

N. Korea in sanctions war cry

B. 10/12
15/12

Tokyo, Dec. 15 (Reuters): North Korea warned Japan today that it would treat economic sanctions as a "declaration of war" and threatened to try to exclude Tokyo from six-party talks on Pyongyang's nuclear arms programmes.

Calls are growing from the Japanese public and politicians for the government to impose sanctions on North Korea after Tokyo said bones Pyongyang had identified as those of Japanese it had kidnapped were from other people.

"If sanctions are applied against the DPRK (North Korea) due to the moves of the ultra-Right forces (in Japan), we will regard it as a declaration of war against our country and promptly react to the action by an effective physical method," a spokesperson for North Korea's foreign ministry said in a statement carried by the official Korean Central News Agency, monitored in Tokyo.

North Korea handed over the bones at talks in Pyongyang in November, saying they were the remains of Megumi Yokota and Kaoru Matsuki, two of 13 Japanese who Pyongyang has admitted abducting in the 1970s and 1980s to teach its spies about Japan.

Japan, which has no diplomatic ties with North Korea, lodged a protest with Pyongyang and demanded clarification on the fate of 10 Japanese who Tokyo believes were kidnapped.

North Korea has said eight of the 10 are dead and two others unaccounted for.

North Korea's spokesperson said it was "unimaginable" that the bones handed over by Yokota's North Korean

husband were not hers.

The North admitted in 2002 to kidnapping the 13 Japanese, and Japan believes another two were also abducted.

Five have returned to Japan.

Pyongyang has said in the past that any imposition of sanctions by Japan would be tantamount to a declaration of war.

A hefty majority of Japanese citizens favour economic sanctions on North Korea, media polls have shown.

However, Prime Minister Junichiro Koizumi has taken a cautious stance, apparently for fear of jeopardising the six-party process.

"We must find out where their real intention lies," Koizumi said when asked about North Korea's remarks.

A Japanese foreign ministry official said today that the six-party talks among the two Koreas, the US, Japan, China and Russia were unlikely to be held before President George W. Bush was sworn in for a second term on January 20 and might be delayed until March, Japanese media reported.

South Korea, meanwhile, said that sanctions were not a good option. "I would like to repeat that it is desirable to make real progress through peaceful dialogue by making North Korea join the dialogue table rather than sanctions or blockade," South Korean foreign minister Ban Ki-moon told a news conference.

North Korea's spokesperson said Pyongyang might call for Japan to be excluded from the talks on its nuclear programmes, which also involve the two Koreas, China, Russia and the US.

SETBACK TO ANTI-BEIJING COALITION

Taiwan Opp wins polls

5-15
12/12



A dejected pro-independence supporter in Taipei on Saturday. — AFP

ASSOCIATED PRESS

TAIPEI, Dec. 11. — Taiwan's pro-independence parties suffered an upset defeat in legislative elections today — a result that will likely please China's leaders, who are angry about the island's drift away from Beijing's sacred goal of unification. China did not immediately comment on today's election.

The coalition that includes President Chen Shui-bian's party was widely favoured to increase its influence over the legislature and possibly win an absolute majority for the first time in the

young democracy's history.

But the three-party Opposition, known as the "Blue team" won 114 of the total 225 seats, the Election Commission said. The President's coalition, called the "Green team" finished with 101 seats. Independents got 10.

Although the president's party remained the largest in parliament, the Opposition parties strengthened their ability to join forces against the ruling coalition's initiatives.

"The moment we've waited for has finally arrived," said Mr Lien Chan, leader of the largest Opposition party, the Nationalists, or Kuomintang. "People want peace across the Taiwan Strait and social harmony and economic development," he said, celebrating the Opposition's first victory in the last four elections.

The Opposition has opposed Mr Chen's plan to spend \$18 billion on US weapons to defend against a Chinese attack and accused the President of recklessness that could lead to war.

Mr Chen's Democratic Progressive Party promised voters it would rewrite the Constitution and continue pushing for a new Taiwanese identity separate from China's. Both pledges angered Beijing, which views them as part of Mr Chen's policy of "creeping independence".

US jittery over Pyongyang missile plans

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20/10

Associated Press
Seoul, October 27

THE UNITED States, Japan and South Korea have boosted their monitoring of a missile base in North Korea as military intelligence indicates that the communist nation might be preparing to test missiles, a South Korean newspaper reported on Wednesday.

The base in Jeongju, 60 miles north of Pyongyang, is home to Scud-type missiles that have a range of 185-310 miles, and Nodong missiles with an 810-mile range. Most of Japan's four main islands fall within Nodong's range.

Beginning two or three days ago, "North Koreans began making moves at the Jeongju base, such as moving mobile missile launch stations," the daily Chosun Ilbo said, citing a senior South Korean government official.

"We are monitoring the movements to see whether this was part of their training or they actually intend to launch a missile." South Korea's defence ministry "neither confirms nor denies" the report, said a ministry spokesman, who spoke on condition of anonymity.

The reported activities came as North Korea denounced this week's multinational naval exercise in Japanese waters, calling them a US-led "ultimate war action" against the isolated country.

Besides the US and Japan, seven other countries are participating in the naval exercise. The drill is part of an anti-proliferation

security initiative, known as PSI, in which allied forces can intercept ships or aircraft believed carrying missiles or equipment for unconventional weapons.

The exercise was initiated last year primarily to deter North Korea's trade in missile and nuclear technology and components.

US Secretary of State Colin Powell — who visited Japan, China and South Korea this week — has said Washington has no intention of invading North Korea and wants to settle a dispute over its nuclear weapons programme peacefully.

Last month, Japan said that intelligence indicated North Korea was beefing up troops and equipment around missile launch bases. Its media later reported that the activity had subsided.

Suspicious over North Korean missile activities came as high-level, six-nation talks on ending the North's nuclear weapons development stalled.

A round of negotiations with the US, South Korea, Japan, China and Russia were planned for late September but were never held because North Korea refused to attend. Powell urged North Korea to return to the nuclear talks. But the North blamed Washington's "hostile" policy against it for the delay, and said this week that it would "double" its deterrent force.

North Korea had rattled Japan in 1998 when it fired a test missile over its neighbour's main island that landed in the Pacific.

THE HINDUSTAN TIMES

28 OCT 2004

Sanctions mean war: North Korea warns UN

AGENCE FRANCE PRESSE
SEOUL, OCTOBER 11

NORTH Korea today warned that any move by the UN to impose sanctions on the communist state to make up for stalled diplomacy would spark a "merciless war".

The warning came after US officials last month hinted at bringing North Korea to the UN Security Council for possible sanctions if it continued to cold-shoulder talks.

"Sanctions mean a war and war does not know any mercy," Pyongyang's official Korean Central News Agency said.

"If the US applies more sanctions to the DPRK (North Korea) by putting the UN in motion, the DPRK will promptly and resolutely react to it with self-defensive war deterrent force." The agency said the US would "be wholly responsible for all ensuing fa-



tal consequences" if war breaks out.

North Korea failed to show up at a fourth round of six-party talks scheduled to open in September in Beijing, saying it was staying away because of the "hostile" US policy towards Pyongyang and reports of secret nuclear experiments in South Korea.

Meanwhile, a Japanese newspaper, citing government sources, reported on Monday that activity around North Korea's missile launch sites is tailing off. The *Yomiuri Shimbun*

said the Defence Ministry had called back a ship equipped with Aegis radar tracking equipment that was sent when satellite monitoring picked up increased activity around missile and other military bases in North Korea last month.

North Korea, believed to have missiles capable of striking almost anywhere in Asia and parts of the US. It is also believed to have several nuclear warheads.

Japan has decided to move forward to the development stage on a next-generation missile defence system it has been working on with the United States, Kyodo news agency said on Monday.

The decision, which Kyodo said was made under pressure from Washington, is bound to face domestic opposition because it will involve a review of Japan's ban on weapons exports. —PTI

INDIAN EXPRESS

12 OCT 2004

N Korea says it has built N-deterrents

■ Envoy tells UN meet that it has turned plutonium rods into nukes

ASSOCIATED PRESS
UN, SEPTEMBER 28

NORTH Korea says it has turned the plutonium from 8,000 spent nuclear fuel rods into nuclear weapons to serve as a deterrent against increasing US nuclear threats and to prevent a nuclear war in north-east Asia.

Warning that the danger of war on the Korean peninsula "is snowballing," Vice Foreign Minister Choe Su Hon told UN General Assembly's annual ministerial meeting that Pyongyang had "no other option but to possess a nuclear deterrent" because of US policies that he claimed were designed to "eliminate" North Korea.

"Our deterrent is, in all its intents and purposes, the self-defensive means to cope with the ever increasing US nuclear threats and further, prevent a nuclear war in north-east Asia," he told a news conference after his speech.

In Washington, a state department official noted that Secretary of State Colin Powell has said repeatedly that the US has no plans to attack the Communist country.

But in his General Assembly speech and at the press conference, Choe accused the US of intensifying threats to attack and destroying the basis for negotiations over Pyongyang's nuclear program.

Nonetheless, he said,

Missile test talk rumour, says envoy

■ UNITED NATIONS: Reports that North Korea is making preparations for a ballistic missile test is "only rumors and guesses," Choe Su Hon, vice foreign minister said on Monday.

He was asked about statements by US, Japanese and South Korean officials that intelligence had shown missile test preparations. "It is only rumors and guesses," Choe said.

Choe also charged that South Korea could not have carried out recently revealed nuclear experiments in 1982 and 2000 without US assistance, and said this cooperation must be fully clarified. The experiments are now under review by the IAEA. —Reuters

North Korea is still ready to dismantle its nuclear program if Washington abandons its "hostile policy."

At the moment, however, he said: "The ever intensifying US hostile policy and the clandestine nuclear-related experiments recently revealed in South Korea are constituting big stumbling blocks" for North Korea to participate in the continuation of six-nation talks on its nuclear program.

Seoul on N Korea missile test jitters

Agence France Presse

SEOUL, Sept. 23. — South Korean and US military authorities are on alert as North Korea appeared to be preparing to test-fire a missile as part of a routine military drill, the defence ministry said today.

South Korean and US military authorities have recently noticed missile-related activities in North Korea, spokesman Mr Nam Dae-yeon of the defence ministry said. "The North's missile-related ac-

tivities are probably part of its annual military drill," he said. "We cannot rule out the possibility of the North test-firing missiles. South Korean and US authorities are closely following the movement in the North," Mr Nam said.

It's not certain whether North Korea is now conducting an annual military drill, but it is highly likely that the movement is part of an annual military exercise," he said.

Yonhap news agency quoted an intelligence source as saying that military vehicles, soldiers and mis-

site experts were converging around an unidentified launch site of North Korea's intermediate range Rodong missile.

"Taking various possibilities into account, the possibility of the North actually test-firing missiles is not so high. It seems that this is merely part of a routine drill by North Korean missile units," the source was quoted as saying.

The same intelligence source told Yonhap that the test was more likely to be a command post simulation rather than a real test-firing.

Iran's warning to Israel

UNHQ, Sept. 23. — Iran said it will re-act "most severely" to any Israeli action against its nuclear facilities, issuing the warning after Israel said the USA was selling it 500 bunker-buster bombs.

Israeli military officials said on Tuesday that the Jewish state will receive nearly 5,000 smart bombs, including the 500 one-ton bombs that can destroy two-metre-thick concrete walls. In 1981, Israel bombed Iraq's nuclear

reactor before it could begin operating. Yesterday, Israel said that Iran will never abandon plans to develop nuclear weapons and called for quick action by the UN Security Council "to put an end to this nightmare." Iran's foreign minister, Mr Karami Kharrazi, when asked yesterday about the sale of the monster bombs, said: "Israel has always been a threat, not only against Iran, but all countries." — AP

N Korea threatens to turn Japan into 'sea of fire'

NORTH KOREA threatened on Thursday to turn Japan into a "nuclear sea of fire" if it comes under attack from the United States.

"If the United States ignites a nuclear war, the US military bases in Japan would serve as a detonating fuse to turn Japan into a nuclear sea of fire," the North's ruling party newspaper *Rodong Sinmun* said in a Korean-language article monitored by South Korea's Yonhap news agency.

It was one of the most searing North Korean threats directed against Japan, Yonhap said. The Stalinist North has accused Tokyo of supporting what it sees as a US campaign to isolate it.

In an English-language article published by Pyongyang's official KCNA news agency, *Rodong* accused the United States of

converting Japan into "strategic vantage points" for a pre-emptive attack on North Korea.

"It plans to use Japan as an advance base in hurling into the Korean peninsula a task force from its mainland and other areas in case of emergency," the paper said.

Japan and the US, along with the two Koreas, China and Russia have held three rounds of talks on curbing the North's nuclear weapons drive in return for diplomatic concessions and possible economic aid.

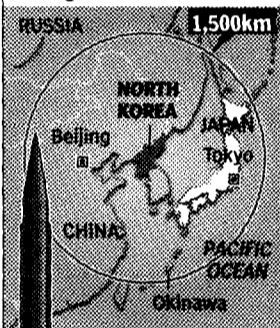
A fourth round was scheduled for this month but Pyongyang has refused to return to the negotiating table, citing Washington's hostile policy and South Korea's nuclear experiments.

The North hardened its position after the South disclosed its own experiments.

AFP, Seoul

North Korea's Rodong Missile

The United States and Japan have detected signs that North Korea is preparing to test-fire a Rodong ballistic missile



Rodong missile

Height: 16 metres

Weight: 16 tonnes

Ranges: 1,350km-1,200kg

(warhead), 1,500km-

1,000kg warhead

Source: Center for Nonproliferation Studies REUTERS

North Korea: in from the cold

By Glyn Ford

THE KOREAN peninsula is probably the most dangerous place on earth, made worse by those who extrapolate dodgy intelligence to fanciful "worst-case" scenarios that become the sand on which policy is founded.

In reality, Europe being threatened by North Korea's nuclear missiles is extremely unlikely. Even concerns over last week's "mushroom cloud" in the north-east were quickly dismissed by the United States and South Korea. The truth is that North Korea is changing: it wants to come in from the cold. A remnant of the Cold War is trying to transform itself, driven by need and necessity to embrace the market. These steps signify a willingness for engagement not seen before, but they have been overshadowed by the "nuclear crisis" triggered in October 2002 when Pyongyang admitted to having the "know-how," but not the technology, for a highly enriched uranium route to nuclear weapons.

In fact, North Korea did not trust the U.S. to keep to the 1994 framework agreement which promised — in exchange for the freezing and dismantling of its Russian-designed reactors capable of producing weapons-grade plutonium — a lifting of the 50-year economic embargo; normalisation of relations; a formal commitment not to use nuclear weapons against North Korea;

two proliferation-resistant nuclear reactors; and an interim supply of oil. Pyongyang had a point. The U.S. negotiators in 1994 were confident that after the collapse of the Soviet empire, North Korea was sure to follow. They failed to take into account that North Korea's was an indigenous regime rooted in the country's history and culture.

the country. As the Vice-Minister of State, Planning, Pak Chang-ryun, said: "It has worked better than fertilizer in improving productivity." Last month North Korea went a step further, acknowledging that central planning must be curtailed because it loses local knowledge and undermines creativity. In future, factories will be set financial targets.

North Korea's regime survived the Cold War and has nuclear know-how. But it is in the West's interests to help it move towards a market economy.

Now the revelation that Seoul had its own clandestine nuclear programme, which went further than the one Pyongyang has admitted, undermines the U.S.' righteous indignation. On top of that, North Korea's military budget is a quarter of Seoul's. South Korea spends more on defence each year than the North's entire GDP.

It took a while, but in July 2002 North Korea embraced the market. Salaries were increased 18 fold, food prices 26 fold, and the exchange rate for the euro — Pyongyang's official currency for foreign exchange transactions — 70 fold. Farmers were set attainable targets for food delivery to the state, with the surplus allowed to be sold in new markets set up around

Freeing the farmers to go to the market is having an impact on productivity, despite inflation. However, the same is not true in the manufacturing sector, where the boost in demand is merely sucking in imports. Without development aid to kick-start the economy, the situation will not change. North Korea, once a developed country with 70 per cent of the workforce in manufacturing, is experiencing a re-ruralisation of the economy, with factory managers laying off industrial workers to grow food instead.

What can be done? It is in our interest to negotiate away the country's nuclear programme — though Pakistan, the source of the technology sold or traded to North Korea and others, seems to be mysteriously escaping global condemnation. It is clear that the programme can be ended with a package of economic and political incentives. If we can set the North Koreans on the broad path to emulating China and Vietnam, the world will be a safer place. With a changing regime instead of regime change, we can move on to restart the human rights dialogue. © *Guardian Newspapers Limited 2004*

(Glyn Ford is a British Labour member of the European Parliament. He has just spent four days in Pyongyang at a workshop organised by the European Commission, the North Korean Ministry of Foreign Affairs and the Friedrich Naumann Foundation.)

