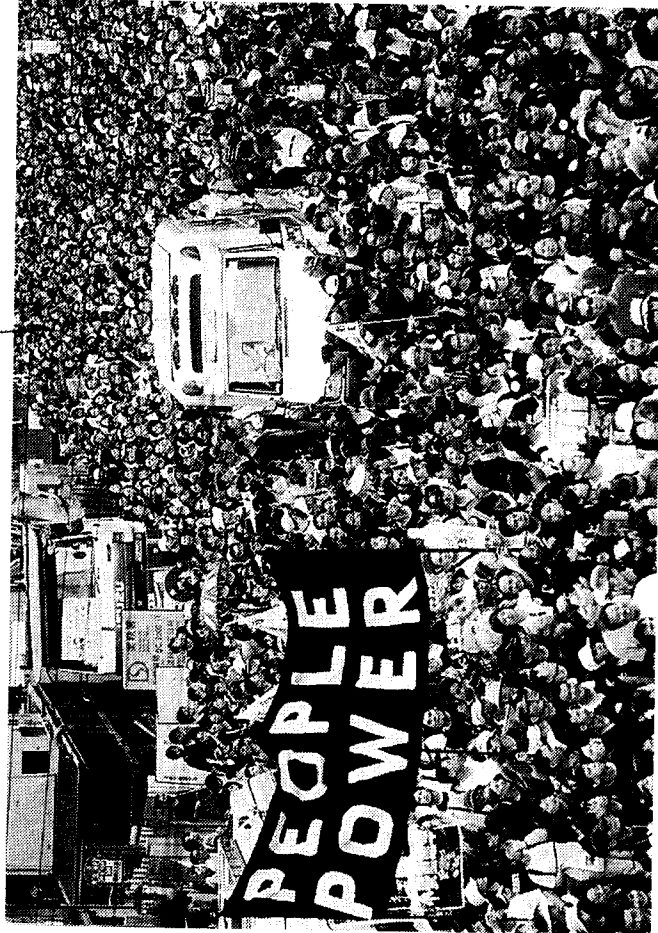
Organisers said at least 100,000 marchers turned out for what appeared to have been Hong Kong's biggest demonstration since the backlash over the Tiananmen Square crackdown, when an estimated 1 million stunned people took to the streets.

The march overshadowed Tuesday's official commemoration of the sixth anniversary of Hong Kong's handover from British to Chinese sovereignty on July 1, 1997.

Hong Kong's national security law, expected to be passed in a few days, will ban subversion, treason, sedition and other crimes against the state, giving police more powers and carrying life prison sentences for some offences.

Critics are worried about mainland-style suppression of dissent in Hong Kong, although the Government insists that is not a concern and that constitutionally protected liberties will not be harmed.

The protesters, clad in black and waving signs, formed a massive line of humanity more than a dozen deep. The demonstration route extended across a wide stretch of Hong Kong island, from an urban park to



Tens of thousands of protesters taking out a march against the anti-subversion law in Hong Kong on Tuesday. — Reuters

the Government headquarters.

The organiser, Richard Tsoi, said more than 100,000 people showed up, but police had no immediate estimate. The Government-owned radio RTHK said the protest was by far Hong Kong's biggest since the protest over the Tiananmen Square crackdown.

To commemorate the 1997 return of Chinese rule, a uniformed band played patriotic music and helicopters dragged the Chinese and Hong Kong flags through the sky as Government leaders, including the Chinese Premier, Wen Jiabao, and Hong Kong Chief Executive, Tung Chee-hwa, stood at silent attention. — AP

N. Korea promises merciless reaction to Western curbs

Seoul: North Korea's military on Tuesday threatened "strong and merciless" retaliation if the US and its allies imposed sanctions or blockade against the Stalinist state.

A statement from the Korean People's Army (KPA) said such a step would be a breach of the Armistice Agreement (AA) which ended the 1950-1953 Korean war. "If the US applies sanctions against the Democratic People's Republic of Korea (DPRK) and conducts sea and air blockade against it anywhere and starts bolstering troops in and around the Korean peninsula, the KPA side will promptly regard it "as a complete breach of the AA by the US side," it said, adding that the KPA would immediately "take strong and merciless retaliatory measures against the infringement upon the DPRK's sovereignty by mobilising all its potentials, completely free from the binding force of the AA".

Pyongyang last month accused the US of stepping up aerial espionage in preparation for its war against the Communist state over a stand-off over the North's nuclear ambitions.

US reconnaissance planes flew 200 missions over the Korean peninsula in June, according to the north's state-run news agency. "The aerial espionage getting more frantic in the wake of the conclusion of the Iraq war clearly proves that the US imperialists are becoming more undisguised in their moves to make a surprise pre-emptive attack on the DPRK over its nuclear issue," a report said,

Pyongyang last month accused the US of stepping up aerial espionage in preparation for its war against the Communist state over a stand-off over the North's nuclear ambitions

adding that the US had used aircraft like the U-2, RC-135 and EP-3 to "spy on strategic targets" in North Korea.

Meanwhile in Washington, US intelligence officials said they suspected that North Korea was developing a technology to make nuclear warheads small enough to fit atop the country's growing arsenal of missiles, potentially putting Tokyo and American troops based in Japan at risk. A media report said the Central Intelligence Agency (CIA) had informed US's allies in Asia that its satellites had identified an advanced nuclear testing site in an area called Youngdoktong. At the site, equipment has reportedly been set up to test conventional explosives that, when detonated, could compress a plutonium core and set off a compact nuclear explosion.

Some intelligence officials said the existence of the testing range showed North Korea's intention to manufacture sophisticated weapons that would be light enough to put on its growing arsenal of medium-and long-range missiles, *The New York Times* said. Agencies

7 2 JUL 2003

Years of solitude end in tearful reunion

Korea Herald/ANN

MOUNT GEUMGANG (North Korea), June 27. — A group of 100 elderly South Koreans arrived here today for three days of reunions with their estranged relatives in the North.

The 100 South Koreans include 102-year-old Eo son-deok who will be reunited with her 56-year-old daughter Jeong Wan-ok. Two other centenarians are part of the team — Park Young-cheol (101) and Lee Eung-gyu (100). The cruise ship Solbong



A South Korean woman greeted by her Northern relatives in Mt Geumgang on Friday. — AFP

Mr Suh Young-hoon, chief of the South Korean Red Cross Society, is leading the delegation to the reunions.

After arriving at the North Korean port at 4 p.m., the team headed to a hotel at the mountain where they were scheduled to hold group reunions with their North Korean family members and have dinner with them later in the day. The families will also hold private, individual reunions and take part in an excursion to the mountain today before bidding farewell to their kin tomorrow.

carrying the 191-member South Korean delegation, which also includes government and Red Cross officials, sailed from the port of Sokcho to Jangjeon, a gateway to the North's eastern coast.

'North wanted deal to abandon nukes'

Yonhap Shimbu/ANN

TOKYO, June 27. — North Korea had announced "its intention to abandon its nuclear development program" in exchange for economic aid and normalisation of diplomatic ties with the USA, Japanese officials have said.

During its talks with the USA and China in Beijing in April, North Korea said it would give up its nuclear facilities in exchange for the completion of two light-water nuclear reactors by the Korean Peninsula Energy Development Organisation. It had also called for food assistance and the signing of a nonaggression treaty at an early stage.

Pyongyang termed the proposal as a "generous solution", but analysts said it was overly advantageous for North Korea.

Although the USA, South Korea and Japan have already agreed to reject the North Korean proposal, officials from the three countries are expected to coordinate their views based on the proposals in working-level talks

scheduled for July. The purpose of the planned meeting is to discuss how to continue negotiations with North Korea.

US and North Korean diplomats said Pyongyang presented four conditions in exchange for abandoning its nuclear facilities: a

'Generous solution'

- US pledge of nonaggression
- Establishment of diplomatic ties with the USA
- US guarantee of economic aid from Japan and South Korea
- US compensation for the delay in the construction of the light-water reactors in North Korea

US pledge of nonaggression; establishment of diplomatic ties with the USA, US guarantee of economic assistance from Japan and South Korea; and US compensation for the delay in the construction of the light-water reactors in North Korea and completion of the reactors.

North Korea subsequent-

ly read out detailed proposals for actions to be taken by Japan, South Korea and the USA for full realisation of US-North Korea Agreed Framework reached in 1994.

According to minutes of the meeting supplied by the USA and other accounts, the first step Pyongyang proposed was that it would "announce its intention to abandon its nuclear development program" if heavy oil shipments to North Korea were resumed, in accordance with the 1994 Agreed Framework that was frozen by Washington in December, and if Japan, South Korea and the USA provided humanitarian food assistance.

North Korea said it would freeze its nuclear facilities and accept inspectors if Washington signed a nonaggression treaty and compensated for the damage caused by the delay in construction of light-water nuclear reactors.

Meanwhile, the South, USA and Japan are reviewing the idea of providing Pyongyang with a multilateral promise on non-aggression.

Chinese Checkers: New Delhi Recognises Tibet Autonomous Region As Part Of China

India, China promise to stabilise borders

Our Political Bureau
NEW DELHI 24 JUNE

INDIA and China have decided not to do a repeat of 1962 by agreeing to a "no-force" clause against each other and resolved to address differences through "peaceful means in a fair, reasonable and mutually acceptable manner".

A joint declaration released by the two sides on Tuesday on "principles for relations and comprehensive cooperation" and a memorandum on expanding border trade, clearly underscored the yearning of both countries to stabilise borders so that they could concentrate on issues like economic growth that demanded priority.

"The common interests of the two countries outweigh their differences. The two countries are not a threat to each other. Neither side shall use or threaten to use force against the other," it said.

Recognising the need not to allow conventional differences to affect overall development of bilateral relations, the two sides agreed to devise mechanisms aimed at regular high level exchanges to coordinate understanding on bilateral, regional



GIFT HORSE. Prime Minister Atal Behari Vajpayee admires a present called 'Portrait of the Qing Emperor Qianlong Reviewing' in the Forbidden City in Beijing on Monday. — AFP

and international issues. The two sides also expressed the preference for a multipolar world while condemning the threat from terrorism in any form and pledging to eradicate the menace "in all regions".

Much of this, however, is seen as plain

not easily forget that Mr Vajpayee had justified the Pokharan II nuclear tests in 1998 by pointing to the threat from China.

The difference in perception was also evident in the manner that the two sides chose to see the conventional issues. The joint declaration said: "The Indian side recognises that the Tibet Autonomous Region is part of the territory of the People's Republic of China and reiterates that it does not allow Tibetans to engage in anti-China political activities in India".

While the Chinese interpreted this as a major deviation, India maintained it had made no concessions and that the formulation was consistent to its stand since '54.

On the other hand, the reference to "mutual desire" in the memorandum for expanding trade ties on reopening the Nathu La trade route in Sikkim was viewed here as an implicit recognition by China on the Himalayan state's irreversible merger with Indian territory. The Chinese foreign ministry, however, was quick to respond by saying that the "Sikkim issue" could not be resolved overnight as it was an "enduring issue left over from history."

Time running out for North Korea

Korea Herald/ ANN

TIME is ticking away. Pyongyang's nuclear stunt is no longer useful. Rather than wasting more precious days — and risking confrontation — through brinkmanship, Mr Kim Jong-il (North Korean President) instead must understand the message a string of high-profile global events have sent him.

The warning from the leaders of 25 European nations meeting in the Greek resort of Porto Carras to the 23 foreign ministers who gathered for the Asean Regional Forum in Phnom Penh has consistently been clear and singular: The global village urges the reclusive North to give up its dangerous nuclear

ambition before it is too late.

Mr George W Bush has emitted an even more powerful signal. He has resumed his campaign to persuade the UN Security Council to condemn the North for failing to scrap its covert nuclear program.

During a conference in Madrid earlier this month, Washington started discussing the maritime interdiction of the North's trade in weapons of mass destruction.

Earlier this year, the USA and its European allies suspended their efforts to adopt a resolution criticising Pyongyang for withdrawing from the Nuclear Nonproliferation Treaty when China and Russia resisted. Both these Cold

War-era allies of Pyongyang now advocate multilateral dialogue to resolve the nuclear issue. Pyongyang may take this as a sign that it will find itself sitting at a negotiating table with several participants present, not talking one on one to the USA.

Although the noose around its neck is tightening, North Korea may believe that time

ANALYSIS

for a "peaceful resolution" to the crisis has not elapsed. It must not squander opportunities to make peace again. Pyongyang must first make concessions to generate momentum to resolve the crisis. Then the US administration must convince the world that it is indeed committed to a diplomatic solution rather than

to the premature use of force.

South Korea is encountering a major challenge in maintaining efficient policy coordination with Washington and Tokyo to prepare for a "concrete proposal" in case the North accepts the multilateral dialogue frame, as foreign minister Mr Yoon Young-kwan has suggested. It is imperative that Seoul keep playing its role of keeping the North engaged through inter-Korean dialogue and economic cooperation to help induce it to the conference table.

Negotiation must precede any attempt to further isolate the North, not to mention any policy of imposing the sanctions that will cause its starving population greater misery and jeopardise stability.

Japan imposing sanctions: N Korea

AGENCE FRANCE PRESSE

TOKYO, June 21. — North Korea today accused Japan of imposing economic sanctions, an act it would regard as a declaration of war.

"As a sign of Japan's loyalty to its master the US, Japan has gone into the lengths of checking the sale of commodities, talking about the 'possible use of goods for a civilian purpose for military purpose,' the official Korean Central News Agency said in a statement. "These facts suffice to prove that the 'economic sanctions' publicised by the Japanese reactionaries have reached the phase of implementation.

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"The DPRK (North Korea) has already clarified its stand that it would regard any economic sanctions as a declaration of war." KCNA complained North Korean ships had been barred from Japanese ports, and condemned calls for Japan to restrict the sale of goods to its Communist neighbour.

"Recently it has barred the calls of DPRK-flagged ships at Japanese ports including cargo-passenger ship Man Gyong Bong, which has plied between Wonsan and Niigata, groundlessly charging it with 'illegal remittance', 'spy mission' and 'transportation of nuclear parts,'" the statement said.

2 2 JUN 2003

THE STATESMAN

Taiwan issues passports to 'independence'

Press Trust of India

BEIJING, June 17. — China today cautioned the international community against Taiwan's attempts to gain "progressive independence" by issuing a modified passport to its 23 million people.

"We hope that countries and relevant governments will respect China's sovereignty and territorial integrity and be vigilant against Tai-

wan authorities' activity," Chinese foreign ministry spokesman Mr Liu Jianchao told reporters here.

The fresh row has begun after Taiwan unveiled new-look passport last week with "issued in Taiwan" printed below the official "Republic of China". Taiwan says that will help prevent foreign immigration officers from mistaking Taiwanese travellers for citizens of China.

But Mr Liu stressed that Taiwan is-

land was a province of China. "China's sovereignty and territorial integrity brooks no separation."

The addition of the word 'Taiwan' into the new passport, was "the continuation of the progressive independence separatist activity by the Taiwanese authorities and another step to undermine cross-straits relations," the spokesman said. "No matter what tricks the Taiwan authorities play, it cannot change the

fact that Taiwan is a part of China. Its attempt to split and separate China will not succeed."

The Republic of China was the name of the Chinese government established in 1911. It moved to Taiwan after the Communist takeover of the mainland in 1949. The Communists renamed China the "People's Republic of China," and have threatened for more than 50 years to use force to bring Taiwan under its control.

Korean rail link opened after 50 years

By P. S. Suyanarayana

SINGAPORE, JUNE 14. Reviving the "spirit of reunification", the two Koreas today set aside their public differences over the North's nuclear weapons programme and enacted a diplomatic cameo of fraternal amity by reopening their borders, even if only for a brief while, and re-linking the two sides through a railroad connection that had remained disrupted since the end of the Korean War over half a century ago.

A solemn ceremony, laced with rich symbolism and mutual outpourings of sentimental bonhomie, marked the re-linking of the two Koreas through a rail connection across the heavily fortified demilitarised zone that still separates them.

Forgotten was the legal technicality that the Democratic People's Republic of Korea (DPRK or the North) and South Korea "are still at war" in the absence of a peace treaty.

Forgotten, too, was the growing diplomatic showdown between the two Koreas over the North's nuclear weapons programme.

The DPRK has only very recently acknowledged that it was well on its way towards developing a "nuclear deterrent force", that was designed to checkmate the U.S., the South's

steadfast military ally despite some recent undertones of unease in the ties between Washington and Seoul.

Dominant at the ceremony was an effusion of sentiments of goodwill. The function, held near the armistice village along the demilitarised zone, was attended by officials directly concerned with the railroad re-link project and not any top political leaders.

Nonetheless, the speeches delivered on the occasion were rich in political fare of the unexceptionable kind about the shared theme of re-unification of the Korean peninsula through a negation of the Cold War logic.

South Korea's representative remarked that the new rail connectivity, which might become operational only by the end of this year, was akin to the 're-linking' of the Korean nation's 'artery'.

This profusion of sentiment was in tune with the sustained political folklore in both Koreas that the people of the two countries, belonging to the same ethnic stock, were but one nation despite their present separation.

The North Korean representative, echoing such feelings, said that today's event was a matter of "true unification", whatever the current political



The North Korean delegate, Kim Byung Chul (left), and his South Korean counterpart, Cho Myong-kyun, during a ceremony to connect railways across their borders in Paju, north of Seoul, on Saturday. — AP

jectives that the DPRK and South Korea had set for themselves at the time of their historic summit in Pyongyang in mid-2000.

This project has not been derailed, even if slightly delayed, by the continual diplomatic skirmishes for the past year or so over the North's nuclear weapons programme.

In a related diplomatic development, South Korea as also the U.S. and Japan have decided, at one of their regular security-related meetings held in Honolulu on Friday, that both Tokyo and Seoul should be directly associated with the "multilateral talks" on the peaceful resolution of the issues arising out of the DPRK's nuclear weapons programme.

For the present, these talks are confined to the DPRK as also the U.S. and China, with Beijing being the prime mover. The DPRK says it is willing to enlarge this group only after discussing certain key security issues directly with the U.S.

realties, and would create a two sides. The re-linking of the railroad connection marks the ambience favourable to the "flow of affection" between the realisation of one of several ob-

NORTH KOREA ✓ KIM JONG-IL REGIME BLAMES IT ON U.S. *East Asia*

Pyongyang admits to n-deterrent plan

By P. S. Suryanarayana *10/6* *12/19*

1/10/03

SINGAPORE, JUNE 9. For the first time, the Democratic People's Republic of Korea (DPRK or the North) has acknowledged that it was pursuing a nuclear weapons programme to build a "deterrent force" against the United States.

The open admission was indirectly but definitively purveyed today through a commentary by the official news agency. This confirmed the disclosures made so far by the United States, whose diplomats had in recent months quoted the DPRK interlocutors as saying that Pyongyang was engaged in producing nuclear weapons.

North Korea's affirmation predictably raised security concerns across the Asia-Pacific region, though there was no question of any shock waves as such, given that Pyongyang's plan was already an open secret.

Not surprisingly in this peculiar climate of opinion in East Asia, the South Korean President, Roh Moo-hyun, who today concluded a visit to Japan, told parliamentarians in Tokyo of his country's preference for a peaceful resolution of the DPRK's nuclear brinkmanship.

While supporting the idea of a diplomatic solution, Japan has emphasised the need to assess alternatives such as economic sanctions and other tougher measures by the international community. China made no immediate comment.

The DPRK, which too had spoken a few days ago about the option of a peaceful resolution of this crisis, today sought to explain the rationale of the evolving "nuclear deterrent force". The North Korean agency said: "The nuclear deterrent force of the DPRK is not meant to blackmail anybody but (only) to reduce the conventional weapons".

Moreover, the DPRK sought to underline



STRIDENT STAND: The North Korean leader, Kim Jong-il, with military officials during an inspection tour of troops at an undisclosed location in this April 27, 2003, file picture.

that a parallel objective was to "transfer manpower and funds to economic construction and people's life". This particular aspect, which does not address the financial costs of nuclear weaponisation itself, is meant to answer the international criticism of Pyongyang's poor economic management.

As for the strategic justification of the "nuclear deterrent plan", Pyongyang blamed the U.S. for sustaining an "anti-

DPRK policy" that indeed necessitated a 'physical' response of this kind. Without addressing the U.S.' plans to carry out research to develop miniaturised nuclear weapons to meet the challenges from the likes of North Korea, the Kim Jong-il regime in Pyongyang said the American concerns over its nuclear profile would be settled peacefully "if the U.S. abandons its anti-DPRK policy and settles our concerns".

10 JUN 2003

'TALKS AND PRESSURE' FOR NORTH Koreas to link rlys, roads

Korea Herald/ ANN

SEOUL, June 8. — South and North Korea neared an agreement today to initiate the linking of the tracks of two sets of inter-Korean railways and roads in the eastern and western parts of their border.

In another development, Seoul and Tokyo have agreed to seek "dialogue and pressure" in settling North Korea's nuclear programme and lure Pyongyang into accepting a peaceful resolution with the prospect of substantial rewards.

Unification ministry officials here said both sides will hold a ceremony this week on the linking of transportation as part of their agreement.

The two sides continued their talks regarding details of reconstructing the border-crossing transportation links when they met on the second day of their working-level meeting in the North's southernmost city of Gaeseong. A 14-member South Korean delegation takes a 90-minute daily bus ride back and forth between Seoul and Gaeseong for the three-day talks travelling on the makeshift road running parallel to the Seoul-Sinuiju railway in the west.

"North Korea responded positively to our requests that the South should inspect sites where the North uses South Korean construction equipment for the railway project."

said a South Korean official.

South and North Korea will issue a statement tomorrow to lay out schedules to facilitate their long-delayed railway project, which was agreed on in June 2000.

In Japan, Seoul and Tokyo have agreed to seek "dialogue and pressure" in settling North Korea's nuclear programme and lure Pyongyang into accepting a peaceful resolution with the prospect of substantial rewards.

In Tokyo, South Korean President Mr Roh Moo-hyun and Japanese Prime Minister Mr Junichiro Koizumi yesterday jointly asked North Korea for "verifiable and irreversible" elimination of its nuclear weapons.

If the North complies with the demand, the South Korean and Japanese leaders said, it will receive the comprehensive support of the international community.

Mr Roh said: "To resolve the North Korean issue, both dialogue and pressure are necessary, but I told Mr Koizumi that the South Korean government puts more emphasis on dialogue."

Mr Koizumi, however, issued a tougher warning: "In case the crisis worsens, Japan, South Korea and the USA need to respond more forcefully via close consultations... We must deal strictly with North Korea's illegal activities."



Mr Roh Moo-hyun

9 JUN 2003

THE STATESMAN

S Korea heading for disaster: North

Korea Herald/ ANN & AFP

SEOUL, May 26. — North Korea today threatened to inflict “unimaginable disaster” on South Korea which it accused of escalating the danger of war on the Korean peninsula, even as Seoul said it was unlikely to take “strict measures” against Pyongyang.

North Korea’s powerful Committee for the Peaceful Reunification of the Fatherland, a Cabinet-level organisation handling ties with South Korea, repeated its last week’s threat to bring “unspeakable disaster to the capitalist South”. Last week’s threat sparked an outcry from Seoul and caused a three-day suspension of inter-Korean economic cooperation.

Pyongyang has turned up the volume of condemnation of South Korea since President Mr Roh Moo Hyun and US President Mr George W. Bush agreed on 14 May that “further steps” may be necessary to counter the North’s nuclear weapons drive.

At North-South talks last week in Pyongyang, North Korea demanded an explanation from South Korea concerning those “further steps”. That explanation clearly did not go far enough, according to the North’s reunification committee statement released by the Korean Central News Agency today. “The South side can neither explain the grave reality with a few words nor avoid the responsibility for escalating the danger of a war on the Korean peninsula and creating North-South confrontation.”

It added that if South Korea “continued to cooperate with foreign forces in defiance of the repeated warnings of the north, the inter-Korean relations would be brought to naught and it would face an unimaginable disaster”.

In a joint statement yesterday, South Korean President and Japanese Prime Minister Mr Junichiro Koizumi said they were unlikely to include strict measures on North Korea’s nuclear threats. The statement comes ahead of the Seoul-Tokyo summit to be held in Japan on 7 June.

The South Korean foreign ministry said the leaders will only agree that they will not tolerate the North’s possession of nuclear weapons and will seek a peaceful settlement of the nuclear standoff.

South Korean national security adviser Mr Ra Jong-yil said Seoul and Tokyo share a similar understanding on diplomatic ways to resolve the North Korean issue.

N. Korea softens stance on talks

5 Ana
110-19

TOKYO, MAY 25. North Korea said today it would agree to U.S. demands to hold multilateral talks over its nuclear programme that included South Korea and Japan but only if Pyongyang and Washington held bilateral talks first.

Quoting a North Korean Foreign Ministry statement issued in Beijing, Japan's Kyodo news agency said the North criticised the U.S. for keeping silent about a "new and bold proposal" made by Pyongyang in three-way talks with China last month on the North Korean nuclear stand-off.

"The U.S. has not yet said any word about the DPRK's (North Korea) proposal for the settlement of the nuclear issue but is talking about the format of talks,

calling for the 'five-party talks'", said the statement issued by North Korea.

"As there are issues to be settled between the DPRK and the U.S., the two sides are required to sit face to face for a candid discussion on each other's policies. Only then is it possible to have multilateral talks and make them fruitful," said the statement.

"It is the DPRK's stand that the DPRK-U.S. talks should be held first and they may be followed by the U.S.-proposed multilateral talks," the statement said.

A Japanese Foreign Ministry official in Tokyo welcomed the North Korean statement, Kyodo reported. — Reuters

HINDO

26 MAY 2003

26 MAY 2003

THE STATESMAN

Taiwan snubs China aid offer Trouble ahead for Lanka PM

Taiwan authorities today
fear of medical protective
ing could better help the
ot blocking its bid to join

is Chinese counterpart,
tional Straits Exchange
mended that Chinese
eir medical supplies for
inst the SARS epidemic.
ient medical supplies, we
be used on the mainland
mic could be placed under
: cross-strait exchanges be
the SEF said. "Taiwan
f there is any need from
ackage included 200,000
00,000 N-95 masks and
igned to transport SARS
c the SEF.
een in Taiwan as another

humiliation from Beijing, which blocked
Taiwan's seventh attempt to join the WHO
last week.

An official from the ruling Democratic
Progressive Party said: "Taiwan could not
possibly accept this after it received a slap on
the face from Beijing." Parliamentarians
from Taiwan's leading opposition Kuomintang
also dismissed the Chinese offer.
In another development, 11 Taiwanese have
died of SARS, but the number of new
infections continued to fall to only three, the
government said today. New deaths from
SARS were reported for the first time in three
days, pushing the toll to 72, the Center for
Disease Control said. Meanwhile, in Beijing,
authorities today reported 11 fatalities from
SARS taking the global cumulative toll from
the disease past the 700-mark.
In Toronto, Health officials have said they
are investigating why ther 33 people
displaying SARS symptoms had the flu-like
illness and ordered 500 people to go into
quarantine due to a suspected new SARS
cluster here.

COLOMBO, May 25
President Ms Chandrika
Kumaratunga's party was
making its first major step
towards toppling the
cohabitation government by
forming an alliance with
Marxists, party officials said
today. Ms Kumaratunga's
People's Alliance, which is the
main Opposition in the 225-
member legislature, will ratify
a deal with the JVP, or
People's Liberation Front, on
Tuesday, they said.

"This is a first step towards
increasing the numbers in
Parliament and then moving
towards winning elections
from the government side to
form a government without
facing elections," a top party
source said. He added that a
memorandum of understanding
between the PA and the JVP
drafted in Sinhalese, set out
agreements on economic
policy, the ongoing peace pro-
cess and the political aspects of
power sharing between them.
JVP spokesman Mr Wimal
Weerawansa, who is also a
member of parliament, de-
clined to give details of the deal
with the President, but said
last week that the plan
included measures to "revive
and rebuild the nation."
He said: "The talks have
been very satisfactory and we
have made progress. We will
announce the details later."
The Opposition has been
talking about an alliance
between Kumaratunga's party
and the JVP for six months
after the two opened unity
talks in a bid to topple the
government of Prime Minister
Mr Ranil Wickremesinghe.



Mr Ranil Wickremesinghe
Mr Wickremesinghe, whose
rival United National Party
won parliamentary elections in
December 2001, has been
locked in a tense stand-off
with Ms Kumaratunga.

Bush, Koizumi warn N. Korea on n-issue

By Sridhar Krishnaswami

110-12
27/5/03
S. Krishnaswami

WASHINGTON, MAY 24. The United States and Japan have warned North Korea of "tougher measures" in the event of escalation of its nuclear weapons programme, the blunt message without specifics coming from the meeting of the U.S. President, George W Bush, and the Japanese Prime Minister, Junichiro Koizumi, at the ranch in Crawford, Texas.

"We will not tolerate nuclear weapons in North Korea," the President said. "We will not give into blackmail", he warned Pyongyang. Mr. Koizumi joins a select group of seven world leaders who have been taken to the President's ranch. It is pointed out that the exclusive invitations to the ranch fall in one of two categories: those leaders that the President wishes to invite for being on his side; and those whose support Mr. Bush is seeking on difficult global issues. Mr. Koizumi, it is said, falls into both the categories.

The remarks on North Korea have been seen as the toughest thus far since the standoff in the Korean peninsula started a few months ago. "We will not settle for anything less than the complete, verifiable and irreversible elimination of North Korea's nuclear weapons programme," Mr. Bush said.

He further warned Pyongyang of unspecified measures if it continued to flout international agreements.

"Further escalation of the situation by North Korea will require tougher measures from the international community", he said. And Japan, which is in no position of being a passive spectator to the goings on in North-East Asia also spoke tough on Friday.

"We will not at all tolerate the possession, the development or transfer of nuclear weapons by North Korea," Mr. Koizumi said.

The assessment of the CIA, is that North Korea has already one or two nuclear weapons; and at a recent three-way meeting in China involving the U.S., Pyongyang has said that it might test, sell or 'use' its arsenal.

Tough measures

The Japanese leader who spent about a day at the ranch, also talked of tough measures in the face of continued intransigence by North Korea and brushed off intimidations from Pyongyang.

"In any event Japan will crack down more rigorously on illegal activities. And North Korea will have to understand that threats... will have no meaning whatsoever... It is extremely important for Japan to comprehensively resolve the various issues, including nuclear weapons, missiles and abduction." Mr. Bush also had some blunt words for North Korea on missing Japanese nationals were abducted in the 1970s and 1980s for use in training spies in the Japanese language and culture.

THE HINDU

Koreas restart fragile talks

2205 40-15
SEOUL, MAY 22. South and North Korean negotiators resumed talks on Thursday that were suspended two days earlier because of a confrontation over the communist North's suspected development of nuclear weapons.

The two Koreas opened negotiations on economic cooperation in Pyongyang on Tuesday, but the talks stalled after North Korea threatened the South with an "unspeakable disaster."

North Korea was upset by a U.S.-South Korean summit in Washington last week, during which the U.S. President, George W. Bush, and his South Korean counterpart, Roh Moo-hyun, agreed to consider "further steps" against Pyongyang if it escalates tension over its nuclear ambitions.

South Korea protested North Korea's remarks, and the two sides had failed to meet since Tuesday.

On Thursday, North Korea proposed a meeting, said Cho Myong-gyun, a spokesman for the South Korean delegation.

"We will see what they want to discuss," South Korean media quoted Mr. Cho as saying. The talks were set up to discuss inter-Korean projects, including cross-border railways and roads as well as an industrial complex that would be built near the border in North Korea.

h. Asia
The talks had been scheduled to end on Thursday morning. The nuclear dispute flared up in October, when U.S. officials said North Korea admitted it had a clandestine nuclear programme.

Meanwhile, South Korean prosecutors on Thursday questioned a senior aide of the former President, Kim Dae-jung, over a disputed payment made to the North ahead of a historic inter-Korean summit three years ago.

Lim Dong-won, who served as intelligence chief at the time, said he would "respond diligently" to questions about the National Intelligence Service's role in the fund transfer to the communist country just before the June 13-15, 2000 summit.

Opposition leaders allege that the Government used the money to bribe Pyongyang to agree to the summit. South Korean law labels the North as an "anti-state entity," and it is illegal to provide cash to the North without Government approval.

Mr. Lim, who also served as Unification Minister, has said that the intelligence service helped the Hyundai business group pay \$200 millions to North Korea just before the meeting between Mr. Kim and the North Korean leader, Kim Jong Il.

However, Mr. Lim denied that the money had anything to do with the summit. — AP

23 MAY 2003

THE HINDI

Singapore on virus-free track

Taiwan health minister quits

17/5
S. Ana (1.3)

Taipei, May 16 (Reuters): Taiwan's health minister resigned today to take the blame for a string of SARS outbreaks at three major hospitals, three weeks after his counterpart in China was sacked following an alarming surge in the number of cases there.

As the political and economic impact of the virus spread across Asia and beyond, there was good news in Singapore where a cluster of suspected cases turned out to be influenza. This puts Singapore on track to be declared free of the deadly virus by the WHO.

Hong Kong, the place worst-hit by Severe Acute Respiratory Syndrome after mainland China, reported its lowest number of infections in a 24-hour period since the outbreak began, with only three new cases but also four more deaths.

Taiwan reported another death and 10 new probable cases of the virus. With 274 infections and 35 deaths, Taiwan has the third-highest number of SARS victims behind China and Hong Kong. "I feel that my supervision was inadequate," Taiwan's minister of health, Twu Shiing-jer, told parliament after tendering his resignation.

The straight-talking Twu said he was partly responsible for a chain of SARS infections at the island's most reputable hospitals this week and for a shortage of protective masks. A Cabi-



A worker seals thermometers at a factory in Ningbo, in east China's Zhejiang province, on Friday. (AFP)

net spokesman said prominent epidemiologist, Chen Chien-jen, the head of the health department's SARS advisory committee, would take over as minister.

SARS has killed 610 people and infected more than 7,700 since first appearing in southern China late last year.

Taiwan had only a few isolated cases until late April.

Many blame a poorly managed case at a Taipei hospital for the severe outbreak it is now suffering.

The army dispatched 1,200 soldiers to disinfect Taipei city, Taiwan's hardest-hit area.

Bush, Roh criticise North Korea for nuclear standoff

Washington: US and South Korea have agreed that they "will not tolerate" nuclear weapons in North Korea and approached other nations and Russia to help defuse the current nuclear standoff.

In a joint statement issued after an Oval office meeting on Wednesday, US President George W Bush and South Korean President Roh Moo-Hyun said "escalatory moves by North Korea will only lead to its greater isolation and a more desperate situation in the North."

The two also noted with serious concern North Korea's statements about reprocessing, possession of nuclear weapons, and its threat to demonstrate or transfer these weapons.

Both leaders asserted their commitment to work for the "complete, verifiable and irreversible elimination" of North Korea's nuclear weapons programme "through peaceful means based on international cooperation."

They welcomed the role played by China at the April 23-25 trilateral talks between US, China and North Korea in Beijing and agreed that South Korea and Japan are essential for a successful and comprehensive settlement

and that Russia and other nations can also play a constructive role in multilateral diplomacy.

"While noting that increased threats to peace and stability on the peninsula would require consideration of further steps," the joint statement said, "They expressed confidence that a peaceful resolution can be achieved."

The two leaders also agreed to work out plans to consolidate US forces around key hubs and to relocate the Yongsan garrison at an early date.

Hours after the US-South Korean summit, Pyongyang said on Thursday that the only way to resolve the dispute was for the US to renounce its hostile policy towards the North.

The communist state has repeatedly made similar comments before. The latest remarks were published in the state-controlled 'Rodong Sinmun' newspaper and reported by the North's Korean Central News Agency.

The crisis flared in October when Washington said North Korea acknowledged running a secret nuclear weapons programme in violation of a 1994 treaty with the United States. AP

16 MAY 2003

16 MAY 2003

THE TIMES OF INDIA

North Korea and pax Americana

By P. S. Suryanarayana

^{B. K. Srin}
THE U.S. has declared victory over Saddam Hussein's Iraq which was defined as a key segment of a global "axis of evil". Washington, however, is wary of going to war with North Korea, another segment of the same "axis of evil". For the sake of world peace, the strategic ambivalence on the part of Washington as regards North Korea is certainly a matter of relief to the larger international community. Nonetheless, the issues at stake do not at all mask the outlines of pax Americana, a policy that is being actively pursued by the U.S. President, George W. Bush.

It has been repeatedly affirmed by the U.S. Secretary of State, Colin Powell, that his country "has no intention" to launch a military strike against the Democratic People's Republic of Korea (DPRK or the North) at this stage. In the same breath, though, the U.S. authorities, from Mr. Bush downwards, have also asserted that "all options", including war, "are still on the table" to tame the Kim Jong-Il "regime" in Pyongyang. In a sense, the DPRK's strategic tussle with the U.S. goes back to the indecisive outcome of the Korean War of the early 1950s. The present standoff centres, though, on the question whether Pyongyang can possess nuclear weapons and ballistic missiles in defiance of the American diktat. While the DPRK cherishes its sovereign right to wield nuclear weapons as strategic "deterrence" against a hostile U.S., Mr. Bush will not brook any such theory. Not only that. Two of the DPRK's neighbours — the ethnic-kin country of South Korea and Japan — are uncomfortable, too, despite deriving their strategic solace from the U.S. The strategic dependence on the U.S. by both Japan and South Korea complicates the realities as seen from Pyongyang, no less than from Tokyo and Seoul.

Surely, the DPRK can count on few genuine allies on the wider international stage. Yet, the Stalinist state, tremendously impoverished despite its ideology of "juche" (self-reliance), is taken very seriously indeed in East Asia. According to the U.S. intelligence community, North Korea has

exported ballistic missiles and the related know-how to countries such as Pakistan. In turn, Islamabad is suspected to have helped the DPRK build nuclear weapons through the uranium-enrichment route. Pakistan, of course, denies any such dealings with Pyongyang. Nevertheless, China gets sucked into these arguments because of its strategic "patronage" of Pakistan. Western diplomatic sources have indicated that Beijing did, at one stage, indi-

Treaty. Beijing will stay in a league above all the other players in East Asia in the foreseeable future. In all, therefore, Beijing will be Washington's most important interlocutor in addressing the "problem" of North Korea, which today owes more to China than post-Soviet Russia in almost all spheres of national activity.

Two important questions should be of utmost concern to the U.S. in this connection. First, will China itself prefer a "nuclearised" North Ko-

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acquire nuclear weapons, can the U.S. go to war with Pyongyang? A strong strand of thinking across Washington's military-industrial-university complex is that a second Korean war at this stage might only bring the U.S.-Japan security alliance, a legacy of the outcome of World War II, under enormous strain. This aspect should explain why the U.S. leaders are saying repeatedly that they have "no intention" of invading North Korea at present. In fact, the U.S. has even underlined that the DPRK's latest claims about having already made the atom bomb should be weighed against the "intelligence" that Pyongyang had not yet tested a nuclear explosive device. The DPRK, it is said, has only tested and even exported ballistic missiles that could deliver nuclear weapons in offensive operations.

Beyond this aspect of Mr. Bush's war-shyness as regards North Korea, for at least the time being, lie the inter-related issues of pax Americana and Washington's Japan connectivity. It is generally reckoned by the U.S. establishment that Japan would be averse to joining any war against the DPRK, especially if the military strikes were designed merely to "decapitate" Pyongyang's capabilities and facilities to make nuclear weapons. North Korea has not no far been seriously accused of producing chemical and biological weapons or of actively promoting anti-U.S. terrorism at the present moment. Should Japan steer clear of any U.S.-led war against North Korea in the present circumstances, the "moral" sustainability of Washington's Tokyo flank might come into question with serious strategic implications.

What will this mean for America's global supremacy which the Defense Secretary, Donald Rumsfeld, has now glorified in "liberated" Baghdad? In an update, Chalmers Johnson, author of "Blowback", has foreseen the "danger" of an "imperial overstretch". The U.S. is surely caught between such dilemmas in its all-consuming anti-terror war of any description and the temptation of being the sole "global hegemon".

Beijing will be Washington's most important interlocutor in addressing the "problem" of North Korea.

cate to Washington that "Pakistan is China's Israel" for all strategic intents and purposes. This aspect, which has so far transcended the ideological dissimilarities between Beijing and Islamabad at any given time, does not establish a political or strategic equivalence between China and Pakistan, though.

However, "pacifist" Japan, in particular, has begun to talk, in recent months, about a nuclear "option" of its own. However, Tokyo's consistent refrain as of now is to rule out the possibility of exercising any nuclear "option" for three reasons — the sentiments of the Japanese people who were "nuked" in World War II, the country's constitutional injunctions and, importantly, the possibility of destabilising the existing international "order". For Seoul, on the other hand, the possibility of a "nuclearised" DPRK will only complicate reconciliation and reunification, unquestionable long-term goals on the inter-Korean front. Relevant to this sub-text is the suspicion within some sections of the Asia-Pacific diplomatic circles that a reunited Korean nation might not be averse to being a "nuclearised" entity. The simple reasoning behind this assumption is that a reunited Korea will still find itself in the vicinity of China — one of only five states allowed to possess all "generations" of the atom bomb under the discriminatory Nuclear Non-Proliferation

rea as a proximate neighbour? In a critical sense, a "nuclearised" DPRK should, as long as it remains friendly with China, challenge the strategic ingenuity of both Japan and South Korea. Any such turn of events must, on paper, suit China's own strategic interests of the military kind in East Asia. However, China knows full well that the U.S., whose "forward-deployed military presence" in East Asia remains vibrant to this day, will be inclined to intervene in the region in this scenario. For the U.S., it is still anathema even as a notion that either Japan or South Korea or both could act independently of Washington to confront or contain a "nuclearised" North Korea. Not surprisingly, therefore, some reasoning of this kind underpins China's current policy preference — a "denuclearised Korean peninsula". China would not want either the DPRK or even South Korea to possess the atom bomb. This should, in a sense, shed light on the strategic calculations behind China's latest initiative of hosting and participating in "tripartite talks" that brought the U.S. and the DPRK together in Beijing. A "Beijing process" has been set in motion as regards the DPRK issue, China tends to believe at this time.

The strategic case relating to Japan is somewhat different. This raises the second important question of deep concern to the U.S. Should the DPRK cross the "red line" and produce or

THE HINDU

Eighteen more succumb to Sars in China, Hong Kong

B. Anil K
11-11 9/5

Beijing: With the killer Severe Acute Respiratory Syndrome (Sars) disease claiming 18 more lives and infecting 191 others in the Chinese mainland and Hong Kong, the World Health Organisation (WHO) has urged Beijing to update its epidemiological data and complete Sars case investigations to curb its further spread.

Mainland China reported nine more deaths from Sars and 181 new cases, taking the death toll to 190 and the cumulative number of cases to 3,971, the ministry of health said.

Hong Kong special administrative region of China also reported nine more deaths, taking the toll to 179 since March 12. The dead include six men and three women aged 50 to 96.

Out of 723 Sars patients in Hong Kong's hospitals, 80 are receiving intensive care treatment.

However, the region had some respite on new cases front with just 10 additional cases being reported since Friday.

The situation in Chinese capital continued to be "severe" with five out of nine new deaths reported nationally occurring in Beijing, which is currently the hardest hit place in the world. The city also accounted for 114 of 181 latest cases.

Five more deaths on Saturday morning took the Beijing toll to 96, more than any other area of China, including Guangdong province where Sars first appeared in November last year.

Up to now, a total of 1,406 patients out of 3,971 have been discharged from hospitals on the Chinese mainland.

Meanwhile, who has urged the Beijing municipal government to analyse epidemiological trends which is vital in curbing the further spread of Sars. Senior WHO experts said much missing data remains to be collected and reports from case investigations must still be completed.

"The public needs to have more information on when and where infection is happening," said Dr Henk Bekedam, WHO's representative in China. "We don't know that right now."

WHO experts have stressed that the development of a central database of operational Sars data would greatly aid in combating the disease.

"The next few months will prove crucial in the attempt to contain Sars worldwide, which now greatly depends on whether the disease can be controlled in China," one official said.

WHO is also studying how best to support hospitals in some of China's poorer western and northern provinces. Concern continues that hospitals in these resource-poor regions may not



Health workers check for fever as passengers enter the departure terminal of Beijing's Capital International Airport on Friday

have the necessary facilities to properly isolate and treat Sars patients.

WHO also urged China to take urgent preventive measures to reduce the spread of Sars infection among medical staff. It noted that the current infection control practices in emergency rooms in Chinese hospitals might have to be modified since health care workers continue to be infected.

Among front-line Chinese health workers in Beijing, there are 300 infected health personnel, the WHO noted.

According to available official figures, out of 3,799 confirmed cases of Sars, 778 are medical workers. Some senior Chinese doctors have died fighting Sars in Beijing municipality and Guangdong and Shanxi provinces.

Reports from Shanghai say that China's largest city has enforced stricter Sars preventive measures, including the enforcement of 14-day quarantine periods for travellers arriving from affected areas like Beijing.

Traffic checkpoints have already been set up to screen people coming into Shanghai, where they are given temperature checks and asked to fill out health declaration forms.

As of Friday, the sprawling east Chinese city of 17 million people had reported just two confirmed cases of Sars

and four suspected cases.

China also said that it has agreed to allow WHO experts to travel to Taiwan to assess the island's worsening Sars outbreak. Meanwhile, the cases of Sars have nearly doubled to 100 in the past week in Taiwan and the officials have launched a major cleanup campaign in the capital Taipei.

Taiwanese President Chen Shui-Bian said he was cancelling a trip to Central America and the Caribbean amid the crisis.

In Hong Kong, health secretary Dr Yeoh Eng-Kiong acknowledged that the region didn't respond quickly enough to the Sars outbreak because not enough was known about the disease.

"It's a fact we weren't speedy enough," he said in a radio interview.

"When the outbreak first happened, we didn't even know what kind of virus it was," Dr Yeoh said, adding "We didn't know how the virus manifested itself."

In Singapore, police filed criminal charges against a man who defied a home quarantine order while Vietnam quarantined 135 students who returned from China.

Vietnamese officials said around 2,400 students returning from China were expected to be quarantined for 10 to 15 days. PTI

Curbs could lead to N Korea war ✓

Seoul, April 30

NORTH KOREA on Wednesday said it would regard any US move to seek UN sanctions against the Communist country as "the green light to a war".

The warning came after South and North Korea agreed to try to peacefully resolve the nuclear crisis, though Pyongyang has said further talks with the United States are useless unless it drops its demand that the North first scrap suspected atomic weapons programmes.

North Korea says abandoning such programmes would leave it defenceless and has in the past said sanctions would be seen as a step towards war.

Pyongyang "will take self-defensive measures, regarding it as the green light to a war" if Washington seeks a UN resolution authorising economic sanctions against it, North Korea said in a statement on KCNA, its official news agency.

South Korea's Foreign Minister Yoon Young-kwan declined to answer a reporter's question on Tuesday as to whether the South would support sanctions. He described the issue as "very delicate and very sensitive".

HC-15 1/5
An unnamed spokesman for the North's Foreign Ministry was quoted as saying by KCNA that recent US aggression compels North Korea "to opt for possessing a necessary deterrent force and put it into practice".

The agreement between the two Koreas pledging to resolve the dispute peacefully was made after four days of talks in Pyongyang. But it was unlikely to mark a change in attitude by North Korea. The country had agreed to similar communiques at previous Cabinet-level talks.

The North has insisted that the South should not meddle in the nuclear standoff, calling it a dispute with the US.

US Secretary of State Colin Powell said the US was reviewing an offer by North Korea to give up its missiles and nuclear facilities in exchange for substantial US economic benefits.

The North Koreans floated the proposal in talks with US envoys in Beijing last week. According to a senior US official, North Korea said for the first time during that meeting that it had nuclear weapons and was contemplating exporting them, depending on US actions.

AP

1 MAY 2003

THE HINDUSTAN TIMES

THE STATESMAN

29 APR 2003

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INTERNATIONAL

TUESDAY

North Korea tells South to stay off nuke dispute

Associated Press

SEOUL, April 28. — North Korea told South Korea today that it should not meddle in a stand-off over the Communist North's suspected nuclear weapons, calling it a dispute between Pyongyang and Washington.

In a second day of Cabinet-level talks in Pyongyang, North Korea's capital, South Korean delegates led by unification minister Mr Jeong Se-hyun

again demanded that the North abandon any nuclear weapons development, citing a 1992 inter-Korean agreement to keep the Korean Peninsula nuclear-free.

Northern negotiators headed by the North's unification minister, Mr Kim Ryong-sung, stonewalled the nuclear discussion. "The Northern side reiterated that the nuclear issue is a matter between the North and the USA," a statement from the South Korean government said. "But they said they wanted to resolve the matter peacefully."

The talks, which began yesterday, are scheduled to end tomorrow.

South officials said North Korean delegates have not confirmed a US claim that during talks in Beijing last week they told an American envoy that they may test, sell or use atomic weapons, depending on Washington's actions.

Instead, they reiterated that the North made a "new, bold" proposal to the USA during the Beijing talks, but did not elaborate, South Korean spokesman Mr Shin Eun-sung said.

US officials did not reveal the North's proposal, but South Korea's JoongAng Ilbo newspaper, quoting unidentified sources, reported today that North Korea proposed to give up its nuclear program in return for a non-aggression treaty and normalisation of "political and economic relations" with the USA.

The US Administration has ruled out such a treaty, but US officials have said some form of written security guarantee could be possible. North Korea says it fears being invaded by the USA following the Iraq War.

South Korean President Moon-byun said today that meets Mr Bush in Washington. May, they will discuss cooperation find a complete and peaceful solution to the nuclear issue.

During yesterday's talks, North Korea called for "united efforts of all the Koreans" to "reject the unilateral strong-arm action of foreign forces ... and prevent the danger of war," said the North's official news agency, KCNA.

N Korea's links to drug trade raise US hackles

By Michael Sheridan

Compelling new evidence of North Korea's involvement in the illegal drug trade has convinced many American officials that the regime will use its underworld connections to sell nuclear materials to the highest bidder.



Kim Jong-il

The threat has become real since a North Korean negotiator told the Americans last week that Pyongyang had nuclear weapons and the will to

use or trade them.

The declaration put North Korea's dictator, Kim Jong-il, back on a course of confrontation with Washington and prompted President George W Bush to accuse the regime of its "old blackmail". The White House also said it would confer with allies about possibly seeking United Nations sanctions against Pyongyang.

Kim's latest brinkmanship came as Australian police charged 30 North Koreans with heroin smuggling after a five-day chase that ended last Sunday with the capture of their ship by the Royal Australian Navy.

A court in Sydney denied bail to the alleged smugglers, who were arrested on board the 'Pong Su,' a vessel owned by a North Korean trading company but registered in the former British colony of Tuvalu, a remote Pacific island. The Australians seized heroin worth pounds 32 million.

While the investigation yielded a dramatic success, its outcome proved to western officials that North Korea maintains links with some of the world's most unscrupulous crime syndicates. "The great fear is that if the North Koreans find a customer for fissile

Pyongyang update

- North Korea tells South to stay off N-dispute
- South Korea wants North to abandon N-weapons development
- North made 'new, bold' proposals to US, says South Korea

materials, they will not hesitate to sell," said a western diplomat in China who follows North Korean affairs.

Prosecutors in Taiwan are also seeking the death penalty for six members of a Taiwanese smuggling gang who loaded pounds 4 million of heroin on board their fishing boat, the 'Shun Chi Fa,' from a North Korean navy vessel last June. Authorities tracked the piratical transaction from waters off North Korea to the eventual swoop on the smugglers as they neared their home port in Taiwan.

Defectors claim Kim il-Sung, founder of the North Korean regime, ordered the cultivation of opium in 1992 and set aside state-run pharmaceutical plants to process it into heroin. The Kim family dictatorship has continued to raise revenue from drug sales and counterfeit currency as the country's economy collapsed in the 1990s.

The regime has even used foreign aid donations of fertiliser to boost the opium crop, according to a recent report published in South Korea.

It is the proven track record of criminal narcotics sales, plus the dictatorship's history of unpredictable moves, that now has American military officials in South Korea and Washington deeply concerned. The Sunday Times

Give up nukes, Seoul tells adamant N Korea

Associated Press

SEOUL, April 27. — South Korean delegates to high-level talks in Pyongyang demanded today that North Korea abandon its nuclear weapons programmes, if it has any. But Pyongyang said it wouldn't do so unless it gets a non-aggression treaty with Washington.

The inter-Korean talks, held in Pyongyang and scheduled to last till Tuesday, come amid heightened tension on the Korean Peninsula. In a meeting between the USA and North Korea in Beijing last week, a senior US official said North Korea claimed to have atomic weapons that it might test, sell or use, depending on US actions.

During a 100-minute talk today, North Korean negotiators did not respond to South Korean officials' demand that they confirm the weapons claim. Instead they reiterated that North Korea made a "new, bold" proposal to the USA during the Beijing talks, South Korean spokesman Mr Shin Eun-sang said.

"We made it clear that we can never accept North Korea's possession of nuclear weapons," Mr Shin said. "We



South Korean unification minister Mr Jeong Se-hyun (left) shakes hand with his North Korean counterpart Mr Kim Ryung-sung during the talks in Pyongyang on Sunday. — AFP

emphasised that the North should dismantle nuclear weapons, if it had any, as well as its nuclear facilities."

South Korea's chief delegate, unification minister Mr Jeong Se-hyun, reminded North Korea that possession of nuclear weapons would be a "serious violation" of a 1992 inter-Korean agreement to keep the Korean Peninsula free of nuclear weapons, Mr Shin said.

In a commentary carried by North Korean radio, Pyongyang's official daily *Rodong Sinmun* said the North was determined to arm itself with "a physical means of deterrence" be-

cause the USA refuses to sign a non-aggression treaty.

Washington has ruled out such a treaty, but said that it would consider some sort of written assurance that it wouldn't invade.

"If Washington does not give us a legal guarantee that it will not take military actions, including use of nuclear weapons, against us, we have no other option but to do everything possible for our self-defence," *Rodong* said.

During today's talks, North Korea tried to discuss linking cross-border railways and other economic projects with South Korea.

S Korea firm on talks with North

AGENCE FRANCE PRESSE SF-12 27/4

SEOUL, April 26. — South Korea will push ahead with planned inter-Korean talks even after it apparently received confirmation from the USA that North Korea claimed it had nuclear weapons. "We plan to push ahead with the high-level talks in Pyongyang," a spokesman of the unification ministry said.

A five-member delegation led by unification minister Mr Jeong Se-Hyun will take a direct flight to Pyongyang tomorrow, he said.

Seoul said it wants to take advantage of the first inter-Korean talks since President Mr Roh Moo-Hyun took office in February to press the North to abide by a 1992 declaration for denuclearising the Korean Peninsula.

The South Korean government held a series of meetings to overview the progress of the Beijing talks also involving China after US envoy Mr James Kelly briefed Seoul official on the talks that wrapped up yesterday.

"South Korea and the USA find it meaningful that dialogue has started on the nuclear issue," said Mr Lee Bong-Jo, policy director of the National Security Council.



SEOUL SEARCH: A South Korean soldier surveys the Demilitarised Zone. — AFP

Another official said after meeting Mr Kelly that it seemed true that the North claimed it had nuclear weapons at the Beijing talks. US officials said they would take a "good, hard look" at the claims to separate "bluster" from reality.

'Pyongyang bigger threat'

North Korea's nuclear weapons pose a bigger threat to the USA than Iraq did before the US invasion, a key US Senator said, AP adds from Phoenix.

"We're in a very serious situation. You could argue, in some ways, more serious than it was with Iraq," US Senator Mr John McCain said in an interview yesterday.

Mr McCain sits on the Senate Armed Service Committee and is known as a maverick. He unsuccessfully challenged Mr George W Bush in the 2000 presidential primary elections. Mr McCain's remarks came as nuclear talks with North Korea ended unresolved in Beijing.

US administration officials said this week they were told by North Korean official that North Korea country had nuclear weapons and would test, export or use them, depending on US actions.

Though the USA can't rule out invasion, he said war should be the last option. Mr McCain also criticised "the low number of active duty personnel" serving in the US military. He said the USA is unable to fight two wars on two separate front around the world.

27 APR 2003

THE STATESMAN

NUCLEAR ISSUE / U.S. TO STUDY DIALOGUE OUTCOME

New proposal to resolve crisis

By P. S. Suryanarayana

SINGAPORE, APRIL 25. The three-way talks on the North Korean nuclear issue ended in Beijing today on a quiet diplomatic note that was not indicative of any definitive progress or failure.

The talks, involving the Democratic People's Republic of Korea (DPRK or the North), the U.S. and China, were conducted for three days at Beijing's initiative. While James Kelly headed the U.S. delegation to these parleys, the DPRK was represented by Ri Gun and China by Fu Ying.

A senior DPRK functionary, Myong Rok, had held talks with the Chinese leaders in Beijing ahead of the "tripartite" meeting. Without confirming or even contradicting the diplomatic indications that North Korea had now firmly acknowledged that it had produced or acquired nuclear weapons, the United States underlined that it would

not come as a surprise to the international community if Pyongyang were indeed holding nuclear weapons in its arsenal. The U.S. maintained, too, that it had in fact spoken for several years about definitive indications that the DPRK was having nuclear weapons.

At the conclusion of this round of dialogue, the DPRK said its delegation had now made "a new proposal" for the resolution of the current crisis over the nuclear issue on the Korean peninsula. This was the farthest that Pyongyang was prepared to go in hinting that it might have actually confirmed its possession of atomic weapons at this stage. No details of the "new proposal" were hinted at by the DPRK.

While the U.S. noted that it would analyse the substantive dialogue that took place in Beijing, a question that was left unanswered by all the three parties pertained to the next

step on this new diplomatic avenue. As the host to the talks, China had all along stressed, during the discussions, that the Korean peninsula should be free of nuclear weapons and that the DPRK nuclear issue should be resolved only through peaceful negotiations. "China will continue to work to (achieve) this end", the Chinese spokesman, Liu Jianchao, said in Beijing today at the conclusion of the talks.

The meeting ended with the leaders of the three delegations "clasping their hands". The Chinese Foreign Minister, Li Zhaoxing, conveyed to the leaders of the other two delegations, at separate meetings with them today, that Beijing would strive for the goal of a non-nuclearised Korean peninsula. For the U.S., this was by far the most definitive statement by China in this regard at a relevant meeting designed to promote a settlement of this issue.

THE HINDU

26 APR 2003

North Korea warns US of 'deadly blow'

Agence France Presse

SEOUL, April 24. — North Korea today said it would deal "merciless deadly blows" to US troops in the event of a war. A second-day of talks got underway today with US envoy Mr James Kelly holding parleys with North Korean foreign ministry delegate Mr Li Gun and China's representative Mr Fu Ying over ways to defuse the crisis over North Korea's nuclear ambitions.

The warning came from Mr Kim Il-Chol, minister of the People's Armed Forces, during a ceremony to mark the 71st anniversary of the army's founding, the North's official Korean Central News Agency (KCNA) said. "If US imperialists and their followers invade even an inch of our inviolable sky, land and seas despite our serious warning, our people's army will deal merciless deadly blows at the aggressors and win a final victory in the confrontation with the USA," he was quoted as having said. The Stalinist state's army was "equipped with powerful offensive and defensive means capable of defeating any formidable enemy at one swoop".

North Korea laid out its bottom-line bargaining position with the USA, pressuring Washington to renounce the use of force against the "Stalinist" state to resolve the nuclear crisis. As US and North Korean officials met in Beijing for the first time in six months to discuss the stand-off, North Korea's official media indicated that Pyongyang had no plans to shift on its key demands. "Clear and consistent is the principled stand of the DPRK (North Korea) to settle the nuclear issue," KCNA said. North Korea has insisted on a non-aggression pact with Washington, saying only then would it address US "security" concerns about North Korea's nuclear weapons drive.

25 APR 2003

THE STATESMAN

Tripartite talks begin in Beijing

By P. S. Suryanarayana

SINGAPORE, APRIL 23. The highly sensitive tripartite talks on the strategic standoff between the U.S. and North Korea, concerning Pyongyang's suspected nuclear weapons programme, began in Beijing today at an undisclosed location.

No authentic details could be ascertained quickly about the substance of the initial contacts.

The talks will last until Friday. The U.S. side is led by its Assistant Secretary of State, James Kelly, while the North Korean delegation is headed by Jo Myong Rok.

While it was not immediately clear as to who had been nominated to head the Chinese delegation, Mr. Kelly called on China's Vice-Foreign Minister, Wang Yi, on the eve of these talks.