হংকং: ভোটে ফের জিতলেন বেজিংপন্থীরা

হংকং, ১৩ সেপ্টেম্বর (সংবাদ সংস্থা)— গতকাল হংকং বিধান পরিষদের ভোট হল। জিতেছেন বেজিংপন্থীরাই। ৫০ আসনের মধ্যে ৩৪টি দখল করেছেন তারা। গণতন্ত্রপন্থীরা মাত্র ২৫ আসন পেয়েছেন। তাঁদের আশা ছিল অনেক বেশি আসনে জিতবেন। গতবারের থেকে ৩টি আসন বেশি পেলেও বেজিংপন্থীদের প্রাধান্য স্বীকার করতে বাধ্য হয়েছেন তাঁরা। ৫৬ শতাংশ মানুষ ভোট দিয়েছেন। গতবারও বেজিংপন্থীরা ৩৪টি আসন জিতেছিলেন। ৭ বছর আগে তাঁদের সঙ্গে সংযুক্তির পর হংকং-এ এবারের নির্বাচন ঘিরে সবথেকে আলোড়ন সৃষ্টি হয়েছিল। মানুষ গণতন্ত্রের পক্ষে না বিপক্ষে ভোট দেন, পর্যবেক্ষকরা তা দেখতে আগ্রহী ছিলেন। তাঁদের মতে, ভোটাররা দুই শিবিরে ভাগ হয়েছেন। তবে সংখ্যাগরিষ্ঠ অংশ তাঁদের দিকেই ঝুঁকেছেন। স্থায়িত্ব, সংহতি ও উন্নয়নের পক্ষে রায় দিয়েছেন এঁরা। ভোটের প্রচারণেও বেজিংপন্থীরা অর্থনৈতিক উন্নয়নের ওপর সবথেকে বেশি জোর দিয়েছিলেন। গণতন্ত্রপন্থীরা এখন নির্বাচনী ব্যবস্থাকে দোষ দিচ্ছেন। বিরোধীরা অবশ্য এই অভিযোগকে আমল দিতে রাজি নন।

HK votes in record numbers

Press Trust of India

BEIJING, Sept. 12. — Polling for the bitterly-contested Legislative Council (LegCo) elections in Hong Kong ended tonight, which, analysts say, may boost the standing of the pro-democracy parties, much to the discomfort of Beijing.

Polls showed turnout at today's poll could be as high as 57 per cent, up from 43.5 per cent in the 2000 election, as a campaign for universal suffrage has enthused voters.

The outcome of the election is expected to be announced tomorrow morning, Xinhua news agency reported from Hong Kong.

A record number of 3.2 million Hong Kong residents had regis-



Chief executive Mr Tung Chee-Hwa casts his vote on Sunday. — AFP

tered to vote for the Legislative Council.

A total of 501 polling stations

were set up for voters to choose members to the 60-seat LegCo.

Half of the seats were chosen by popular vote, with the remaining 30 chosen by interest groups that tend to support the Beijing-backed government headed by the chief executive, Mr Tung Chee-Hwa.

A total of 159 candidates have been nominated for the election, out of which 11 candidates have been elected unopposed in 11 functional constituencies.

The four-year term of the third term LegCo members will commence from 1 October.

Mr Tung, one of the first voters, said he would cooperate with the new LegCo in advancing Hong Kong's economic development and maintaining Hong Kong's prosper-

ity and stability.

Media reports from Hong Kong, one of the leading financial centres in Asia, said that the democratic parties are expected to make strong gains over pro-Beijing politicians.

However, scandals surrounding some of the pro-democracy candidates may inflict considerable damage on their electoral prospects. Two Democrat candidates were involved in financial and sex scandals, one of whom was locked up in a China jail for allegedly consorting with a prostitute.

China's ruling Communist Party leadership fears that any upset of the existing arrangement would dilute its authority and control over the city.

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North Korea blast shrouded in mystery

1379

SEOUL, SEPT. 12. A large explosion occurred in the northern part of North Korea, sending a huge column of smoke into the air on an important anniversary of the communist regime, a South Korean news agency reported on Sunday.

The South Korean Government said it was trying to confirm the report of an explosion at 11 a.m. (local time) on Thursday in Yanggang province near the border with China.

The *Yonhap* news agency carried reports from unidentified sources, with one in Washington saying the incident could be related to a natural disaster such as a forest fire. It also cited a diplomatic source in Seoul as

raising the possibility of an accident or a nuclear test.

Yonhap later quoted Kim Jong-min, spokesman for South Korea's presidential office, as saying: "Currently, we are trying to find out in detail the exact character, cause and size of the accident, but we don't think North Korea conducted a nuclear test."

'Nuclear test unlikely'

Although North Korea is believed to be developing nuclear weapons, international experts would likely have been able to detect the test if one had occurred. "We understand that a mushroom-shaped cloud about 3.5- to 4-km in diameter was

monitored during the explosion," the source in Seoul said.

The agency also quoted an unidentified Government official as saying there was seismic activity related to two blasts in North Korea.

Thursday was the anniversary of North Korea's founding on September 9, 1948. Leader Kim Jong-Il uses the occasion to stage performances and other events to bolster loyalty among the population. Experts have speculated that North Korea might use a major anniversary to conduct a nuclear-related test, but one analyst said an open test, as opposed to one below ground, would be difficult in such a small country. — AP

No halt on nuke road for N Korea

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1719
ASSOCIATED PRESS

SEOUL, Sept. 11. — North Korea said today that South Korea's secret nuclear experiments involving uranium and plutonium make the Communist state more determined to pursue its own nuclear programmes, a news report said.

A spokesman for North Korea's foreign ministry condemned the South Korean nuclear experiments, conducted in 1982 and 2000, as "clearly of military nature", according to Pyongyang's official news agency KCNA, monitored by South Korea's national news agency Yonhap.

The recent revelations of those experiments will affect the prospects for six-nation talks aimed at persuading North Korea to abandon its nuclear weapons programmes, the unnamed North Korean spokesman was quoted as saying.

"We strongly suspect that the USA may have masterminded the experiments that were clearly of a military nature," he was quoted as saying. "We cannot but link these developments with the issue of holding six-party talks."

South Korea said on Thursday that it extracted a tiny amount of plutonium, a key element for making atomic bombs, in a nuclear experiment in 1982. That revelation followed an acknowledgment last week that it enriched a small amount of uranium — another element that could be used to make a bomb — in 2000.

The controversy over South Korea's experiments has threatened to further disrupt troubled efforts to persuade North Korea to dismantle its suspected nuclear weapons programmes.

"Under these circumstances, it is only natural that we should never give up our nuclear programme," the North Korean spokesman said.

12 SEP 2004

N Korea rules out N-talks with US

Says President George Bush Is Worse Than Adolf Hitler

Seoul: North Korea on Monday described US President George W Bush as an "imbecile" and a "tyrant" who was worse than Adolf Hitler, and ruled out holding new talks on nuclear weapons with the US.

In an unusually strong attack, a North Korean foreign ministry spokesman said comments by Bush calling North Korea a tyrant during campaigning last week in Wisconsin were "malignant slanders and calumnies".

"He is a political imbecile bereft of even elementary morality as a human being and a bad guy," said the spokesman, quoted by the official KCNA news agency.

The spokesman blamed Bush for starting wars in Iraq and elsewhere, and said the United States was trying to topple the legitimate government of North Korea.

"Bush's assumption of office turned a peaceful world into a pandemonium unprecedented in history as it is plagued with a vicious circle of terrorism and war," said the statement.

The spokesman went on to describe Bush as "a tyrant that puts Hitler into the shade" as well as "an idiot, an ignorant, a tyrant and a man-killer."

He said that following Bush's comments, it would be "impossible" to hold working-level discussions to prepare for a new round of multilateral talks on the nuclear issue. The talks bring together the two Koreas, China, and

Japan, Russia and the United States. "This made it quite impossible for the DPRK (North Korea) to go to the talks and deprived it of any elementary justification to sit at the negotiating table with the US," he said.

The third and last round of six-nation talks were held in Beijing in June and broke up without progress.

The United States wants North Korea to close down all its nuclear weapons facilities in return for a package of economic and diplomatic rewards.

Washington also said it would give North Korea security guarantees that it would not be attacked. The United States currently has no diplomatic ties with North Korea, which is also on the US list of countries sponsoring terrorism.

North Korea rejected the proposals and said it wanted aid and guarantees before it went ahead with freezing its nuclear programmes. The stand-off over North Korea's quest for nuclear weapons erupted in October 2002 when the United States accused Pyongyang of operating a nuclear weapons programme based on enriched uranium, violating a 1994 nuclear freeze of its separate plutonium producing programme.

Pyongyang has denied running the uranium-based programme, but has again fired up its once-mothballed plutonium-based programme. AFP

Americans want a new party

Washington: Thousands of low or lose residents and American voters, who say their tax dollars.

After voting on New Hampshire last September, the group held its first gathering there. About 300 members met at a campground in the White Mountains for the inaugural Porcupine festival—named after the group mascot, which they say is a gentle creature but well-prepared when others try stepping on its back, the report said.

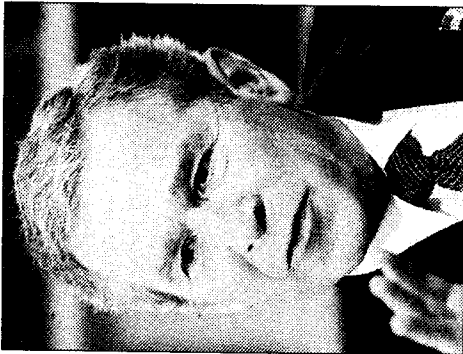
While there, they met with Governor Craig Benson, a Republican, who has called the group a "friend" and has welcomed it to the state.

He has also appointed members to a task force on government efficiency. But Democrats have attacked his association with free state during this election year and he had stopped short of endorsing the group, the paper said. Agencies

Thousands of low or lose residents and American voters, who say their tax dollars. The country's two-party system has become too homogeneous, bureaucratic and inept, have begun a 'pilgrimage' to New England with the dream of starting a new party that will become a national force and unite legions of the equally disenfranchised, a media report said.

The movement, known as the Free State Project, was started in late 2001 and now has about 6,000 members. It also has an ambitious plan to more than triple its membership and become firmly entrenched in New Hampshire politics by 2011. The Washington Times reported from New Hampshire on Sunday.

Organisers say their primary goals are to limit government, reduce taxes and increase personal liberties. If the plan works, they say, other states will have to follow.



THE

20 AUG 2004

6
5/18

China to resolve Taiwan issue peacefully: Hu

BEIJING, July 31. — China will exert its utmost efforts with its utmost sincerity to resolve the Taiwan issue by peaceful means, but will never tolerate “the independence of Taiwan,” Chinese President Mr Hu Jintao stressed in Beijing yesterday.

Mr Hu made the remark when he held a telephonic conversation with US President Mr George W Bush.

Mr Hu reaffirmed China’s opposition to US sales of sophisticated weapons to Taiwan, saying that the current situation across the Taiwan Strait is very sensitive and complicated and that the two sides should act resolutely against “the independence of Taiwan” and any adventurous attempts by separatist organizations.

Mr Bush made a positive appraisal on the recent development of China-US relations. He expressed his understanding of China’s concern over the Taiwan issue through the phone conversation and reiterated that the USA would implement the one-China policy, and observe the Three Communiques and position of not supporting “the independence of Taiwan.” The US stance on the issue will never change, he promised. — **China Daily/ANN**

More North Koreans 'defect'

By P. S. Suryanarayana

SINGAPORE, JULY 28. In what is being described as an unprecedented episode of "mass defections" to South Korea, a batch of 241 North Koreans arrived at an international airport near Seoul today.

The reported 'defection' of this latest batch, by a chartered flight, follows the arrival of over

200 North Koreans (227, according to one estimate) at a military airport near Seoul on Tuesday. Both batches reached Seoul from an unspecified Asian country, where they had first gone from North Korea, by chartered flights that were arranged by the South Korean authorities.

So far, over 5,000 North Koreans are said to have 'defected'

to the southern part of the peninsula since the end of the Korean War in 1953.

Following the arrival of the first batch on Tuesday, the South Korean Unification Minister, Chung Dong-young, was quoted as saying that Seoul would now "need to review and upgrade the overall policy" of allowing North Korean 'defectors' to settle in the south.

Korea-U.S. mistrust remains despite talks

By John Aglionby

JAKARTA, JULY 4. North Korea declared on Friday that it did not trust America, after the two sides' Foreign Ministers held their highest-level talks since Washington described Pyongyang as being part of an "axis of evil."

Colin Powell, U.S. Secretary of State, admitted after meeting his counterpart, Paek Nam-sun, in Jakarta that great mistrust existed between their countries.

Both countries sought to put a positive spin on the discussions, held on the sidelines of a regional security conference. But aides said the two men did little more than restate their positions, and were no closer to a solution over American demands for Pyongyang to dismantle its nuclear weapons programme.

"There is no trust between the Democratic People's Republic of Korea and the United States," Mr. Paek was quoted as saying in an official statement.

"(However) if the United States is of the position to improve bilateral relations, the DPRK will not regard the U.S. as a permanent enemy."

Mr. Powell was equally forthright. "These are difficult negotiations. It just doesn't happen overnight," he said afterwards in a meeting with Indonesian students.

"There is a great deal of mistrust between the United States and North Korea."

His spokesman, Richard Boucher, said Mr. Powell told his counterpart there was an opportunity for "concrete progress" in the continuing efforts to rid the Korean peninsula of nuclear weapons. But Washington wanted "words not deeds" on disarmament before it started giving concessions to the reclusive state where millions of people live in hunger and poverty.

Mr. Paek said his Government would budge only if it saw "simultaneous actions" from Washington.

When officials from the two sides met last month in Beijing, along with representatives from China, Japan, Russia and South Korea, they put forward contrasting proposals to move the stalled six-party peace talks forwards.

The U.S. said that Pyongyang would receive aid and security guarantees if it agreed to a step-by-step dismantling both of the plutonium weapons that it admits to, and the uranium bomb programme that its neighbours are convinced it is developing.

Assistance would come first from South Korea and Japan and then, once North Korea has shown long-term commitment to the deal, from the U.S.

In contrast, North Korea has offered to freeze rather than dismantle its weapons programmes if it receives guarantees of vital energy supplies to make up for serious shortfalls.

Washington's offer, which is being seen as a conciliatory step, is thought to have been partly prompted by criticism at home from the Democratic presidential contender, John Kerry, over the lack of progress in the negotiations.

Mr. Powell's meeting with Mr. Paek was high on symbolism, but short on substance, according to Byungki Kim, an associate professor of international relations at the Korea University in Seoul.

"This meeting was an important symbolic sign that both parties will continue to talk," he said. "But in terms of substance, it won't have much impact."

Mr. Kim believes that there will be little progress before the U.S. presidential election in November. — ©Guardian Newspapers Limited 2004

5 JUL 2004

THE HINDU

Thousands take out march in Hong Kong

CARRIE LEE
HONG KONG, JULY 1

*B. Asin
Hong Kong 95 7 2/7*

HUNDREDS of thousands of people in white shirts poured onto the streets of Hong Kong on Thursday to vent their frustration at Chinese rule and challenge Beijing's refusal to allow them to elect their own leaders.

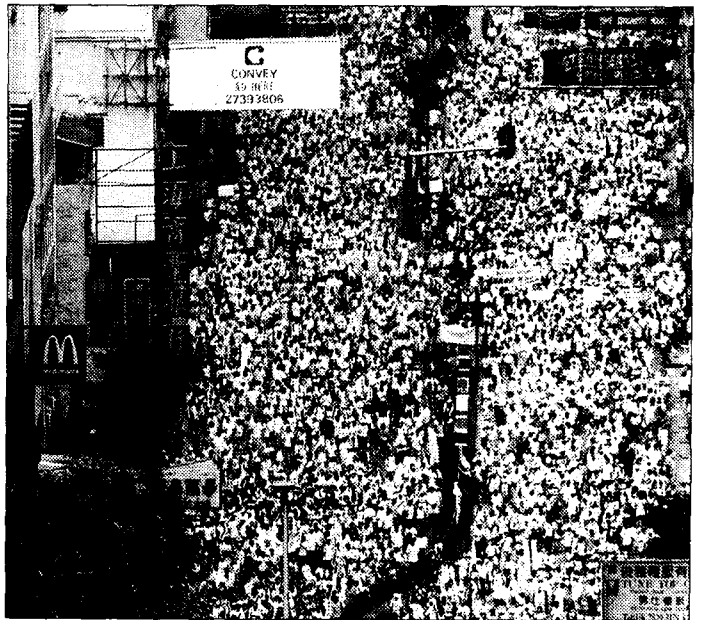
Waving green and black banners and carrying umbrellas to shield them from the sun, retirees joined mothers carrying children to chant "Return power to the people, fight for democracy" as they streamed from a city park to government offices in the heart of the city kilometres away.