As for the semantics about the diplomatic format of these parleys, China has officially characterised them as a 'trilateral' exercise, while the U.S. is depicting these talks as a preliminary dialogue that could lead to a multilateral process that would involve Japan and South Korea as well and, perhaps, even Russia at some stage and if required.

North Korea, on the other

hand, sees the current Beijing meeting as a virtual bilateral exercise involving the U.S., with China playing only a relevant role as a facilitator.

In a sense, China also tends to view the latest talks as the first opportunity for a 'direct' diplomatic encounter between the U.S. and North Korea, albeit within a bilateral-plus format, as it were.

As for the substance of the present Beijing meeting, the U.S. has underlined that it would not settle for anything less than a verifiable and credible dismantling of the nuclear-weapons capabilities of North Korea.

In contrast, North Korea maintains that its suspected nuclear-weapons capabilities are but a figment of Washington's imagination.

On the eve of today's meeting, North Korea again warned its citizens that the danger of a "nuclear war" on the Korean peninsula, alleged to be traceable to the U.S.' intentions, was increasing by the hour.

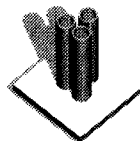
Catastrophic events

AFP reports from Moscow:

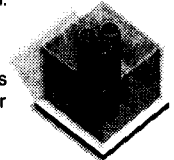
A top Russian Foreign Ministry official was quoted as telling reporters today in Tokyo that a 'catastrophic' development of events in North Korea's nuclear

Creating weapons from nuclear fuel

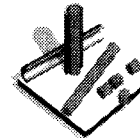
North Korea has recently announced that it is reprocessing nuclear fuel rods, a step toward producing weapons-grade plutonium. The announcement triggered debate in the U.S. administration over whether to proceed with upcoming talks with China and North Korea over Pyongyang's suspected nuclear weapons programs.



Inside the reactor, the fission process converts uranium in the fuel rods into various radioactive isotopes including plutonium.



Once spent of their energy, the cladded fuel rods are removed and submerged in cooling pools for two years or more.



The rods are moved to a reprocessing facility, stripped of their cladding, and cut into short pieces.

Dissolving in acid, both uranium and plutonium are chemically extracted.



Now separated, the weapons-graded plutonium can be used in nuclear weapons.

SOURCE: COGEMA, France; Nuclear Energy Institute; U.S. Department of Energy AP

standoff with the United States was imminent, and could occur within the next day.

"It is probable that, as early as tomorrow, there will be a catastrophic development of

events," ITAR-TASS quoted the Deputy Foreign Minister, Alexander Losyukov, as saying.

Mr. Losyukov holds the Asian affairs brief in the Russian Foreign Ministry.

21 APR 2003

THE HINDU

N Korea, China & US open talks

Press Trust of India

BEIJING, April 23. — Senior envoys from the USA, North Korea and China today began closed-door negotiations here on ways to peacefully resolve Pyongyang's nuclear issue, diplomatic sources said.

Washington is represented by US assistant secretary for East Asia, Mr James Kelly, North Korea is represented by deputy director general for US Affairs, Mr Li Gun and the Chinese side by the director general, Asian department, Mr Fu Ying.

The start of the three-day negotiations mark the first face-to-face talks by Washington and Pyongyang since talks broke up in October last year over North Korea's alleged nuclear weapons programme.

While no one is willing to say what would be the outcome of the secret parleys, analysts say the fact that the two warring sides have agreed to sit down across the table represents a breakthrough in itself.

Mr Kelly refused to speak with reporters.

Yesterday, Chinese foreign ministry spokesman Mr Liu Jianchao had said that the meeting would be out of bounds for the media.

Mr Liu said China had arranged the meeting between the US and North Korea so that the two sides could better understand each other's stand on the issue and take steps to peacefully resolve the crisis.

Prior to the talks, Chinese leaders held several meetings with both North Korean and US officials.

24 APR 2003

THE STATESMAN

Koreas to resume Cabinet-level talks

By P. S. Suryanarayana *for*
SINGAPORE, APRIL 21. The possibility of a dramatic forward movement on the Korean front was indicated today, even as Seoul and Pyongyang agreed to resume their stalled bilateral talks at the level of Cabinet Ministers.

These inter-Korean talks will be held in Pyongyang early next week in the wake of the prospective trilateral meeting involving the U.S. and North Korea as also China in Beijing. South Korea today affirmed, yet again, that the trilateral parleys on the North Korean nuclear issue would indeed take place as scheduled from April 23.

The Democratic People's Republic of Korea (DPRK or the North) announced, on its part, that a top official of its National Defence Commission would be in Beijing for a few days from April 23. The DPRK's announcement is apparently related to the tri-

lateral talks. According to South Korea, a DPRK military delegation had already arrived in Beijing today, probably in connection with the proposed trilateral talks on the nuclear arms issue.

The separate inter-Korean meeting, now on the cards, will be the 10th in a series and the first since the inauguration of a new President in South Korea last February. The current indication is that the three-day talks may begin in Pyongyang on April 27.

The resumption of the inter-Korean dialogue, proposed by Seoul a few weeks ago, was recently held in abeyance following the North's reservations in the context of its running feud with the U.S., South Korea's military ally. It is, therefore, significant that a new inter-Korean meeting has now been scheduled as a sequel to the planned trilateral conference on the DPRK's nuclear issue.

On the nuclear talks, South Korea today

indicated that the U.S. would not back away despite the DPRK's latest ambiguous statements about whether or not it had actually begun reprocessing 8000 spent fuel rods at a nuclear energy facility through a process that could yield weapons-grade plutonium.

Pyongyang today fired yet another political salvo against the U.S., charging Washington with making preparations for a second Korean war.

The North underlined that the Korean people on both sides of the divide should, therefore, recognise that the stark choice before them was either peaceful reunification or "national extermination" at the (alleged) hands of the U.S.

Interpreting the upcoming trilateral talks, South Korea said today that the U.S., which would attend the parleys, might not offer incentives to the DPRK to induce it to make a credible commitment to giving up its suspected nuclear weapons programme.

2 1 20

North Korea tripartite talks may be derailed

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

WASHINGTON, April 19. — The proposed trilateral talks between USA, North Korea and China are in jeopardy over Pyongyang's "ambiguous" statement over reprocessing of fuel rods.

A North Korean spokesman has been quoted yesterday by a state-run English news agency, saying: "We are successfully reprocessing more than 8,000 spent fuel rods at the final phase." But the Korean version of the statement says: "We are successfully completing the final phase of the reprocessing operation for some 8,000 spent fuel rods."

SEOUL PROTEST

SEOUL, April 19. — Ripping apart an effigy of North Korea's late leader, Kim Il Sung, about 1,000 South Korean war veterans and activists today protested the communist country's suspected nuclear weapons programs. In the rally in central Seoul, the demonstrators also chanted slogans in support of the US-led war in Iraq. — AP

"It is not clear exactly what (the statement) means, US state department spokesman Mr Richard Boucher said yesterday.

"There is some imprecision in the language about the status of the reprocessing."

Mr Boucher indicated that if Pyongyang had indeed started reprocessing, it could have serious consequences on the talks. "We would regard reprocessing of spent fuel to extract plutonium as an extremely serious matter," he said.

USA's goal in the trilateral talks set for 23-25 April in Beijing is to freeze North Korea's weapon programme and later try to reverse it, analysts said.

USA wants an assurance from North Korea that it will not extract plutonium from the 8,000 rods but the latest statements by Pyongyang are contradictory.

20 APR 2003

THE STATESMAN

Virus kills 12 in a day in HK

Beijing, April 19 (Reuters) — Twelve people died in Hong Kong today from the SARS virus, a record for a single day, and Singapore said the disease threatened to become its biggest crisis since independence.

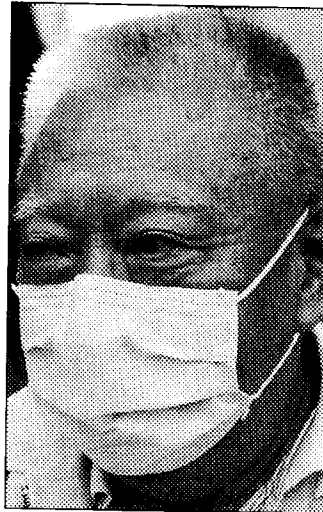
China, where the virus is believed to have originated last year, intensified its newly declared open war on the disease by threatening to punish officials caught covering up cases.

The latest deaths took Hong Kong's toll to a world-leading 81 just a day after the territory's leader, Tung Chee-hwa, said the outbreak would "stabilise gradually".

It has now had 1,358 cases of Severe Acute Respiratory Syndrome, almost as many as on the Chinese mainland where the deadly virus first appeared in the southern province of Guangdong, the former British colony's neighbour. The disease, which is fatal in about four per cent of cases and has no known cure, has killed 172 people and infected nearly 3,500 around the world. Hong Kong was the first place SARS erupted outside the mainland and Singapore was not far behind as air travellers carried SARS around the world to infect people in 25 countries.

One of the infected was a male flight attendant with Cathay Pacific Airways Ltd, the first infected cabin crew member in Hong Kong. Singapore said today it may be facing the worst crisis since independence in 1965 as SARS threatens to wreak havoc on its economy.

Prime Minister Goh Chok Tong said his nation was having some success in limiting infection rates, but more needed to be done to tackle the climate of fear



Chief executive Tung Chee-hwa in Hong Kong on Saturday. (Reuters)

causing damage to the vital tourism and transport industries. "If we fail to contain SARS in Singapore, it may become the worst crisis that our country has faced," Goh told a news conference. "The economic costs are huge." That cost could top \$850 million, he said.

The threat of punishment from Premier Wen Jiabao was another sign China, accused of telling the world too little, too late about the outbreak of a new disease, was getting serious about SARS. Newspapers gave prominent coverage today to Wen's threats.

"Anyone who covers up SARS cases or delays the release of information will be harshly punished as this matter concerns the people's health and safety," the English-language *China Daily* quoted Wen as saying during a tour of schools yesterday.

US will abandon N-talks if S. Korea is not included

Seoul: The United States will abandon three-party talks with North Korea and China if Pyongyang insists on shutting South Korea out of the talks to resolve the nuclear crisis, Yonhap news agency said on Thursday quoting a government official.

"Washington has pledged not to proceed with the three-way dialogue if we are not allowed to take part in substantial discussions," the unnamed official was quoted as saying.

"We are determined to take part in the multilateral dialogue and the United States shares our position." Seoul and Washington have characterised the three-party talks as a preliminary step towards a broader dialogue and Washington has pledged to press for the inclusion of Seoul and Tokyo.

"Even if the issue of Seoul's participation in the dialogue is not resolved in the upcoming Beijing talks, we will continue to address it," the official said.

South Korean foreign minister Yoon Young Kwan said on Thursday South Korea would not be bound by decisions reached at talks from which it was excluded.

Seoul was shut out of talks in 1994 to resolve the last nuclear crisis on the Korean peninsula but ended up footing the bill for the lion's share of economic aid to Pyongyang agreed to in the talks.

South Korean President Roh Moo Hyun criticised over his country's exclusion from talks but said the results of negotiations were more important than the format.

"Many people are unhappy with the fact that South Korea is not part of the talks and think our pride has been hurt," Mr Roh was quoted as saying.

"But if we insist on taking part in the talks belatedly, it would only make the matter more complicated." A senior US official told AFP in Washington that three days of talks would take place between April 23 and 25.

US secretary of state Colin Powell welcomed North Korea's agreement to join the three-way talks but sees little hope that the discussions will lead to a speedy resolution of US concerns about Pyongyang's nuclear weapons programmes. Agencies

18 APR 2003

THE TIMES OF INDIA

North Korea reprocessing spent N-fuel rods

Associated Press

SEOUL, April 18. — North Korea today said it was reprocessing more than 8,000 spent nuclear fuel rods, which US experts have said will give the Communist state enough plutonium to make several atomic bombs.

The development raises the stakes in the North's upcoming talks with the USA over Pyongyang's suspected nuclear weapons programs. Those talks could begin in Beijing as soon as next week.

"As we have already declared, we are successfully reprocessing more than 8,000 spent fuel rods at the final phase," a foreign ministry spokesman said. "Interim information" was sent to the USA and "other countries" last month. "Essential issues" will be discussed at the Beijing talks, the spokesman said.

Washington believes North Korea already has one or two nuclear bombs and can extract enough plutonium from the fuel rods to make six to eight more bombs within months. "At the talks the Chinese side will play a relevant role as the host state and the essential issues related to the settlement of the nuclear issue will be discussed between the Democratic People's Republic of Korea and

the USA," the spokesman said.

China's ambassador in Seoul said North Korea and the USA should resolve their nuclear dispute themselves, and Beijing does not plan to mediate between them during talks. "I don't think China plans to mediate," ambassador Mr Li Bin told South Korea's MBC Radio in an interview recorded yesterday.

'Resume dialogue'

SEOUL, April 18. — South Korea urged North Korea today to resume dialogue, a day after North Korea asked for rice and fertilizer aid. It canceled a series of talks with South Korea scheduled for last month and early this month amid tensions over its suspected nuclear weapons programs. South Korea welcomes the Beijing talks and "urges North Korea to come to inter-Korean dialogue as soon as possible to discuss peace on the Korean Peninsula and other issues," the South Korean unification ministry said in a statement. — AP

US and South Korean officials have said China, a key ally of North Korea, will be a full participant in the forthcoming talks. The nuclear crisis flared in October, when the USA claimed that North Korea had admitted having a secret nuclear weapons program in violation of a 1994 agreement.

The USA and other countries stopped oil shipments to North Korea, which retaliated by withdrawing from the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty and moving to restart a nuclear reactor.

North Korea has accused Washington of plotting an invasion, and demanded a nonaggression treaty in one-on-one talks.

Last week, North Korea indicated it could accept US demands for multilateral talks and agreed to let China sit at the table.

Multilateral talks on N. Korea likely

1714
By P. S. Suryanarayana 6 April 110-15

SINGAPORE, APRIL 16. The prospects of a "multilateral dialogue" on North Korea's suspected nuclear weapons programme have brightened following a strong indication by South Korea today that the issue might be discussed in Beijing early next week.

To begin with, the U.S. and North Korea besides China would participate in such talks likely to be held on April 23.

However, South Korea had, earlier in the day, indicated that such trilateral talks, a prelude to the multilateral format, would begin as early as next week. South Korea, Russia and Japan are expected to join the U.S. as also China and North Korea.

Even as South Korea broke the possibility of this new development, its President, Roh Moo-hyun, hoped in Seoul today that the Democratic People's Republic of Korea (DPRK) might be amenable to renouncing its suspected two-track nuclear-weapons programmes if it were to receive international guarantees about its security and economic well-being.

The development has been made possible by the shift in the DPRK's stand — from an insistence on a direct dialogue with Washington on the nuclear issue — to a stated willingness to consider other formats of dialogue. It is in this context that the meeting will mark a half-step, for the time being, towards a truly multilateral format.

These indications have come in the context of Washington's position that the nuclear issue should be discussed on a regional basis, whatever might be

the initial format without being an exclusive U.S.-DPRK dialogue as such.

Washington's new sense of urgency has been reflected in the American political circles as well, with at least one Senator describing the DPRK as the "black hole" of North-East Asia.

South Korea has interpreted the shift in the DPRK's stand as a response to the manner in which the U.S. has been able to silence the Iraqi guns. While noting that the turn of events in Iraq might have placed North Korea in a disadvantageous position on the international scene, South Korea is understood to be taking the line that China and Russia could have also played a role behind the scenes, according to regional diplomatic observers.

A spokesman of the North Korean Foreign Ministry had said last week-end that "if the U.S. is ready to make a bold switch-over in its Korea policy for a settlement of the nuclear issue, the DPRK will not stick to any particular dialogue format". The solution to this issue "depends on what is the real intention of the U.S.," Pyongyang said, underlining that "what matters is the U.S." even in a multilateral framework.

For South Korea and Japan, the latest nuance in the North Korean position has acquired greater significance and relevance following the comments by the U.S. President, George W. Bush. Emphasising that "the best way to deal with their (North Korean) proliferation is through a multi-national forum", Mr. Bush has said that "it looks like that might be coming to fruition".

17 APR 2003

THE HINDU

Multilateral talks on N. Korea likely

DIA
By P. S. Suryanarayana

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17 APR 2003

THE HINDU

15 APR 2003

THE STATESMAN

Singapore breathes a little easy

Agence France Presse

SINGAPORE, April 14. — More than 200,000 secondary school students in Singapore returned to their classes today after an 18-day shutdown to contain the spread of the SARS virus, but only after facing stringent screening measures.

Some schools had teachers stationed outside the premises to spot students with a fever — an initial symptom of Severe Acute Respiratory Syndrome (SARS) — to be sent home immediately. Others set up temperature monitoring stations, manned by teachers wearing surgical masks and gloves. Pei Cai Secondary School was just one ex-

ample, with teachers garbed in medical masks, gloves and gowns scrutinising re-turning students, a spokesman said.

"It was very smooth today. We had teachers stationed outside taking temperatures of students coming to school. All the teachers were involved, and they were equipped with the masks, gloves and the gowns," he said. "We can't really tell how many students were sent back, but it wasn't that many," he said.

13 more dead in China

Six more people succumbed to the deadly pneumonia today in China, which accepted that the situation was "grave" as the virus killed seven more patients in Hong Kong where deaths of "younger and fitter" persons sparked concerns that the virus had mutated.

Holiday toll!

BANGKOK, April 14. — While all of SouthEast Asia is gripped by the panic over SARS, the death toll from the Songkran holiday in Thailand over the weekend rose to 359 yesterday, while more than 23,000 people have been reportedly hurt in road accidents during the festivities, the Thai ministry of health said. The Nareenthorn emergency centre said since Friday 359 people were killed and 23,327 injured in road accidents throughout the country. On Sunday alone, the death toll was 160 and 10,648 people were hurt. — The Nation/ANN

Pyongyang ready for talks: Seoul

Agence France Presse

SEOUL, April 14. — South Korea today said North Korea had signalled it was ready for multilateral talks to resolve the six-month-old nuclear crisis.

Seoul's statement follows Pyongyang's declaration on Saturday that it was ready for talks with the USA under any format. South Korean President Mr Roh Moo-Hyun's office said the move proved North Korea was complying with efforts to resolve the crisis and was ready to accept dialogue.

"The government considers this as an indication that Pyongyang will accept multilateral talks on resolving its nuclear issue," the statement read.

It said: "North Korea appears to be creating a favourable atmosphere for dialogue while complying with efforts by our government and the international community to solve the nuclear issue through dialogue."

Russia sceptical

Russia is sceptical about the usefulness of holding multilateral talks to resolve North Korea's nuclear stand-off with the USA and may not participate, a foreign ministry official said today. In Moscow's first public response to Pyongyang's announcement on Saturday that it would accept any form of dialogue with Washington, Russian deputy foreign minister Mr Alexander Losyukov accused the USA of fanning the crisis by refusing to enter into direct talks with North Korea, adds AFP from Moscow.

"The USA will prefer to stay on the sidelines while a group of countries conduct the talks with their (US) participation. Such an approach has no prospects and we will not take part in this," he said. "If we see that there is a real willingness on the part of the USA to reach an agreement then there would be a role for our diplomats."

15 APR 2003

THE STATESMAN

15 APR 2003

THE HINDUSTAN TIMES

SARS to affect growth rate

XXXX 15/4

Hong Kong, April 14

THE DEADLY outbreak of Severe Acute Respiratory Syndrome (SARS) will slash economic growth rates in Asia this year with the worst effects expected to be felt in the current quarter to June, ING Financial Markets said Monday.

"We expect growth in Asia will be reduced from the impact of SARS... it will be concentrated in the second quarter of the year," ING's chief economist for Asia Tim Condon said.

Economies which rely significantly on tourism such as Hong Kong will be badly affected by SARS which has claimed more than 130 lives worldwide and is believed to have infected at least 3,200, Condon said.

"For every (US) dollar lost from tourism, we are expecting a knock-on impact on private consumption of 50 cents," he said in a teleconference call. In a note to clients, Condon said the respiratory virus "is a more serious threat to regional GDP

Hong Kong to 1.5 percent from 2.5 percent, while trimming its 2003 forecast for Malaysia to 4.0 percent from 5.0 percent and Thailand to 4.3 percent from 4.5 percent.

ING also cut its growth forecast for Singapore to 2.0 percent from 3.5 percent.

"The revision for Singapore's GDP, though the economy is not most vulnerable to SARS under our base case, was prompted by a disappointing first quarter performance," it said.

It reduced its 2003 growth forecast for Indonesia to 3.7 percent from 4.0 percent and its Taiwan estimate to 3.3 percent from 3.5 percent.

The brokerage also cut its forecast growth for South Korea to 4.0 percent from 4.9 percent, although it said the revision is more due to weakening economic fundamentals than SARS.

ING said it is maintaining its growth forecast of 7.5 percent for China "because we consider it was subject to upward revision before SARS".

AFP

'US economy to recover moderately'

THE ECONOMY is likely to show gradual improvement as 2003 progresses, Philadelphia Federal Reserve Bank president Anthony Santomero said. But he warned it was too early to say that the US economy is back on track. "It won't be a giant bounce but it will be a more general expansion," Santomero said in a speech to the American Truck Dealers convention here. "Moderate growth on the consumer

side combined with gradual improvement on the business side will produce a moderately paced economic recovery as the year progresses, setting the stage for a healthy expansion and full employment as we move through 2003," he said.

"The relatively swift resolution to the war in Iraq has helped reduce the 'tail' over the global business environment," said Santomero.

AFP, Philadelphia

these said. "Korea, the Philippines and Taiwan would be least affected." Forecast economic growth in the region, excluding Japan, has been trimmed to 5.3 percent this year from 5.7 percent. ING

The brokerage slashed its GDP growth forecast for

Hong Kong reports five more Sars virus deaths

Hong Kong: Hong Kong reported a sharp jump in deaths from the Sars virus on Sunday as Asia's fourth largest airline — Cathay Pacific — said it could soon ground its fleet if passenger numbers fell further.

In a further sign Severe Acute Respiratory Syndrome (Sars) was far from being contained in Hong Kong, the government said five more people had died and 42 more had been infected with the flu-like virus.

It was the largest jump in the death toll in weeks and raises the number killed from the virus to 40 since the epidemic began in the city in March. At least 1,150 have been infected.

The virus has been spread by air travellers to nearly 20 countries, killing 126 people and infecting nearly 3,200. Canada reported three more deaths. Singapore reported one death from the disease, with two more suspected.

The illness has crippled tourism in Asia and forced airlines to cut flights sharply. Economists say the longer the crisis lasts the deeper it will eat into the region's economies and it could push some, including Hong Kong, back into recession.

Hong Kong's Cathay Pacific Airways said in an internal memo the company was losing US\$3 million a day.

The airline is carrying only a third of its usual traffic volume and a senior official said on Sunday the company could not rule out grounding its fleet next month if things got worse.

"If demand falls still further we will have to respond accord-

● Crisis could affect economies of the region

● Toll in Canada rises to 13, thousands quarantined

● Schools to reopen in Singapore on Monday

ingly," said Tony Tyler, director of corporate development.

"Clearly we can't rule out any particular course of action, but we will respond to circumstances." Hong Kong's airport authority said 195 flights, or 37 percent of those scheduled, were cancelled on Sunday. Passenger numbers at the airport have fallen more than 60 percent in recent days.

Canada, which has the third-largest number of SARS cases, said three more people had died, bringing the death toll to 13, while there were more than 270 probable or suspected cases of infection. Thousands of people have been quarantined.

Singapore's death toll rose to 10 and four new cases of the disease were reported but the government said primary and secondary schools would reopen on April 14 and 16, respectively after having been closed since late last month.

Scientists say they have identified a virus, part of a family of viruses that can cause the common cold, but say it is new to science and there is no known cure. Diagnostic tests are still being perfected. Fears of the virus have prompted affected countries to take dramatic control measures, from home quar-

antine for thousands of suspected cases, to banning tourists from China.

Malaysia banned Chinese tourists last week and in response Beijing has advised travel agencies not to organise tours to SARS-infected areas such as Singapore, Thailand and Malaysia, local media said. It has not asked operators to halt trips to Hong Kong, however.

The World Health Organisation issued an advisory this month against travel to southern China and Hong Kong. The measure has further cut the number of people travelling to Hong Kong, one of Asia's main financial centres and top tourist destinations. Hard-hit Cathay is carrying roughly 10,000 passengers every day, down from 30,000 in ordinary circumstances.

"We forecast that the number of passengers could fall to less than 6,000 per day in May, in which case we will have to consider grounding the entire passenger fleet," Nick Rhodes, Cathay's director of flight operations, said in an internal memo seen by Reuters on Saturday.

China says 59 people have died of Sars and more than 1,300 are infected. The illness has spread to a number of areas in China, most recently impoverished Inner Mongolia.

WHO officials have said the epidemic was being contained elsewhere in the world but they were worried about China and the ability of some infected areas to recognise and control Sars. Reuters

14 APR 2003

THE TIMES OF INDIA

N. Korea shifts stand to resolve nuclear stand-off

Seoul: North Korea shifted significantly toward US calls for multilateral talks on its suspected nuclear arms plans and Washington voiced interest, saying it would follow up through diplomatic channels.

The North Korean comments on Saturday could mark a breakthrough in the nuclear standoff just days after US-led forces removed Iraqi President Saddam Hussein from power in a war the South Korean president said had "petrified" the North.

"If the US is ready to make a bold switchover in its Korea policy for a settlement of the nuclear issue, the DPRK will not stick to any particular dialogue format," the North's KCNA news agency quoted a Foreign Ministry spokesman as saying.

Until now, North Korea has insisted on bilateral talks.

Washington, which lumps communist North Korea in an "axis of evil" with Iraq and Iran for seeking weapons of mass destruction, wants talks that also include regional play-

● We note N. Korea's statement with interest, reacts US

● Iraq war 'petrified' North, says South Korea

● S. Korea hopeful of resolving crisis in a peaceful manner

ers South Korea, Japan, Russia and China.

"We noted the statement with interest," US state department spokesman Philip Reeker said on Saturday, adding: "We expect to follow up through appropriate diplomatic channels."

The United States and North Korea do not have formal diplomatic relations, but exchange messages through diplomatic channels in New York. The United States can also work through intermediaries such as Russia and China.

The North's spokesman did not specify what would constitute a "bold switchover" but the impoverished, energy-starved North has demanded security guarantees and aid in

the past.

South Korean President Roh Moo Hyun reiterated on Sunday that he would make every effort to solve North Korea's nuclear crisis in a peaceful manner.

"I am confident we can resolve the nuclear issue peacefully through dialogue and diplomatic channels," he told an anniversary ceremony for establishing Korea's interim government in China during Japanese colonial rule in the early 1900s.

Kim Jung Roh, deputy spokesman at the South Korean unification ministry, said by telephone that Seoul had expected North Korea to shift its position gradually. "Also, as the Iraq war is coming to an end faster than expected, North Korea has less options to take," he said.

Mr Roh told 'The Washington Post' in an interview published on Friday the US-led Iraq war had had a profound impact on North Korean leader Kim Jong Il and other North Korean officials. Reuters

SARS gives a jolt to Asian economies

China Daily/ANN and AFP

BEIJING/HONG KONG, April 13. — The worldwide death toll from SARS virus climbed to 131 today as the fallout from the epidemic caused growing disruption to key east Asian economies. As new deaths from Severe Acute Respiratory Syndrome over the weekend were reported in Canada, Hong Kong, China and Vietnam, scientists said they had made progress towards developing a diagnostic test — and perhaps ultimately a cure — for the illness.

Hong Kong reported five more SARS deaths today, bringing the total number of dead in the territory to 41. The figure included an American who was pronounced dead on arrival at a Hong Kong hospital on Wednesday after being transferred from mainland China. But China, to where Sri Lankan Prime Minister Mr Ranil Wickremesinghe has postponed a visit due from 23 April due to the outbreak of SARS, remains the hardest hit, reporting two new fatalities yesterday for a total of 60 dead. Canada, which reported three new deaths over the weekend, now has a total of 13 fatalities. Singapore has reported nine deaths, with five in Vietnam, two in Thailand and one in Malaysia. More than 3,200 SARS cases have been reported world-wide.

Hong Kong, where 42 new cases were reported today, and China, have recorded the highest numbers of sick. Both governments have been accused of responding too slowly to the crisis, with critics saying they failed to react for fear of sparking widespread panic. Possible new cases were identified over the weekend in several other countries, including Canada, Malaysia, Singapore and New Zealand, which reported its first suspected SARS case.

Scientists are racing against time to identify the virus and find a cure. A team from the Genome Sciences Centre in Vancouver said yesterday they had cracked the genetic code of the virus. They said the breakthrough was the first step towards developing a test to diagnose the illness.

Hong Kong's flag carrier Cathay Pacific said 42 per cent of its schedule had been cut as the SARS scare kept people from flying. The city's air authority said today 30 per cent of flights in and out of Hong Kong had been cancelled as passenger numbers plummeted 60 per cent in April.

Chinese Premier Mr Wen Jiabao yesterday expressed gratitude to medical workers involved in treating SARS patients and the Chinese health ministry urged medical workers across the Taiwan Straits to join hands to fight the spread of SARS.

14 APR 2003

THE STATESMAN

South Korea launches radar-evading warship

Seoul: South Korea launched a stealth warship capable of electronic spying on North Korea on Friday while the communist state's leader reportedly visited an air force base and told pilots he was satisfied with their readiness to "beat back the enemy."

The displays of military capabilities underscored tensions on the Korean peninsula stemming from the North's alleged development of nuclear weapons and efforts by the South's key ally, the United States, to get Pyongyang to scrap the programme.

South Korean President Roh Moo-Hyun attended the launch of the radar-evading warship, officials said. The vessel is named *Moonmu the Great*, after an ancient king who unified the Korean peninsula more than two millenniums ago.

The 150-metre-long ship is equipped for electronic monitoring as well as anti-ship and anti-submarine warfare, navy officials said. It is South Korea's most advanced warship with a top speed of 29 knots. It carries 300 personnel. The officials claimed South Korea already has an unspecified number of stealth warships.

Moonmu the Great symbolises South Korea's defence technology and its will

● The 150-metre-long ship is equipped for electronic monitoring

● South Korea has an unspecified number of stealth warships

● China backs the denuclearisation of the Korean peninsula

for independent defence," Mr Roh said at the launch in the southern port city of Ulsan.

North Korea's KCNA news agency reported that the state's leader Kim Jong Il inspected flying unit 887 on Thursday to brief pilots. It did not say where the air base was located. The visit came a day after North Korea warned that the Iraq war proved the need for it to have strong military deterrent against the United States. China, meanwhile, has backed the denuclearisation of the Korean peninsula and firmly insisted on maintaining peace and stability in the region and resolving the issue peacefully through dialogue, foreign minister Li Zhaoxing said.

The Chinese stand on the North Korean nuclear issue was stated by Mr Li in Beijing on Thursday during a

meeting with his South Korean counterpart Yoon Young-Kwan, a media report said.

Mr Li stressed the security of North Korea, China's closest ally, should be ensured, urging all concerned not to make any move that could escalate tension in the region, *China Daily* reported on Friday.

Mr Yoon arrived in Beijing for a three-day visit to China. His visit came after the UN security council met to discuss the North Korea-United States nuclear standoff on Wednesday.

Meanwhile, the Russian government has ordered officials to work out "preventive measures" to defend national interests and the population in the country's far east should the crisis on the Korean peninsula spin out of control, a top diplomat said in Moscow on Friday.

"As a result of the positions of the US and North Korea, which do not permit the start of negotiations, unfortunately the situation on the Korean peninsula continues to sharpen and is approaching a point beyond which could be an uncontrollable reaction," deputy foreign minister Alexander Losyakov was quoted as telling the Interfax news agency.

Ministerial-level Korea talks put off

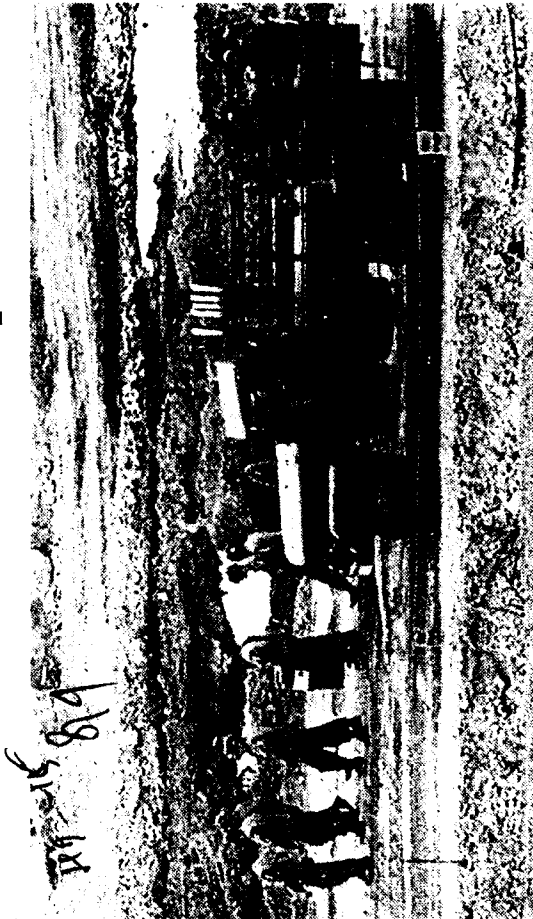
By P. S. Suryanarayana

SINGAPORE, APRIL 7. A ministerial-level meeting, scheduled to begin in Pyongyang today as part of the dialogue between the two Koreas, has been put off indefinitely.

Even as South Korea pointed the accusing finger at the Democratic People's Republic of Korea (DPRK or the North) for this turn of events, Pyongyang sought to redefine the current crisis as one that the United Nations Security Council would have no jurisdiction to address. The freeze in the inter-Korean dialogue process, which had picked up unusual momentum in recent months, follows the North's refusal to talk to the South in the context of a perception that Seoul is intensifying its strategic military ties with the United States. However, even as Seoul and Pyongyang tend to regard the other as the villain of this latest piece of diplomatic tussle, the DPRK has gone on a political offensive against the U.S. and the U.N., ahead of an anticipated debate by the Security Council on the North Korean nuclear armament issue.

A spokesman for the North Korean Foreign Ministry declared that "the DPRK will not recognise any resolution to be adopted at the United Nations Security Council meeting to be called by the U.S., which launched the (current) war (in Iraq, by) defying the U.N." Pyongyang's reference to a prospective resolution is related to the issue of North Korea's suspected nuclear armament programme in the specific context of the recent decision by the International Atomic Energy Agency to ask the U.N. Security Council to address this question.

Presuming that any debate in the Security



South Korean army engineers work to open cross-border railways and roads in the inter-Korean buffer in Paju on Monday. — AFP

ty Council would lead to an international inspection of the North Korean nuclear programme or even a war on the DPRK, the Kim Jong-il regime posed the issue in the following manner. "The United States (has) forced the U.N. Security Council to call a meeting on April 9 to discuss the DPRK's withdrawal from the NPT (Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty). As pointed out by the January 10 statement of the DPRK Government, its withdrawal from the NPT has already taken effect. (However), the U.S. and some countries insist on a 'legal argument' that the DPRK's withdrawal takes effect after April 10 (this week) ... (So) the UNSC's (proposed) handling of the nuclear issue on

the (Korean) peninsula is precisely a prelude to war."

Accusing the U.S. of having already trifled with the Security Council over the current Iraq crisis, the DPRK Government said, "The Iraqi war shows that, to allow (any) disarming through (international) inspection does not help avert a war but rather sparks it.

Neither international public opinion nor the U.N. Charter could prevent the U.S. from mounting an attack on Iraq (at this time). This suggests that even the signing of a non-aggression treaty with the U.S. (as proposed by North Korea) would not help avert a war" on the Korean peninsula.

8 APR 2003

00

Security Council will discuss North Korean nuclear crisis

United Nations: Almost three months after North Korea announced its decision to withdraw from the nuclear non-proliferation treaty, the United Nations Security Council (UNSC) will hold for the first time discussions on Pyongyang's nuclear crisis next week.

Though North Korea is demanding bilateral talks with the United States to resolve the issue, Washington wants the council, a multilateral forum, to deal with it.

The council could impose economic sanctions but North Korea has warned that it would treat any embargo as an "act of war."

North Korea had announced on January 12 its decision to withdraw from the treaty and barred the UN nuclear watchdog agency, International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA), from inspecting its facilities.

Six weeks ago, the IAEA's board of governors had referred the matter to the council. China, a veto wielding member had supported North Korea's demand for bilateral talks with the United States but current president of the council ambassador Adolfo Aguilar Zinser of Mexico said all members are on board, indicating that China had lifted its objection during the closed-door consultations on Wednesday at which the decision to discuss the issue on next Wednesday was taken. China's UN ambassador Wang Yingfan said they had agreed for consultations on the issue on April 9 but did not say whether his government would support a statement condemning North Korea.

4 APR 2003

THE TIMES OF INDIA

S. Korean House defers vote on troop deployment

By P. S. Suryanarayana

SINGAPORE, MARCH 28. Separate rallies were held in Seoul today, one opposing and the other supporting the South Korean Government's move to send "non-combat troops", consisting of construction engineers and medical personnel, to Iraq to help the U.S.-led 'coalition' forces there at this juncture. Given the increasing polarisation of political opinion on this sensitive war-related issue, the South Korean National Assembly today decided to defer, for the second time in recent days, a vote on this subject.

With a rising tide noticed in respect of the popular opposition to the despatch of even "non-combat troops" for services under the U.S. military establishment, the South Korean Parliament today met as a "committee of the whole" to consider the issues intensively in an atmosphere of free discussion without the compulsions of party politics. This process will be carried forward tomorrow, and the current indication is that a vote in the full session of Parliament might take place on Monday at the earliest.

It was against this back-



Pro-war demonstrators shout slogans in Seoul on Friday. — AFP

ground that the South Korean President, Roh Moo-hyun, today urged the parliamentarians to opt for a decisive majority vote after these free-for-all discussions.

He also cautioned against the move, in some quarters, to launch a campaign of unseating those parliamentarians who might now vote in favour of sending South Korean "non-

combat troops" to Iraq at this time.

On a separate front, the South Korean National Assembly today began preparations for making a recommendation to the Government about the best or "optimal solution" to the issue of North Korea's attempts to make and deploy nuclear bombs and other weapons of mass destruction.

THE HINDU

29 MAR 2003

49-73

North Korea raises new rumpus

Asia

By P. S. Suryanarayana

SINGAPORE, MARCH 26. Virtually specialising in diplomatic brinkmanship, North Korea today threatened to unravel the Armistice Agreement which had brought the Korean War to a close nearly 50 years ago. Continuing to challenge the United States over its alleged plans to launch a pre-emptive strike against North Korea, the Kim Jong-il regime today notified the United Nations Command (UNC) at the truce village of Panmunjom that Pyongyang would not send its representatives to an armistice-related meeting of a routine kind.

In a message to the UNC Deputy Chief of Staff, James Sotigan, North Korea's interlocutor, Ri Chan-bok, said: "We are not sending our representatives

to the regular meeting of liaison officers at Panmunjeon, because it is meaningless for us to discuss with them when the U.S. forces continue to be arrogant".

The threat to pull out of a truce-sustaining forum was punctuated by North Korea's parallel hints about its political compulsions to take a "new important measure" concerning the Armistice Agreement itself.

According to an authentic version of Pyongyang's latest ultimatum to the UNC, North Korea said that it would be "pointless to keep the truce" if the U.S. military continues to starkly violate the Armistice Agreement and brings the political situation on the Korean Peninsula closer to war".

Cited in connection with the perceived futility of the truce

process were the "repeated aerial espionage" by the U.S. against the interests of North Korea and Washington's (alleged) step-by-step preparations for a pre-emptive strike against the Democratic People's Republic of Korea (or the North).

Holding these alleged actions by the U.S. to be in violation of the Armistice Agreement, Pyongyang said that it might disassociate itself from the accord if Washington were to impose sanctions on the DPRK or take incremental steps towards a war with the North.

The DPRK's latest decision to risk a further deterioration in the strategic environment over the Korean Peninsula is directly linked to Pyongyang's paranoia that the U.S. would indeed attack the North. According to

regional diplomatic observers, the North fears that it might come under attack, perhaps after the current Iraq crisis is over, despite Washington's assurances of peaceful intentions and its frequent affirmations of faith in a multilateral dialogue that would involve Japan as also South Korea besides China and Russia in addition to the U.S. and the DPRK.

On Iraq, China reaffirmed today its call for an early end to the U.S.-led military strike — a renewed indication by Beijing that it had shifted its position from that of an insistence on an immediate halt to the war. Meanwhile, the Iraqi embassy in Beijing today put out a statement designed to set the record straight regarding the U.S. claims about the progress of the current war.

N Korea: US, South eye diplomacy

PAUL ECKERT & PATRICIA
WILSON
SEOUL/WASHINGTON,
MARCH 14

THE United States and South Korea vowed to seek a diplomatic solution to the North Korean nuclear crisis as US Stealth fighters and an aircraft carrier assembled in the South for annual exercises.

In a call to South Korean President Roh Moo-Hyun, US President George W. Bush repeated his call for multilateral talks to end the standoff over the North's suspected nuclear weapons programme.

North Korea wants direct talks with the United States. At the United Nations, China seems to be backing its Communist neighbour's stance while diplomats say Russia, also influential in Pyongyang, is sitting on the fence.

The US Air Force was

preparing to resume spy flights off the coast of North Korea, one of which was intercepted by North Korean MiGs. A Japanese report said the North may soon test-fire a missile that could reach Japan.

American military muscle has gone on full display in the South this week with the deployment of six F-117A Stealth warplanes.

The aircraft carrier *USS Carl Vinson* is due to take part in the annual US-South Korean war games, too. Several dozen anti-war protesters greeted the *Carl Vinson* as it docked in Pusan on Friday.

The US has played down escalatory North Korean moves, including two missile tests and steady steps towards restarting its suspected nuclear weapons programme.

The programme was frozen under a US-North Korean deal in 1994. —Reuters

15 MAR 2003

INDIAN EXPRESS

N Korea launches anti-ship missile

Associated Press & Yonhri Shimbun/ANN

SEOUL, Feb. 25. — North Korea launched an anti-ship missile into the sea between the Korean Peninsula and Japan, a South Korean defence ministry official said today.

The Seoul government was investigating whether yesterday's launch was a test of a new missile or whether it was the firing of an old missile as part of the North Korean military's ongoing winter training, said the official, who asked to be identified only as Major Chun.

Both the USA and Japan have urged North Korea not to conduct missile testing amid the international standoff over the communist state's nuclear activities, saying it would raise tensions in the region.

The missile launch came on the eve of the inauguration of South Korea's new President, Mr Roh Moo-hyun.

China urges restraint: After North Korea test-launched a missile, its last major ally, China, called for all parties to show restraint today in the dispute over Pyongyang's nuclear programme, a report adds from Beijing. Foreign ministry spokesman Mr Kong Quan said he had only heard reports of the North Korean missile test, but that China hoped all "relevant parties can exercise restraint and calm".

No violation of bilateral declaration: The Japanese government reacted calmly to North Korea's firing of an anti-ship missile because it finds the weapon less menacing than long-range missiles whose launch was banned under the Japan-North Korea Pyongyang Declaration. The government apparently considered the launch of the short-range missile another example of North Korean brinkmanship.

15 MAR 2003

THE STATESMAN

N Korea tests another missile

PAUL ECKERT
SEOUL, MARCH 10

NORTH Korea fired a cruise missile into the Sea of Japan on Monday, ratcheting up tensions as it tries to force the United States into nuclear negotiations at a time when Washington's eyes are firmly on Iraq.

The US, which wants to keep the stand-off with Pyongyang from hindering its build-up for possible war with Saddam Hussein, had anticipated the launch, the second in as many weeks, and played down its significance.

So had South Korea, after Pyongyang declared a maritime exclusion zone in the Sea of Japan from March 8 to 11.

The firing nonetheless caused Seoul's stock markets to dip, adding to fears voiced by a Seoul private-sector think-tank that a prolonged nuclear crisis and any protracted conflict in Iraq would

slash 2003 growth prospects for Asia's fourth-largest economy. "The missile was fired around noon today into the Sea of Japan, and we judged it was the same type as was tested on February 24," a South Korean Defence Ministry spokesman said by telephone.

"We are still trying to find out exactly what type of missile it was," he added. Yonhap news agency quoted a senior official as saying the missile flew about 110 km.

The anti-ship missile N Korea fired into the same waters two weeks earlier was thought to be a version of a Chinese Silkworm missile. Last week, a Pentagon official said Washington was "not overly concerned" about the expected repeat launch.

Japanese Foreign Ministry spokesman Hatsumasa Takashima said: "We understand this was not a ballistic missile and therefore is not considered a direct threat to Japan."



South Koreans read newspapers discussing North Korea's missile test in Seoul on Monday. Reuters

But he added: "We do not think that this is very favourable in light of the rather unstable situation created by North Korea's nuclear development."

Secretary of State Colin Powell said on Sunday the US would eventually talk with N

Korea about the country's nuclear ambitions, but reiterated the US view that others in Asia should help bring about an end to the standoff.

"I think eventually we will be talking to N Korea, but we're not going to simply fall into what I believe is a bad

practice of saying the only way you can talk to us is directly when it affects other nations in the region," Powell said.

Powell told the CNN Late Edition television show a 1994 deal for N Korea to halt its nuclear programme had been the product of direct talks with the North that Pyongyang later set aside in pursuit of other ways to develop nuclear weapons.

US National security adviser Condoleezza Rice told ABC's *This Week* on Sunday: "We have to bring the weight of the international community in a multilateral fashion to deal with the N Korea threat."

China and Russia have resisted US entreaties to pressure North Korea into multilateral talks, but have not ruled them out. Pyongyang insists on bilateral talks with the US and has been underscoring that demand with moves that seem to parallel the US timetable for war with Iraq.

—Reuters

'South Korea approves of U.S. approach to North'

By P. S. Suryanarayana

SINGAPORE, MARCH 7. The United States today indicated that it would consult South Korea on ways to deal with the suspected nuclear-weapons programme of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea (DPRK or the North).

Washington also spoke of its renewed intention to "reduce (the U.S.) base footprint in Korea" in a military sense, even as Seoul urged Pyongyang to act in a 'prudent' and 'responsible' fashion.

The DPRK, on its part, accused America of preparing to launch a "pre-emptive strike" against North Korea's "peaceful nuclear facilities".

These diplomatic cross-currents of utmost importance to the Korean peninsula came into a sharp focus on a day that the international community was seized of America's real intentions, as a "hyper-power", against Iraq as regards its image, as portrayed by the U.S. itself, as 'proliferator' with (alleged) terrorist connections.

The diplomatic gossip in the Asia Pacific circles is that the looming presence of North Korea on the U.S. military establishment's radar screen will be magnified many times over as soon as Washington deals with Iraq.

It is in this context that today's diplomatic goings-on across the Korean peninsula acquired unusual importance.

The U.S. Ambassador to South Korea, Thomas C. Hubbard, said today that Washington and the new Roh Moo-hyun administration in

Seoul "are in basic agreement on the challenges posed by the DPRK".

Noting that the two 'agree' that they "should seek to resolve the current situation by peaceful diplomatic means", he said that South Korea "has expressed support" for Washington's 'approach' of wanting to "engage in a multilateral dialogue" to de-nuclearise the Korean peninsula by addressing the North's "pursuit of nuclear weapons".

It is in this sub-text that the U.S. has now hinted that it would try to crack the DPRK's nuclear puzzle with the support of South Korea. Seeking to douse the speculation that Washington was now contemplating a drastic reduction or dramatic re-deployment of the American military forces in South Korea in the specific new context of the DPRK's strident defence of its nuclear sovereignty, Mr. Hubbard affirmed in Seoul today that "our (American) military presence in Korea will continue" and that any reduction in this regard was a matter that had been in the air for more than a decade now.

On the overall state of the U.S.-South Korea bilateral ties, Mr. Hubbard maintained that the "relationship already is mature, fair, and respectful".

Yet, the U.S. would strive to address any 'perception' that might be there in South Korea that "our (bilateral) relationship needs to be re-balanced".

On other separate but related fronts, the South Korean Defence Ministry today cautioned the DPRK against any mind-set that might have been behind

Pyongyang's recent attempts to intercept American spy planes over international waters.

Seoul wanted Pyongyang to exercise 'prudence' so that no flare-up of the military kind might take place.

The DPRK, however, sustained its diplomatic barrage against the U.S. by accusing it of preparing plans to "invade" North Korea.

Interpreting some of the latest remarks by the U.S. President, George W. Bush, Pyongyang said that he was contemplating a presumptive pre-emptive strike on North Korea's nuclear facilities.

8 MAR 2003

THE HINDU

Washington erupts in anger as jets hustle spy plane

North Korea tension flares

PAULECKERT AND
CHARLESALDINGER

Seoul/Washington, March 4 (Reuters): An angry Washington hit out at North Korea for intercepting a US spy plane at the weekend, a close call over the Sea of Japan that underscores the danger that a nuclear crisis could spiral out of control.

The risks were made clear today when sources in Japan with close ties to North Korea

said it was "only a matter of time" before the Communist state restarted a nuclear fuel reprocessing plant that could produce weapons-grade plutonium.

Senior US officials said Washington would formally protest about the jet fighter incident, once it found a way to do so. North Korea and the US have no diplomatic relations.

Four North Korean fighters intercepted a US air force RC-135 reconnaissance plane in international airspace over the Sea of Japan on Sunday and came within 50 feet of the big US jet while shadowing it, the Pentagon said yesterday.

The encounter — a whisker away from disaster in the air in one of the world's most militarised regions — followed repeated assertions by North Korea's state media that RC-135s had been flying sorties in its airspace.

The North said this showed the US was preparing for war on the peninsula. Many analysts fault the US for neglecting North

Korea even as that isolated state makes continuous moves to ratchet up tension.

The US has up to now played down eye-catching North Korean incidents such as a missile launch last week just before South Korean President Roh Moo-hyun was inaugurated. The response to the near-miss suggests Washington could be changing tactics in the search for a way out of the nuclear standoff.

Analysts say Pyongyang's goal in the four-month-old impasse is to draw Washington into talks and normalise ties to ensure survival of the impoverished state.

The spy-plane incident came as tension continued to rise on the Korean peninsula over the North's suspected nuclear arms ambitions, and as the US builds up military forces in the Gulf in preparation for a possible invasion of Iraq.

China, an old friend of North Korea, urged calm. "We hope that under the current situation

all sides keep calm and exercise restraint in order to truly safeguard peace and stability on the Korean peninsula," foreign ministry spokesman Kong Quan said.

Sources in Tokyo with close ties to Pyongyang said North Korea was poised to make a more ominous move — firing up a reprocessing plant at Yongbyon, whose main purpose is believed to be producing plutonium for nuclear bomb-making.

"The US has drawn a 'red line,' but the North will not hesitate to move beyond that," one of the sources said. "It's just a matter of time (before the reprocessing unit is reactivated)," he said.

The fresh reminder of North Korean dangers weighed on Seoul's stock market but there was no overt sign of tension in the South. Roh's week-old government held a security meeting and agreed to work to contain the nuclear crisis, including sending Seoul's new foreign minister to Washington as soon as possible.

5 MAR 2003

THE TELEGRAPH

Koreans seek solidarity as North talks nuke war

ASSOCIATED PRESS
SEOUL, MARCH 2

NORTH Korea on Sunday warned of "nuclear disasters" world-wide if attacked by the US, while its civilian officials urged greater cooperation between North and South Korea to stave off conflict on the volatile Korean Peninsula.

The North's official *Rodong Sinmun* newspaper accused the CIA of preparing a surprise attack on the Communist nation's nuclear facilities, which are suspected of being used to make atomic bombs.

"If the US imperialists ignite a war on the Korean Peninsula, the war will turn into a nuclear war," said the newspaper report, carried by the North's state-run KCNA news agency. "As a consequence, the Koreans in the North and South and the people in Asia and the rest of the world will suffer horrifying nuclear disasters."

The North, believed by US officials to already have one or two nuclear bombs, accuses the US of inciting the standoff over its nuclear programmes as a pretext for an invasion. Washington repeatedly said it

has no plans to attack North Korea, but stresses that "all options are on the table."

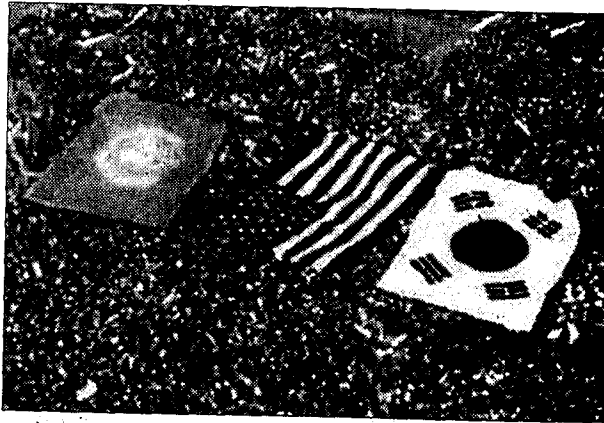
On the eve of South Korean President Roh Moo-Hyun's inauguration last week, North Korea raised tension by test-firing a short-range missile into the sea off its east coast. US and South Korean officials later said the North had also reactivated a 5-megawatt reactor that could produce plutonium for nuclear weapons. North Korea, however, claims the reactor is being used to generate electricity.

A *Rodong Sinmun* report monitored by South Korea's Yonhap news agency said the

North's nuclear programme is "strictly for peaceful purposes and poses no threat to anyone."

In Seoul on Sunday, visiting North Korean religious and civic leaders urged greater cooperation between the two Koreas to prevent war.

"Preventing war through national cooperation is the most urgent task of the nation," said Ri Mun-Hwan, a senior North Korean delegate. "Foreign forces will never give us reunification. We must cooperate with each other," another Northern delegate, Oh Kyung-Woo, was quoted as saying by Yonhap. —WSJ



South Koreans carry a UN flag (L), US flag (C) and South Korean flag during a prayer for peace on the Korean peninsula in Seoul on Sunday. Reuters

3 MAR 2003

DIAN EXPRESS

North Korea dares U.S. on n-issue

By P. S. Suryanarayana

SINGAPORE, FEB. 28. The North Korean nuclear issue flared up in some unusual light today as the new Government in the South not only confirmed Pyongyang's reactivation of its weapons programme at the ground level but also expressed deep regret over this action of the ethnic kin-country.

By openly taking the nuclear weaponisation path at this stage, the Democratic People's Republic of Korea (DPRK or the North) has dared Washington which, while being relentless in profiling Iraq as a "proliferator", has yet to flex America's military muscle against Pyongyang, according to seasoned diplomats in the Asia Pacific region. In Seoul, a South Korean official today confirmed the lat-

est indications from the U.S. that the DPRK has finally re-launched its nuclear weapons programme, which had been formally suspended, with some suspected transgressions of this suspension itself, since the 1994 agreement that Washington "imposed" on Pyongyang.

The South Korean Foreign Affairs and Trade Ministry Spokesman, Seok Tong-youn, said in Seoul that new Roh Administration "expresses deep concern and regret" over this latest development in the DPRK. He said that "North Korea's reactivation of its 5-mega-watt reactor is not only unhelpful to maintaining peace and stability on the Korean peninsula but (this also) goes against the nuclear non-proliferation efforts of the international community".

There was no immediate confirmation whether the DPRK had commenced operations at a reprocessing facility, too, for being able to put the existing plutonium stocks to use for making nuclear weapons. The 5-mw reactor will yield additional plutonium as a by-product. It is against this background that the "double standards" in America's "non-proliferation agenda" came to be noticed in the Asia Pacific diplomatic circles. Although the White House spokesman said in a new update that the U.S. would not reward the DPRK for "bad behaviour" and 'blackmail', regional diplomats noted that Washington was at this stage content to deal with North Korea with kid-gloves while flexing an "iron fist" at Iraq, despite its efforts to meet the demands of the U.N. weapons-inspectors

under the Security Council's Resolution 1441. It was in this overall context that China offered to 'mediate' between the DPRK and the U.S. over Pyongyang's nuclear posture and to 'cool' the tempers on both sides so that the two could yet enter into a "direct dialogue" on this sensitive issue. In the same context, a 'consensus' among all "relevant parties" could be sought, a Chinese official said in Beijing. China would indeed favour any plan for a peaceful resolution of the DPRK's nuclear question through either a U.S.-DPRK dialogue (Beijing's primary preference) or multilateral discussions among the parties concerned, it was said. Separately, the Russian Foreign Minister, Igor Ivanov, said the Moscow still remained opposed to the idea of any new U.N. Security Council resolution.

North Korea reactivates research N-reactor

By Harvey Stockwin
TIMES NEWS NETWORK

Hong Kong: North Korea has further escalated its brinkmanship with the United States by reactivating a research reactor which had been inoperative since 1994, thereby increasing its potential to make nuclear weaponry.

The provocative move comes less than 24 hours after secretary of state Colin Powell had told reporters, as he flew back from his East Asian tour, that North Korea had neither reactivated the reactor nor started reprocessing the 8,000 spent fuel rods in its possession. "That's a wise choice if it is a conscious choice," Mr Powell said.

But Mr Powell spoke too soon. In Washington DC a day later, administration officials revealed that North Korea had made the conscious choice to reactivate its five megawatt experimental nuclear reactor at Yongbyon for the first time since the reactor's operation was frozen under a 1994 agreement with the Clinton administration. The small reactor is the only one which the North currently possesses. Work on two larger reactors was also halted in 1994.

"I think this is another example of the North Korean regime taking escalatory actions in order to gain concessions," US National Security Council spokesman Sean McCormack said. "With each step it takes to advance its nuclear capability, North Korea fur-

ther isolates itself from the international community," he said.

As they sought to confirm this development for themselves, critical comments were quickly forthcoming from South Korea and Japan. The North Korean move is the least provocative escalation currently open to it. The small reactor will only produce a small amount of spent fuel, capable of being reprocessed into weapon's grade plutonium. It would take at least a year for the reactor to produce enough spent fuel for reprocessing into the plutonium used in making a nuclear bomb.

While the North Koreans are once again justifying this move as being necessary for producing electricity, there is no validity in this claim. The 5-megawatt reactor is designed for research purposes, not electricity production. It is far too small to have any impact on North Korea's congenital power shortages. A much more provocative move would be for North Korea to restart the radiochemistry laboratory, also at Yongbyon, which can reprocess those 8,000 spent fuel rods (previously under the care of IAEA inspectors whom the North has now expelled) into weapons-grade plutonium.

It is estimated that it would only take a month or two for the North Koreans to produce enough plutonium for five or six bombs. US satellites are carefully monitoring Yongbyon for any tell-tale signs that North Korea has decided to take this fateful step.

N. Korea restarts nuke reactor

PAUL ECKERT AND
TABASSUM ZAKARIA

Seoul/Washington, Feb. 27 (Reuters): North Korea has restarted the reactor at the heart of its suspected drive for nuclear weapons, raising the stakes in its diplomatic showdown with the US.

The activation of the small research reactor at Yongbyon, the communist North's latest step in a crisis that erupted last year, comes as the US prepares for war with Iraq and South Korea forms a new government.

"I think this is another example of the regime of North Korea taking escalatory actions in order to gain concessions," said Sean McCormack, the White House National Security Council spokesman. "We seek a peaceful diplomatic solution, but all options remain on the table."

US officials said there was no sign North Korea had reactivated its nuclear fuel reprocessing plant, which would be of even greater concern because it would take the North a step closer to adding to the two nuclear

UN watchdog opposes move

Vienna, Feb. 27 (Reuters): The International Atomic Energy Agency — the UN nuclear watchdog — said today that it was firmly opposed to North Korea operating its nuclear facilities without the presence of UN safeguards inspectors.

The US had said yesterday that Pyongyang had reactivated a small nuclear research reactor capable of producing plutonium. "If this is true, the IAEA deplores the operation of the DPRK (North Korean) nuclear facilities without the presence of safeguards inspectors," IAEA spokeswoman Melissa Fleming said in a written statement. She added that without the presence of UN inspectors to verify North Korea's compliance with, or breach of, its nuclear safeguards obligations the agency was unable to verify if what the US alleged was true.

bombs it is believed to have. "Part of this demonstrates their desire to continue their nuclear weapons programme and it's another effort to apply pressure on the US," another US official said.

Analysts in Seoul saw the move as yet another North Korean attempt to shake new President Roh Moo-hyun, who has been at odds with Washington over how to deal with the crisis. The North upstaged Roh's inauguration on Tuesday by firing a short-range missile into interna-

tional waters off its east coast.