The demonstration on the seventh anniversary of the former British colony's return to China gave Beijing a taste of what it fears most, a mass show of public dis-

sent. But pro-democracy activists were quick to stress that what Hong Kong people wanted was more freedom under Chinese rule, not independence.

"We are here today to fight for democracy," said veteran campaigner Martin Lee. "Not a single person here wants independence." The main organiser, the Civil Human Rights Front, said 530,000 people had joined the march, well over the 300,000 they had expected. Observers said there were fewer people than last year's half million.

The large turnout could increase China's fears about losing control of Hong Kong in elections in September. One strong theme was the depth of dissatisfaction with the man chosen by China to run Hong Kong, former shipping tycoon Tung Chee-Hwa. —Reuters



Demonstrators crowd a main street at a Hong Kong shopping district on Thursday. Reuters

<p>VIDYA MANDIR SOCIETY NOTICE</p> <p>All the Members are here by informed that the 27th A.G. Meeting of the Society is going to be held on 31st July, 2004 at Vidya Mandir Public School, Sector-15A, Faridabad.</p> <p>By Order of the Exec. Committee Sd/- N.K. LOHIA President</p> <p>Place: Faridabad Date: 1.07.2004</p>	<p>VIDYA NIKETAN SOCIETY NOTICE</p> <p>All the Members are here by informed that the 36th A.G. Meeting of the Society is going to be held on 31st July, 2004 at Vidya Niketan Sr. Sec. School, 2M, NIT, Faridabad.</p> <p>By Order of the Exec. Committee Sd/- N.K. LOHIA President</p> <p>Place: Faridabad Date: 1.07.2004</p>
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Korea capers

Does Bush seriously want a deal?

Washington has taken its time to come up with a substantive offer to resolve the North Korean crisis, after two rounds of talks are over and the third round is beginning. Till date Washington was utterly uncompromising, its stand summed up by the acronym CVID — or the complete, verifiable and irreversible dismantling of Pyongyang's nuclear weapons programme before any concessions can be contemplated. Since President Bush has put North Korea on his "axis of evil" list along with Iraq, before attacking it, analysts compare the CVID option with asking Pyongyang to put its gun down, so that it can be safely shot. Such an uncompromising attitude caused dissension among Washington's Asian allies, moving to negotiate separately with Pyongyang. Washington's failure to get the talks going means, in effect, that Pyongyang gains time to develop its arsenal. Meanwhile John Kerry has sounded the alarm back home, all of which creates pressure on Bush to come up with something meaningful. After all, North Korea is impoverished and Al Qaeda is cash-rich, this means North Korea has something Al Qaeda is probably looking for.

Hence the current proposal, which offers aid and oil shipments to Pyongyang if it dismantles its nuclear weapons programme and allows arms inspectors to verify that it has done so. It also offers, and this is the catch, a "provisional" guarantee that Washington will not attempt regime change in North Korea. What Pyongyang is holding out for is a pledge by the US President that North Korea will not be attacked after it gives up its nuclear weapons. Washington's proposal doesn't look serious — it's like telling Pyongyang to put its gun down, after which we may or may not shoot you, depending on whether we think you're behaving. A "provisional" guarantee can be countermanded at any time, and Washington has not exactly behaved scrupulously in the past — for instance in cooking intelligence to justify the invasion of Iraq. Pyongyang is currently giving both sorts of signals, suggesting that it will give up its weapons programme if its security and some economic needs are met, but that it will develop the programme further if spurned. Bush's offer, on the other hand, appears intended to convince his allies and a skeptical electorate at home that he's trying, rather than to seriously engage Pyongyang.

Group to define scope of N. Korean nuclear freeze

By P. S. Suryanarayana

HO-17 29/6 6/2004

SINGAPORE, JUNE 26. An agreement was reached at the six-party talks in Beijing today, to 'authorise' a diplomatic exercise to "define the scope" of the "first steps for de-nuclearisation" of the Korean peninsula. Shorn of the complexity of formulation, the accord authorises the defining of a possible 'freeze' by North Korea of its nuclear-weapons programme.

The Chinese Vice-Foreign Minister, Wang Yi, who hosted the talks, said in a summing-up statement that the six parties "authorised the (relevant) working group to convene at the earliest possible date to define the scope, duration and verification as well as corresponding measures for first steps for de-nuclearisation."

The working group was further 'authorised' to make "recommendations as (considered) appropriate." The working group is to convene before the next round of the six-party parleys which would be, "in principle," held "by the end of September 2004."

An overall limited accord on these lines was reached at the end of the third round in Beijing today. The working group was formed after the previous round several months ago.

Besides China, the other participants, in both the six-party

forum and the relevant working group, are the United States, the Democratic People's Republic of Korea (DPRK or North Korea), Japan, South Korea and Russia.

By publicly talking of 'verification' measures and also 'duration', Mr. Wang Yi clearly hinted at the possibility of a 'freeze' by the DPRK of its atomic arms programme as one of the "first steps" towards de-nuclearisation of the entire Korean peninsula, inclusive of the northern part.

An inference of this order was made possible too by the statement of a spokesman of the DPRK embassy in Beijing. The spokesman, Hyun Hak-bong, said: "What we are proposing is to not only freeze these (nuclear) facilities but also dismantle them if (appropriate) conditions are formed" or brought about.

While these 'conditions' would be assessed from a North Korean perspective, Mr. Hyun said that any nuclear freeze would mean "no more production, transfer and testing of nuclear weapons".

Shortly before the completion of the latest round of talks, the U.S. characterised the "overall atmosphere" as 'constructive'. It was also clarified that the U.S. did not reckon that North Korea had indeed issued a 'threat' or ultimatum about wanting to test a nuclear weapon.

N Korea threatens to test nukes

Pyongyang demands hefty energy aid from US in exchange for freeze

Associated Press
Beijing, June 25

NORTH KOREA has threatened to test a nuclear weapon unless Washington accepts Pyongyang's conditions for a freeze of its nuclear weapons programme, a senior US official said.

North Korea said it wants hefty energy aid in exchange for the freeze, calling on the US to make a "responsible, bold decision." The demands came at six-nation talks on Friday.

Two previous rounds of disarmament talks have made little progress, and the North Korean threat of a nuclear test suggested the latest round may be unsuccessful, said a senior US official in Washington. The other participants are South Korea, China, Japan and Russia.

On Friday, the start of a group meeting was delayed while Chinese and North Korean envoys met privately, said a South Korean official who asked not to be identified further. China cancelled a planned closing ceremony on Saturday, the Chinese Foreign Ministry said without explanation. Two earlier rounds of six-nation talks in the Chinese capital have ended with closing ceremonies.

The US has been insisting on complete disarmament by the communist state and submitted a proposal to this week's conference in Beijing outlining a step-by-step plan and the benefits North Korea could receive if it complies.



PEACE PARLEY: The six-nation negotiations on North Korea's nuclear drive in progress in Beijing on Friday.

On Friday, the North renewed a demand for the US to drop its "hostile policy," though it made no public response to the American proposal. "It is high time the US made a responsible, bold decision," said the North Korean official newspaper 'Minju Joson', quoted by the North's main news agency.

North Korea's own pro-

posal reportedly calls for energy aid in exchange for freezing its main nuclear facility at Yongbyon. It was unclear whether that included a commitment to dismantle the program.

"The most concrete ... and specific proposal on the table is that made by the United States yesterday with the support of other govern-

ments who were there," State Department spokesman Richard Boucher said in Washington. "We look to the North Koreans to study that proposal seriously."

The North Korean envoy, Vice-Foreign Minister Kim Gye Gwan, spoke with US Assistant Secretary of State James A. Kelly on Thursday. There was no indication of

when North Korea might carry out its reported threat to test. The US thinks N Korea has at least one or two nuclear weapons, with the potential for several more. Near the end of their discussion, Kelly told Kim that there was little trust of North Korea in Washington and that Kim's statements wouldn't improve matters.

No success in N-talks: US

AMID A North Korean threat to test a nuclear bomb, the US today said "no breakthrough" was achieved at the ongoing six-party talks on ways to peacefully dismantle Pyongyang's nuclear weapons programme.

"The US side expects further talks although 'no breakthrough' has been achieved in this round", an unnamed senior official of the US delegation for the third round of six-party talks on the nuclear issue was quoted as saying by Xinhua news agency.

Chinese Vice-Foreign Minister Wang Yi, also head of the Chinese delegation, however, said the chance for peace appeared during the parleys. Chinese Foreign Ministry sources said heads of the delegations to the talks held consultations today on key issues, particularly on how to launch the nuclear weapons freezing process, so as to make the first step to realise the goal of denuclearisation.

Earlier, US officials said the North Korean threat resembled those from Pyongyang in the past. China, the host of the six-way talks, however, underplayed the reports.

PTI, Beijing

Little hope as talks begin on N Korea

Reuters
Beijing, June 23

NEGOTIATORS FROM six countries opened talks on the North Korean nuclear crisis on Wednesday but few expected progress in bridging the chasm between Washington and Pyongyang despite a report of US plans to offer incentives. The four days of talks began at the exclusive Diaoyutai state guesthouse in Beijing, where two previous rounds on the crisis that has simmered since October 2002 have ended inconclusively.

The *New York Times* said in its Wednesday edition that US negotiators would offer the North new, but "highly conditional", incentives to give up its nuclear weapons, including a provisional guarantee not to invade. The incentives, if offered, would be the first significant, detailed overture to North Korea since President George

W. Bush took office more than three years ago.

Under the proposal, aid would also begin flowing to North Korea once its leader, Kim Jong-il, made a commitment to dismantle his plutonium and uranium weapons programmes, the newspaper said. "China, Russia, Japan and South Korea would immediately begin sending thousands of tons of heavy fuel oil every month, and Washington would offer a 'provisional' guarantee not to invade the country or seek to topple Kim's government", it said.

It was unclear how such a proposal would be greeted by the unpredictable North, which unleashed a characteristic barrage of anti-US rhetoric ahead of the talks. "No positive results can be expected from the third round of the six-party talks if the US again raises its old brigandish demand at the talks", North Korea's *Rodong Sinmun* newspaper said.

Negotiators spent Wednesday morning in bilateral meetings ahead of the main talks at which a freeze on the North's nuclear programmes and inspections leading to their dismantling would be up for discussion. After two rounds of senior-level and working-group talks — at which progress has been measured in modest diplomatic increments like whether to meet again — the main protagonists, the US and North Korea, remain poles apart. The US is sticking by its demand that North Korea dismantle fully its weapons programmes, while the North says it wants aid in return for a freeze. Host China, North Korea's closest ally and supplier of two-thirds of its energy and food aid, was cautiously optimistic, though other participants expect little progress.



REUTERS

North Korea's chief delegate Kim Kye-Gwan at the six-party talks in Beijing on Wednesday.

Hostage begs for life, Korea stands firm

Baghdad, June 21 (Reuters): Muslim militants in Iraq threatened to behead a South Korean hostage unless his country scrapped plans to send 3,000 more troops — a demand rejected by Seoul.

A videotape aired on al Jazeera television last night showed 33-year-old Korean businessman Kim Sun-il pleading for his life. A banner in the background named his captors as Jema'at al-Tawhid and Jihad, the group led by Abu Musab al-Zarqawi, a Jordanian accused of links to al Qaeda. "Please get out of here," Kim begged, referring to South Korean troops already in Iraq. "I don't want to die."

Kim, an Arabic speaker and evangelical Christian who has worked in Iraq for a year as a translator for a Korean firm supplying goods to the US military, was seized in Falluja on June 17, the day before Seoul announced its troop plan.

"We ask you to withdraw

your forces from our land and not to send any more troops, and if not we'll send you this Korean's head," one of a group of armed, masked men standing around the terrified South Korean said in the videotape.

The group said Seoul had 24 hours to comply. The threat to kill Kim came a day after a US air strike on Falluja on what the American military said was a house used by Zarqawi's followers in the volatile town west of Baghdad.

Local Iraqi officers said women and children but no foreign Muslim militants were among the 22 people killed in the attack. The raid shattered a lull in Falluja and fuelled tensions before the formal end of Iraq's US-led occupation on June 30.

In Ramadi, another restive city west of Falluja, four US soldiers were killed by insurgents, witnesses said. Their bodies lay sprawled on the ground. The US military had no immediate infor-

mation on the attack.

North of Baghdad, a roadside bomb attack on a convoy near Mosul killed four Iraqis and wounded four, the US army said. Witnesses said the dead Iraqis worked for a security company.

Insurgents, thought to include Saddam Hussein loyalists, Sunni nationalists and foreign militants, have sought to disrupt the handover to Iraq's new interim government with bombings, killings and attacks on the oil industry, its economic bedrock.

Sabotage last week halted all oil exports, but officials said they resumed today after repairs to one of two pipelines blown up in southern Iraq. The sabotage had choked off about 1.6 million barrels of daily exports from two Gulf terminals.

The violence wracking Iraq has torpedoed Washington's hopes that last year's invasion to topple Saddam would lead swiftly to stability, peace and reconstruction.

Nine-tenths of Iraqis now view US-led troops as occupiers, not liberators, according to an opinion poll taken for the occupation authority in late April, just as a scandal over abuses of Iraqi prisoners by American troops was breaking.

Three soldiers charged with abuses at Abu Ghraib jail faced initial hearings in Baghdad today, reviving images of sexual and physical humiliation that sparked worldwide outrage.

The photographs of smirking American soldiers tormenting naked detainees have rocked the US military and prompted critics to argue that policies adopted in President George W. Bush's "war on terror" encouraged the cruelty.

The hearing that began today, at a convention centre built by Saddam, aims to resolve any outstanding legal issues before the court-martial of Specialist Charles Graner, Staff Sergeant Ivan Frederick and Sergeant

Javal Davis. Judge Colonel James Pohl agreed to a request by the defence to interview Central Command chief John Abizaid and top Iraq commander Lieutenant General Ricardo Sanchez.

Judge Pohl also agreed to a defence request that Abu Ghraib prison should not be demolished as it was a "crime scene". Bush has said the prison will be torn down. Davis' defence counsel Paul Bergrin said he wanted court members to see Abu Ghraib for themselves.

"We want the court members to smell the faecal matter and the urine that service members who worked inside that prison and who are accused in this case had to live with," he said.

Islamic militants have seized on the Abu Ghraib scandal and the detention of hundreds of Muslim suspects without charge at the US base in Guantanamo Bay, Cuba, as pretexts for re-venge.



South Korean businessman Kim Sun-il during military service in South Korea. (Reuters)

Koreas halt propaganda broadcasts

AP & PTI

SEOUL, June 15. — South and North Korea stopped their loudspeaker propaganda broadcasts along the world's last Cold War frontier today, marking the anniversary of a landmark summit between the two sides four years ago. The development comes on the same day Beijing said it will host the next round of six-party talks on the North Korean nuclear issue between 23 and 26 June.

North and South Korea have waged a war of nerves using propaganda broadcasts since the 1950-53 Korean War, but the ear-splitting broadcasts came to a halt shortly after midnight, South Korean military officers said. South Korea also turned off electronic signs after displaying a last flash message which read: "Peace, reconciliation and cooperation."

Dozens of high-performance loudspeaker batteries have been set up along the 248-kilometre border dotted with slogans, electronic displays, posters and religious and ideologi-

cal propaganda. "Now, we announce the historic fact that our voice of freedom broadcasts are being brought to closure," South Korea said in its last broadcast, according to the defence ministry.

Meanwhile, South Korean President Mr Roh Moo-Hyun offered to extend "comprehensive and concrete" economic aid to North Korea if the country scraps its nuclear programme.

In Beijing, a foreign ministry spokesman appealed to all sides (involved in the North Korean nuclear talks) to show "utmost sincerity" and "flexibility". He said the third round of six-party talks in Beijing from 23 to 26 June would be preceded by a two-day working-level session from 21 to 22 June which will set the agenda and prepare documents for talks. But the proposed talks received an immediate setback as Pyongyang rejected a US demand for the complete, verifiable and irreversible dismantling of its weapons programme and demanded US concessions in return for a partial nuclear freeze.

USA plans troops cut in S Korea

The Times, London

SEOUL, June 7. — The USA is to cut its military forces in South Korea, removing nearly one-third of the army deployed there, against the threat of North Korean invasion, for the past 50 years.

The USA wants to pull out 12,000 of the 37,000 US troops in South Korea by the end of next year, a South Korean diplomat revealed today, as officials from the two countries met in Seoul to discuss their alliance. The move represents a change in American priorities at a time of increasing tension and uncertainty on the divided peninsula.