In Beijing, China and Russia—friends of North Korea and permanent members of the UN Security Council—issued a joint communiqué promising to push for dialogue between the US and North Korea to resolve the nuclear crisis. "China and Russia will try their best to push for dialogue between the Democratic People's Republic of Korea (DPRK) and the US," the communiqué said.

Chinese foreign ministry

spokesman Kong Quan said: "We believe the main thing at the moment is that each side keeps calm and exercises restraint and avoids taking action that will escalate the situation."

Reaction in Seoul to North Korea's latest move was muted, as Roh finalised his cabinet. "We are trying to find out more," said a South Korean source, adding Seoul would hold consultations with allies Japan and the US. "Even in the US it is still at the level of intelligence, very raw intelligence."

In Tokyo, Japanese Prime Minister Junichiro Koizumi urged a calm and cautious response while the news was being analysed. "We have received information that it has been restarted. We don't know yet to what degree," he told reporters.

A US official, speaking on condition of anonymity, said the intelligence was obtained through satellite photographs.

There was no statement on the reactor from North Korea's official Korean Central News Agency, the main outlet for announcements from Pyongyang.

28 FEB 2003

THE TELEGRAPH

Roh assumes office amid N. Korean crisis

SEOUL, FEB. 25. The former human rights lawyer, Roh Moo-hyun, became South Korea's ninth President on Tuesday amid a deepening crisis over North Korea's suspected nuclear ambitions and within hours of Pyongyang firing a missile out to sea.

Mr. Roh was sworn in outside Parliament in Seoul, then received a gun salute, reviewed a march past by troops in traditional costume and was serenaded by opera singers in front of a pond. But the ceremony, shortened out of respect for the dozens who died in a subway fire a week ago, was overshadowed by North Korea's latest attention-grabbing tactic and uncertainty about the shape of future ties with Washington, Seoul's chief ally.

Mr. Roh said the foreign exchange factors that caused the 1997 Asian financial crisis still



The South Korean President, Roh Moo-hyun, and his wife, Kwon Yang-sook, at a party after Mr. Roh's swearing-in as President in Seoul on Tuesday. — AP

existed in South Korea, and called for new economic strategies at a time of growing economic uncertainty and an E.U.-style community in North-east Asia. Mr. Roh's efforts to push ahead with forming a Cab-

inet — including the key Finance and Foreign portfolios — were set back when Parliament failed to agree on how to vote on his choice for Prime Minister, the veteran bureaucrat and former Seoul mayor, Goh Kun.

8:00 AM 40-15
The vote will now be held on Wednesday.

"The suspicion that North Korea is developing nuclear weapons poses a grave threat to world peace, not to mention the Korean Peninsula and North-east Asia," Mr. Roh said in his 30-minute speech. "It is up to Pyongyang whether to go ahead and obtain nuclear weapons or to get guarantees for the security of its regime and international economic support."

Mr. Roh's motorcade later drove to the presidential Blue House, passing the U.S. embassy on an avenue that saw huge anti-U.S. candlelight protests around Mr. Roh's election in December.

Mr. Roh met the U.S. Secretary of State, Colin Powell, and Japan's Prime Minister, Junichiro Koizumi, at the Blue House for talks dominated by North Korea. — Reuters

THE HINDU

26 FEB 2003

N. Korea missile steals Powell show in south

PAULECKERT

Seoul, Feb. 25 (Reuters): North Korea test-fired a missile and accused the US of conducting spy flights, upstaging today's inauguration of a new President in Seoul attended by US secretary of state Colin Powell.

News of the test, the latest twist in a four-month nuclear stand-off, rattled Asian financial markets and Australian foreign minister Alexander Downer said Pyongyang was trying to "create a sense of a crisis".

Powell, however, called it a "fairly innocuous" launch of an old missile for which North Korea had given advance notice.

In his inaugural speech, President Roh Moo-hyun condemned North Korea's suspected nuclear weapons programme as a "grave threat to world peace".

"It is up to Pyongyang whether to go ahead and obtain nuclear weapons or to get guarantees for the security of its regime and international eco-

conomic support," he said. But he highlighted differences with Washington on how to respond to the threat by pledging to work for a more equitable and reciprocal relationship with the US.

The dovish Roh, a 56-year-old former human rights lawyer, has ruled out force against Pyongyang, while the US insists all options must be kept open.

The divergent views risk a half-century alliance forged in the Cold War and nurtured under successive pro-US military presidents in South Korea, which plays host to 37,000 US troops. Powell and Roh sought to paper over the rift. In conciliatory remarks, Powell said he had told Roh that Washington had no plans to use military force to deal with North Korea.

"There are no armies on the march", he told Roh, adding Washington would consult Seoul before taking any action.

"I think he was reassured by my comments," Powell told a news conference at which he

also unveiled US plans to resume food aid to hungry and impoverished North Korea.

Roh was quoted by South Korea's Yonhap news agency as telling reporters: "I frankly don't understand all this talk about a Korea-US dispute". He said "minor differences" could be ironed out through dialogue, and he hoped to take up an invitation to visit US President George W. Bush. Roh has vowed to continue the policy of his predecessor Kim Dae-jung of unconditional engagement with North Korea despite the north's suspected nuclear ambitions. Japanese Prime Minister Junichiro Koizumi also sought to play down the missile test, saying he had not discussed it with Roh.

Powell urged to defuse Korea crisis with talks

Seoul, February 24

SOUTH KOREAN President Kim Dae-jung has left office, urging the US to hold one-on-one talks with North Korea to defuse a crisis over the reclusive Communist state's nuclear intentions.

As US secretary of state Colin Powell sought Chinese backing for a multilateral approach, Australia, an ally of Washington, said it too had concluded reluctantly that direct talks were the only way to end the four-month-old crisis.

North Korea, which insists on bilateral talks with the US and a non-aggression treaty, persuaded a summit of developing nations in Malaysia to water down a statement that sought to criticise its role in the crisis.

"Dialogue between North Korea and the US is the important key to a solution," Kim, 78, said in an address to the nation on his last day in office on Monday.

Powell, who will attend the inauguration on Tuesday of Kim's successor, held talks in Beijing with top Chi-



REUTERS

US Secretary of State Colin Powell (left) and Chinese President Jiang Zemin shake hands in Beijing on Monday.

nese leaders. "I think they are anxious to play as helpful a role as they can," he told a news conference before leaving for South Korea. "I think they prefer to play their role quietly but they have a clear understanding of our desires and our interests."

Powell did not say exactly what China, which in the past has called for direct talks between the United States and the North, might do to influence an ally with whom it has diplomatic and economic influence.

Reuters

25 FEB 2003

THE HINDUSTAN TIMES

N Korea warms up nuke rhetoric

China Daily/ ANN

PYONGYANG, Feb. 19. — North Korea today said USA's rejection of bilateral talks to solve the nuclear crisis was illogical and aimed at thwarting Pyongyang's efforts to improve its economy and communist system. The White House, however, dismissed it as "strident rhetoric".

North Korea wants a non-aggression pact with the USA, while Washington favours multi-lateral talks to press Pyongyang to ensure its suspected nuclear weapons program is shut down.

War warnings and assertions that the USA was poised to attack the North have been daily fare in Pyongyang's media since the crisis flared up nearly five months ago. North Korea yesterday threatened on Tuesday to pull out of the 1953 armistice that ended the Korean War if sanctions were imposed on it.

"The USA is insisting on a day, said Washington was desperate assertion that it cannot adequately trying to hamstring the respond to the Democratic People's Republic of Korea's efforts to improve its communist system.

for talks as they mean a sort of reward for the DPRK despite the unanimous world public opinion that direct talks should take place to find a peaceful solution to the nuclear issue," North Korea's KCNA news agency quoted the foreign ministry as saying. "This is an illogical far-fetched assertion."

●PYONGYANG: The USA is being illogical in not accepting North Korea's talks offer

●WASHINGTON: This is not the first time that North Korea has used strident rhetoric to blackmail other nations into giving economic benefits

DPRK stands for the North's official name, the Democratic People's Republic of Korea.

The statement, published to-

White House spokesman Mr Ari Fleischer called Pyongyang's comments "predictable" but said President George W Bush was still searching for a diplomatic solution to the dispute. "This is not the first time that North Korea has used strident rhetoric as a way to blackmail other nations into providing economic or other benefits to that country."

Mr Bush and other officials have said Washington has no intention of attacking the North.

A US State Department official, who asked not to be named, took a slightly harder line on the latest warning. "The USA will not respond to threats, broken commitments or blackmail by North Korea. Any further escalation by North Korea of the situation on the peninsula will bring international condemnation and further self-isolation."

Pyongyang's *Rodong Sinmun* newspaper said US statements calling for dialogue and saying it had no plans to attack North Korea were "a camouflaged peace tactic to cover up its attempt to ignite a war of aggression".

Arson: toxic gases impede rescue work

SEOUL, FEB. 18. In a horrific act, a man with a history of mental illness today set afire a sub-way train killing more than 130 people, most of them charred beyond recognition, and injuring 140 others in central South Korean city of Daegu.

Rescuers have discovered as many as 100 bodies inside the wreckage of the train, official Yonhap news agency reported. The sub-way was filled with toxic gases impeding rescue efforts. The fire brought the entire sub-way system to a halt and paralysed traffic on ground as frantic fire-fighters and rescue workers rushed to the spot.

At least 140 others injured in the blaze were being treated at eight hospitals in Daegu, about 300 km south east of Seoul, police said, adding more than 70 were still missing.

Rescuers at the accident site were quoted as saying that most of the bodies were burnt beyond recognition and would take time to identify them.

The middle-aged man ignited a carton containing inflammable liquid and threw it on a six-car subway train bound for Ansim from Jincheon this morning, police said. The train immediately caught fire which spread to another six-car sub-way train that

was at the station.

The fire gutted 12 sub-way cars before fire-fighters controlled it more than three hours after the attack.

'Insane person to blame'

Police said they had apprehended the 56-year-old arson suspect, identified as Kim-Dae-Hwan, reported to be a former mental patient, who was being treated for burns to his legs and arms in nearby hospital. Police did not know what motivated the attack.

According to medical authorities many victims died due to smoke inhalation.

The South Korean President, Kim Dae-Jung, has expressed his condolences to the families of the victims of the attack. "I express my condolences and offer solace to the victims of the incident," the message from the President said.

Daegu, South Korea's third largest city, after Seoul and Pusan, has only one sub-way line in operation for last five years. In 1995, a gas explosion in a sub-way construction site in the city killed 101 people and injured at least 140.

Television channels showed thick black smoke billowing out of ventilator shafts and above-ground entrances of the sub-way.

minutes after the attack. Fire-fighters gave horrifying accounts of the scene underground. Many bodies were found on the sub-way stairs, where people apparently choked as they tried to escape. On the platform and in the train were the ashen bones of those trapped in the flames.

The police were interrogating Kim Dae-han, who witnesses said carried the carton into the sub-way car. Another police official, speaking on condition of anonymity, said Kim Dae-han had been treated for mental illness in the past.

"When the man tried to use a cigarette lighter to light the box, some passengers tried to stop him. Apparently a scuffle erupted and the box exploded into flames," the officer said.

The television station YTN aired footage of the frantic scene inside a nearby hospital, showing nurses attending to a man who was reportedly the suspect. The man sat frowning on a bed wearing a hospital smock, his face and hands smudged with soot.

A police sergeant said Kim Dae-han had been burned on both legs and the right wrist. But a doctor told YTN that the man's only injury was toxic gas inhalation. — PTI

THE HINDU

19 FEB 2003

N. Korea threatens to pull out of peace treaty

By P. S. Suryanarayana

SINGAPORE, FEB. 18. North Korea is intensifying its confrontation with the United States following its suspected move to impose sanctions on the Kim Jong-il regime by acting alone or in conjunction with other countries. The latest in a series of diplomatic salvos from North Korea is its threat to dishonour its commitments under the Armistice

its alleged nuclear arsenal from South Korea.

The DPRK's People's Army said in a statement, at the truce village of Panmunjom, that "if the U. S. violates and misuses the Armistice Agreement, there will be no need for us (North Koreans) to remain bound to the Armistice Agreement."

Direct dialogue

Meanwhile, the North Korean Foreign Minister visited Beijing even as the outgoing South Korean President, Kim Dae-jung, reiterated his view that the nuclear crisis in East Asia could be resolved only through a direct dialogue between Washington and Pyongyang, suggesting that the international community could perhaps 'alternate' between the multilateral talks as desired by the U.S. and the bi-

Hubbard underlined that "the deterrence provided by the close and long-standing alliance between Korea and the U.S. provides the foundation for long-term peace and stability on the peninsula."

Referring to the diplomatic and emotional turbulence in the U.S.-South Korean equation, the U.S. envoy noted that "military alliances are rarely easy."

He would, therefore, assure the South Koreans that "our commitment to defend the security of the Republic of Korea remains unshaken."

However, he emphasised, "there is definitely room for change in alliance."

The U.S.-South Korea alliance "not only should be balanced it must be seen as being so".

lateral track as demanded by the DPRK in its dealings with Washington over the North Korean nuclear issue.

"But the important thing is the U.S.-North Korea talks", Mr. Kim noted in an authentic version of his latest remarks. He also identified the U.S. as South Korea's most important ally in these circumstances. It is in this context that the U.S. Ambassador to South Korea, Thomas Hubbard, declared in Seoul today that Washington "emphatically disagrees with North Korea's contention that this (nuclear) issue is strictly a bilateral dispute between North Korea and the U.S."

According to him, "it is certainly not a bilateral dispute and there is a major role for the Republic of Korea (the South)" In a major policy speech, Mr.

N. Korea in new threat

(2)

LEE JAE-WON

1912
6/10/12
Panmunjom (South Korea), Feb. 18 (Reuters): Communist North Korea threatened today to abandon the 1953 Korean War armistice if a naval blockade or other sanctions are imposed because of its suspected nuclear weapons programme.

War warnings and assertions that the US is poised to attack the North have been daily fare in Pyongyang's official media since the nuclear crisis flared up late last year.

North Korea demands a non-aggression pact with the US, while Washington wants multi-

lateral talks to press Pyongyang to verifiably halt its suspected atomic programme.

It was not immediately clear whether today's statement, from the North's Korean People's Army (KPA), was anything more than fresh brinkmanship. North Korea quit most armistice activities in 1994 and has a history of challenging the truce, US officials say.

There was no sign of unusual tension at the Panmunjom truce village which straddles the North-South border. Ten North Korean soldiers escorted a handful of Russian and Chinese tourists on the northern side of

1-3
the frontier line. In Beijing, North Korean foreign minister Paek Nam-sun, on a stopover en route to an international meeting in Malaysia, held talks in Beijing today.

"Both sides said the current Korean peninsula issue should be resolved through peaceful means and dialogue," Chinese foreign ministry spokeswoman Zhang Qiyue said after Paek met vice-minister of foreign affairs Wang Yi.

Diplomats in Beijing said China had been applying pressure quietly, although it remained opposed to sanctions against the unpredictable North, fearing they could provoke Pyongyang further or even push it towards a collapse that would destabilise the region.

South Korean President Kim Dae-jung, who retires next week, said the nuclear crisis had forced him to consider all security threats, but "my conclusion is that I believe the danger of war on the Korean peninsula is slight — in fact, non-existent".

19 FEB 2003

THE TELEGRAPH

Kim admits pay-off to North Korea

Associated Press

SEOUL, Feb. 14. — President Kim Dae-jung's government acknowledged today that it condoned an illegal \$200 million payment to North Korea that the President said was done to promote peace. But the country's Opposition said it was a bribe to buy his crowning achievement: a 2000 summit with the Communist regime.

A grim-faced President faced TV cameras, and apologised to the nation over the \$200 million cash

'Nuke agency US lapdog'

SEOUL, Feb. 14. — North Korea today said the UN nuclear watchdog's decision to refer the dispute over its nuclear programme to the UN Security Council was "interference in internal affairs." The country's official news agency, KCNA, called the Vienna-based International Atomic Energy Agency "America's lapdog," and said North Korea had no legal obligations to the agency. — AFP

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inmittance the business group Hyundai made four days before Mr Kim's 13-15 June 2000 summit in Pyongyang with North Korean Mr leader Kim Jong Il. Mr Kim Dae-jung, a former pro-democracy crusader who survived a death sentence and four alleged assassination attempts during the country's military rule, has pushed engagement with North Korea as his trademark policy, which culminated with the summit. He now faces allegations that he paid off the Pyongyang regime for the meeting. "What I have wanted most was to leave office at the end of my tenure on a happy note," Mr Kim said during the nationally televised speech. "I

am extremely sorry. ... I feel wretched and am in pain." Hyundai claims it paid the money, borrowed from a state-run bank, for the rights to pursue projects such as railways, power generation and tourism in North Korea. Mr Lim Dong-won, Mr Kim's former intelligence chief and current adviser on North Korea, said his agency helped Hyundai send the money. "The government accommodated this because it judged that such projects would be helpful for peace and in the national interest," the President said.

Cross-border tour: South and North Korea launched a landmark cross-border tour overland for the first time in five decades when they allowed hundreds of civilians to travel overland to the North.

THE TELEGRAPH

15 FEB 2003

N Korea prepared for missile test in Jan



REUTERS
TOKYO, FEBRUARY 13

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NORTH Korea prepared for a ground test of the engine of what appeared to be its long-range Taepodong 2 missile in January, but did not carry out a test, a Japanese news agency reported on Thursday. The report came as pressure mounted on Pyongyang over a nuclear crisis that is headed to the UN after months of brinkmanship by the communist state.

Kyodo news agency quoted US Intelligence sources in Washington as saying that movements of people and vehicles at a testing facility on N Korea's northeastern coast had picked up in early January. It was not known whether N Korea went as far as injecting liquid fuel into the engine for a ground test, the sources said.

There was a possibility that N Korea, aware it was being watched by US spy satellites, ordered the flurry of activity to convince Washington of its intention to develop long-range missiles.

The sources did not rule out the chance that

North (R) and South Korean soldiers stand guard at Panmunjom truce village on Thursday. Reuters

some sort of problem had caused a planned test to be halted, Kyodo reported. On Wednesday, US intelligence officials told the US Senate that N Korea was developing missiles capable of hitting the US, although Pyongyang had not tested the missiles. The US warnings followed a resolution by the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) governing board declaring N Korea in breach of atomic safeguards, sending the crisis to the 15-nation Security Council.

The crisis over North Korea's nuclear programme has been simmering since October, when Washington said Pyongyang admitted to pursuing a programme to enrich uranium. This violated a 1994 Accord under which Pyongyang froze its nuclear programme in exchange for two nuclear power reactors and economic assistance.

Since then, N Korea has expelled IAEA inspectors, withdrawn from a nuclear non-proliferation treaty, restarted a nuclear complex capable of producing weapons-grade plutonium and threatened to resume missile tests. North Korea last carried out such a test in 1998, shocking the world by firing a missile that flew over Japan's main island of Honshu. It later said it would not carry out further testing but late last year said the moratorium was no longer in effect.

N. Korea indicted, case goes to UN council

MARCUS KABELAND LOUIS
CHARBONNEAU

Vienna, Feb. 12 (Reuters): The governing board of the UN's nuclear watchdog agency declared North Korea in breach of atomic safeguards today, sending the crisis to the UN Security Council.

The 15-nation Security Council has the power to impose economic sanctions, which Stalinist North Korea has said would amount to a declaration of war. But UN officials have said the Council would try to find a diplomatic solution.

Russia and Cuba abstained in the vote by the International Atomic Energy Agency's (IAEA) 35-nation governing board, a diplomat said. Russia has said it was opposed to escalating the affair and preferred quiet diplomacy outside the UN.

The crisis over North Korea's nuclear ambitions erupted in October when Washington said Pyongyang admitted to pursuing a programme to enrich urani-



International Atomic Energy Agency chief Mohamed ElBaradei in Vienna. (AFP)

um. This violated a 1994 accord, under which Pyongyang froze its nuclear programme in exchange for two atomic power reactors and economic assistance.

Since December, Pyongyang has expelled IAEA inspectors, withdrawn from the nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT), restarted a mothballed nuclear complex capable of producing weapons-grade plutonium and threatened to resume missile

tests. "In my view...the DPRK's actions constitute further non-compliance with the NPT safeguards agreement," IAEA chief Mohamed ElBaradei told the agency's board in his opening statement.

The term "non-compliance" is a diplomatic codeword which automatically brings the issue to the Security Council.

The IAEA board had until now avoided doing that partly in deference to the US, which has tried to play down the issue as it gears up for a possible war on Iraq. There were 31 votes for the resolution, no votes against and two members absent, IAEA spokeswoman Melissa Fleming said.

The resolution said the IAEA "calls upon the DPRK (North Korea) to remedy urgently its non-compliance with its safeguards agreement by taking all steps deemed necessary by the agency." The resolution also said the board would report North Korea's breach "to the Security Council and General Assembly".

Solana holds talks in Seoul over n-crisis

By P.S. Suryanarayana

SINGAPORE, FEB. 11. Diplomatic efforts to resolve the North Korean nuclear arms issue gained momentum in East Asia today. The European Union's foreign affairs policy chieftain, Javier Solana, held talks with the leaders of South Korea, which boasts a unique 'relationship' with the Democratic People's Republic of Korea (DPRK or the North).

China once again urged DPRK and the U.S. to hold direct talks on Pyongyang's nuclear profile as soon as possible, while the American Ambassador to Japan, Howard Baker, underlined there was still some diplomatic space left to try and deflect North Korea from its nuclear-weaponisation path.

Taken together, the parties directly concerned with the North Korean question left the door open for a diplomatic solution to the threatening nuclear crisis, but there was no tangible forward movement at this moment.

Mr. Solana, who held talks with the Japanese leaders in Tokyo over the week-end, today met the South Korean President, Kim Dae-jung, and the Foreign Affairs and Trade Minister, Choi Sung-hong. While the E.U. official was mindful of the need for a pro-active role by the organisation, the South Korean Foreign Minister is understood to have called for a visit to Pyongyang by a European Union delegation with a mandate to persuade the Kim Jong-il regime to take a U-turn and retrace its steps across the nuclear Rubicon.

Even as the E.U. might mull over a direct dialogue with the North Korean leaders in Pyongyang itself, China and the U.S., two players with arguably greater influence in determining the mood and methods of Pyongyang, stepped in with their up-

dated comments. The Chinese Foreign Ministry spokeswoman, Zhang Qiyue, said in Beijing today that "from an historical and practical perspective, the 1994 DPRK-U.S. Framework Accord remains the important basis for de-nuclearisation (on the Korean peninsula) and it should continue to be safeguarded".

The substance of a solution should, in China's view, "guarantee the de-nuclearisation of the Korean peninsula while heeding the security concerns of the DPRK", even while reiterating China's support for a U.S.-DPRK dialogue, an old theme in Beijing's foreign policy, Ms. Zhang maintained that her country would "contribute (its) share to a peaceful solution" and that the issue could eventually be resolved peacefully if "all relevant parties" were to make "constructive efforts".

This aspect of not opposing multilateral efforts is a relatively new nuance in China's evolving approach as regards North Korea. The U.S. envoy in Japan reiterated that Washington had "no intention of invading the North (the DPRK)". This message, delivered in the context of the U.S. President, Mr. George Bush's recent remark about "all options" being "on the table", was meant to reassure Pyongyang even as Washington raised the stakes over Iraq's nuclear profile. Mr. Baker said "we are prepared to have direct talks with them provided they modify their threatening behaviour". Lest this be construed as an olive branch for a blanket bilateral dialogue with Pyongyang.

North Korea, he said, "must freeze activities at its plutonium complex and dismantle its enriched uranium programme" and "cooperate fully with the International Atomic Energy Agency" and also "comply with the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty".

Crisis in Korea

NY 6 Asia 9/8
Pyongyang does its own sabre-rattling

On North Korea, President Bush is obviously between a rock and a hard place. Sabre-rattling over Iraq means that his Administration has to have some response to the escalation in nuclear tensions from North Korea, Iraq's compatriot in the "axis of evil" league. The deliberate and calibrated escalation by Pyongyang has included throwing out UN weapons inspectors, recommissioning the Yongbyon nuclear plant frozen by a previous agreement, and walking out of the Nuclear Non-Proliferation treaty. In response long-range bombers have been despatched by the Pentagon to Guam, from where they could potentially strike North Korea. But President Kim Jong-Il has demonstrated that he knows a thing or two about deterrence, by threatening "total war" in case the US bombs its nuclear facilities. North Korean media is calling it a war that "could reduce the Korean peninsula to ashes", which sounds like an implicit nuclear threat. Washington now finds itself in a place relative to Pyongyang where New Delhi was in relative to Islamabad last year, when General Musharraf and his henchmen repeatedly raised the nuclear bogey. Even if Pyongyang has not yet deployed nuclear weapons, its capacity for it is awesome. It has a million strong army, numerically comparable to that of a far larger country like India. It has about 11,000 artillery pieces dug in along the demilitarized zone, supposed to be capable of flattening Seoul on the first day of conflict. It is also well armed with long-range missiles, some of which it has passed on to Islamabad.

Not surprisingly, Washington has taken the line that it is prepared to "talk" though not "negotiate" with Pyongyang; the difference looks semantic. Pyongyang wants Washington to sign a non-aggression pact with it, which the Bush administration, having placed North Korea on its "axis of evil", will be loath to do. Pyongyang is threatening to restart missile testing, and with the Bush administration focussed on Iraq, Pyongyang might just escalate the crisis by firing a missile or two over Japan. That would set alarm bells ringing in both Seoul and Tokyo, and induce the fateful decision to go nuclear themselves. A dangerous new game is beginning, to which collective solutions must be found. Or the new century may well have a radioactive beginning.

1 2 FEB 2003

THE STATESMAN

North Korea warns South about perils of war

5 BSA
SI-11

ASSOCIATED PRESS

SEOUL, Feb. 8. — North Korea said today that South Korea should help stop the USA from mounting a military attack on the communist state because a war would devastate the South as well.

"The situation on the Korean Peninsula is inching closer to the phase of serious crisis," the North's state-run daily Rodong Sinmun said in a commentary. "There is no guarantee that the US warhawks, seized by extreme war fever, would not ignite a war of aggression."

The commentary was carried by the North's official news agency, KCNA, a day after Mr George W Bush said that "all options are on the table" in his efforts to curb the Stalinist regime's nuclear activities.

Bomber alert: The US decision to put as many as 24 B-52 and B-1 bombers on alert for possible deployment to Guam was to deter

North Korea from taking any military action, Deputy Defence Secretary Mr Paul Wolfowitz has said, PTI adds from Washington.

The North Korean regime was "unpredictable" and "seems to be moving along a ladder of escalation in terms of its actions," Mr Wolfowitz told a US-Korea relations forum.

Japan plans: The Japanese government secretly prepared a seven-page document titled "What the future Japan-US alliance should be" in preparation for a meeting of the Japan-US Security Consultative Committee in Washington in December, Yomiuri Shimbun adds from Tokyo. The internal document stated the guidelines and law would serve as "a basis for Japanese efforts to deal decisively with North Korea," indicating that these frameworks were established in preparation for an armed conflict and other crises on the Korean Peninsula.

9 FEB 2003

THE STATESMAN

North Korea threatens first strike on US

NY
HI-15
G. B. Srin
Pyongyang, February 6

NORTH KOREA is entitled to launch a pre-emptive strike against the US rather than wait until the American military have finished with Iraq, the North's foreign ministry told *The Guardian* on Wednesday.

Warning that the current nuclear crisis is worse than that in 1994, a ministry spokesman called on Britain to use its influence with Washington to avert war.

"The US says that after Iraq, we are next," said deputy director Ri Pyong-gap, "but we have our own counter measures. Pre-emptive attacks are not the exclusive right of the US".

His comments came on a day when tension was apparent in Pyongyang, with an air-raid drill that cleared the city's streets and the North's announcement that it has begun full-scale operations at the Yongbyon nuclear plant, the suspected site of weapons-grade plutonium production.

Since reopening the plant in December, the North has kicked out international inspectors and withdrawn from the global treaty to stop the spread of nuclear weapons.

Anxiety in North Korea has been rising since US announced plans to beef up its military strength in the area. Additional bombers will be sent to the region. North Korean officials fear the extra forces are the start of the build-up for a full-scale confrontation.

The Guardian

7 FEB 2003

THE HINDUSTAN TIMES

Hawks want Bush to turn dove

LET'S assume we are all hardliners. Let's assume the worst about North Korea. But don't be too surprised, as we analyse the situation as card-carrying hawks, if we end up in the same position as President Bill Clinton when he was thinking of bombing North Korea's nuclear installations at the time of the last big crisis in 1994 and conclude that we have no choice but to heed the advice of the doves.

Victor Cha is a professor at Georgetown University, a North Korean specialist and a hawk. He has always believed the worst about President Kim Jong-Il. Everything he says and writes is charged with an acceptance of worst-case scenarios. He takes nothing the North Koreans say or do at face value. He is suspicious of the regime's apparent desire to be friendlier to South Korea, assuming that this is a tactical manoeuvre rather than a strategic shift. He assumes that this is a 100 per cent pure Machiavellian regime. But in a long, thoughtful essay in Harvard University's quarterly, "International Security", he finds that the hawks fly themselves hard and fast into a concrete wall, wounding only themselves.

As a hardliner he rejects the hawk position: containment plus isolation or the even more hawkish one, containment plus coercion, and comes down on the side of most doves, containment plus engagement. The aim of US policy, he argues, must be to make sure that this calculating regime of Kim Jong-Il never concludes that aggression against South Korea is a "rational" course of action, even though it would in fact be irrational as it could never hope to prevail. After all states can choose war even when there is little hope of victory, as Saddam Hussein seems to be doing right now.

To clear our minds before we get down to the nitty gritty we should imagine how difficult the North Koreans might yet become. Since George Bush came to power with his hard line "axis of evil" approach, in short sequence the North has renounced the freeze on its nuclear programme; it has threatened to reprocess nuclear waste; it has shut out the nuclear inspectorate; and it has renounced its own moratorium on test-firing new missiles. Perhaps its next moves could be even more outrageous: the lobbing of a few artillery shells into a southern city to create panic and chaos; launching a chemically-armed

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Kim Jong-Il's demands are not unreasonable. All he asks is for recognition and a non-aggression pact, and presumably a fast track on the lifting of sanctions and the provision of alternative sources of electricity



DOWN WITH US DESIGNS: South Koreans shouting anti-USA slogans during a demonstration in front of the US embassy in Seoul on Thursday. They were protesting against the US decision to send 12 each B-52 and B-1 bombers close to the Korean peninsula for additional firepower to deter North Korea. — AFP

missile on a southern port; or infiltrating some suicide bombers into southern cities. Each provocation would be too minor to prompt all out war, Kim Jong-Il might reason, but perhaps sufficient to drag Washington to the face-to-face negotiating table that he so obviously badly wants. The more difficult and intransigent policy in Washington is, the more appealing, in the North's eyes, becomes such a double-or-nothing option.

Dovish engagement with an opponent of this mind set has a number of important points in its favour: it avoids the likelihood of war because it lengthens time horizons, it reduces the threat of imminent attack, and ultimately it changes the North's terms

of reference. This was what was so remarkable about the Clinton diplomacy. Built on Jimmy Carter's pact with the late Kim Il-Sung it achieved remarkable breakthroughs in the North's posture on nuclear weapons. If a Republican Congress

world view

JONATHAN POWER

had not undermined the administration's solemn promises made to the North on the speedy development of alternative power supplies and an end to the economic

embargo, it is highly unlikely that the present crisis would have ever blown up.

Today's carrots are tomorrow's most effective sticks. But sticks will only work if the North has a stake in the status quo. Under the current administration in Washington the North began to feel it was losing everything – the completion of new power stations were being delayed yet again and Washington was refusing to let the South sell electricity to the North. Meanwhile the economic embargo continued. The policy should have been the other way round. Full throttle on all the 1994 promises and then the threat to reverse them if the North no longer cooperated.

Washington, if it wants positive results

and wishes to avoid precipitating the very actions it says it is determined to avoid, must realise rather quickly that it has to double back on its tracks of the last two years. Unlike Clinton, Bush can carry Congress with him. Bush needs to give the North a hefty stake in the status quo. Kim Jong-Il's demands are not unreasonable. All he asks is for recognition and a non-aggression pact, and presumably a fast track on the lifting of sanctions and the provision of alternative sources of electricity. If not only the doves can see this, but some important hawks too. Perhaps it is the right time for Bush to change his flight path away from hitting the wall.

N Korea N-crisis deepens as US beats war drums

Seoul: North Korea accused the US of pursuing a "policy of evil" on Tuesday, as US aircraft and warships were put on alert for possible deployment near the country, now gripped in a nuclear crisis.



M. ElBaradei

The UN nuclear watchdog, booted out of North Korea last month took steps to refer the communist state's nuclear weapons programme to the Security Council. The flurry of international attention to the four-month-old face-off came as Washington prepared to make its case for war against Iraq. Last year President George W. Bush bracketed Iraq with North Korea and Iran in an "axis of evil" for their suspected weapons proliferation.

North Korea's official newspaper 'Rodong Sinmun' accused the US of pursuing "policy of evil against the Korean nation, its reunification and peace".

The daily dismissed US offers of dialogue on the impasse as "a camouflaged peace hoax to cover up its nuclear blackmail against North Korea..."

On Monday, US defence officials said the Pentagon was considering reinforcements in the western Pacific in order to deter any North Korean aggression in case of a war with Iraq.

They said defence secretary Donald Rumsfeld had yet to issue any final orders to move B-52 bombers, F-16 fighters or naval units closer to the Korean peninsula. Military alliance officials are monitoring developments and would consult South Korea "if additional forces are required on the Korean peninsula for the accomplishment of our mission," commander of US forces in Korea Gen Leon J. LaPorte said.

North Korean radio said the reported reinforcement proposals showed the US was "plotting to boost forces in Japan and South Korea as one link in its scheme to stifle our country through military means".

Pyongyang's Korean Central News Agency said North Korean leader Kim Jong-il toured a naval unit on Monday, praising sailors for upholding "the spirit of becoming human bombs and the spirit of blowing oneself up as their invariable faith".

In Vienna, the UN's nuclear watchdog agency said on Monday its governing board would hold an emergency session on February 12 on the nuclear crisis.

International Atomic Energy Agency chief Mohamed ElBaradei said the IAEA board was likely to hand the issue over to the Security Council.

"I've exhausted all possibilities within my power to bring North Korea into compliance," ElBaradei said. Reuters

N Korea wants talks, prepares Army for US

PAUL ECKERT
SEOUL, FEBRUARY 3

NORTH Korea's said on Monday the Communist state's troops were in full combat readiness in case of US aggression, amid signs of rising tensions over the nuclear crisis on the Korean peninsula.

Radio Pyongyang quoted Korean People's Army chiefs as vowing loyalty to Kim Jong-Il, who, it said, had toured two Army units over the weekend as his country vilified the US over the three-month-old nuclear impasse. North Korea has accused US of preparing to attack it over the crisis, including deploying an aircraft carrier in waters off the peninsula.

Washington has denied the N Korean assertions, but US officials have announced steps to shore up the American military presence in South Korea with troops and equipment to deter the North in the event of a US war with Iraq.

"Our Army and people are in combat readiness to cope with military and political moves stemming from the US imperialist warhawks' strategy to dominate the Korean peninsula," said the broadcast.

North Korea's ruling Workers Party newspaper weighed in with a warning that the crisis would worsen unless Washing-

ton accepted Pyongyang's demand for talks and a non-aggression pact.

"As long as US resorts to a cynical ploy, turning its back on North Korea's demand for negotiations and conclusion of a non-aggression treaty, the nuclear crisis on Korean peninsula cannot be settled any time," said the Rodong Sinmun in an editorial. "It will only deteriorate the crisis," said the editorial.

Despite the recent sabre-rattling by N Korea's media, there have been no troop movements in the North, South Korea's Defence Ministry said.

The Seoul-based US 8th Army announced on Monday that the transfer of about 2,900 officers and soldiers slated to leave South Korea in the next three months would be postponed to maintain full mission readiness in the country.

The "Stop Movement" order was not linked to the crisis, an Army spokesman said. He said the rotation freeze was ordered to maintain troop levels in South Korea while replacements from US based units were also being held back amid simultaneous deployments near Iraq and in Afghanistan.

An envoy of South Korean President-elect Roh Moo-hyun travelled to Washington on Sunday to consult on policies toward North Korea.— Reuters

Extra
110-12

North Korea for 'binding' non-aggression pact with U.S.

112 ✓

By P. S. Suryanarayana

BANGKOK, JAN. 31. The two-dimensional "nuclear crisis", confronting the international community, has begun to impinge on the political realities in the Asia-Pacific region.

China, the only permanent member of the U.N. Security Council from this region, has expressed itself on the Iraq issue in categorical terms, while North Korea set out a virtually non-negotiable position as regards the crisis that concerns Pyongyang's own suspected nuclear-weaponisation overdrive.

The North Korean Ambassador to China, Choe Jin-su, said in Beijing today that the questions on his country's alleged nuclear weapons programme could be settled only

through a non-aggression pact with Washington. While there was nothing new about this position, the envoy underlined, for the first time, that North Korea was eager to enter into such an agreement on a firm and 'binding' basis.

Any such pact could be deemed to be of 'binding' value if the U.S. Congress ratifies a document of this magnitude, he said. The U.S. has consistently cold-shouldered all notions of a no-war pact with North Korea. At the same time, Pyongyang charged that the Bush administration had stockpiled nuclear weapons in one part of Korea (the southern one) while seeking to launch a "pre-emptive nuclear strike" against the North.

This, the envoy said, was the crux of the

nuclear crisis concerning his country.

On Iraq, the Chinese Foreign Minister, Tang Jiaxuan, has said in Beijing that the only 'rational' means of addressing the doubts and concerns of the U.S. would be the search for a 'political' solution "within the framework of the United Nations".

While these comments would not amount to any shift in China's position, it is significant that Beijing has forcefully reaffirmed its stance in the context of the Bush administration's promise to take the U.N. Security Council into confidence about the unpublicised evidence, in America's possession, regarding Iraq's programmes of fabricating and stockpiling weapons of mass destruction, complete with delivery systems.

THE HINDU

FEB 2003

THE HINDU

Mixed reaction in Asia Pacific

By P.S. Suryanarayana

SINGAPORE, JAN. 29. The traditional strategic allies of the U.S. in the Asia Pacific region today welcomed, in a general sense, the broad outlines of the American President, George W. Bush's differentiated policies towards Iraq and North Korea as regards their respective capabilities to produce and deploy weapons of mass destruction.

Japan and South Korea took note of what they perceived to be the logic behind Mr. Bush's uncompromising stance on Iraq and a relatively soft tone, not entirely a conciliatory one though, on North Korea. China, on the other hand, kept its strategic counsel to itself, though some Chinese analysts, close to the establishment in Beijing, made clear their concerns that a U.S.-led war on Iraq, a distinct

possibility in Mr. Bush's current calculus, might only "open Pandora's box" in West Asia. There was a mild note of dissonance in South Korean political circles about Mr. Bush's willingness to take unilateral action against Iraq.

Australia, which has already rallied behind the U.S. in a military sense as well, placed a premium on the fact that Mr. Bush now wanted to take the U.N. Security Council into confidence on America's intelligence on Iraq.

Whether or not the Council "acquiesces in some kind of military action" against Iraq while perhaps "not approving" the use of force, the onus was now on the U.N. organ to "match the rhetoric of its resolution with action".

The Australian Prime Minister, John Howard, posed the

question. "What hope we have got of controlling North Korea, which is in our region, if the Security Council walks away from its responsibilities to deal with Iraq?"

North Korea, for its part, renewed its call for a non-aggression pact with the U.S. and pledged to meet squarely Washington's plans for a "pre-emptive strike" against its nuclear facilities.

However, officials and analysts in the region heaved a sigh of relief that Mr. Bush did not portray Pyongyang in the strategic metaphor of "axis of evil".

Meanwhile, the South Korean special envoy, Lim Dong-won, today returned home from Pyongyang without being able to meet the the North Korean leader, Kim Joing-il, who, however, received a message from his southern counterpart.

THE HINDI

30 JAN 2003

North adamant, South Korea says resolution not in sight

PAUL ECKERT
SEOUL, JANUARY 27

SOUTH Korea will stress to the Communist North the importance of ending its nuclear crisis but expects no swift resolution, a special envoy from the South said before leaving for the North on Monday. The mission of Lim Dong-Won, special envoy of S Korean President Kim Dae-Jung, may be made easier after the US said on Sunday it was ready to tell N Korea it has no intention to attack.

But the North hurled a stream of abuse at the head of the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA), which is planning an emergency session on the crisis, questioning his judgment and saying it was no longer in a position to discuss its atomic ambitions.

"I will directly convey to the North Korean President Kim's firm desire for peace and reconciliation and the hopes of all of our people," Lim said before leaving. "Whatever I do, I hope to open a pipeline and create the first steps towards the resolution of the nuclear issue in a way that avoids war." Analysts say the



S Korean envoy Lim Dong-Won (R) and Unification Minister Jeong in Seoul on Monday. Reuters

mission could be a forerunner to possible meetings involving Russia and China and eventually result in direct discussions between Pyongyang and Washington, something the North has always demanded.

Lim's trip and a renewed flurry of diplomatic activity aimed at persuading the North to renounce its nuclear ambitions have put the IAEA's plans on a pause for an emergency session as early as February 3. Lim, carrying a letter from outgoing President Kim and accompanied by an envoy from President-elect Roh Moo-Hyun, played down the possibility of a swift

end to the crisis.

"As everyone knows the nuclear problem will take a long time to solve," he said. "It's already been 10 years since we signed the North-South non-nuclear agreement and eight years have passed since the Agreed Framework between North Korea and the US and yet the nuclear issue has flared up again." The US has said there can be no return to that framework and the only way to solve the current crisis is for the North to dismantle its nuclear programme which Pyongyang regards as essential for its defence. —Reut

28 JAN 2003

INDIAN EXPRESS

'A LOT MORE NEEDED TO BE DONE ON SUBSTANCE'

Iraq not fully cooperating on disarmament: Blix

By Sridhar Krishnaswami

UNITED NATIONS, JAN. 27. The chief weapons inspector, Hans Blix, has charged Iraq with not fully accepting the United Nations' resolution on disarmament and said that while Baghdad had been cooperating on the process — especially as it pertained to access — a lot more had to be done on "substance".

Submitting his report to the U.N. Security Council today on the 60 days of weapon inspections in Iraq, Mr. Blix did not ask the Council for more time but argued that he shared the "sense of urgency" to achieve Iraq's disarmament within "a reasonable period of time".

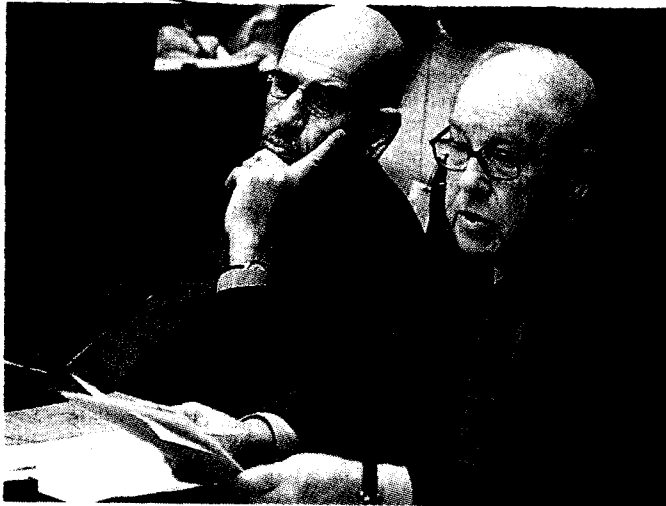
The U.N. Secretary-General, Kofi Annan, prior to the start of Mr. Blix's address, emphasised that the weapons inspectors should be given "a reasonable amount of time" to complete their task.

'No evidence of new n-programme'

The Head of the International Atomic Energy Agency, Mohamed ElBaradei, in his report, argued that two months of inspections had not proved that Iraq had attempted to revive its nuclear weapons programme. "We have found no evidence that Iraq has revived its nuclear weapons programme since the elimination of the programme in the 1990s."

The major focus was on what Mr. Blix said. The Head of the United Nations Monitoring, Verification and Inspection Commission did not spring any major surprise in his 16-page report. He minced no words when he charged Iraq with not living up to the terms of the disarmament provisions of the world body.

"Iraq appears not to have come to a genuine acceptance, not even today, of the disarmament



The U.N. chief weapons inspector, Hans Blix (right), speaking to the U.N. Security Council on Monday, as the International Atomic Energy Agency chief, Mohamed ElBaradei, looks on. — AP

ment that was demanded of it," Mr. Blix said at the start of his address making the distinction in cooperation between substance and process.

"It would appear from our experience so far that Iraq has decided in principle to provide cooperation on process, notably access. A similar decision is indispensable to provide cooperation on substance in order to bring the disarmament task to completion, through the peaceful process of inspection, and to bring the monitoring task on a firm course", Mr. Blix said.

He brought out a series of gaps or unresolved issues on Iraqi disarmament that included unanswered questions about the deadly nerve gas, VX, nutrients for biological agents such as anthrax, artillery shells filled with mustard gas and the 6,500 chemical bombs. The environment in Iraq may be "workable" but Mr. Blix touched on several problems including the use of

U-2 surveillance planes and harassment.

At the outset, he argued that three questions remained unanswered: the extent of illicit weapons that might remain undeclared and intact from even before the 1991 Gulf War; what, if anything, was illegally produced or procured; and how the world could prevent weapons of

mass destruction to be produced or procured in the future.

No hope: U.S. envoy

The first reaction from the United States was on expected lines with the country's top envoy to the U.N., John Negroponte, arguing that nothing that the inspectors said today "gives us any hope that Iraq will disarm".

But the top Iraqi envoy to the U.N. insisted that cooperation with the weapons inspectors had been total with Baghdad giving "immediate and unconditional access".

In Washington, the Bush administration reacted rather coolly to the idea that the weapons inspectors must be given more time; and Washington once again warned that "time is running out" for the Iraqi leader, Saddam Hussein, to come out clean.

"When people say give them more time, the more time they get, the more time they get the runaround. Iraq is giving the inspectors the runaround," the White House spokesman, Ari Fleischer, remarked.

Other reactions: Page 14

Gold prices at all-time high

NEW DELHI, JAN. 27. Gold prices shot up today to hit an all-time high in markets across the country, closing at Rs. 6020 per ten gram in Delhi on aggressive buying by speculators and investors apprehensive over the gathering war clouds over Iraq.

Delhi, which had the maximum level at Rs. 6020 per ten gram, showed another gain of Rs. 50 from the previous close while Mumbai scaled a new height of Rs. 5960.

In Chennai, the price of 22-carat gold moved up to Rs. 5490 per ten gram while in Kolkata the market remained closed due to a strike.

The upsurge was on the back of growing concerns of war which fuelled buying by major market players finding no other option but to pump in their funds into the purchase of the yellow metal. Tumbling equity markets and the U.S. dollar losing ground in Forex markets were also attributed to diversion of investors' funds in precious metals. — PTI

THE HINDU

28 JAN 2003

Liberties at risk

By Kuldip Nayar

The attack on an American missionary in Kerala and the illegal detention of a journalist from Kashmir show a type of vindictiveness that is alien to our culture.

HD-10
28/1

TWO RECENT incidents, not connected with each other, are disturbing because they relate to individual liberty. Both reflect an attitude of scant respect to the rule of law. The attack on an American missionary in Kerala and the illegal detention of a journalist from Kashmir show a type of vindictiveness that is alien to our culture. By any criterion, they violate human rights.

Take the case of the American missionary, Joseph Cooper. He is a known evangelist. But the propagation of one's faith is not banned, conversion through force and fraud is. Some extremist Hindus injured him grievously. The State Chief Minister, A. K. Antony, said such incidents had happened before. This may be a statement of fact but it brings no credit to the State which tops the country's literacy pyramid and which is supposed to look after the safety of its people. For reasons best known to Mr. Antony, he did not want to identify the attackers. He should have called a spade a spade because this is one way of exposing such forces.

The RSS has been active in Kerala for a long time. Till recently, the communists were the RSS' main targets. At many places, the two have clashed and dozens have died at each other's hands. But since the communists proved to be more than a match for the RSS, it seems to have switched to targeting the Christians. The RSS chief, K. S. Sudarshan's innuendo against the Jesuits is only a few days old. Some fanatics seem to believe that killing a missionary here or demolishing a church there will create fear among the Christians and make them stop their normal activity. Incidents are taking place in Bihar and Orissa and in Madhya Pradesh and Kerala. Top RSS men, working in the Ranchi tribal belt, have been shifted to Madhya Pradesh. The organisation's latest strategy is to have anti-conversion legislation in all the States where the BJP is ruling and to make conversion a poll issue in States where it is not in power. Already, BJP-ruled Himachal Pradesh, where elections are only a few weeks away, has announced that the party would bring in the anti-conversion law if it

is returned to power. The plan is to play the Hindu card even though the population of Muslims and Christians in the State is negligible.

The National Human Rights Commission (NHRC) has done well in taking *suo motu* notice of the attack on the missionary. The Antony Government, unlike the Narendra Modi Government in Gujarat, will not hide facts. When the NHRC asked Ahmedabad about the communal riots, the report sent was inadequate and misleading. It could do so because the Home Ministry was at its back. Kerala is different. The Government may be circumspect about naming the organisation behind the incident for political reasons but there is no reason to believe it will not cooperate with the NHRC.

It is a pity that the NHRC chairman, Justice J. C. Verma, has retired before the report has come from the State. His has been a commendable tenure. One felt unhappy over his equivocal definition of Hinduism in one judgment. This has come in handy to the Hindutva forces. However, he has allayed doubts about his leanings by his stand on Gujarat. His finest hour was when he forced the Modi Government to submit a report on the carnage in the State. Indeed, Justice Verma has spoken eloquently on behalf of a permanent underclass in our society, the minorities whose rights are impinged upon every day.

It seems as if the job that the Commission has done first under Justice Venkatachalliah and now under Justice Verma has upset the BJP. It was never in favour of a Human Rights Commission. When it was part of the Janata Government (1977-79), it wanted a different type of commission. This may well be the reason why the Justice Ahmedi committee's recommendation to give more powers to the Commission has remained unimplemented. The committee's proposal was that the armed forces,

outside the ambit of the NHRC, should be redefined so that the exemption given is applicable only to the three services, not to the BSF, CRPF and such other formations. The Government has not yet accepted another recommendation that the Commission be given power to grant interim relief to the sufferer. Official bias against the Commission is clear from the long time taken to fill vacancies. Two vacancies in the five-member NHRC have been there for months. Probably, the Government feels it is one way to punish the Commission for the alacrity it shows in coming to the rescue of the aggrieved.

The case of Iftikhar Geelani, a journalist from Kashmir, is a shameful example of violation of constitutional rights an Indian citizen enjoys. His fault is that he is married to the daughter of Syed Shah Geelani, a Hurriyat leader. Not many like Mr. Geelani's father-in-law's open support for Kashmir's integration with Pakistan. But should the sins of a father-in-law visit on the son-in-law? We seem to have at the Centre a Government which knows no bounds of law. Mr. Geelani would have been still behind the bars had the Director-General of Military Intelligence (DGMI) not given him a clean chit and told the court that the documents found in Mr. Geelani's possession were not "incriminatory". The attitude of the Home Ministry was vindictive. Even after the Army's clearance the Ministry stuck to its line of "punishing" the son-in-law. It rejected even the evidence tendered by the DGMI. Public exposure of the Home Ministry's stand evidently made it withdraw the case against Mr. Geelani. His statement after coming out of jail will touch every honest Indian's heart. He described how he was physically manhandled in jail and how, in spite of everything that was happening, he had never

lost faith in the Judiciary. He was sure that justice would triumph.

When POTA was came into force, some people expressed fears about its possible misuse. Mr. Geelani's case shows how biased rulers can misuse POTA for their political ends. Authoritarian ways finished Indira Gandhi. The BJP leaders should have learnt a lesson. But Mr. Geelani's case proves that they have not. It has brought further contempt to the system and those running it. It looks as if human rights activists are going to be targeted more than before. They should be prepared for this.

Where is Sevagram? This was the question many asked me in Delhi when I told them about a meeting of voluntary workers at Sevagram. Even at Nagpur, which is near Sevagram, it was the same query. Once when my car driver lost his way, quite near the place, it was difficult to find a person who could tell us the exact location of Sevagram.

Sevagram had been the hub of political activities only five decades ago. This is the place where Mahatma Gandhi spent most of his years and from where he launched several satyagrahas. Certain things he did are still done the same way here. There is a prayer meeting every evening at six at the very spot where Mahatma Gandhi used to hold it. Alas, the number of people at the meeting has been reduced to a number which can be counted on one's fingers.

I was in Sevagram when some Gandhians and human rights activists met to discuss the brutalisation of society at the hands of fanatics on the one hand and the economic reformists on the other. Nearly 50 people were there. The 90-year-old Gandhian, Siddharaj Dadhha, Kishen Patnaik, Amar Nath Bhel and the leading lights from among human rights activists such as Medha Patkar and B. D. Sharma were present. They resolved to develop a new paradigm of alternative development with equality, justice and democratic planning. The emphasis was on a struggle against casteism and communalism and adherence to social equity and secularism. I wondered how many takers would be there in today's India.

THE HINDU

28 JAN 2003

Taiwan flight makes first visit to China

By P. S. Suryanarayana

SINGAPORE, JAN. 26 Heralding a new episode of contacts between China and Taiwan, a charter flight of a Taiwanese carrier, which styles itself as "China Airlines", today carried passengers from Shanghai to Taipei, via Hong Kong though, for the first time since the inception of the People's Republic of China in Beijing in 1949.

The event was of considerable cultural symbolism for a possible political reunification of Taiwan with mainland China over time. However, today's flight itself was portrayed by both sides in realistic economic and cultural terms rather than in a political context of the future.

Over 240 Taiwanese, mostly business persons working in China, took today's flight, the first of a planned series of ad hoc services which will link Shanghai and Taipei via Hong Kong. The Taiwanese passengers went home for the Chinese New Year Spring Festival which falls on February 1 this year.

Given the political complexity of the Taiwan-China 'ties', the Taiwanese aircraft, a jumbo jet, reached Shanghai from Taipei with no passengers at all on board. On the return journey, the airliner carried only Taiwanese passengers resident in China. Such two-way flights, numbering 16 and timed exclusively for the Chinese New Year holidays, will transport between



Officials wave before taking the first Taiwanese charter flight from China to Taiwan, at Shanghai's Pudong airport on Sunday. — AP

1000-1500 Taiwanese to Taipei first and bring them back to Shanghai after the holidays.

According to one estimate, about one million Taiwanese work in China, mostly in the business sector. Significantly in

this context, no passage to Taiwan for the Chinese citizens themselves is planned under this project of friendship.

It was the decision of the Taiwanese authorities that these ad hoc flights should be routed

through Hong Kong, which enjoys a unique political status within China at present, so that the diplomatic connotation of an absolutely 'direct' link between Taipei and Shanghai could be avoided.

However, China saw today's development as a significant step towards a "direct link" with or without a political momentum of its own.

Speaking at a seminar in Beijing ahead of this air-link diplomacy, the Chinese Vice-Premier, Qian Qichen, said that any talks between China and Taiwan on the modalities of opening "three direct links" between them "are not political" in character. Such parleys could, therefore, steer clear of the political implications of the idea of "one China", the eventual goal, it was underlined.

The proposition of "three direct links" relates to two-way mail as also trade and transport services between China and Taiwan. Beijing's official line is that no political calculations should be allowed to impede the progress towards such 'economic' links.

In diplomatic shorthand, China's position is an indictment of the perceived Taiwanese policy of tardiness towards an eventual reunification. Such tardiness is seen in the regional political-diplomatic circles as an aspect of Taipei's "offshore engagement strategy" of arming Taiwan with an "offensive military capability".

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27 JAN 2003

27 JAN 2003

S. Korea sending top official to North for dialogue

By P. S. Suryanarayana

SINGAPORE, JAN. 24. A new direction was today charted out by South Korea in its efforts to promote the ongoing international campaign of defusing the threatening crisis over North Korea's suspected nuclear-weapons programme.

South Korea took the initiative of scheduling a mission to the North next week by a presidential envoy, even as a top U.S. trouble-shooter consulted Japan on ways to resolve the question of Pyongyang's nuclear profile through peaceful means.

The South Korean President, Kim Dae-jung, nominated his Special National Security Adviser, Lim Dong-won, to visit Pyongyang for several days from Monday with a mandate to carry out a reality check in the specific context of today's accord between the two sides on the nuclear issue itself. The South's objective was to capitalise on the existing comfort-level with the North to explore a realistic solution of the present crisis through diplomatic means.

Earlier in the day, the pre-arranged inter-Korean ministerial meeting, which found itself grappling with the nuclear issue on a priority basis, ended on a positive note of some consensus.

The two Koreas "agreed to cooperate actively in solving the (nuclear) issue peacefully".

In one sense, the joint statement on these lines fell short of the South's expectations of being able to persuade the North to renounce its ongoing nuclear-weapons programme.

However, the chief delegate and Cabinet Councillor of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea (DPRK or the North), Kim Ryong Song, not only echoed the joint statement but also underlined the South's acceptability quotient as a serious interlocutor.

This aspect is of particular

importance, given the DPRK's general refrain that the nuclear issue could be settled only through bilateral talks with the United States.

South Korea's Unification Minister and chief delegate, Jeong Se-hyun, noted that today's accord with the DPRK was "not totally satisfying".

However, the point underlined was that the two countries had agreed to "continue our dialogue". The renewed accent on a sustainable inter-Korean dialogue on the nuclear issue itself did not, however, devalue either the DPRK's preference for a bilateral track with Washington or the latest Japan-U.S. consultations aimed at a multilateral approach.

Pyongyang's take on multilateralism was of a different kind, as reflected in the DPRK's insistence, during the just-concluded inter-Korean talks, that the nuclear issue be settled "within a framework of international solidarity".

The Japanese Foreign Minister, Yoriko Kawaguchi, told the U.S. Undersecretary of State, John Bolton, in Tokyo today that the issue of imposing U.N. sanctions on North Korea should be dealt with "very carefully".

Mr. Bolton was understood to have taken the line that the U.S.' insistence on a say by the U.N. Security Council would not necessarily mean a preference for instant sanctions over the DPRK. For Japan, the most important consideration was that of a mechanism by which both Tokyo and Seoul could play a diplomatic role as and when the U.N. Security Council might discuss the DPRK's nuclear issue.

It was in this context that Japan and the U.S. agreed at this time that Tokyo as also Seoul and Washington would "act jointly" as regards Pyongyang's nuclear issue within the jurisdiction of either the International Atomic Energy Agency or the U.N.

No plan to make nukes: N Korea

SAMUEL LEN
SEOUL, JANUARY 22

SOUTH Korea urged the Communist North to drop its nuclear ambitions on Wednesday and the North Koreans responded by saying they had no intention of building atomic weapons.

"North Korea stressed that it has no intention of developing nuclear weapons," South Korean Unification Ministry spokesman Rhee Bong-Jo said after the opening session of talks.

"The North voiced its stance on the (nuclear) problem, creating a basis for discussion," he told reporters.

The denial at the first meeting between the ministers of the North and South since Pyongyang withdrew from a global treaty to prevent the spread of nuclear weapons this month was a repetition of previous North Korean statements.

But it defied predictions that North Korea would resist discussing with Seoul an issue it had insisted was exclusively a problem for Pyongyang to work out with the US.

Rhee said that South Korean Unification Minister Jeong Se-Hyun opened the talks calling on North Korea to reverse steps taken during Pyongyang's last two months of nuclear brinkmanship and return to compliance with all its non-nuclear pledges.

In opening remarks on Wednesday and arrival comments the night before, the head of the N Korean delegation, Kim Ryong-song, pointedly ignored



US Deputy Undersecretary of State John Bolton in Seoul. He said he expected the Security Council to begin discussions on North Korea by the weekend. Reuters

references to the nuclear crisis and repeated Pyongyang's stock calls for reunification. Kim also did not hesitate to urge host South Korea to join hands to fight "outside forces" — a swipe at Seoul's ally, the US, and the pressure over the nuclear programme. The nuclear issue was not formally on the agenda of the three-day meeting, the ninth round of talks that have normally focused on economic cooperation.

N Korea is unlikely to allow the talks to become a forum for a nuclear discussion that it regards as nothing to do with Seoul, analysts say. The two Koreas are holding talks at three levels and at three different venues this week. Seoul sees the meetings as a pivotal chance to revive flagging "Sunshine Policy" reconciliation projects started by President Kim Dae-Jung, who steps down next month. —Reuters

40-19
221 ✓
U.N. Council will take up Pyongyang n-issue: U.S.