"The USA informed us of its plan to pull out 12,000 troops by the end of December 2005," said

Mr Kim Sook, a spokesman for the South Korean foreign ministry. The redeployed units include 3,600 soldiers from positions on the border between South and North Korea, who will be sent to Iraq.

The Pentagon has been discussing reductions to its presence in South Korea for a few years, but nothing so detailed as today's announcement has been publicly disclosed.

It is partly to reduce the so-called "footprint" left by US troops on their host country that the force reduction is being planned. In keeping with this policy, Yongsan will be vacated by the US in two years time and transformed into the site of luxury apartments. But the troop withdrawal is also part of a broad and ambitious revision of



A South Korean protester shouts slogans during an anti-US rally in Seoul on Monday. — AFP

Bars, clubs turn away US soldiers
 SEOUL, June 7. — Following a recent stabbing of a taxi driver allegedly committed by a US serviceman, popular night clubs are no longer allowing them in, and one establishment has posted a sign reading: "No GIs Allowed."

"We put the sign up because GIs always fight and cause other problems, like stealing drinks and harassing women," said an employee of the Zen Bar, located in Sinchon, an entertainment district in central Seoul.

Witnesses say the two soldiers charged with the assault had bought drinks with a group of friends at the Zen Bar before the crime occurred last month.

Another nightclub near Hongik University has also adopted a similar policy of not allowing US troops inside its doors because of the stabbing. "Mainly, the Korean customers will not come here if they see GIs in our bar. Many Koreans are afraid of them right now," said Stormper's employee Mr Kim Yoon-do. — Korea Herald/ANN

American troop deployments worldwide.

At present, many US troops abroad are deployed in large concentrations close to old Cold War flashpoints such as Germany, South Korea, and

the Japanese island of Okinawa.

Changing attitudes

The announcement will provoke delight and dismay in South Korea, which has

always been divided over the presence of American soldiers on its soil.

To an older generation, they are the saviours of the country's liberty and a crucial shield against North Korea, allegedly develop-

ing its own nuclear weapons. But to plenty of younger people, born after the devastating 1950-53 Korean War, the Americans are noisy, ill-mannered and unwelcome interlopers.

26 MAY 2004

China 'woos' Hong Kong with Buddha relic

Associated Press

HONG KONG, May 25. — Beijing is lending Hong Kong one of the Buddha's fingers for public display, but critics belittled the move today as a political gesture to soothe anger over China's recent decision ruling out full democracy in Hong Kong.

"This is part of China's propaganda exercise," said Hong Kong pro-democracy lawmaker and unionist Mr Lee Cheuk-yan. "Beijing is trying to get close to Hong Kong people and cool the heated political atmosphere."

The holy relic, held in a bulletproof glass box, was

flown in this afternoon — just in time for the Buddha's birthday celebrations here tomorrow. It will be shown for 10 days in this largely Buddhist territory.

But Mr Lee compared the event to the visit late last year by China's first astronaut, Mr Yang Liwei, which was seen by many as heavy-handed public relations campaign to bolster Hong Kong's lukewarm sense of nationalism.

Many in Hong Kong are furious after China's top legislative committee ruled last month that the territory cannot elect its next leader in 2007, and all its lawmakers in 2008.

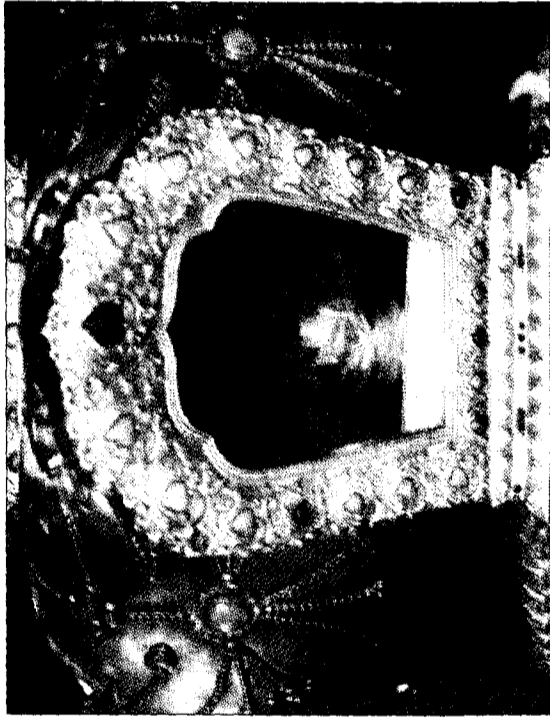
Saffron-robed monks

escorted the finger off an airplane that brought it from Xiayang in Shaanxi province. It was transferred onto a truck decorated in gold paneling and lotus flowers as a band played.

Senior monks prayed and sounded horns before the finger was driven to an exhibition center.

The finger was among Buddhist relics discovered in an underground shelter at Famen Temple near the ancient capital of Xian in central China in 1987.

A senior Communist Party official, Mr Liu Yandong, was set to officiate at an opening ceremony for the finger's display from tomorrow till 4 June.



The relic which is believed to be a bone section of Buddha's finger. — AFP

BEIJING, May 25. — Tibetan spiritual leader, the Dalai Lama, is not qualified to be the "representative" of Tibetans since he "betrayed" his people and motherland and sought "Tibetan independence", Chinese scholars have claimed.

Describing the 68-year-old spiritual leader as "the chief representative of serf owners", a researcher at the Chinese Academy of Social Sciences, Mr Hao Shiyuan, said the Dalai Lama staged an armed rebellion against China in 1959 in order to protect feudal serfdom in Tibet. "His absconding made himself betray the Tibetan people and his home country, and also deprived him of his qualification as representative of Tibetan people," Mr Hao was quoted as saying by the

... As scholars rap Dalai Lama

state-run Xinhua news agency. Mr Bi Hua, an expert with the China Tibetology Research Centre (CTRC), said the destiny and future of Tibet could be decided only by the whole Chinese nation, including Tibetan people, but no longer by the Dalai Lama and his clique. This was because Tibet's local government headed by the Dalai Lama representing feudal serfdom, had been replaced by the democratic administration established by the Tibetan people themselves. Mr Bi claimed. "This is an objective political fact that cannot be denied or shaken."

The criticism comes a day after China published its first white paper on the Tibet issue, urging the Dalai to give up his quest for "Tibetan independence". — PTI

SF-3 26 5

North Korean nuclear trade exposed

By Ian Traynor

VIENNA, MAY 24. North Korea supplied uranium for Libya's secret nuclear bomb programme, U.N. investigators have established, raising alarm about the heightened risk of so-called rogue states or terrorist groups buying nuclear materials.

Western diplomats in Vienna close to the International Atomic Energy Agency confirmed yesterday that the IAEA investigation into the Pakistan-led black market in nuclear materials and technology had found that 1.7 tonnes of slightly enriched uranium hexafluoride uncovered in Libya when Colonel Muammar Qadhafi voluntarily scrapped his nuclear project last December was sent from North Korea. It was initially suspected that the material had been obtained via private traders.

"There was a direct North Korea-Libya connection through the Khan network," said a diplomat close to the agency, re-

ferring to Abdul Qadeer Khan, the Pakistani scientist who led the secret nuclear trading network. "This is the first time that there is evidence that North Korea has sold nuclear materials to another country."

The discovery, reported yesterday by the *New York Times* and confirmed by diplomats in Vienna, was made recently, the source added. It indicates that North Korea is the first state known to be involved in the illicit nuclear trade.

Officials at the agency declined to comment publicly on the North Korea case, although they did not deny that the Libyan uranium was of North Korean provenance.

The discovery by IAEA investigators does not reflect well on British or U.S. intelligence, who spent nine months last year negotiating secretly with the Libyans to get Col. Qadhafi to scrap his weapons of mass destruction programmes. The bargain was sealed with a dramatic announcement. — © *Guardian Newspapers Limited 2004*

THE HINDU 25 MAY 2004

Chen vows to improve China ties

Associated Press

TAIPEI, May 20. — Taiwanese President Mr Chen Shui-bian promised in his inaugural speech today that he would work to improve ties with rival China, but he said that Taiwan must bolster its defences against the mainland's threats.

Mr Chen said: "We love peace but we are also concerned about national security. Facing the other side's military build-up, we have to reinforce our national defences."

Mr Chen was narrowly re-elected on 20 March after campaigning on a China-bashing platform and claiming that only he could best protect Taiwan from Beijing's plans to swallow up the tiny island.

The fiery rhetoric strained already tense relations with China, which claims that self-ruled Taiwan is part of Chinese territory.

Mr Chen tried to use the speech to smooth over relations with China. He also wanted to reassure the island's most impor-



President Chen addresses a gathering at his inauguration ceremony in Taipei on Thursday. — AFP

tant friend, America, that he wasn't a reckless leader anxious to trigger a devastating war.

A steady drizzle fell as Mr Chen spoke outside the Presidential Office to an audience of about 200,000. Most wore disposable yellow plastic rain ponchos to protect against the downpour that soaked the President's shoulders.

He urged Chinese leaders to use new thinking to solve the long-standing disputes between the two sides. He also said he

would honour commitments made in his inaugural speech four years ago when he pledged not to seek independence if China didn't attack. But he also repeated his pledge to rewrite Taiwan's Constitution before finishing his four-year term. He also said that the final document should be approved by a referendum.

He has infuriated Beijing by proposing to rewrite the Constitution. Chinese leaders fear he would use the new document to formalise

the Taiwan's independence.

As the inauguration ceremony was beginning, hundreds of Opposition supporters gathered for a protest at a park in the eastern part of the capital, Taipei. Some of them scuffled with police near the presidential office as they released huge black balloons with "No truth, no President" written on them.

Beijing keeps growling

China today warned President Chen against pursuing independence, saying that the island should not "gamble on the mainland's tolerance" as he began his second term.

Beijing had no immediate comment after Mr Chen delivered his potentially provocative inaugural address saying that he wanted to improve ties with the mainland but would also strengthen defences against Chinese threats.

State media affirmed China's warning that it would use force if necessary to stop the leader from making Taiwan's de facto independence permanent.

N Korea nuke talks 'conducive'

BEIJING, May 13. — The first working group meeting of the six-party talks on North Korean nuclear issue has held "conducive and in-depth" discussions on various issues of concern, Chinese foreign ministry sources said.

All the parties regard this meeting, which commenced here yesterday, as an important step toward resolving the Korean peninsula nuclear issue, the official Xinhua news agency quoted the unnamed sources as saying.

This is the first official information on the in-camera meeting between senior officials from China, the USA, North Korea, South Korea, Russia and Japan which is taking place at the Diaoyutai state guesthouse here, the venue for the previous two rounds of six-party talks.

The working group meeting is expected to finalise a date for the holding of the third round of six-party talks which is expected to be held here before the end of June.

China has already stated that it will play the role of coordinating with the other parties in a bid to make fruitful the working-level talks on Korean nuclear issue. — PTI

Pacino forgoes pound of flesh

The Times, London

CANNES, May 13. — Al Pacino has waived his multi-million-pound fee to star as Shylock in an ambitious British production of *The Merchant of Venice*.

The Hollywood star has wanted to play the role for years. When he heard that Michael Radford, the British director whose films include the Oscar-winning *Il Postino* and *1984*, with Richard Burton, was planning an adaptation, he agreed to take just a fraction of the £8.6 million fee which he can command.

The production, which is being promoted at the Cannes Film Festival, also boasts an A-list cast of British stars, including Joseph Fiennes and Jeremy Irons. Lynne Collins, an American actress tipped to be a star,



Shylock is so vulnerable." Once Pacino's name was attached to the production, the rest fell into place. Mr Radford said: "It needed a star to get the movie rolling."

plays Portia. Pacino is best known for classics such as the *Godfather* trilogy and *Scarface*, but Shakespeare has been his lifelong passion. He portrays Shylock as a character who is neither good nor bad, but who is put in a certain situation and behaves badly.

In telling the story of the animosity between Christian noblemen and the Jewish merchant and moneylender, the film will present a story of human conflict, one that is not dissimilar to the conflict between Christians and Muslims today, Mr Radford said, as "Two groups of people who don't understand each other".

He added: "The world hasn't changed at all. The film, set in 1596, is about people in love, revenge, hate. They're all flawed human beings.

In defence of torture?

World view JONATHAN POWER

How else to explain the eerie silence that greeted the detailed revelations made in the *Washington Post* 16 months ago? With no shortage of testimonials, the reports revealed that US intelligence agents had been torturing terrorist suspects in Bagram air base outside Kabul and in Diego Garcia, a US base beyond the reach of US courts. Other suspects were handed over to the intelligence services of Jordan, Egypt and Morocco which did the job US officials were perhaps nervous about doing.

It appeared to the reporters that wrote the story that a number of officials directly involved wanted the subject aired. Aware of the moral and legal ambiguities involved they wanted to know what public opinion considered were the limits. They got only an indirect answer. Most of the rest of the media gave the story only cursory attention, Congress ignored it and the administration brushed it off.

Timing, of course, is everything. When the

Torture returned with vengeance during the 20th century — in Stalin's Soviet Union, in Hitler's Germany, Mussolini's Italy, Franco's Spain — and always, if not continuously, in British-ruled Ireland.

In 1972, a young Amnesty International opened a campaign for a UN Anti-Torture Convention. In 1981, it won the support of Sweden, the first country to take up the cause. In 1984, the UN finally approved a legally binding treaty against torture. Quite soon after the treaty was ratified by most members of the UN, including by the USA of Ronald Reagan and the Britain of Margaret Thatcher. Once again the tide had appeared to turn against torture. In 1999, in the House of Lords, for the first time anywhere a high court decided that sovereign immunity must not become sovereign impunity and that under the Convention Pinochet could be prosecuted.

Yet still, says Amnesty, torture continues to be practised. Nevertheless, the evidence is that rarely does torture successfully elicit the truth — at best only part of it. More often it is used as a tool of oppression, to intimidate and humiliate. It certainly corrupts the souls of the torturers, as many have later testified. And probably it deeply corrupts the countries who tolerate it. What cannot be doubted it compromises their reputation, undermines their credibility and weakens their ability to win the changes they want. For the USA and Britain this time round, the use of torture clearly seems to have irredeemably lost them the battle for the hearts and minds of the Muslim world.

USA was doing well in Afghanistan and hopes were high it would repeat its success in Iraq very few wanted to quibble about such things. But with the USA on the psychological run, if not yet on a military one, together with the fact that the evidence is now photographic, the urge to jump on the moral high horse is irresistible. But all this does is to point up the ambiguities of human nature even more starkly.

And these particular ambiguities go back a long time. Rome tortured the early Christians and the Church, repelled by what had happened, for a thousand years after used its influence to ensure that torture was abolished in Europe. But then under pressure at the time of the Inquisition, it brought it back. In the 17th century, torture started to die out again. In 1640, it was abolished in England — except for "witches". In France and Italy, Voltaire and Beccaria wrote passionately against it and after the 1789 revolution, it was made a capital offence.



WHO in extremis could put his hand on his heart and say he would not sanction torture if he knew the detainee possessed information that could save thousand of lives? This has been the central conundrum of the long debate on the morality of torture.

In 1979, nearly two decades after the revelations of torture during the war of Algerian independence against colonial France, the commanding general of the French forces during the Battle of Algiers, Jacques Massu, published his memoirs defending its policy. The man who in his family life tried to make amends by adopting two Algerian orphans made the argument that torturers may be responsible servants of the state in times of extreme crisis.

Three years ago, another top French general, Paul Aussarresses, went public with his memoirs. "The first time I tortured someone", he wrote, "it was useless: the fellow died without saying a thing. I had no regrets over his death. If I had any regrets it was because he did not talk." But Massu, then in his nineties, commented that he had become convinced that torture is "not indispensable in time of war, we should have found another way — but how?"

That is indeed the question and society at large prefers to skirt around it. We have labelled it a sin, but in extraordinary situations we tolerate it. When in 1998 the Chilean former head of state General Augusto Pinochet was detained in London and accused of torture, his lawyer argued quite correctly, "there is torture everywhere, including in Britain and Northern Ireland."

China rules out popular vote in Hong Kong

By P. S. Suryanarayana

SINGAPORE, APRIL 26. Snuffing out the idea of universal suffrage for Hong Kong in the near-term future, China today affirmed its "consistent stance ... to develop democracy" in that territory in accordance with the "principle of gradual and orderly progress".

Ruling out the 'election' of Hong Kong's Chief Executive in 2007 and the 'election' of the Legislative Council in 2008 on the basis of universal suffrage, the Standing Committee of China's National People's Congress (NPC or Parliament) decided in Beijing today that the "specific

methods" in respect of these two aspects could still be "appropriately modified". There was no immediate hint about the kind of 'modification' that might be acceptable to Beijing.

The NPC panel, however, laid down that any 'modifications' would be conditional not only on the principle of "gradual and orderly progress" but also on the main decision against universal suffrage and "general election" in 2007 and 2008.