By P. S. Suryanarayana
SINGAPORE, JAN. 22. North Korea today signalled that it had "no intention" of developing nuclear weapons at this point, even as a top U.S. trouble-shooter said that the threatening crisis over Pyongyang's actual disposition might be brought before the United Nations Security Council as early as this week itself.

The latest flurry of indications from and about Pyongyang came into a sharp focus in Seoul where the ninth round of inter-Korean ministerial

meetings took place, while the U.S. Under-Secretary of State for Arms Control and International Security, John Bolton, said in the South Korean capital itself that the nuclear issue at stake might be taken to the U.N. soon.

Mr. Bolton held talks in Seoul earlier in the day with South Korea's Foreign Affairs and Trade Minister, Choi Sung-hong, and also its Defence Minister, Lee Jun. The inter-Korean confabulations as also Mr. Bolton's consultations in Seoul were punctuated by the expressions of hope that flowed from the South and by the North's assertions of one kind or the other about the nuclear

crisis and also some related issues.

The South Korean President, Kim Dae-jung, sought to set the tone by saying that he thought he "can portray a big picture in which the nuclear issue is set to be resolved peacefully through dialogue despite twists and turns". Mr. Kim made this optimistic comment as he hosted dinner for the Commander-in-Chief of the United States Forces Korea (USFK), Gen. Leon LaPorte, besides the Chairman of South Korea's Joint Chiefs of Staff, Gen. Lee Nam-sin, and the South Korean Defence Minister, Lee Jun.

At the inter-Korean ministerial

meeting itself, the North held out assurances that it was not thinking of fabricating nuclear weapons at this stage. A gesture of this kind was relayed to the international community by a spokesman of the South at the conclusion of today's session of the inter-Korean dialogue.

However, the Democratic People's Republic of Korea (DPRK or the North) later reacted strongly to the U.S. diplomat's suggestion that the puzzle over Pyongyang's nuclear-weapons programme could be taken up by the U.N. Security Council soon. The DPRK sought to reserve the right to resume

missile-tests in this new context. There was no immediate and independent confirmation of the North's response of this dimension.

Amid such complex indications, the DPRK claimed, through its official news agency, that Pyongyang could have remained within the bounds of the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT), if only the U.S.-led consortium—the Korean Peninsula Energy Development Organisation (KEDO)—had not soft-pedalled towards a project aimed at meeting the electricity needs of the North following its Framework Agreement of 1994 with the U.S.

Isolated N Korea looks South

Agence France Presse

SEOUL, Jan. 21. — An increasingly isolated North Korea appealed to South Korea for support today, as US efforts to build international opposition against the state's nuclear programme gained strength.

A high-ranking delegation arrived in Seoul for four days of talks that were supposed to focus on reconciliation and humanitarian issues, but the North Koreans left no doubt about the message they had brought from Pyongyang.

"The stronger the outside pressure is and the graver the situation is, we must work together to make it through difficulties and set the future course of the nation,"

Russia helped CIA: NYT

NEW YORK, Jan. 21. — Russian Intelligence officials helped the CIA monitor North Korean nuclear activities in the 1990s, according to a *New York Times* report which Moscow rejected as "fabricated".

Russian agents placed sophisticated nuclear monitors provided by the CIA inside the Russian embassy in Pyongyang to detect signs of activity from the North Korean nuclear weapons programme, Intelligence officials were quoted as saying. — AP

the team said after arriving.

"Let us demonstrate this will to the world through this

round of talks." Pyongyang reinforced its message with a series of less diplomatic outbursts in its official media.

Pyongyang's message came as the US' strategy of building widespread global opposition to the North's nuclear programme appeared to be paying off.

Russia declared today that it fully backed the USA's drive to eliminate North Korea's nuclear ambitions.

"We have the same goal: to enforce the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty," deputy foreign minister Mr Georgy Mamedov said in Moscow. His declaration came a day after Russian envoy Mr Alexander Losyukov met North Korean leader Mr Kim Jong-Il in Pyongyang, during which he presented Russia's plan to defuse the nuclear crisis.

THE STATESMAN

17 JAN 2003

'N. Korea will not attack South'

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HONG KONG, JAN 20. The top North Korean diplomat here said his nation would not attack South Korea if it were drawn into a war with the United States and denied Washington's charge that it has nuclear weapons.

"If the United States attacks us, we'll only go after our enemy," the Consul-General, Ri To Sop, told the *Ming Pao* newspaper in an exclusive interview. "We will not mix up South Korea with the United States," Mr. Ri was quoted as saying in today's edition of the Chinese-language daily.

A North Korean consular spokesman confirmed Mr. Ri's comments to AP. The official declined to elaborate or to identify himself by name.

The U.S. and North Korea have been locked in standoff since October, when Washington said the North Koreans had admitted to developing nuclear weapons in violation of a 1994 agreement.

But Mr. Ri said North Korea had no nuclear arms — and he called Washington's accusations the result of an angry exchange during a visit in October by the U.S. Assistant Secretary of State, James Kelly.

"They said we reneged on the nuclear non-proliferation treaty first," Mr. Ri said.

"That's not true. We do not have nuclear weapons," he said.

— AP

North Korea needs written guarantees: Russia

Agence France Presse

MOSCOW, Jan. 20. — North Korea needs written security guarantees if it is to abandon its nuclear prog-

ramme, Russian envoy Mr Alexander Losyukov said today after a meeting with the Stalinist state's leader.

Mr Losyukov, Russia's deputy foreign minister, said in an interview with Russia's

Itar-Tass news agency in Pyongyang that the written guarantees were necessary "for this country to develop its relations with the outside world and to feel safe".

The Russian diplomat

said Moscow was "optimistic about the chances of resolving the crisis over North Korea through peaceful means" following the discussions with Kim Jong-Il in Pyongyang.

"We conveyed our ideas for a compromise, which would resolve the current crisis. The Korean side responded constructively to these proposals," he told Itar-Tass.

N Korea rejects UN mediation efforts

Agence France-Presse

SEOUL, Jan. 19. — North Korea today rejected moves to resolve the nuclear crisis through the United Nations, saying the dispute could only be resolved in direct negotiations with the USA, even as the US Defense Secretary Mr Donald Rumsfeld said today the USA was keeping "all options on the table", when asked if Washington had ruled out using military force against Pyongyang.

The Stalinist state said it would not allow the USA to "internationalise" the dispute, amid a wave of global diplomacy aimed at forging a united stance to harness North Korea's nuclear ambitions. "The DPRK (North Korea) and the USA should sit face-to-face to solve the nuclear issue on the Korean peninsula, as it was authored by the latter," the state-run Korean Central News Agency quoted first vice foreign minister Mr Kang Sok-Ju as saying in Pyongyang.

"The internationalisation of this issue would make the prospect of its settlement more complicated and gloomy." Separate editorials by KCNA and North Korea's ruling Workers' Party newspaper Rodong Simmun criticised the USA, and especially Secretary of State General Colin Powell, for suggesting the UN should help broker an end to the crisis.

"It fully reveals the shameless nature and wicked intention of the USA to internationalise the DPRK's 'nuclear issue in a bid to brand it as a 'criminal' and stifle it at any



South Korean Christians float balloons symbolising peace on the Korean peninsula during a pro-US rally in Seoul on Sunday. — AFP

Pyongyang and expected a reply on Monday, according to Russia's Itar-Tass news agency. As part of the international bid to bring a diplomatic solution to the crisis, Russian diplomats are pushing a so-called "package plan." The proposal requires a commitment for a nuclear-free Korean peninsula in return for security guarantees for North Korea and the resumption of humanitarian aid and economic help to the North.

The Russian diplomat was quoted as saying the dialogue "is very active and substantive, while the situation at the talks is very warm, friendly and constructive."

On Sunday, the US Ambassador to South Korea called the nuclear stand-off with North Korea "a challenge to the entire international system" and said Washington is willing to consider a wide range of aid to resolve the dispute. Diplomatic efforts elsewhere were also stepped up on Sunday with US Assistant Secretary of State Mr James Kelly in Japan to coordinate policies on North Korea and US under-secretary of State Mr John Bolton in Beijing for similar talks.

Mr Kelly met with foreign minister Mr Yoriko Kawaguchi, who expressed support for the US announcement that it may declare it had no intention of attacking North Korea if Pyongyang gave up its nuclear arms program. "I was told that the ideas were a comprehensive result of its historical efforts" to deal with North Korea, Mr Kawaguchi told reporters after meeting Kelly.

resolve the crisis.

Russian plan: Diplomatic efforts to defuse the North Korean crisis gathered pace on Sunday, as a Russian envoy submitted a settlement plan to the communist country's leaders and US diplomats met for talks in China and Japan. Russian deputy foreign minister Mr Alexander Losyukov presented a "Russian-brokered proposal on settling the Korean problem" to officials in

cost," the Rodong Simmun said.

"The nuclear issue and the present situation on the Korean peninsula are entirely attributable to the US imperialists' hostile policy toward the DPRK." The reports came just one day before the UN Security Council was to discuss the issue in New York and a day after UN Secretary General Mr Kofi Annan's special envoy, Mr Maurice Strong, made a four-day visit to Pyongyang to help

S. Korea, Russia for dialogue

*B R 24
HD-12*

SEOUL, JAN. 17. South Korea's President-elect today encouraged the United States to negotiate fully with North Korea to defuse the stand-off over its nuclear weapons development. A North Korean official said only the U.S., not South Korea, could solve the problem.

The South Korean call for talks was echoed by the Russian Deputy Foreign Minister, Alexander Losyukov, who visited Beijing to discuss the impasse. Mr. Losyukov was expected to visit Pyongyang later for talks with North Korean officials.

The South Korean President-elect, Roh Moo-hyun, speaking to American and European chambers of commerce, suggested the U.S. should push for negotiations with Pyongyang. Washington has said it is willing to talk, but ruled out bargaining with North Korea to get it to dismantle its nuclear programmes.

"I would like to persuade the U.S. to engage actively in dialogue with North Korea," said Mr. Roh, who assumes office next month. He expressed optimism that a deepening of the confrontation could be averted through talks. The U.S. has taken a more conciliatory tone with the North Koreans this week, offering the possibility of energy and agricultural aid for the impoverished country if it gives up its nuclear hopes. But Washington has refused to make any guarantees to Pyongyang.

Mr. Roh also said he thought North Korea, one of the most closed nations in the world, was serious about reforming its decrepit economic system. "I think North Korea is sincere about opening up and reforming because they have no

18/1

choice. Mr. Roh said he wanted South Korea to play a prominent role in resolving the crisis."

South Korea has said it would use its contact with the North to press for an end to its nuclear programmes, but a Northern official was quoted as saying that Pyongyang would refuse to discuss the nuclear issue in Cabinet-level talks in Seoul next week.

"The nuclear issue should be resolved through talks between the Democratic People's Republic of Korea (North Korea) and the United States," Cho Chung-han, deputy bureau chief of the Secretariat of the Committee for the Peaceful Reunification of the Fatherland, was quoted as saying. "It cannot be resolved by South Koreans."

Mr. Losyukov, the Russian envoy, said that Washington-Pyongyang negotiations should be opened.

But Russia's Interfax news agency later quoted the Foreign Ministry's public affairs office as saying Moscow did not intend to play mediator. China has offered to host such talks. "Dialogue between the United States and the DPRK is necessary," Losyukov said, referring to North Korea by the initials of its formal name. Mr. Losyukov said it was a time for "quiet diplomacy" and added that it "is important to refrain from loud statements and from further antagonism of the sides." South Korea today accepted North Korea's proposal on opening talks Jan. 22-25 on connecting cross-border railways and roads. The talks, which will overlap with North-South meetings in Seoul, will take place in Pyongyang. — AP

SECRET

JAN 20 2003

Our army is prepared for the worst, says S. Korea

Beijing/Seoul: South Korea said on Thursday it was prepared for a worst-case scenario that included war on the peninsula if diplomacy failed to resolve the crisis over the North's suspected nuclear weapons ambitions.

At the same time, the top US envoy for Asia said in Beijing the whole international community agreed that the Korean peninsula must be free of nuclear weapons but held out little hope of a speedy outcome.

"It's going to be a slow process to make sure we achieve this in the right way," US Assistant Secretary of State James Kelly said after talks with Chinese leaders.

Mr Kelly spoke hours after Pyongyang scornfully dismissed as "pie in the sky" US offers of possible food and energy aid if the impoverished North would halt its nuclear programme.

In Seoul, South Korean defence minister Lee Jun told parliament that war would be unavoidable if diplomacy failed. "If the North Korean nuclear problem cannot be solved peacefully and Ameri-

"If the North Korean nuclear problem cannot be solved peacefully and America attacks North Korea, war on the Korean peninsula will be unavoidable"

ca attacks North Korea, war on the Korean peninsula will be unavoidable." Lee said, adding, our army is prepared for the worst-case scenario".

Despite Pyongyang's hard-line public declarations, however, Japan's foreign minister and South Korea's president-elect said they saw signs it wanted talks to end the crisis. Mr Kelly, flitting between Asian capitals to drum up support for Washington's stance on North Korea, said he had held "very good" talks with officials from China—one of Pyongyang's few allies.

"We're going to have to talk more together and communicate with other people, including North Korea, very, very clearly, so we all agree on the end results," he said.

Mr Kelly left China for

Singapore as Russia's chief Asia expert, Alexander Losyukov, prepared to fly to Beijing and then to Pyongyang where he was to discuss Moscow's proposals for ending the crisis.

Meanwhile, in a major shift in his approach to North Korea since the crisis erupted, US President George W. Bush offered on Tuesday to revive a stalled initiative to give North Korea food and energy aid if it abandoned its pursuit of a nuclear arsenal.

North Korea—officially called the Democratic People's Republic of Korea (DPRK)—scorned the offer, saying Washington was trying to trick it into disarming.

"The US loudmouthed supply of energy and food aid are like a painted cake pie in the sky as they are possible only after the DPRK is totally disarmed," said the foreign ministry statement.

White House spokesman Ari Fleischer dismissed the statement as unhelpful bluster. "We still have not received any official word from North Korea," he told reporters. Reuters

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1 10:00 am

China ready to mediate

Press Trust of India

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BEIJING, Jan. 15. — China today said it is opposed to a nuclearised Korean peninsula and offered to coordinate with all parties to peacefully resolve the North Korean nuclear stand-off.

“China supports the denuclearisation of the Korean peninsula and the maintenance of peace and stability there, and is not willing to see any nuclear weapons to appear on the peninsula,” Chinese vice foreign minister Mr Li Zhaoxing said during talks with US Assistant Secretary of State Mr James Kelly.

Mr Li said that the North Korean nuclear issue should be resolved peacefully through dialogue. He said China does not support Pyongyang's withdrawal from the NPT and that Beijing was willing to coordinate with all parties concerned for an early peaceful solution of the issue, the official Xinhua news agency quoted Mr Li as telling Mr Kelly.

China, North Korea's closest ally, offered to host direct talks between Pyongyang and Washington yesterday if both sides agreed to engage in a dialogue to peacefully resolve the North Korean nuclear issue.

Mr Kelly, America's top envoy for



Mr James Kelly talks to the press before meeting Mr Li Zhaoxing in Beijing on Wednesday. — AFP

North-east Asian and Pacific Affairs, said Washington is “seriously” concerned over the North Korean nuclear issue.

The American diplomat, who arrived here last night for talks with senior Chinese officials expressed serious concern over the increased tension following North Korea's withdrawal from the NPT, the report said.

Military exercises: China's armed forces have conducted large-scale military maneuvers seeking to improve cooperation by land, air and seaforces under future-war conditions, state media said today. The exercise came amid growing tensions on the Korean peninsula, the China News Service said. The news agency gave no further details about the number or type of troops involved.

Blindsiding Bush

4x8 Pyongyang holds the cards 15/1

Theodore Roosevelt once enjoined American administrations to speak softly but carry a big stick. The ideologically driven Bush administration is pursuing exactly the opposite course vis-a-vis North Korea, which may appropriately be summed up as speak harshly but have no policy. While the administration's hardliners are focussing on Iraq, threatening to go to war even though UN weapons inspectors haven't found anything conclusive, North Korea has walked out of all agreements that could place any limits on its nuclear weapons capabilities. Pyongyang's provocations have come thick and fast, in a manner that must make President Saddam Hussein turn green with envy. It threw out its own weapons inspectors, recommissioned its Yongbyon nuclear reactor which can be used to extract plutonium for a bomb, walked out of the nuclear non-proliferation treaty, is threatening to restart missile tests, and announced its intention to wipe out other nations which infringe on its sovereignty. Pyongyang has all but declared itself a nuclear power. Its acquiring nuclear weapons could prompt Seoul and Tokyo to go nuclear, which would cause Beijing to feel more threatened. A sequence of events which would be radically destabilising for and trigger a nuclear arms race through all of Asia, not exactly helpful for Washington's interests either as its troops stationed in Japan and South Korea would be in Pyongyang's sights.

The last time Pyongyang had mounted a similar threat, in 1994, President Clinton had been ready to launch a military strike; this time, all Washington can manage is a weak warning that missile testing would further isolate the regime from the international community. As if President Kim Jong-Il cares his anachronistic regime is pretty isolated anyway, in fact chooses to be so, knowing that too much contact with the outside world could herald its downfall. Washington is clearly unprepared to be involved in military operations against Baghdad and Pyongyang simultaneously. Neither will economic sanctions work against a country where an estimated two million have already died of famine over the last decade. Pyongyang has said, though, that it will forswear the nuclear option if Washington is willing to sign a mutual non-aggression pact with it, which would seem to be the obvious way out of this difficult situation. Not surprisingly, assistant secretary of state James Kelly has now backtracked on the official US position, saying it is now considering talks and energy aid with Pyongyang. The question arises then, why doesn't Washington offer negotiations with Saddam Hussein with whom, substantively, the issues are the same? Even before a shot has been fired in Iraq, Washington's hawkish policies have placed it in a bind. Its credibility has been hurt even in South Korea where there are large anti-American demonstrations. President Bush needs to rethink his unilateralism with respect to Iraq.

THE STATESMAN

15 JAN 2003

N Korean crisis is India's headache too

JASJIT SINGH

NEW DELHI, JANUARY 13

NORTH Korea may be geographically far away, but the series of developments climaxed by North Korea's withdrawal from the NPT and announcement of restarting nuclear programme and missile tests has far reaching implications for India and its security. North Korea is believed to possess about two nuclear weapons, and would now be capable of producing four or more (plutonium-based) bombs this year. To start with, the events of the past three months re-emphasise the role of nuclear weapons for coercive political role as indeed we saw Pakistan trying to do on more than one occasion. Even in the face of unambiguous threats Washington is severely constrained in use of force against the "evil axis" state. And US options have been progressively narrowing due to short-term concessions to past proliferation as we have seen in the case of Pakistan.

"What North Korea shows is that deterrence is working," said Professor Joseph S. Nye Jr., former US Assistant Secretary of Defence last week. He added, "The only problem is that we (the US) are the ones who are being deterred." Secondly, The axis of nuclear-missile proliferation is now clear and extends from Pakistan-China further to North Korea. It will remain a matter for study and speculation how much of North Korea's strategic capabilities (like the 1,500-km ballistic missile transferred to Pakistan) came from China which (according to Pak-

istan government) earlier had supplied missiles directly to Pakistan. Pakistan's nuclear weapon design had reportedly come from China and Dr. Samar Mubarakmand, the nuclear scientist in charge of Chagai tests in May 1998, had stated one year later that they had tested a "nuclear device" in 1983. The nuclear test

in Lop Nor in China's nuclear test range at that time was attended by General Yakub Khan, the then foreign minister under Zia ul-Haq. Now evidence has emerged to indicate that Pakistan has provided the technology to North Korea to build nuclear bombs based on highly-enriched uranium technology. What direc-

tion could this cosy relationship move in future?

Missile technology in North Korea and nuclear weapon technology in Pakistan have reached a certain level of autonomous capabilities that would allow them to proceed with minimal further assistance from any other source. Both North Korea

96-7 14/1
and Pakistan are not party to NPT, and nor are they bound by any international treaty or agreement to stop them from proliferating these capabilities to third countries, and among themselves. Both have a record of proliferation to other countries. In a way their capabilities are complementary: North Korea

stronger in ballistic missiles and plutonium extraction from spent fuel for bombs, and Pakistan stronger of the two in highly-enriched uranium for nuclear weapons. Half-a-dozen missing nuclear scientists from Pakistan for the past three years could be in North Korea, or some newly emerging nuclear nation. A North Korean merchant ship quarantined in Kandla port a few years ago provided enough evidence of what was already going on. Only a few weeks ago NATO warships intercepted a North Korean consignment of ballistic missiles, which was later allowed to go its destination in Yemen. In fact, the deployment of missile defences would lead to further spread of nuclear-missile capabilities worldwide by countries seeking to oppose US hegemony. And Pakistan, seeing itself as a champion of the Islamic world has sought a role labelled "strategic defiance" by the then army chief General Aslam Beg. Of greater immediate concern to us would be the potential supply of plutonium to Pakistan for building smaller size warheads to be fitted on ballistic missiles. Pakistan has a small plutonium-based nuclear reactor (supplied by China) which is outside international safeguards. This would provide the fig leaf for accumulation of plutonium from other sources to expand the nuclear arsenal. Pakistan claims to be developing even longer-range (3,000-km plus) ballistic missiles (which would cover even Israel). But this could only be done with assistance from North Korea which has been engaged in building such a missile for some time and even tested one in 1998 across Japan.

Washington dangles energy aid carrot

PAUL ECKERT

SEOUL, JANUARY 13

THE top US envoy for Asia said on Monday that Washington was willing to talk to North Korea and would even address its energy shortages if the nuclear crisis could be resolved. Washington has insisted that it is not prepared to negotiate new terms to resolve the crisis, but US Assistant Secretary of State James Kelly, visiting South Korea, appeared to be offering an inducement to Pyongyang's rulers.

"We are of course willing to talk," he said. "Once we get beyond nuclear weapons, there may be opportunities with the US, with private investors, with other countries to help North Korea in the energy area." He was addressing a news conference after his talks with President-elect Roh Moo-Hyun. "We're going to be talking here with government people about some of the best ways to do that," he said.

Kelly called the hardline anti-US rhetoric and threats to restart missile tests "a little mystifying" and repeated US statements that Pyongyang's diplomats covered no new ground in



US Asst Secy of State James Kelly with South Korean Foreign Minister Choi Sung-Hong in Seoul. Reuters

weekend talks in New Mexico with the former US ambassador to the UN, Bill Richardson. On Sunday, Richardson urged the Bush administration to open talks with Pyongyang to defuse the nuclear crisis. "What I think the administration needs to do, with all due respect, is just pick up the phone," Richardson said on ABC's *This Week*.

Roh explained to Kelly that his incoming government would not accept a nuclear North Korea and wanted to play a leading role in crafting a peaceful solution to the crisis, his aides said. Roh, who takes office on Febru-

ary 25, underscored his support for the bilateral military alliance with the US.

Meanwhile, as Russia stepped up efforts to resolve the international standoff over North Korea's decision to reopen its nuclear facilities, Pyongyang denied on Sunday that it ever told US officials it was conducting a secret nuclear programme. In October, US officials had announced that North Korea had acknowledged carrying on the secret programme based on highly enriched uranium.

When the US cut off energy aid in response, North Korea

moved to restart a nuclear reactor that can produce weapons-grade plutonium, setting off a confrontation that has escalated dramatically.

But the Pyongyang regime said on Sunday, through its official newspaper, *Rodong Sinmun*, that the US claim that North Korea admitted to the secret programme "is an invention fabricated by the US with sinister intentions," a South Korean news agency reported. The statement may have been an effort to sharpen divisions between South Korea and the US amidst talks between Kelly and Roh.

On Sunday, Pyongyang called on Koreans in the South to join the struggle against the US, which has 37,000 troops in the South to protect it from invasion from the North. The North, in turn, has thousands of loaded artillery pieces aimed at Seoul and half of its Army is deployed within 65 km of the demilitarised zone dividing the peninsula, the world's most heavily fortified border.

But Koreans in the South have lived with the threat for 50 years and appear sanguine about the current standoff. —Reuters

U.S. ready for talks with N. Korea

By P. S. Suryanarayana

SINGAPORE, JAN. 13. The United States Assistant Secretary of State for East Asian and Pacific Affairs, James Kelly, today held out the promise of a two-stage process of addressing the international crisis over North Korea's withdrawal from the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT) and its declaration of intent to resume test flights of ballistic missiles that could deliver nuclear weapons.

The first step in the two-stage process will consist of parleys with the Democratic People's Republic of Korea (DPRK or the North) about its "response" to the worldwide demands that it eliminate its nuclear weapons.

The second phase is to address the DPRK's energy concerns "once we get beyond (the) nuclear weapons (issue)".

Mr. Kelly, now in Seoul to consult America's allies and interlocutor states in Pyongyang's neighbourhood, said the U.S. was willing to "talk" to the North Koreans about "their response to the international community, particularly with respect to (the) elimination of (their) nuclear weapons".

The purpose of his current discussions in South Korea was to explore "some of the best ways to do that kind of talking" with the DPRK, he said.

Although Mr. Kelly spoke of possibilities rather than certainties at this delicate stage of sorting out the nuclear puzzle, he made it clear that the U.S. did not want to slam the diplomatic door on the DPRK's face.

There was no immediate reaction from North Korea, which, however, was now searching for a new "crack in the U.S. door" of nuclear protectionism.

In the early 1990s, Pyongyang had for the first time seen a "crack in the U.S. door" (Robert Manning's phraseology) and en-



South Korean plainclothes policemen take away a student protesting against the visit of the U.S. Assistant Secretary of State, James Kelly, near the U.S. embassy in Seoul on Monday. — AP

tered into the Agreed Framework accord with the U.S. in 1994.

Articulating the new and evolving U.S. approach of telling the North Koreans about the basics in Washington's present thinking, Mr. Kelly underscored the importance of helping the DPRK tide over its huge energy crisis only after steps are initiated to "eliminate" Pyongyang's nuclear weapons.

On the energy-related second phase too, of engaging North Korea, the American envoy minced no words. "It may well be ... once we get beyond nuclear weapons, there may be opportunities with the U.S., with private investors in other countries, to help North Korea in the energy area".

The linkage between the DPRK's nuclear

weapons capabilities, on the one side, and the energy needs of the North Koreans, on the other front, has much to do with the constant refrain from Pyongyang that its latest actions should be seen in the overall context of its compulsions to "produce electricity" by using nuclear reactors that could yield weapons-grade plutonium.

Mr. Kelly today met South Korea's President-elect, Roh Moo-hyun, and other leaders in Seoul.

The current indication is that he will travel to China and Japan too, during his current visit to East Asia.

Mr. Roh told Mr. Kelly about the need to resolve the North Korean nuclear issue peacefully. The bottom line in Mr. Roh's thinking, as conveyed to his U.S. interlocutor, is that South Korea cannot tolerate or accept the North's attempts to possess nuclear weapons.

He conveyed South Korea's suggestion that the U.S. could consider giving the North some "security guarantee" other than a bilateral non-aggression pact as suggested by Pyongyang.

THE HINDU

34 JAN 2003

Pyongyang in punishing mood

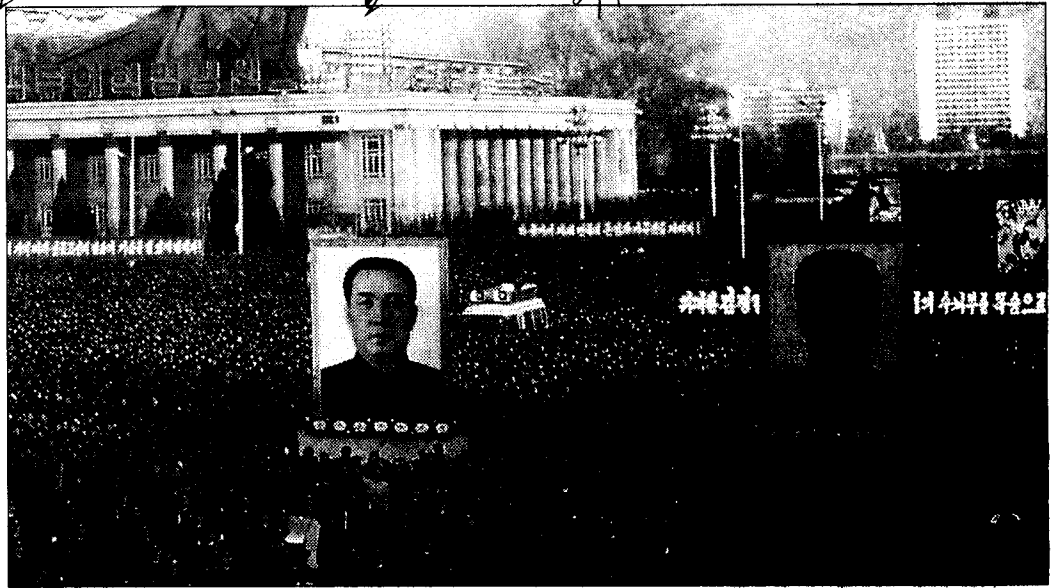
Agence France Presse

SEOUL, Jan. 12. — North Korea today threatened to “mercilessly punish” the United States if its withdrawal from a key anti-nuclear pact was met with sanctions and called on the Korean people to unite against their common enemy.

After sparking outrage by withdrawing from the nuclear non-proliferation treaty (NPT) on Friday and then threatening to restart missile tests, the North showed no sign of trying to ease tensions over the crisis.

Instead, in a series of editorials in the ruling communist party’s Rodong Sinmun newspaper, Pyongyang sought to blame the United States for the current standoff, claiming that the latter was planning an invasion.

“If the US and its followers...challenge North Korea over its withdrawal from the NPT with more pressure and sanctions, it will counter them with a stronger self-defensive measure,” one editorial warned. A second commentary also accused the US of snubbing North Korean calls for a non-aggression pact in recent



More than one million people thronged Kim Il-Sung Square in Pyongyang on Saturday where the nation’s Communist leadership defended the decision to withdraw from the NPT. — AFP

weeks and accused the United States of countering its patient efforts for negotiations with the threat of “blockade” and “military punishment”.

In a separate appeal to South Koreans, the regime’s mouthpiece called for a united battle against the United States.

Chyung Dae-Chul, the envoy of South Korea’s President-

elect Roh Moo-Hyun, denounced North Korea today for using dangerous brinkmanship to try to gain the upper hand in negotiations with the US.