The present system of choosing half of Hong Kong's Legislative Council from functional groups and the other half from electoral constituencies "shall remain unchanged".

N. Korea puts pride before pain

By B. M. S.

(1.7) 927A

Seoul/Beijing, April 26 (Reuters): North Korea urgently needs medical aid to treat victims of its huge train blast, UN officials said today after aid workers described children writhing in pain, their blackened faces stitched with twine.

But the secretive communist state shut down one route to quick relief when North Korean officials told South Korea they did not want direct overland shipments.

Seoul agreed to hold more talks tomorrow and will send some goods by sea, officials said.

UN officials in the North Korean capital said Chinese aid was reaching the town of Ryongchon, where at least 161 people died and hundreds were injured in last Thursday's blast.

"A lot of assistance is needed very urgently," said Gerald Bourke, spokesperson for the World Food Programme in North Korea.

"At the hospital, they are overwhelmed. They have very little in the way of equipment and the necessary drugs and medicines," he said by telephone. "So there is a big need there."

Brendan McDonald, head of the UN Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA) in Pyongyang, said the blast had put Ryongchon's hospital out of action.

"That's a hospital that serves the needs of the whole country's 123,000 people," he said.

North Korea's official KCNA news agency said government bodies had sent aid and officials were "striving to heal the dam-

aged KCNA devoted more



Children injured in the April 22 train explosion share beds at the People's Hospital in Sinuiju, North Korea. (AFP)

space to evening galas marking army foundation day yesterday. Ministers and top army and party officials watched an acrobatic show in Pyongyang, it said.

The death toll could rise above 161 as ill-equipped hospitals in the impoverished North battled to save the lives of hundreds suffering from serious burns, Sweden's envoy said.

Scores of primary school children were among those

killed when the two trains exploded, obliterating a school and large parts of the border town.

Aid workers who visited victims at nearby Sinuiju Provincial Hospital described great suffering. International agencies had relief operations under control, said Swedish ambassador Paul Beljer.

But he said he feared the

death toll could rise with hundreds of burn victims suffering in crude hospitals with minimal supplies.

"I believe it might get much higher. There are still some 300 seriously wounded people in hospital," he said in Stockholm by telephone from Pyongyang.

The blast took place just hours after North Korean leader Kim Jong-Il's train passed

through Ryongchon on his way back from China.

He is widely reported to fear flying, and his rail routes are heavily guarded, often with traffic halted for hours.

"We saw children rolling and moaning in pain, many with a lot of cuts to the face and rudimentary twine stitching," World Food Programme Asia regional director Tony Banbury said by telephone.

Faces of many of the injured were blackened by burns or lacinated by rubble and dust blown into the air.

The first outside help arrived yesterday from China, the North's giant neighbour and closest ally. South Korea decided to send goods worth \$1 million as soon as possible and Japan announced plans to contribute \$100,000 worth of relief supplies.

Officials of the two Koreas were to meet tomorrow in the North Korean border city of Kaesong after North Korea said it preferred receiving aid by sea to overland shipments, a Seoul official said.

The South Korean Red Cross said some goods would leave by boat on Thursday, making the 15-hour trip from Incheon to Nampo.

North Korea's first official report on the disaster blamed the incident on carelessness during the shunting of wagons loaded with ammonium nitrate fertilizer and fuel tanker wagons.

Seoul has said the blast was probably an accident resulting from a train backlog rather than a botched attempt on Kim's life.

'Dynamite, not collision, behind North Korea train blast

Agencies
Beijing, April 23

TWO WAGON loads of dynamite being shunted into a siding hit live electrical wires, sparking the massive explosion in North Korea, the UN said on Friday.

"There was no collision," Masood Hyder, the UN's humanitarian coordinator in North Korea, said from Pyongyang. "It was an explosion caused by two wagons full of explosives, which I believe was dynamite, being shunted and coming into contact with live wires."

Later, the North Korean foreign ministry issued a statement saying: "The explosion at the station in the city of Ryongchon occurred on Thursday due to ignition of gunpowder meant to be used for the construction of an irrigation canal."

Hyder said the blast caused "much damage. So far, 50 bodies have been recovered and over 1,000 people are injured."

The International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Society, too, scaled down the death toll from Thursday's reported figure of 3,000, saying at least 54 people were killed and 1,249 injured in the train blast in Ryongchon city. But the Red Cross said that the figure could be far higher, because more than 8,000 houses were destroyed, possibly burying people under the rubble.

"More than 1,800 houses or rooms have been destroyed, and more than 6,000 damaged," said Niels Juel, a Red Cross official in Beijing.

He said it was "not unlikely" that people might be trapped under the rubble.

North Korean authorities have given UN relief agencies permission to travel to the site of the explosion. "The authorities have accepted the offer of UN help and agreed to an evaluation mission by UN agencies," said Christiane Berthiaume, spokeswoman for the World Food Programme.

North silent, neighbour puts toll at 3000

Seoul, April 22 (Reuters): Up to 3,000 people were killed or injured when two trains loaded with fuel collided and exploded at a North Korean station today, hours after leader Kim Jong-il had passed through, South Korea's YTN television said.

South Korea's Yonhap news agency, which spoke of widespread destruction, said there were thousands of casualties and some form of emergency had been declared in the area near the border with China.

"The station was destroyed as if hit by a bombardment and debris flew high into the sky," Yonhap said, quoting unidentified Chinese sources. YTN in its report quoted witnesses.

Neither Yonhap nor YTN gave a breakdown of deaths and injuries and there was no independent confirmation of the reports. Communist North Korea, one of the world's most reclusive and impoverished countries, has not said anything on the disaster.

Yonhap quoted sources in the Chinese city of Dandong that borders the North as saying the explosion occurred around 0400 GMT — nine hours after Kim's special train was reported to have passed on its way to Pyongyang after a visit to China.

The sources said trains carrying fuel and liquefied petroleum gas collided at Ryongchon station 15 km south of the Yalu river border near the Yellow Sea.

There were rumours the fuel was a gift from China to Kim and his energy-starved country, Yonhap said. Ryongchon is translocated as Yongchon in South Korea and appears that way on most maps in the West.

Yonhap also quoted a senior defence ministry official as saying the South's military — which eavesdrops on North Korea — had heard about the blast through "intelligence channels directed against the North".

There was no immediate suggestion the blast was anything other than an accident.

But the explosion came after Kim met China's new leadership during a rare foreign visit to discuss the North's nuclear

weapons plans, tentative economic reforms and aid that has in the past included fuel.

North Korea's official media made no mention of the disaster but earlier today they broke their silence on Kim's three-day trip to Beijing — strongly suggesting he was safely back in Pyongyang.

International telephone lines to the area appear to have been cut to prevent information about the explosion getting out, Yonhap added.

The North's creaking medical system would be hard pressed to cope with a large number of casualties, but there was no word any international agency or neighbouring country

had been asked for help.

"We have not yet received official information on the accident. We are trying to confirm the report," a unification ministry spokesman said in Seoul. Other officials at various government agencies also had no information.

At the UN in New York, a North Korean diplomat said he had no information except what he had heard from outside reports. Yonhap said the Chinese sources said people in Dandong were concerned their friends or relatives could have been caught up in the blast. Traders from both sides criss-cross the border area.

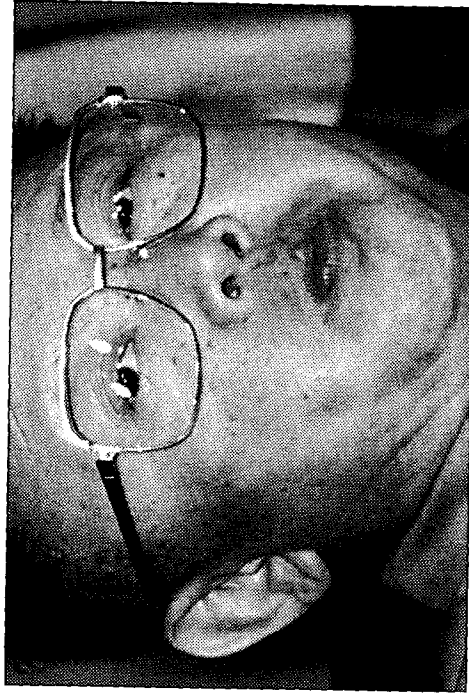
A railway worker on the Chi-

nese side of the Dandong border crossing said he had not heard of a blast and had seen no signs of any emergency effort under way.

"The closest station to here in North Korea is in Sinuiju (on the border), and I would have heard it. But I didn't hear anything," he said by telephone.

Residents in Pyongyang said by telephone there was nothing unusual in the capital. North Korean television was broadcasting military songs and music — standard evening fare.

Masood Hyder, the World Food Programme coordinator in Pyongyang, said he was not sure if or when the government might inform his agency of the reported accident.



Kim Jong-il. (AFP)

11-13
2004

Kim in Beijing to discuss N-issues

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Beijing: Reclusive North Korean leader Kim Jong-Il held talks with President Hu Jintao on Monday. They were centred on nuclear issues, reports said. United States had cited intelligence that Pyongyang had atomic bombs.



Kim arrived with a 30-to-40-strong entourage on the unannounced four-day visit to Beijing by train amid tight security, according to South Korea's Yonhap news agency. He disembarked before the train arrived at Beijing station for security reasons. The agency said that the talks took place over lunch at Zhongnanhai, the residence of

China's top leaders, and focused on the nuclear standoff, China's economic assistance to the North and the Stalinist state's economic reform. Hu briefed Kim on Washington's position on the nuclear issue following his meeting last week in China with US vice president Dick Cheney, and listened to Kim's ideas on how to end the dispute, unnamed sources were cited as saying. China declined to confirm the visit, saying it had "no official information". North Korean embassy staff also refused to confirm Kim was in Beijing. There was no special security in place outside the embassy, with the usual two guards at the entrance, who also denied any knowledge of Kim's visit. AFP

Protest march in Hong Kong

Associated Press

HONG KONG, April 11. — About 20,000 angry citizens marched today to Beijing's representative office in Hong Kong, demanding the right to choose their government democratically and calling on Hong Kong's unpopular leader to quit.

People from many walks of life turned out to protest against a ruling by China's most powerful legislative committee that Beijing must give advance approval to any changes in the way Hong Kong's leader and legislature are selected. After a brief stand-off with police, the demonstrators were allowed to file past the rear entrance of the Chinese government's liaison office, dropping off boxes of letters that urged Beijing to reverse its ruling and allow universal suffrage. A small group later staged a sit-in.

The silhouettes of more than a dozen people inside the Chinese office could be seen looking out, but no one was available for comment. "We don't want to over-



Protesters in Hong Kong on Sunday. — AFP

throw the Central government," said a 48-year-old warehouse manager who joined the march. "We're just asking for rights we deserve." Rally organiser Jackie Hung said more than 20,000 people had turned out to oppose to the ruling issued on Tuesday by the Standing Committee of the National People's Congress in China. Police estimated the crowd at about 10,000.

THE STATESMAN 12 APR 2004

N. Korea threat to beef up N-deterrent force

Assoaiated Press
Seoul, April 1

NORTH KOREA on Thurs-
day threatened to strengthen
its "nuclear deterrent force"
to cope with alleged aerial es-
pionage by the US and its
plans to deploy a destroyer in
waters off the Korean Penin-
sula later this year.

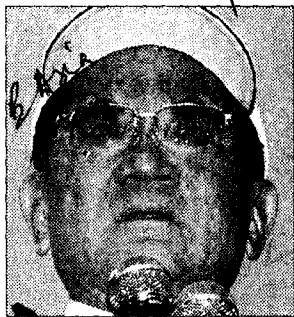
The North's official KCNA
news agency, citing un-
named military sources, ac-
cused the US of conducting
over 220 spy flights against
the communist state in
March. "Such aerial espi-
onage frantically committed
by the US imperialists with
the whole area of South Ko-
rea as an operation theatre
clearly proves how urgent
our strengthening of self-de-
fensive nuclear deterrent
force is", the official news
agency said.

The allegation came a
day after a North Korean
foreign ministry spokes-
man condemned a US plan
to deploy a destroyer in
Japanese waters off the Ko-
rean Peninsula in Septem-
ber as part of a ballistic
missile defense system.

5-2

Taiwan Opp demands fresh polls

Associated Press 11A



Opposition leader Mr Lien

TAIPEI, March 31. — Taiwan's Opposition demanded a fresh presidential election today. An official, however, said the island might have to wait until at least Friday before the High Court decided when it would hold a recount of the disputed 20 March election.

A Nationalist Party spokesman said it would file a petition with the court within two days demanding the election be nullified and that a new one be held — a tactic that analysts suggested would likely fail.

Intelligence chief quits

Taiwan's top intelligence official resigned today over the pre-poll shooting of Mr Chen, the presidential office said, adds AFP. "Mr Tsai Chao-ming, head of the National Security Bureau, has shouldered political responsibility for the security of President Chen and Vice-President Annette Lu... His resignation has been accepted," a statement said.

THE STATESMAN 1 ADD 0001

TAIWAN'S CONTESTED MANDATE

THE CONTROVERSY SURROUNDING the election in Taiwan, including the shooting incident that appears to have given President Chen Shui-bian the vital edge over his opponent by introducing the sympathy factor into the vote, has taken some of the sheen off a politician who loses no opportunity to project himself as pro-democracy. A recount of votes in the contested election, as demanded by the Opposition in court, is expected to confirm a second term for President Chen. He won the narrowest of election victories — by a mere 0.2 per cent or 30,000 votes — triggering widespread protests in the island. The Opposition, led by the Kuomintang, has challenged the result in court but by publicly agreeing to a recount Mr. Chen may have paved the way for an early resolution of the political crisis. Still, several question marks will continue to hang over this election, particularly the Opposition allegation that Mr. Chen staged the shooting incident in a desperate attempt to turn the election in his favour.

While it will take a long time for the dust raised by this election to settle, the slender margin of Mr. Chen's victory should give him pause to reconsider his adventurist plans for taking the island further away from political reunification with China and towards independence. President Chen wants to write a new Constitution for Taiwan and implement it by 2008. This will mean placing Taiwan on a dangerous course in its relations with People's China, which views the island as a dissident province and its government as a rebellious local government. But Mr.

Chen would do well to remember that while 50.1 per cent of the Taiwanese people voted for him in last week's election, 49.9 per cent voted for his opponent. Such a narrow victory does not translate into a meaningful mandate of any kind. Rather, it is a reflection of how divided the Taiwanese really are over the status and future of Taiwan. The defeat of a referendum proposal for raising Taiwan's defence preparedness against the mainland that Mr. Chen placed before voters simultaneously with the presidential election is only more evidence that the Taiwanese do not want their government to adopt a posture of confrontation with the People's Republic.

However, should President Chen persist in his adventurism with China, he will find himself increasingly isolated in the international community. Even though the United States has congratulated Mr. Chen on his re-election, thus contradicting its declared One China policy, the Bush administration has made it clear it does not want to be drawn into a confrontation — military or diplomatic — with the People's Republic, which has emerged as one of America's closest economic partners in the last few years. China believes Taiwan belongs to all Chinese, and that its future cannot be decided by those living on the island alone. Taiwan's claim to being an independent entity is recognised only by a handful of countries. It is time Taiwan recognised international realities and concentrated on developing historic contacts and people-to-people and economic links with mainland China instead of pursuing a foolhardy fantasy.

THE HINDU

1 APR 2004

Taiwan Opp protest swells, China fumes

Reuters
Taipei, March 27

IN TAIWAN'S biggest-ever protest, 500,000 supporters of defeated presidential challenger Lien Chan massed in Taipei on Saturday to dispute his loss as China vowed not to tolerate turmoil on the island.

A sea of yellow raincoats filled the square and streets around the office of President Chen Shui-bian as demonstrators defied rain to demand a recount for last Saturday's poll, which Chen won by just 30,000 votes out of more than 13 million cast.

Dressed in black in a demonstration of mourning and standing in front of a huge sign reading "Democracy is Dead," Lien told the crowd he had counted more than 1,000 irregularities in the island's third ever direct presidential vote.

"Today so many people gather here to demand a fair election. This is the most basic value of democracy," said Lien, leader of the Nationalist Party who also lost to Chen in 2000.

"Our common demands are very simple: immediate recount. I want to ask Chen Shui-bian: what are you afraid of? Stand up!"

"Say no to Bulletgate scandal," read one placard held up by the crowd. "Say no to the dirty election," read another raised near a huge plaster replica of the Statue of Liberty. Lien urged the crowd to go

home, but warned Chen that his supporters would return in force to launch a new protest in early April if their demands over the disputed election were not met.

He said he would persist until the president's May 20 inauguration. The crowd then began to disperse.

Beijing said on Friday that it would not sit idly by if the protests spiraled out of control. China is anxious to prevent pro-independence activists who back Chen's policy of greater sovereignty from using the turmoil to promote their cause.