He also urged the North to reverse its decision to pull out of the NPT.

USA warning: The USA warned North Korea yesterday that its threat to end a morato-

rium on missile testing “would further isolate the regime from the international community.” The warning came after New Mexico Governor Bill Richardson held private talks with two North Korean envoys at his Santa Fe residence in an effort to diffuse the present crisis, adds another report from Washington.

1 3 JAN 2003

THE STATESMAN

N. Korea threatens to revive tests

By P. S. Suryanarayana

SINGAPORE, JAN. 11 North Korea today continued its course of aggressive diplomacy by expressing readiness to consider resuming the missile flight tests that have remained suspended for nearly two years.

This was indicated by the North Korean Ambassador to China, Choe Jin-Su, in Beijing today, even as the U.S. maintained that it would pursue a "very steady and steely diplomacy" to resolve the crisis over Pyongyang's decision to quit the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT).

The North Korean envoy said at a news conference in Beijing that "we believe we cannot go along with the 'self-imposed' missile moratorium any longer" because "all agreements have been nullified by the United States side". The Ambassador justified this new move by arguing that North Korea "must possess the means to deter a nuclear attack by the United States". The translated comment can apply to both the flight testing of ballistic missiles and the production of nuclear weapons.

This diplomatic salvo acquired a new dimension in the context of an assertion by Pak Gil Yon, Ambassador of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea (DPRK) at the United Nations, that it would be a "declaration of war" if any NPT-related sanctions were to be slapped on Pyongyang by the Security Council.

The DPRK's calibrated ways of keeping the nuclear stakes high were, however, thrown into some confusion. Thae Hyong-Chol, President of North Korea's Academy of Social Sciences, was quoted by the country's official media as saying that, "We do not have any nuclear weapons and nor do we have any will or need to make them."

Without going into such niceties, the North Korean Government underlined that



SHOW OF SUPPORT: A large portrait of the North Korean leader, Kim Jong Il, looms over tens of thousands of people who packed Pyongyang's main plaza, the Kim Il Sung Square, on Saturday to support the nation's withdrawal from the global nuclear treaty. — AP

it was merely lifting the 'moratorium' which was in place as regards the question of Pyongyang's withdrawal from the NPT.

The complicated phraseology of this kind was used to notify the U.N. that Pyongyang was at present withdrawing from the NPT for a second time after having done so in 1993 only to rejoin it in the following year by imposing a 'moratorium' on the option of a pull-out.

The North Korean statement said, too, that "if the U.S. drops its hostile policy to stifle the DPRK and stops its (Washington's) nuclear threat to the DPRK, the DPRK may

prove, through a separate verification between the DPRK and the U.S., that (Pyongyang) does not make any nuclear weapon". While the U.S. and the International Atomic Energy Agency sought at one level to decipher and defuse Pyongyang's moves, North Korea's neighbours swung into considerable diplomatic action at another level.

Besides the Russo-Japanese summit, South Korea and Japan consulted each other, even as the U.S. President got in touch with his Chinese counterpart and the French Foreign Minister held talks in Seoul.

THE HINDU
1993

N Korea withdraws from NPT

The Korea Herald/ANN

SEOUL, Jan. 10. — North Korea announced yesterday its withdrawal from the nuclear Non-proliferation Treaty but claimed that it had no intention to develop nuclear weapons.

"The government of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea in a statement today declared its withdrawal from the Nuclear Non-proliferation Treaty and its total freedom from the binding force of the safeguards accord with the International Atomic Energy Agency," said a North Korean statement carried by its official Korean Central News Agency. "Though we are pulling out of the NPT we have no intention to produce nuclear weapons and our nuclear activities at this stage will be confined only to peaceful purposes such as the production of electricity."

Shortly after the disclosure, an official at the North Korean Embassy in Beijing said the country will reconsider its decision to pull out of the nuclear arms control treaty if the USA resumes fuel shipments.

The announcement dampened hopes for the resumption of official talks between Pyongyang and Washington in the nuclear standoff.

North Korea's latest ac-



KEEPING TRACK: Two South Korean soldiers patrol along a railroad link leading to North Korea in the demilitarised zone between the two countries on Friday. — AFP

nuclear arms control pact," a senior unification ministry official said.

"The withdrawal from the NPT is a legitimate self-defence measure taken against the US moves to stifle the DPRK (North Korea)," the statement said.

The South Korean government convened an emergency National Security Council meeting yesterday to discuss the North Korean announcement. President Kim Dae-jung said the situation has deteriorated but that he believes the issue should be resolved diplomatically and through talks between the South and the North. President-elect Roh Moo-hyan expressed "strong regrets" about the North's action and urged it to reverse its decision.

Clinton envoy: Two North Korean envoys to the UN have been cleared to meet ex-President Bill Clinton's diplomatic sharpshooter Mr Bill Richardson, US officials said yesterday, adding a new twist to a simmering nuclear crisis, adds ANN from Washington.

North Korea's ambassador, Mr Pak Gil-Yon, contacted Mr Richardson, now governor of New Mexico, who made a trademark of negotiating with dictators and strongmen from Mr Saddam Hussein to Mr Fidel Castro, to organise a meeting, White House spokesman Mr Ari Fleischer said.

tion is seen to align with its decision so as to pressure the USA to come to the negotiation table, rather than accusing Washington to renege on its promise. "The North revealed the same diplomatic negotia-

N-CRISIS / WORLD POWERS STEP UP PRESSURE

N. Korea agrees to hold talks with South

10/1
SEOUL, JAN. 9. As diplomatic pressure for dialogue over its nuclear weapons programme mounted around the world, North Korea agreed on Thursday to attend Cabinet-level talks with South Korea — a meeting that could help solve the dangerous stand-off.

Pyongyang said it wanted the talks held on January 21-24, a week later than the South had proposed, according to South Korea's Unification Ministry.

The North did not explain the delay. However, it would allow the communist regime to digest what a top U.S. diplomat says during a planned visit to Seoul next week.

The South, which will host the Cabinet-level conference in Seoul, said the nuclear dispute will be on the agenda.

The talks would be the ninth since a historic summit of the leaders of the two Koreas in 2000. They also would be the highest level of direct communication between the two Governments since the North's secret weapons programme was revealed in October.

Meanwhile, other countries pushed hard for a diplomatic solution.



A South Korean man, whose former hometown was in North Korea, writes a message of peace on a Unification flag at the inter-Korean border of Imjingak on Thursday. — AP

France's Foreign Minister was in Beijing petitioning China — one of North Korea's few remaining allies. The French Pres-

ident, Jacques Chirac, has said the North has "no other choice" but to abandon its nuclear programme.

The Japanese Prime Minister also left on Thursday for Russia, another North Korean ally.

Although it says it is willing to talk with the South, Pyongyang has not yet replied to a separate offer for dialogue with the United States, which it accuses

of plotting to attack it, "increasing the danger of a nuclear war on the Korean Peninsula."

Previously, the U.S. said it would not talk to North Korea until it scrapped its nuclear weapons programme. — AP

Pyongyang says economic sanctions mean war ✓

North Korea talks tough

PAULECKERT *h Am*

Seoul, Jan. 7 (Reuters): North Korea said today economic sanctions over its nuclear programme would mean war and urged the US to sit down and talk, just hours after Washington signalled that dialogue was still an option.

President George W. Bush, who has branded the Communist state part of an "axis of evil" along with Iraq and Iran, said yesterday he remained open to dialogue but White House officials said the North must first end efforts to develop atomic weapons.

Pyongyang's KCNA news agency denounced the US' brief seizure last month of a shipload of North Korean scud missiles bound for Yemen, calling it "part of the US-tailored containment strategy against the DPRK (North Korea).

"The strategy means total economic sanctions aimed at isolating and stifling the DPRK," the agency said today.

"Sanctions mean a war and the war knows no mercy. The US should opt for dialogue with the DPRK, not for war, clearly aware that it will have to pay a very high price for such reckless acts," KCNA added.

A South Korean Unification Ministry official said that North Korea customarily emits shrill rhetoric, but that its words were being watched carefully because of its nuclear brinkmanship.

"People do not think that there is going to be a war," said the official. "But this time, North Korea's nuclear threat can be taken seriously because the North has broken its promises to the US and the international community."

A South Korean presidential envoy headed to Washington in a fresh bid to defuse the crisis that flared up last month, when Pyongyang expelled UN nuclear inspectors and vowed to restart a reactor idled under a 1994 pact which froze its nuclear pro-



Kim Jong-il with Korean People's Army personnel in Pyongyang. (AFP)

gramme in exchange for oil from the West.

National security adviser Yim Sung-joon, was expected to suggest that the US give North Korea security assurances and promises to resume energy supplies in return for the North agreeing again to abandon its nuclear programme.

The UN nuclear watchdog, meanwhile, gave Pyongyang a last chance to readmit inspectors expelled last week.

Meeting in Vienna, the governing board of the International Atomic Energy Agency

(IAEA) passed a resolution warning North Korea to cooperate with its inspectors or be reported to the UN Security Council for breaching nuclear safeguards. North Korea has yet to respond to the IAEA ultimatum. South Korea joined the US and Japan in urging Pyongyang to heed the IAEA's latest decision.

"The government hopes North Korea will not miss the cherished opportunity for a diplomatic and peaceful solution to its nuclear problems," the foreign ministry said in a statement.

8/1
"North Korea should respect the IAEA's resolution and take the responsibility and do its duty as a member of the Non-Proliferation Treaty by implementing it right away."

Japan's Kyodo news agency reported today that a document distributed to the 35 member countries of the IAEA said there was a strong possibility that North Korea had acquired a small amount of plutonium since it removed seals from the reactor last month.

The UN nuclear watchdog said in the document that the amount of nuclear material was too small to produce a nuclear bomb but was enough to produce a so-called "dirty bomb" which could scatter radioactive material when detonated, Kyodo said.

Washington insists that the North end its quest for nuclear arms. Pyongyang demands that the US, which keeps 37,000 troops in the South, sign a non-aggression pact.

Bush said yesterday the US would talk with North Korea but a White House official said dialogue could start only after the North dismantles its weapon programmes. "We'll have dialogue. We've had dialogue with North Korea," Bush said after a cabinet meeting. He did not elaborate on the kind of dialogue he envisaged but said the US had no intention of invading North Korea. Washington has previously ruled out immediate negotiations with North Korea while saying that low-level contacts continued through the North Korean UN mission in New York.

8 JAN 2003

Sanctions mean war: Pyongyang

Straits Times/ ANN 8/1 6/13/03 5/2

SEOUL, Jan. 7. — North Korea today warned the world against leveling sanctions against it saying that “sanctions mean a war, and war knows no mercy”. The announcement, carried by the state-run North Korean News Agency, comes a day after the UN’s nuclear watchdog delayed a step towards sanctioning the isolated country over its nuclear programmes.

The International Atomic Energy Agency yesterday said it would give North Korea a second chance to drop its nuclear development and comply with international agreements before referring to the matter to the Security Council.

Mr George W Bush had said he hoped to resolve the stand-off peacefully and reiterated that the USA had no plans to invade it. But he also sternly called on Pyongyang to abide by a 1994 anti-nuclear deal with Washington. “I believe this will be resolved peacefully and I believe it can be resolved diplomatically... Talking is one thing, but we expect people to honour obligations.”

Today, North Korea demanded that the USA apologise for what it described as “piracy” in the seizure of a North Korean ship carrying missiles to Yemen. It described the seizure as a part of a US strategy of “total economic sanctions aimed at isolating and stifling” the Stalinist country.

Last month, US and Spanish warships seized a North Korean ship carrying Scud missiles in the Arabian Sea. They later allowed it to sail after receiving assurances that the Scuds would not be transferred elsewhere in the tense Persian Gulf region.

In the same message, North Korea also criticised the US for portraying it as an international missile threat and retorted: “The US tops the world’s list in producing and selling the weapons of mass destruction.”

North Korea said it had the right to produce missiles to “protect itself from constant military threat posed by the USA”. KCNA added that it has never concealed the fact that it has been exporting them for “commercial purpose”, and denied that it put the world at risk. Pyongyang urged the USA to “opt for dialogue” in defusing the current stand-off.

THE STATESMAN

8 JAN 2003

Twin spectres of a deadly ballet

RICHARD LLOYD PARRY
THE TIMES, LONDON

PANMUNJOM, Jan. 4. — On the border between North and South Korea, the Cold War rumbles on, as grim and absurd as ever. In Panmunjom, at their only meeting point along the 150-mile-long demilitarised zone, soldiers of South Korea and the USA face the North Korean People's Army in a weird, deadly ballet that has not changed since the 1950s.

From the North, vast speaker systems bellow forth propaganda in praise of the country's "Great Leader", Mr Kim Jong Il. On the other side of the line, South Korean soldiers strike martial arts poses and wear dark glasses on the darkest of days in an effort to intimidate the enemy.

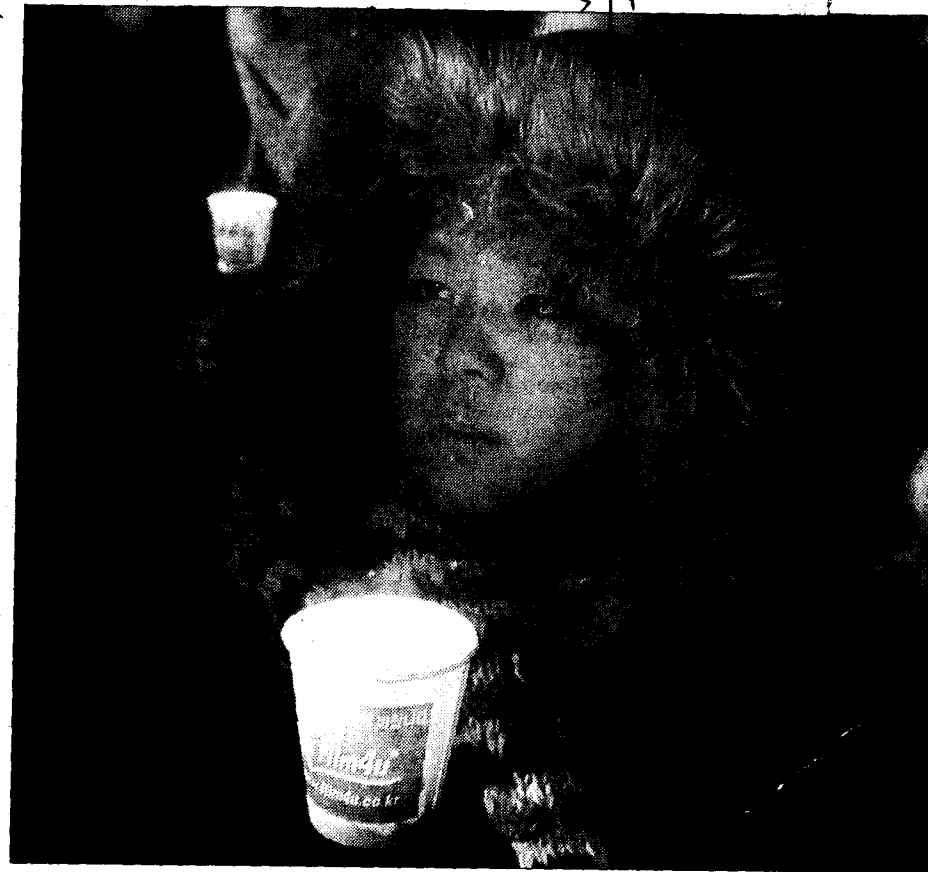
The American troops sleep in their uniforms with rifles at their side, prepared at any moment for war. "We're at the highest level of alert we can be, short of firing bullets," Mr Brian Davis, an American army captain, said yesterday as snow fell on the trenches and the gun emplacements. "Every day we face a real threat. It's been that way for half a century and nothing has changed of late."

But two miles to the west, a different version of North-South relations is being

NO POLITICS WITH FOOD

WASHINGTON, Jan. 4. — The USA has become one of the largest donors of food to North Korea, sending shiploads of corn, rice, flour and other food despite misgivings about where some donations end up.

The Bush administration intends to continue the assistance, officials say, in spite of those concerns as well as recently renewed tensions over nuclear weapons. The USA has given 1.9 million tonnes of food since 1995. — AP



A CANDLE IN THE WIND: A demonstrator at an anti-US rally in Seoul on Saturday. — AFP

acted out. There, shiny new railway tracks extend towards the border with the North. Progress on the northern side has been slower, but teams of workers have already laid the foundations of the new line. In the South, an entire station has been built, and Korean and English signs hopefully spell out the North Korean destinations that will be accessible when — or if — the two railways are joined.

Work has been on since September. Completion of the railway, along with two

trans-Korean roads, is tantalisingly close.

The unchanging grimness of Panmunjom, and the excitement of the development of the railway crossing, symbolise two views of North Korea and its future.

The North Korea perceived by Mr George Bush is the country visible at Panmunjom — aggressive, tricky and untrustworthy. In his State of the Union address a year ago, President Bush described the Pyongyang regime as part of the "axis of evil", and much that has

happened since seems to bear him out.

In October, the North all but admitted having a secret uranium programme, in violation of its 1994 agreement to forgo all nuclear activity. Last month, it went further, starting up a suspended plutonium reactor and expelling the UN officials who were monitoring it. Mr Kim Jong Il fits the stereotype of the evil dictator, a man who protects his own power while his people go hungry.

"We've got a great heart," Mr Bush said this week. "But I have no heart for somebody who starves his folks."

But the South Korean soldiers and construction workers on the new railway line see a different North Korea: a regime more pathetic than dangerous, financially as well as morally bankrupt, resorting to desperate measures to stave off its inevitable demise. In South Korea, the so-called "Sunshine Policy" of President Kim Dae-jung, supported by the president-elect, Mr Roh Moo Hyun, has been to accept this decline, to offer a fraternal embrace and to bring North Korea out of the cold with tolerance not confrontation.

SOUTH SHOWS CONCERN

PANMUNJOM, Jan. 4. — The incoming South Korean president will ask the USA to promise not to attack North Korea in return for an abandonment of the communist state's nuclear programme. Mr Roh Moo-hyun's attempt to end the Korean deadlock, outlined by the President-elect's aides yesterday, will require a written security guarantee from the US government if North Korea publicly renounces its nuclear activities.

But the USA rejected a new North Korean demand for a non-aggression treaty issued through Pyongyang's ambassador to Beijing, and it remains doubtful whether either side is in a mood to compromise. — The Times

North Korea presses for a new deal

By P. S. Suryanarayana

SINGAPORE, JAN. 3. North Korea today outlined its diplomatic case for a virtual new deal with the United States to sort out the row over its 'sovereign' right to possess nuclear weapons. Aware of the need to influence international opinion as the first step in any such game plan, the North Korean Ambassador to China, Choe Jin-su, told journalists in Beijing today that the nuclear-arms controversy should be resolved by Pyongyang and Washington themselves.

However, even as he underlined the bilateral nature of this dispute, he left the diplomatic door ajar for possible "outside mediation" that might help bring the two antagonists together for renewed talks.

Any such externally-facilitated bilateral parleys should, nonetheless, remain essentially unconditional in scope, the envoy indicated.

The Pyongyang thinking is an answer to the indication by the U.S. President, George W. Bush, that he might still give diplomacy a big chance to help him de-nuclearise the Democratic People's Republic of Korea (DPRK). It is in this context that the South Korean President-elect, Roh Moo-hyun, today offered to intervene in the U.S.-DPRK dispute.

Mr. Roh indicated in Seoul

that he might "fashion a compromise draft" that could be discussed and suitably agreed upon by the U.S. and North Korea.

The idea was to encourage both the U.S. President and the Chairman of North Korea's National Defence Commission,

Tri-nation meet

WASHINGTON, JAN 3. Top officials from South Korea, Japan and the United States will confer in Washington next week on how to defuse the nuclear crisis with North Korea, the State Department said today. The Assistant Secretary of State, James Kelly, will host counterparts in a meeting of the so-called Trilateral Coordination and Oversight Group (TCOG) in which the allies seek to frame a unified policy towards the Stalinist state.

Mr. Kelly will leave for Asia in a visit expected to include meetings with aides to the South Korean President-elect, Roh Moo-Hyun, after the talks, a State Department spokesman said — AFP

Kim Jong-il, to "make concessions".

In any case, diplomatic observers in the region tend to believe that Mr. Roh himself may not have yet given a definitive shape to the 'concessions' he is thinking about.

However, a strand of 'informed' speculation that did the rounds in Seoul today is that the present South Korean Government, in conjunction with Mr. Roh who will assume presidency next month, has now begun to consider suggesting that Washington spell out a firm commitment to guarantee the DPRK's sovereign status.

The stated objective is to put North Korea at ease without the U.S. itself having to downplay or discard its insistence that Pyongyang de-nuclearise its "atomic energy programme" as regards the scope for weaponisation.

Even if the U.S. were to enshrine the proposed commitment in the form of a "written assurance", it will not qualify for the status of a treaty of any kind, it is pointed out.

Apparently aware of the South Korean initiative, the North Korean envoy in Beijing laid down his country's maximal position. Mr. Choe insisted that any unconditional talks between Washington and Pyongyang, if facilitated by other power(s), should still be linked to the existing ground realities.

The North Korean view, in this regard, is that the U.S., with its "Cold War style thinking", is 'threatening' Pyongyang with the possible use of nuclear weapons against it. According to Mr. Choe, America's "hostile stance" towards the DPRK is "clear as daylight".

THE HINDU

JAN 2003

4 JAN 2003

N. Korea willing to talk to US on defusing N-crisis

Beijing: North Korea said on Friday it was willing to talk to the United States and the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) to defuse a showdown over its nuclear programme.

The reclusive communist state's ambassador to China, Choe Jin Su, told a news conference in Beijing the North's decision to reactivate the nuclear programme was an act of self-defence and accused Washington of refusing to discuss the crisis.

South Korea's Yonhap news agency quoted the ambassador as calling for unconditional talks, but the Chinese translation of his comments made no mention of conditions or a lack of them.

"The US alone, with Cold War-style thinking, is threatening us with nuclear weapons," ambassador Choe told reporters. "On this, we were forced to take self-defence measures against this threat for the national dignity and right to existence."

Mr Choe said talks had broken off with Washington about how to safeguard the framework governing its nuclear programme. "This issue should be negotiated in the future," he said. "If time permits, we will discuss with the IAEA." Washington, which announced in October that the North had admitted to a secret nuclear weapons programme, has said it will not reward bad behaviour by holding talks with the North.

"While talking about the peaceful resolution of the nuclear issue, it also rejects dialogue," Mr Choe said of Washington. "On the other hand, we all the time tried to seek dialogue."

North Korea set off alarm bells around the world by starting to reactivate a nuclear complex, mothballed under a 1994 deal with Washington but capable of producing weapons-grade plutonium. Calling for direct talks with Washington and a non-aggression pact, it expelled U.N. inspectors monitoring the complex and said it would no longer abide by the nuclear non-proliferation treaty.

Meanwhile, South Korea may ask the United States to give North Korea a written assurance, guaranteeing its sovereignty if Pyongyang first scraps its nuclear programme, a report said on Friday.

The Seoul government may convey the proposal when representatives from South Korea, the United States and Japan meet in Washington next week for a trilateral coordination and oversight group (TCOG) meeting, the Yonhap news agency reported, quoting government sources.

Diplomatic efforts to bring the North into line gathered pace on Friday with South Korea, which held talks with China on Thursday, sending an envoy to Russia for weekend talks. "We will ask strongly for the Russian government to take an active role in contacts with North Korea to persuade it to come to the table for negotiations that will secure a peaceful resolution of the current situation," an official at the South Korean embassy in Moscow told Reuters.

The Vienna-based IAEA, whose inspectors were expelled by North Korea, also meets on Monday to discuss the crisis. Agencies

S Korea asks China to deal with North

Beijing, January 2 XFL

SOUTH KOREA and North Korea's chief ally China have agreed to use diplomacy to defuse a showdown between the United States and the reclusive communist state over its drive to acquire nuclear weapons.

South Korean Deputy Foreign Minister Lee Tae-shik, who met Chinese Vice Foreign Minister Wang Yi, was believed to have urged China to put more pressure on isolated, impoverished North Korea to halt its weapons programme.

Both sides were tight-lipped afterwards. A Chinese Foreign Ministry statement on Thursday said only: "The two sides exchanged views on bilateral rela-

21/03
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tions and common concerns on North Korea nuclear issues."

South Korean foreign ministry officials however said both sides agreed to use diplomacy to try and end the crisis.

"The two sides hold the common view that the problem should be resolved peacefully through dialogue and agreed to work together to prevent a further escalation of the situation," Shin Jung-seung, director general of the ministry's Asian and Pacific Affairs Bureau, was quoted as saying by the Yonhap news agency.

One diplomatic source said of the meeting: "I think it will help improve the atmosphere to resolve this nuclear issue in a peaceful manner."

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"It is always good for the surrounding countries to discuss this issue. In that sense, I think it may have some influence on North Korea," he said without elaborating.

But North Korea kept the rhetorical fires burning, urging South Koreans to join in resisting the United States and accusing Washington of whipping up the confrontation.

"The United States seeks to escalate military pressure and offensive against the DPRK (North Korea) on the charge of posing a nuclear and missile threat and, furthermore, bring it to its knees by force," the North Korea's official *Minju Josa* newspaper said.

North Korea has started reac-

tivating a nuclear complex, mothballed since 1994, which is capable of producing weapons-grade plutonium and has expelled United Nations inspectors monitoring it.

China, which fought alongside the North during the 1950-53 Korean War, has so far balanced a call for a nuclear-free Korean peninsula with support for dialogue between the United States and North Korea to end the stand-off.

Pyongyang is demanding direct talks with Washington and a non-aggression pact to defuse the crisis over the nuclear programme. Washington has rejected the idea, saying it will not reward bad behaviour.

Reuters

S. Korea puts pressure on North

Beijing, Jan. 1 (Reuters): An envoy from South Korea arrived in China today to urge North Korea's chief ally to put more pressure on the reclusive Communist state to stop its nuclear weapons programme.

Deputy foreign minister Lee Tae-shik flew into Beijing — after US President George W. Bush said Washington and Pyongyang were engaged in “a diplomatic showdown... not a military showdown” — and pledged to work for a peaceful settlement to the dispute.

But North Korea kept the rhetorical fires burning today, calling on its people to build “a powerful nation” under its “army-based policy” and urging South Koreans to join in resisting the US.

The South Korean envoy's visit is part of a flurry of diplomacy aimed at warding off a crisis over North Korea, which Bush has designated part of an “axis of evil” along with Iraq and Iran.

Lee, who is scheduled to meet Chinese vice-foreign minister Wang Yi tomorrow, told Reuters television he planned “to exchange our views with Chinese officials on how to find a constructive way out of this nuclear stalemate”. Diplomats said Lee was expected to urge communist China to play a more active role in ending the standoff.

War shadow on the Korean front

Agence France Presse

SEOUL, Dec. 31. — The South Korean defence minister Mr Lee Jun, today urged the South Korean army to remain alert for a possible confrontation with North Korea amid mounting tension over North Korea's nuclear ambitions.

"We must keep in mind that we are at a transitional stage where South and North Korea are still at military confrontation amid brisk exchanges for reconciliation and cooperation," Lee said in a New Year message to the South Korean people.

"Whatever changes take place in inter-Korean relations, there will be no changes to the mission (the armed forces) have to perform," he added.

In testimony to parliament yesterday, Mr Lee said Seoul was concerned about possible North Korea military provocation amid the escalating nuclear standoff with the USA.

He also addressed anti-US sentiment in South Korea and widespread calls for the pullout of US troops from the Korean peninsula.

The defence minister said he was aware that anti-US protests had found an echo among some officials and

pundits in the USA who had urged Washington to withdraw US forces from South Korea if they were no longer welcome there.

"It is true that some US officials and citizens have

suggested US troops should pull out of South Korea if that is what South Koreans want," Mr Lee said.

"But there was no such discussion between Seoul and Washington, nor was

there any discussion on such a premise."

'NPT can't be honoured'

North Korea cannot honour a key Non-Proliferation pact because it feels threatened

South Korean demonstrators at an anti-US rally in Seoul on Tuesday. Public anger has mounted over the controversial release last month of two US soldiers who had been charged with negligent homicide in the deaths of two teenagers in a road accident in June. — AFP



of the USA," Mr Pak Ui Chun was quoted by the Interfax news agency as saying.

The USA is "threatening us with carrying out a preventive nuclear strike," he said.

by the USA, Pyongyang's ambassador to Russia said today, adds a report from Moscow.

"North Korea cannot currently fulfil its obligations to the Non-Proliferation Treaty and it is the fault

Arms dealing drives Kim's regime

North Korea raised \$560 million from weapons sales in 2001 alone,

writes RICHARD LLOYD PARRY

IF THE United States makes good its threat to intercept North Korea's missile shipments, it will deprive the regime of one of its most important sources of foreign income. The risk is that it may provoke a North Korean attack.

According to US government analysts, North Korea raised \$560 million from weapons sales in 2001 alone. With the sale of drugs and counterfeit dollars, missiles and missile technology have helped to tide North Korea over the economic crisis that has followed the end of the Cold War.

These sums pale in comparison with the largest arms proliferator of all — the USA, which earned \$14 billion from defence sales in 2000.

North Korea's customers are believed to include Iran, Libya, and Syria as well as American allies such as Egypt and Yemen. The trade operates in two directions for example with Pakistan, the US's supposed ally in the campaign

against Osama bin Laden, swapping uranium weapons for North Korean missile technology.

North Korea bought its first Scud missiles during the 1960s from the Soviet Union and China. Over the years, scientists in North Korea enhanced the original Soviet technology, but all were inaccurate, mechanically unreliable, and had ranges of only a few hundred miles.

A breakthrough came with the development of the Nodong missile, with a range of up to 800 miles. It is still an inaccurate weapon, but it could potentially be used to carry nuclear or chemical warheads. This was the weapon said to have been purchased in blueprint form by Benazir Bhutto, then Prime Minister of Pakistan, in 1993.

North Korea's most shocking ballistic gesture came in 1998 when it test-fired a new three-stage long-range missile into the Pacific Ocean. The course of the so-called Taepodong took it over the north coast of Japan; even more alarmingly, its range approached that of an intercontinental ballistic missile.

North Korea's Scuds are able to reach all of South Korea, its Nodongs could attack Japan, and the Taepodong 2, which is believed to be in development, has the potential to threaten Alaska, Hawaii and Australia. — *The Times, London*