China's communist leadership issued its most strongly worded statement since the election, but stopped short of threatening action. Beijing regularly threatens to use force to recover an island it claims as a renegade province.



AFP
A crying Statue of Liberty erected by Taiwanese protesters.

Chen agrees to swift vote recount

TAIPEI, March 23. — Taiwan's President Mr Chen Shui-bian has agreed to push for a change to the law that would allow a swift recount of the island's disputed presidential election.

A ruling party legislator said the President will seek to amend an election law this afternoon and "start a recount as soon as possible". President Chen announced the move at a meeting with senior government officials and the proposed changes will bypass the lengthy legal process.

Mr Yeh Yi-jin from the Democratic Progressive Party said: "We hope to pass the revisions this afternoon after discussions with Opposition lawmakers and start a recount as soon as possible."

The amendment would allow a candi-

date to demand a recount within seven days of a presidential election if there was a difference in the vote share of less than one per cent. Mr Chen polled 50.11 per cent of the vote compared with 49.89 per cent for KMT chairman Mr Lien Chan — allowing him to sneak home by fewer than 30,000 votes. Mr Lien had warned of a "very serious problem" if the courts did not order a recount.

Chen denies vote-rigging: Mr Chen said today that allegations over vote-rigging in the close-run election were false, calling it an insult to his reputation.

Meanwhile China today sought to downgrade the just-concluded presidential polls in Taiwan terming it as a "regional" election. — ANN & PTI

Taiwan court orders ballots sealed

Associated Press

TAIPEI, March 21. — Taiwan's High Court ordered the sealing of all ballot boxes today, even as 10,000 protesters demanded a recount of President Chen Shui-bian's re-election saying it was marred by voting irregularities and a mysterious shooting that wounded the incumbent.

The court said it was sealing the boxes to preserve evidence but did not immediately order a recount as demanded by challenger Mr Lien Chan. The Opposition also said it would seek to nullify Mr Chen's narrow victory yesterday, arguing he unfairly received sympathy votes because of the election-eye shooting, which remained unexplained. Mr Chen and his Vice-President were slightly wounded in the attack. There have been no

arrests and police have not identified any suspects.

Several hundred demonstrators outside the presidential office here cheered news of the ballot-sealing order, but tempers soon rose again and the crowd swelled, waving flags, blowing air horns and clamoring for an immediate recount. Police estimated by midafternoon that 10,000 people had turned out.

Speaking to the protesters, Mr Lien said he was demanding that the government form a special task force with medical and criminal experts to investigate the attack on Chen and its influence on the election. "The government should give us an early answer so that we don't have to stay here overnight."

Just before Mr Lien's speech, Premier Mr Yu Shyi-kun called for the protesters to end their demonstration and leave the election dispute for the court to resolve. "Let

our national hostilities end here."

Confronted with doubts about the shooting, Mr Chen's office today released photographs that showed him being treated for a wound to the abdomen. They showed the President on an operating table but not seriously hurt. In one frame he is talking on a mobile phone while doctors are working on him.

Presidential Office spokesman James Huang said officials released the pictures to stop speculation that the injury was faked to win sympathy votes for Mr Chen. "Some people said we faked this, that the pictures we released earlier only showed a belly, Mr. Huang told reporters. "If we wanted to use the incident to influence the election, we could have made these pictures public then to win sympathy. We did not because we didn't want to spark an outcry."



Opposition Kuomintang supporters carry a Taiwan flag at a protest rally in Taipei on Sunday. — AFP

h/ant

High Court orders sealing of ballot boxes

By P. S. Suryanarayana

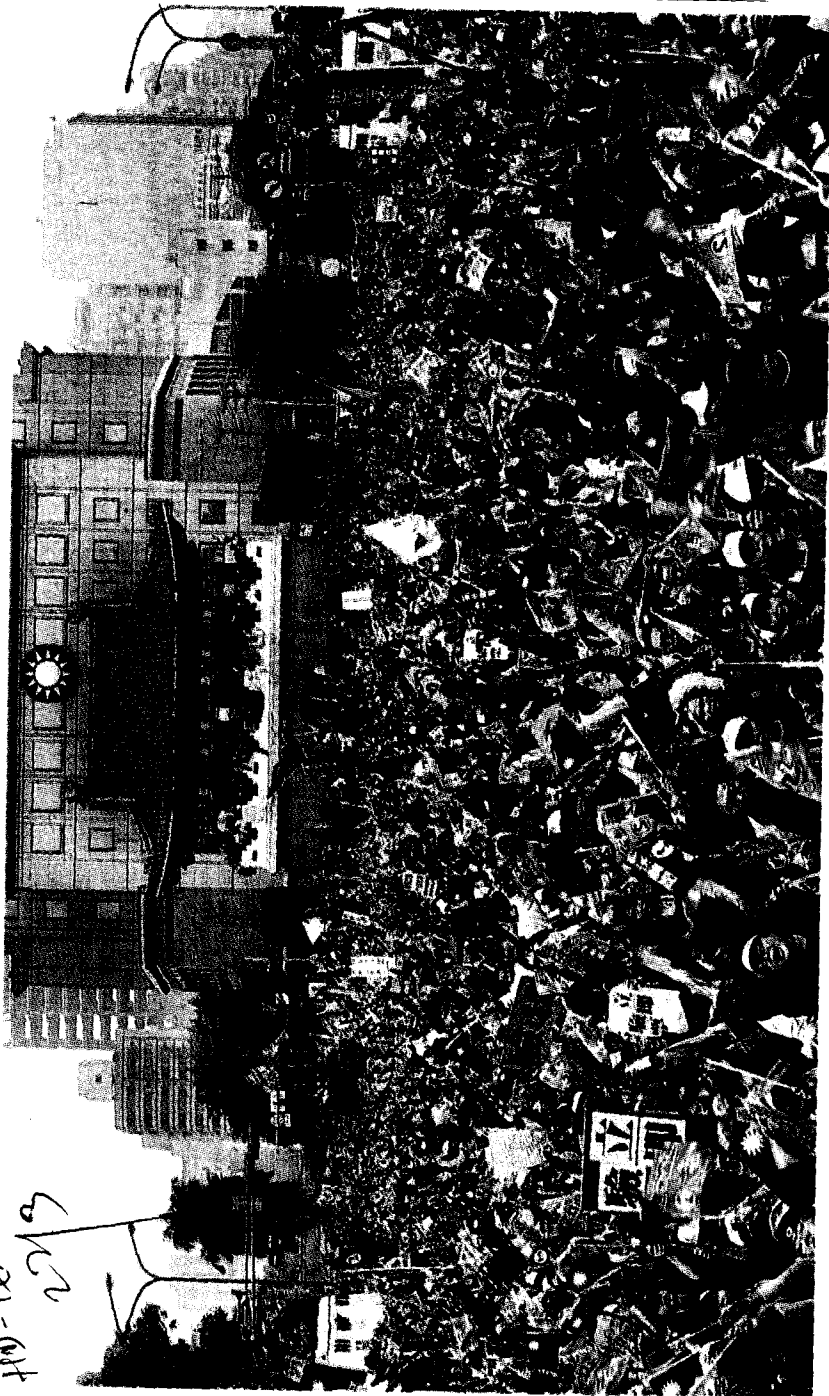
SINGAPORE, MARCH 21. The Taiwanese High Court today intervened to settle the sharp political dispute over the outcome of the presidential poll in the non-sovereign territory.

The Court ordered the seizure and sealing of the ballot boxes, as the first step, even as the losing Opposition Kuomintang candidate, Lien Chan, and his supporters staged a protest rally outside the presidential complex in Taipei. The incumbent President, Chen Shui-bian, of the Democratic Progressive Party, was declared re-elected by a slender margin following Saturday's polling.

Taking cognisance of a law suit filed by Mr. Lien and his vice-presidential running mate to challenge the 'unfair election and its outcome, the Court ruled that all presidential ballot papers, including the blank ones, the valid votes and those declared void, besides all other relevant electoral materials be seized and sealed, pending the disposal of the case.

One of the anomalies cited by the Opposition is that the invalid votes totalled well over 0.3 million, out of nearly 13 million ballots cast, as against the margin of Mr. Lien's defeat — about 30,000 votes. The Court's ruling acquired significance in this context.

Apparently feeling encouraged by the latest judicial intervention, Mr. Lien, who is also the Kuomintang Chairman, appealed for an immediate and transparent recount of all the ballots. Mr. Lien, who was



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21/3

Supporters of Taiwan's main Opposition Kuomintang hold a massive rally in Taipei on Sunday accusing the President, Chen Shui-bian, of orchestrating an assassination attempt on March 19 to swing elections in his favour. —AFP

speaking at the Opposition rally today, had refused to concede defeat even before the result was officially announced on Saturday night. His demands include an impartial investigation of the apparent assassination attempt on Mr. Chen and his vice-presidential running mate, Annette Lu, on the campaign trail on Friday.

Even as the post-poll political

battle intensified within Taiwan, which was once upon a time a permanent member of the U.N. Security Council only to become a non-sovereign entity thereafter, China took note of the situation without making an immediate comment. Beijing regards Taiwan as an integral part of China and wants a political and constitutional reunification of the island-territory.

Beijing has no particular political favourites in Taiwan, and the territory's present leader of the Opposition belongs to an outfit that had opposed the Communist Party of China. As a new battle of attrition threatened to engulf Taiwan, the territorial government indicated its readiness for a trench warfare on the basis of a 'consensus' between the ruling and opposition parties.

Taipei, March 20 (Reuters): Taiwan President Chen Shui-bian won re-election today, a day after he was hit by gunfire from a would-be assassin, in the closest such election in the island's history and in a result almost certain to anger China.

Quivering with rage, Nationalist Party opponent Lien Chan swiftly challenged the razor-thin result, demanding the election be declared invalid and saying he would ask for a recount.

The political drama of Chen's victory was underscored by his victory by just 29,158 votes out of 12.9 million votes cast and by the failure of his referendum on boosting defences against China that had been his brainchild and the heart of his campaign.

"The election is over," Chen said, trying to draw a line

Taiwan's Chen wins razor-thin poll race

under the potentially destabilising quarrel over the result.

"Even those of us with different beliefs and ideals should use love and forgiveness to create a new Taiwan," he said.

Ten thousand supporters gathered outside Chen's Taipei campaign headquarters, screaming with delight, waving the green banners of his Democratic Progressive Party (DPP)

and setting off a storm of firecrackers into the Taipei night sky.

Analysts said this narrowest of wins could be due to an 11th-hour sympathy vote after the unidentified gunman fired twice at Chen. Most analysts had expected Chen to lose based on underground gambling and secret opinion polls by newspapers.

Lien chose not to concede defeat and instead challenged Chen's re-election by calling the vote unfair and saying many question marks still hung over Friday's bizarre shooting in which a bullet gashed the President's abdomen. "We want to raise a motion to declare the election invalid," Lien, head of the Nationalist Party or Kuomintang, told cheering supporters.

"We ask the central election commission to seize and seal all ballot boxes," he said, demanding a recount. At the heart of the controversy was the high number of invalid ballots. Invalid votes totalled 337,297, almost triple the 122,278 invalid votes in 2000 and up from 117,160 in the 1996 presidential election.

China factor

China was paying close attention to developments in Taiwan after Chen Shui-bian was re-elected by a thin margin, a source close to Taiwan policy making said today. After Taiwan's first referendum failed, the source quoted a Chinese government statement as saying the result showed the vote was unpopular and added that efforts to split China were doomed to failure.



Taiwan President Chen Shui-bian (right) with Vice-President Annette Lu at a victory rally in Taipei. (AFP)

THE TELEGRAPH

21 MAR 2004

Taiwan Prez, Vice-Prez shot while campaigning

JANE MACARTNEY
TAIPEI, MARCH 19

TAIWAN President Chen Shui-bian survived an assassination attempt on Friday while campaigning on the eve of a presidential election, escaping with a bullet wound to the stomach.

Vice President Annette Lu was also wounded in the attack in the southern city of Tainan but was not badly hurt, officials said. The pair were rushed to hospital, but a hospital official said later that they had left to fly back to the capital.

Officials said Saturday's election would go ahead as planned. Chen and Lu had been travelling in an open-top jeep through Tainan streets, waving to crowds, when unknown assailants shot at them at 1.45 pm. Police said they believed two standard handguns had been used and at least two shots fired. They had yet to make any arrests.

Chen, who was not wearing a bullet-proof vest, was rushed to hospital in Tainan, his home town, where he received 14 stitches in an 11-cm long, three-cm deep wound. Television reports said the 54-year-old president was able to walk in for treatment.

Lu, 59, was hit in the right leg and had to be assisted. But her condition was not serious, officials said. It was unclear if the attack in a country where such political violence is virtually unknown would affect the election outcome. Analysts said most voters had already made their choice based on policy and were unlikely to be swayed by emotion now.

Chen's chief of staff, Chiou I-Jen, told a news conference that the president had



A video grab shows blood (circled) coming from the wound on Taiwan President Chen Shui-bian's stomach after he was shot in Tainan on Friday. Reuters

China silent after Taiwan shooting

BEIJING: Hours after Taiwan President Chen Shui-bian was shot, diplomatic foe China had no official reaction and its media was not reporting the news. A Chinese Foreign Ministry spokesman said he could not comment on the shooting. However, seven hours later, China's official Xinhua news agency issued a brief report on the shooting. The short report from Taipei quoted local media as saying that "Taiwan authorities' leaders" Chen and Annette Lu, his Vice-President, were shot and slightly wounded. — Reuters

called for calm. Both the DPP and the Opposition Nationalists called off campaigning after the shooting.

Officials had voiced worries that hardcore supporters of Chen, leader of the pro-independence Democratic Progressive Party (DPP), might cause violence at final evening election rallies. "For the sake of social stability, we have suspended all campaign activities," said DPP campaign

manager Su Chen-Chang. Chen had been due to address an evening rally in Taipei. Opposition candidate Lien Chan, who was believed to have a slight edge in the contest, also called off his campaign. "Because of this special situation we have decided to suspend all our campaign activities this evening," Lien told a Taipei news conference. Outside the DPP headquarters supporters waved green party flags and shouted Chen's popular nickname: "A-Bian, A-Bian, go, go, go." The Investigation Bureau said police were hunting two attackers.

"The shooters probably were in the crowd because the wound to the president was on an upward trajectory," an official said. "The gunshot occurred just as firecrackers were exploded, so we don't even know how many shots were actually fired," the bureau official told Reuters. Wang Hsin-nan, a lawmaker from Chen's party who was travelling in the motorcade, told TVBS television that a bullet hit the Vice-President in the knee first, and then the President. — Reuters

Taiwan President survives bid on life

By P. S. Suryanarayana

SINGAPORE, MARCH 19. Taiwan's President, Chen Shui-bian, and the Vice-President, Annette Hsiu-lien Lu, were injured today, as they were shot at while campaigning together in Tainan city, on the eve of the non-sovereign territory's presidential poll and a critical referendum.

The Taiwanese Government later announced that the polling would take place as scheduled tomorrow and that both leaders, whose "injuries [were] not life-threatening," were in a stable condition. Until nightfall today, no one was arrested or identified as the possible assailant.

China, which has proprietary claims over Taiwan, made no immediate comment.

Mr. Chen and Ms. Lu, political running mates for the presidential poll, were riding an open four-wheel-drive vehicle through the streets of his hometown in the afternoon, when the shooting occurred.

After they were rushed to a local hospital for treatment, the secretary-general to the President, Chiou I-jen, said at a press conference in Taipei that both Mr. Chen and Ms. Lu, who "are fully conscious," had urged the people to remain calm. He said Mr. Chen was wounded in the belly while Ms. Lu was hit on the right knee. They both appeared to have been hit by the same bullet.

The official said that "national security mechanisms have been activated" and that the Government would take



A video grab shows the Taiwan President, Chen Shui-bian, and the Vice-President, Annette Hsiu-lien Lu, just after they were shot at and injured while campaigning for the presidential election in Tainan on Friday. A single bullet grazed Mr. Chen's belly (the circle shows the wound) and then hit Ms. Lu on the right knee. — AP

"full responsibility" for the shooting heightened in view of China's objections to the planned plebiscite. Beijing wants Taiwan to be re-united with mainland China on the basis of "historical reciprocity." The reunification systems, especially the referendum, even as the international community was running closely watching the situation.

Snipers injure Taiwan Prez

Agencies
Taipei, March 19

TAIWAN PRESIDENT Chen Shui-bian survived an assassination attempt on Friday while campaigning on the eve of a presidential election, escaping with a bullet wound to the stomach.

Vice-President Annette Lu was also wounded in the attack in the southern city of Tainan but was not badly hurt, officials said. The pair were rushed to hospital, but a hospital official said later that they had left to fly back to the capital.

Officials said Saturday's election would go ahead as planned. Opposition presidential candidate Lien Chan paid a brief visit to Chen at his official Taipei residence on Friday evening. "He is resting," Lien told reporters afterwards. "We wished the President a speedy recovery and gave him a box of ginseng."

Chen and Lu had been traveling through Tainan streets in a red open-top jeep, waving to crowds, when unknown assailants shot at them at 1:45 pm local time.

Police said they believed

two standard handguns had been used and at least two shots fired. City police later offered a T\$3 million (US \$90,000) reward for information leading to the capture of the two assailants.

More than six hours after the shooting, China's official Xinhua news agency carried a terse factual report but the Chinese authorities had no official reaction. Beijing regards Taiwan as a renegade province to be recovered, by force if necessary. Chen was rushed to hospital in Tainan, his home town, where he received 14 stitches in an 11-cm (five-inch) long, three-cm (one-inch) deep wound. Television reports said the 54-year-old president was able to walk into the hospital for treatment.

Lu, 59, was hit in the right leg and had to be assisted into the building but her condition was not serious.

"She (Lu) first felt a pain on her right knee and thought it could have been caused by a firecracker. Later, the president also felt that his stomach was wet," said Chiou, the secretary general of the presidential office.

THE HINDUSTAN TIMES

20 MAR 2000

Taiwan President escapes bid on life

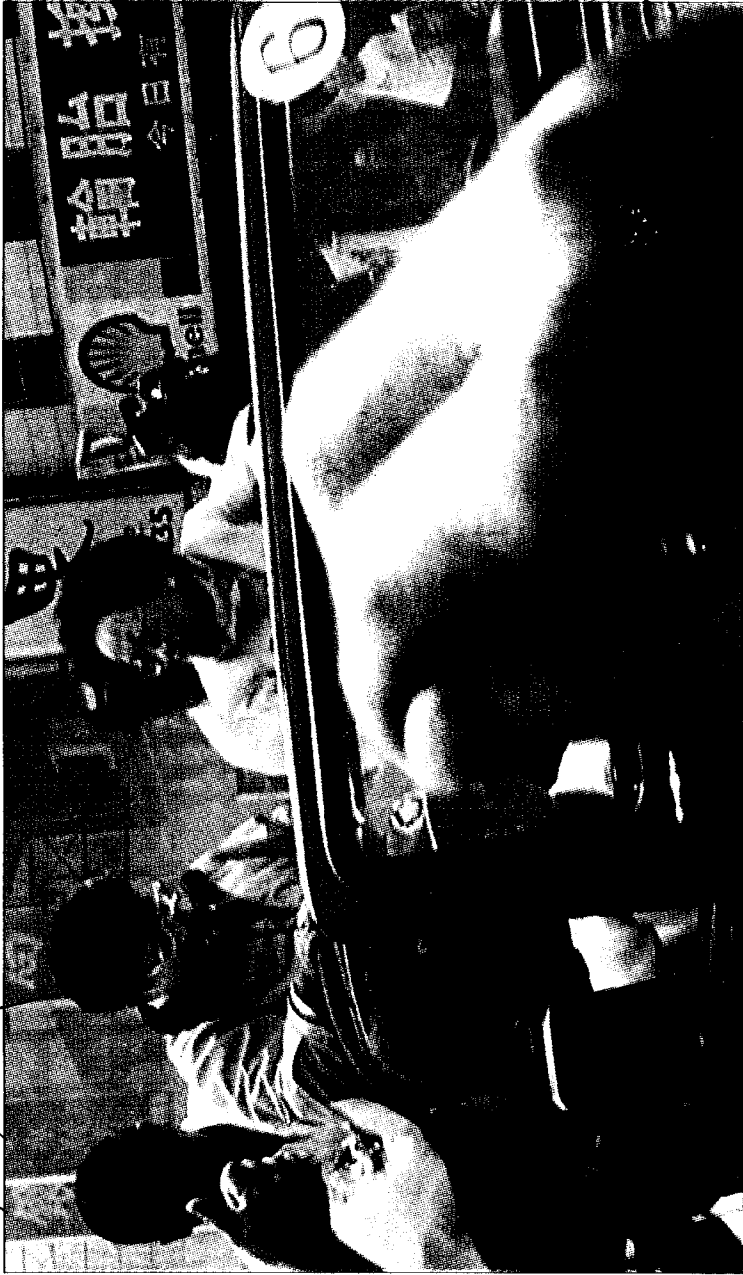
Associated Press

TAIPEI, March 19. — Taiwanese President Mr Chen Shui-bian and Vice-President were shot and wounded in an apparent assassination attempt today, the final day of campaigning for the presidential polls scheduled to be held tomorrow.

No arrests were reported and it was not clear who fired in a street choked with Mr Chen's supporters in his hometown, the southern city of Tainan.

Election officials said voting would go ahead as scheduled tomorrow despite the attack, the first of its kind against a Taiwanese President. Some analysts predicted it could boost Mr Chen's chances in what had been a neck and neck race.

Mr Chen, who has angered the Nationalist Opposition and Beijing by championing a separate identity for Taiwan, was hit in the abdomen while sitting in a red convertible four-wheel-drive vehicle.



BULLETS AND BALLOTS: President Mr Chen Shui-bian (centre) looks at his stomach shortly after being hit by a bullet in an assassination attempt in Tainan on Friday, as Vice-President Ms Annette Lu looks on. — AFP

Surgeons said they had removed a bullet that had not penetrated far into his body and had caused no damage to his internal organs. Vice-President Ms Annette Lu, who was sitting beside him, was grazed on the right knee. Mr Chen was able to walk into the Tainan hospital and about five hours after the shooting, the President returned to the capital, Taipei.

Police said they had suspects and would not speculate who might be responsible or what the motivation was.

China silent

BEIJING, March 19. — China had no official reaction and waited more than six hours to tell its public today that Taiwan's President was shot and wounded ahead of the elections that Beijing hoped he would lose. One mainland Web site apparently blocked commentary and a CNN broadcast on the assault was blacked out. A two-sentence report by the official Xinhua News Agency late today said Mr Chen and Ms Lu had been shot and that Taiwanese authorities were investigating. The report didn't refer to either by their official titles, reflecting Beijing's insistence that Taiwan's popularly elected government isn't legitimate. "I'm not surprised. We don't like him very much on the mainland," Mr Li Feng, a Beijing office worker, said when told of the news. "He keeps trying for independence, and it's been causing relations between the two sides to be very bad." — AP

Taiwan polls: Confrontation with both China & the USA

IN the short eight years of full democracy in Taiwan, Saturday's election will be the third. In each election, the candidate that Beijing did not like won office. This time Beijing has made it clear that it doesn't want to see President Chen Shui-bian re-elected. By the workings of normal electoral arithmetic, he shouldn't be. In the last election, he won on a minority vote because the opposition — the successor party to Chiang Kai-shek's Kuomintang — was divided. This time there is no division and until recently, many assumed Chen would lose. But once again, China has been waving its fist and the chances are that Chen has a good chance of gaining a second term.

The more Taiwan becomes democratic, the more the older generation of Chinese die off (a good many of whom crossed the strait as part of the fleeing troops of the Kuomintang defeated by the communists in China's civil war) and the more Taiwan advances with its formidable educational system and the technology that system produces, the more the new voters ask themselves why should their country kowtow before the dictatorship of Beijing.

In February 1972, US President Richard Nixon, seeking to end years of enmity between the USA and China, made one of the greatest mistakes of post World War II history. Signing the Shanghai Communiqué, the USA declared, "The USA acknowledges that all Chinese on either side of the Taiwan Strait maintain there is but one China and that Taiwan is a part of China." Understandably, these words have been cast in stone by Beijing. But if it were ever true in Taiwan, it is certainly no longer true. All Chinese in Taiwan do not believe

their country is part of China. And there's the rub. For many, and perhaps even most Taiwanese, this is not just a question of semantics but also of principle and, not least, of history. Why should Taiwan forsake the cause of independence when it was only ruled in a very desultory manner by the Chinese from 1683 to 1895? For most Taiwanese this was simply colonialism, no different from what came before — the Spanish (who ruled for 17 years), the Dutch (38 years) — and

Last November, Chen upped the stakes by declaring that election time would also be the occasion for two referenda, one of which is on whether Taiwan should increase its military spending to counterbalance the growing number of missiles that Beijing is aiming at Taiwan. Beijing became exceedingly angry and only when the White House sent an envoy to Taipei to persuade Chen to stop needing Beijing and President George W Bush went out of his way to assure Chinese premier Wen Jiabao, during his visit to Washington in December, that no change in Washington's "One China" policy was contemplated did Beijing start to calm down. Even so it remains agitated about Chen's favourable chance of being re-elected and about the somewhat milder referenda he is determined to go ahead with. Another crisis between the two is certainly on the cards. Last time President Bill Clinton had to deploy two aircraft carriers in a show of force to cool tempers on both sides.

While there can be no question that the pushy democrats in Taiwan have both history and right on their side, they also have to be pragmatic. With two (three if Europe is included) great powers against it, how can Taiwan maneuver to keep its freedom?

Taiwan has to play a long game. Time is Taiwan's friend. If Taiwan is changing fast, so is China. China in 10 or 20 years' time could be a democracy. In Hong Kong, there is a great deal of agitation for full elections. Before very long, people in China itself will be asking why they can't elect a president if the Taiwanese can. Then it is not inconceivable to imagine that a democratic China and a new generation could lose their obsession with incorporating Taiwan.

1979 world view

JONATHAN POWER

after with the Japanese from 1895 to 1946, who were the first to control the entire island. Following the end of World War II came the occupation and rule of Chiang Kai-shek and, after his death, that of his son. In 1991, President Lee Teng-hui of the Kuomintang party renounced Taiwan's claim to be the true rulers of China.

John Steinbruner of the Brookings Institution has written in his book, *Principles of Global Conflict*, that the Taiwan/China conflict is "a major strategic accident waiting to happen". Of that there can be little doubt. China is not prepared to lose face by changing its policy. As Taiwan develops both economically and educationally, the voices within seeking independence will grow. The question for the USA and Taiwan is how to manage this democratic transition.

S Korean President impeached

SF 2
1987

5/20/87

The Korea Herald/ANN

SEOUL, March 12. — Mr Roh Moo-Hyun today became the first President in South Korean history to be impeached after the Speaker ordered his loyalists forcibly removed from the legislature.

About 30 minutes after parliamentary police dragged away Uri Party members, lawmakers voted 193-2 to remove Mr Roh from office. The beleaguered President left Chong Wa Dae before the vote for an engagement at the Korea Naval Academy in Jinhae in South Gyeongsang province.

The constitution calls for Prime Minister Mr Goh Kun to take over while a court decides whether to uphold the impeachment. The constitutional court has up to 180 days to rule. Mr Roh (57), was immediately suspended from office.

The nation watched on live TV as chaos reigned in the Assembly with police pulling away Uri Party lawmakers, some kicking and screaming, from the Speaker's chair. The Speaker then took his seat. Uri lawmakers later resigned en masse.

"We will carry out a vote on the impeachment motion," Speaker Mr Park Kwan-Yong said.



Mr Roh Moo-Hyun

Military, police on alert

SEOUL, March 12. — South Korean troops and police strengthened their vigilance today after President Roh Moo-Hyun was impeached and suspended from office, officials said. "The Korean Joint Chiefs of Staff ordered each branch of the armed forces to strengthen its surveillance and security posture," ministry spokesman Brigadier General Nam Dae-Yeon told reporters. The Seoul police said some 4,000 riot troops were engaged in a standoff with demonstrators outside parliament after the vote. — AFP

Some Uri members cried, others yelled "coup" and most sang the national an-



South Korea's Opposition party lawmakers and security guards remove pro-Roh Uri Party lawmakers who block the Speaker's chair before voting could start in Seoul on Friday. — AFP

them as the vote began.

The outcome of the vote had been in doubt since the impeachment motion was introduced on Tuesday but the Grand National Party was able, with threats of expulsion from the party, to convince enough of its dissi-

dent lawmakers to change their minds and vote to oust the president.

"I hereby declare that the motion to impeach President Roh Moo-Hyun has been approved," Mr Park announced after the secret ballots were tallied.

THE STATESMAN

7 3 MAR 1987

1 MAR 1987

NOT UP: IT HAPPENS IN SEOUL, TOO



A ruling party lawmaker hurls a ballot box after the impeachment of South Korean President Roh Moo-hyun at the National Assembly in Seoul. In an uproar a few years ago, legislators had hurled microphones at each other in the Uttar Pradesh Assembly. (AP)

Impeachment sparks South Korea crisis

Seoul, March 12 (Reuters): South Korea's parliament impeached President Roh Moo-hyun today, suspending him from office amid chaotic scenes and thrusting the country into unprecedented economic and political uncertainty.

Some 12,000 Roh supporters, many holding candles and chanting slogans, protested peacefully near the National Assembly parliament building and the headquarters of the main opposition Grand National Party. Riot police stood at the ready.

All Roh's powers are in limbo until the Constitutional Court rules on the vote, which the Opposition called after he broke an election law. That process could take up to six months, during which time Prime Minister Goh Ku will run the country.

"The world is watching us with anxiety and concern," Goh told ministers in a nod to the unseemly brawling in parliament as well as the geo-political ramifications of impeachment for a country that borders North Korea and has Asia's fourth-largest economy.

"We should do our best to change those anxieties and concerns into belief and trust in our country," he said as he presided over his first cabinet meeting as acting President. US and South Korean military officials will meet tomorrow to discuss security — there are 37,000 US troops in South Korea.

South Korean financial markets reacted sharply to the historic vote, which took place as members of parliament brawled and wept. Burly plainclothes

guards had had to prise grimacing deputies' hands off the speaker's microphone. Investors sought the safe haven of bonds, shares closed at a five-week low and the won shed 1 per cent against the dollar. Finance minister Lee Hun-jai sent 1,000 letters to international agencies, global banks and fund managers to reassure them the economy would remain stable.

The economy is just emerging from a downturn and the nation faces an April 15 parliamentary election. Seoul is also crucial in six-way talks on North Korea's nuclear ambitions.

"This is the day our nation's democracy died," said the pro-Roh Uri Party that had sought to block the vote with a sit-in. Its members of parliament said they would all resign.

South Korean President faces impeachment

B Kim
5/3
10/3
Korea Herald/ ANN & AP

SEOUL, March 9. — South Korea's two main Opposition parties submitted the country's first ever presidential impeachment motion today, targeting embattled leader Mr Roh Moo-hyun after he was found to have violated election laws with comments aimed at influencing parliamentary polls.

The proposal was submitted to the National Assembly with the support of both the Millennium Democratic Party and the main Opposition Grand National Party, an MDP spokesman, Mr Kim Young-chang, said.

It marked the first time since the country's foundation in 1948 that South Korean lawmakers have tried to unseat a president through impeachment, National Assembly official Mr Oh Se-il said. The

motion needs a simple majority of the 273-member Assembly to make it to debate and a two-thirds majority to pass.

It was submitted with the support of 159 lawmakers, more than half, Mr Kim said. "We believe we won't have big difficulties in passing it."

Earlier in the day, the GNP had decided to support the MDP's move to impeach President Mr Roh. Immediately after the decision, the two Opposition parties started to discuss details on the impeachment Bill before referring it to the National Assembly.

But the GNP was experiencing difficulties as some young party lawmakers were refusing to throw their support for the introduction of the Bill to the plenary session.

The motion was being pushed by Mr Roh's former Millennium Democratic Party but the GNP young

lawmakers had been hesitant to jump on board for fear such a move would not go well with voters in 15 April general elections. Opinion polls suggest more than half the public oppose impeachment.

The Korean Bar Association called for the Opposition parties to halt the ongoing talks over the impeachment so as "not to cause a presidential vacancy". It said in a statement: "Mr Roh's remarks do not constitute grounds for impeachment."

But the association also urged the President to show respect for the election watchdog's decision to resolve the current political standoff.

"Mr Roh's resolution not to surrender to what he claims as the 'Opposition's unfair political and tactical oppression' only solidified our resolution to bring him down," MDP chairman Mr Chough Soon-hyung said.



The impeachment motion was submitted against Mr Roh after he was accused of having violated election laws.

The National Election Commission ruled last week that Mr Roh contravened a law requiring public officials to remain neutral in polls after he had said he would do everything within the law to help the Uri Party win the election.

Korea talks end with no breakthrough, US upbeat

by Asia P-A
29/7

Beijing, Feb. 28 (Reuters): Six-party talks on the North Korean nuclear crisis ended today without a breakthrough but a senior US official said the meetings had advanced Washington's agenda of disarming Pyongyang.

Chinese foreign minister Li Zhaoxing closed the four-day session saying all sides had agreed to set up a working group and hold the next set of talks in Beijing before the end of June.

"Differences, even serious differences, still exist," Li said at the closing ceremony, without specifying what gaps remained.

China's chief negotiator, Wang Yi, cited an "extreme lack of trust" between the US and North Korean side and said further discussions were needed on the scope of both the north's proposal to freeze its nuclear programmes and the US demand for dismantling all atomic arms schemes.

But a senior US official declared the talks that also involved South Korea, Japan and Russia "very successful", saying

all but Pyongyang had agreed to the goal of a nuclear-free North.

"The event has exceeded my expectations in a very important respect. It's been very successful in moving the agenda towards our goal of complete, verifiable and irreversible dismantling (CVID) of DPRK nuclear programmes," the US official said. "CVID is now more on the table than ever."

Russia's chief delegate, Alexander Losyukov, said the talks achieved "modest" results. But he called the working groups "a reasonable base for the continuation of discussions of those problems arising from the different positions". Analysts said, however, that Washington and Pyongyang could both dig in their heels in this US presidential election year.

"North Korea does not have to strike any agreement now, ahead of the November election in the US," said Yu Suk-ryul of Seoul's Institute of Foreign Affairs and National Security.

"The US has a need to avoid

collapse of the talks before the election," he said.

China's Li said the second round featured substantial dialogue and made "a big step forward".

"The road is longer and more bumpy. But time is on our side. Time is on the side of peace," Li said.

But there was little evidence the gulf between North Korea and the US had narrowed. In the end they settled on a chairman's summary statement instead of a joint declaration.

"They (the Americans) haven't succeeded, but they haven't failed and they can always say that the process is under way," said Peter Hayes, director of the Nautilus Institute in Berkeley.

North Korea, whose 11th-hour rejection of language in a proposed agreement prolonged the talks for hours and prevented the parties from signing a joint declaration, repeated its denial that it had an enriched uranium weapons programme.



Chinese foreign minister Li Zhaoxing in Beijing after the talks ended. (AFP)

FEB 2004

North Korea proposes freeze on N-activities

China Daily/ ANN 6 AM

BEIJING, Feb. 26. — North Korea today put forward a proposal for a "comprehensive stop" of nuclear activities during the second day of the ongoing six-party talks.

Mr Liu Jianchao, Chinese foreign ministry spokesman and member of the Chinese delegation to the six-party talks, told reporters after today's discussions that all sides had a "deep and practical" discussion on the proposal.

"All sides welcome North Korea's proposal for a compre-

hensive stop to its nuclear activities and consider such a move an essential step toward its nuclear dismantlement," Mr Liu said, adding all sides understand the "relevant requirements" raised by Pyongyang.

A North Korean official this evening confirmed his country's proposed stance to freeze all its nuclear programmes, including those for peaceful purposes, in the six-party talks.

Today's talks, which were regarded by analysts as "decisive" for the success of this second round of talks, were also said to have entered a "critical phase" on discussing abandon-

ing nuclear programmes, security concerns and economic cooperation.

While meeting with delegation heads and diplomatic envoys, Chinese official Mr Tang Jiaxuan said China hopes that all sides will show mutual respect, exercise "maximum flexibility" and explore "feasible solutions" to the issue.

Heads of the delegations told Mr Tang that they believed the talks were constructive and provided unprecedented opportunities for a peaceful solution of the nuclear issue, said Chinese foreign ministry sources.

The six parties discussed first-

phase action and relevant measures to realize a nuclear-free Korean Peninsula during today's meeting, according to the Chinese foreign ministry but gave out no detailed arrangement saying participants would have further discussions.

Diplomats and observers in Asia said some positive signals appeared but it's still too early to be optimistic. Mr Liu Jianchao, a leading international relations specialist at Tsinghua University in Beijing, said seeking for a peaceful resolution has been the "main stream and common ground" in the international community.

Both North Korea and the USA have signaled modest flexibility, but, he reminded, the reality is that Washington and Pyongyang are still far apart and it is unrealistic to expect a "major breakthrough" through one or two talks.

The complicated issue should be seen in a much broader perspective, and its solution depends upon many other factors such as "in-depth" contacts between the two countries, the expert said. He also predicted that this round of talks may result in a commitment to keep talking as well as a statement of consensus.



South Korean deputy foreign minister Mr Lee Soo-Hyuck after the talks in Beijing on Thursday. — AFP

S Korea to reward North for scrapping nuke plan

Guardian & Agencies
Beijing, February 25

SOUTH KOREA on Wednesday offered the North compensation for giving up its nuclear programme and the US said it had "no intention" of invading the reclusive nation as six-country talks on Pyongyang's atomic ambitions convened.

Despite an outwardly amiable atmosphere, the tensions of the moment — and the 16-month standoff between the US and the North that led up to it — were clear. The North's chief delegate, Kim Kye Gwan, said he would be "maintaining our principles" hours after the last-minute demand for compensation for shutting down the programme was made.

Washington's delegate said nothing but a wholesale elimination of the nuclear activities would do. "The US seeks complete, verifiable and irreversible dismantlement of all North Korea's nuclear programs, both plutonium and uranium," Assistant US Secretary of State James Kelly said in opening remarks.

At issue are allegations

that Pyongyang has a uranium-based weapons programme as well as its known plutonium-based one. Kim Jong Il's government has denied having a uranium-based programme.

The dispute erupted in October 2002 when the US said North Korea had acknowledged the existence of a nuclear programme that violated a 1994 agreement that bound the impoverished country to renounce nuclear development in exchange for oil and other aid.

Talks on the dispute convened after months of efforts to get all six countries — North and South Korea, the USA, Japan, China and Russia — on board.

After the first session, South Korea said it had proposed "countermeasures" if the North froze its nuclear programme and showed signs of dismantling it. Seoul's head delegate, Lee Soo-hyuck, said he presented the proposal in the first hour.

"If it is such a freeze, we can push for countermeasures," Lee told reporters, using a term that is believed to refer to compensa-

tion for the North's giving up its nuclear ambitions.

He didn't elaborate, and it was unclear whether the US had directly endorsed the proposal. Last week, South Korean officials said Seoul was ready to resume energy aid to its communist neighbour after the dispute is resolved and the North dismantles its nuclear programmes.

Lee said he had told North Korea that its freeze must cover all nuclear programs and be followed "in a short period of time" by steps toward a complete and verifiable dismantling of nuclear capabilities.

"A nuclear freeze should be an inseparable part of nuclear dismantlement. A nuclear freeze itself is not the goal ... dismantlement must be the goal," Lee said. He called on the North to address the uranium allegations.

The New York Times reported that the North will be offered oil aid in return for a pledge to freeze and eventually dismantle its program. The North also wants a non-aggression treaty with the US, but Kelly said it had nothing to worry about.

US in range of nukes from China, N Korea

THE US, which was within range of only Russian intercontinental ballistic missiles, will soon come under the range of Chinese, North Korean and Iranian ICBMs, a senior defence official said.

While Russia's nuclear stockpiles decline, the number of weapons in China, India, Pakistan and North Korea will grow. Vice-Admiral Loell Jacoby of the Defence Intelligence Agency, told a Senate Select Committee on Tuesday.

"In the next ten years," he said, "we expect other countries to join Russia, China and France as major exporters of cruise missiles. India, in partnership with Russia, will begin production of the PJ-10, an anti-ship and land war cruise, this year and may export the system."

Russia, China and North Korea support various WMD programmes, especially in West Asia. Chinese companies are involved with missile projects in Pakistan and Iran.

PTI, Washington

Nuclear deterrent force is indigenous: North Korea

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By P. S. Suryanarayana

SINGAPORE, FEB. 21. North Korea today claimed that its "nuclear deterrent force" had been developed indigenously on the basis of its home-grown technology. Pyongyang's official claim, monitored by South Korea, was also accompanied by the reaffirmation of a denial that a Pakistan-centred nuclear-proliferation ring had anything to do with the North Korean programme.

With these comments, the Democratic People's Republic of Korea (DPRK) began to outline its public diplomacy ahead of the second round of six-party talks, scheduled to begin in Beijing on Feb. 25. The DPRK's denial of the U.S. assertions about the Islamabad link comes a day after the Malaysian authorities disclosed the findings of their investigation of the activities of an 'associate' of the Pakistani nuclear scientist, A. Q. Khan. There was no mention of North Korea

in the submissions of the 'associate' as outlined by the Malaysian police, whereas Iran and Libya figured as countries that the suspected nuclear mafia had dealt with.

Pyongyang dismissed as "false rumours" all suggestions that it derived help from Pakistan for uranium enrichment. More significantly, the DPRK's state news agency denied even that Pyongyang's deterrent was based on any enriched uranium project.

The implied message was that the original plutonium-based project, the subject matter of inspections by the International Atomic Energy Agency at one stage, was behind North Korea's "deterrent force".

The existence or otherwise of a North Korean uranium enrichment project came into international focus following the U.S. envoy, James Kelly's talks with the DPRK leaders in Pyongyang in October 2002. It is against this background that North

Korea today characterised "the story about the enriched uranium programme" as a 'lie'.

The DPRK's official agency claimed that "the U.S.' ultra-neo-conservatives fabricated it [the story] ... after Kelly's Pyongyang visit". The "ulterior intention" behind such a story was to gain access to "the interior of the DPRK, on the basis of a legitimate mandate [from the international community]".

The overall objective, it was said, was to "disarm [North Korea] just as the U.S. did in Iraq [now]". A justification was now being sought by the U.S. for its likely 'demand', at the prospective six-party talks, that North Korea "scrap its nuclear programme first", Pyongyang said.

On a related plane, China, the talks host, said that "at present, all the parties show flexible and practical attitudes to different degrees and are willing to promote discussions on substantial issues".

N Korea denies buying nuke secrets from Khan

*The New York Times & Reuters
Pyongyang/Islamabad, Feb. 10*

NORTH KOREA has denied buying nuclear secrets from Pakistan, accusing the US of "inventing" the claim to justify a future invasion. Dr Abdul Qadeer Khan had last week admitted he illegally sold secrets to North Korea, Libya and Iran.

In North Korea's first official statement on Tuesday, a foreign ministry spokesman said the US had fabricated Khan's story to derail the impending six-nation peninsular peace talks and lay the basis for an Iraq-style invasion.

"This is nothing but a mean and groundless propaganda," the spokesman told KCNA newsagency. "The US smear campaign will only provide with an opportunity to realise once again what a just measure it was to build a nuclear deterrent force. The US is now hyping the story about the transfer of nuclear technology in a bid to make

North Korea's enriched uranium programme sound plausible."

There was a twist to the nuke story on Tuesday when Musharraf blamed the US for delaying to send evidence of Khan's activities. He said he had suspected for the past three years that Khan was selling atomic knowledge to other states, but US officials did not provide him evidence till last October. Musharraf told the *New York Times* in an interview that his hands were tied without strong evidence because the scientist was a national hero.

The US has also asked Pakistan to "pull up by its roots" the secret network of nuclear sales run by Khan. Colin Powell told reporters in Washington that Pakistan has done quite a bit now to roll up the network, but "it has to be pulled up by its roots and examined to make sure that we have left nothing behind". Powell also said that Musharraf has "assured (him) that that was his objective as well".

THE TELEGRAPH

11 FEB 2004

Chen outlines issues before referendum

Associated Press

TAIPEI, Jan. 16. — President Chen Shui-bian said voters will be asked in a March referendum whether Taiwan should set up more anti-missile defenses if China doesn't stop pointing hundreds of missiles at the island.

The ballot for the 20 March election will also ask voters if Taiwan should proceed with peace talks with China, Mr Chen said on Friday in a taped televised address.

The President said: "The first question will be: The Taiwanese people insist that the cross-strait problem must be resolved peacefully. If China doesn't remove the missiles pointed at Taiwan and renounces the threat to use force against Taiwan, do you agree that the government should purchase and set up more anti-missile defenses to strengthen Taiwan's self-defence capability."

Mr Chen said that the second part of the referendum would say, "Do you agree that the government should open negotiations with China and establish a framework for peaceful and stable interaction to seek a cross-strait consensus for the people's well-being."

The President has been under pressure to defuse the referendum issue, which has worried China as well as Taiwan's most important friend — the United States.

Beijing opposes the referendum because it fears it could set a precedent for a vote on wheth-

Taiwan slaughters 20,000 chickens

TAIPEI, Jan. 16. — Taiwan authorities today slaughtered 20,000 chickens at a farm in an effort to prevent a bird flu outbreak after a virus strain was detected.

The chickens were killed at the farm in central Taiwan's Changhua County, the authorities announced, after yesterday's discovery of the H5N2 virus, a less virulent form of the H5N1 virus which has been blamed for the deaths of 13 people in Vietnam.

"The carcasses will be processed into feed using high heat while the farm is disinfected to make sure the environment is not polluted," an official said. — AFP

er Taiwan should refuse unifying with China. The two sides have been ruled separately since they split amid civil war in 1949. Chinese leaders consider unification to be a sacred goal.

US officials fear that the vote could upset the delicate status quo in the Taiwan Strait. Washington has cautioned Taiwan against provoking China with referendums that might involve the touchy sovereignty issue.

Although US officials have tried to pressure the Taiwanese President to scuttle the referendum, Mr Chen has insisted on holding the vote.

His opponent in the race, former Vice-President Lien Chan, has dismissed the referendum as a reckless ploy to draw more Chen supporters to the polls.

N Korea offers to freeze reactors

Agence France-Presse
Seoul, January 12

NORTH KOREA offered on Monday to freeze its nuclear reactors producing weapons grade plutonium if compensated by Washington in a new sign officials say shows Pyongyang wants to negotiate an end to its nuclear crisis.

"North Koreans are seen trying to clarify their ideas and make them more attractive ... while seeking six-way talks focusing on a nuclear freeze," said Wi Sung-Lac, head of the US affairs bureau at Seoul's foreign ministry.

The overture came as US delegates briefed South Korean officials, including Wi, on last week's first visit by outsiders to the North's nuclear complex since international monitors were expelled more than a year ago.

If the Bush administration was willing to compensate the North, Pyongyang "is willing to freeze its nuclear activities based on the graphite-moderated reactors as a starting point for the denuclearisation of the country", the official Korean Central News Agency (KCNA) quoted a foreign ministry spokesman as saying.

North Korea has previously admitted that it fired up the reactors at its main nuclear complex at Yongbyon, 90 km north of Pyongyang, intensifying the latest nuclear crisis that began in October 2002. But the North has recently made a series of overtures over the long-running nuclear standoff. Last week, Pyongyang proposed refraining from producing and testing nuclear weapons in what it said was a "bold concession" to the United States.

In exchange, Pyongyang is demanding from Washington an agreement on "first-phase actions", including the lifting of sanctions against North Korea and a resumption of energy aid in return for the nuclear freeze.

Washington halted its fuel oil shipments to the energy-strapped country in late 2002 soon after accusing North Korea of running a secret uranium-enrichment programme violating a 1994 nuclear safeguard accord to mothball

US will not attack Pyongyang: Powell

DESPITE PYONGYANG'S threats to renounce the moratorium on nuclear testing, Secretary of State Colin Powell has reassured that the US will not attack North Korea.

"How can a claim like that be made at the same time that we are working so closely with our friends in the region to deal with six-party talks with North Korea? Are we preempting? Are we attacking somebody? We have told North Korea we don't intend to attack it," Powell said.

PTI, Washington

the Yongbyon plant.

In retaliation, Pyongyang said it reactivated the Yongbyon complex. It has since claimed that it reprocessed 8,000 spent nuclear fuel rods, which would yield enough plutonium for up to six nuclear bombs. The CIA says Pyongyang may have already possessed one or two crude nuclear bombs. Wi met late on Monday with US congressional aides Keith Luse and Frank Jannuzzi, who arrived here on Sunday to brief Seoul officials on their five-day trip to North Korea.

North Korea said on Saturday that it showed its "nuclear deterrent" to the unofficial US delegations, as US newspapers said later they appeared to have seen reprocessed plutonium, a key ingredient for making nuclear bombs. But Wi reaffirmed Luse's earlier caution that those US and North Korean reports were speculative and warned against drawing "premature" conclusions.

"They told me that even if they could describe what they had seen at the facilities, they could not characterise its meaning and value," Wi said after meeting with the US delegates.

He refused to elaborate on the items in the nuclear facilities that the US delegation had actually seen.

THE HINDUSTAN TIMES

13 JAN 2004

Keep off Hong Kong, U.S. told

By P. S. Suryanarayana

P. S.
SINGAPORE, JAN. 11. China has asked the United States to honour its 'commitment' to support the "one country, two systems" policy that Beijing is 'implementing' in Hong Kong.

Commenting on the U.S. State Department's reported observations on the evolution of Hong Kong's political system, the Chinese Foreign Ministry spokesman, Kong Quan, said in Beijing during the week-end that Washington should keep its parallel 'commitment' to the "stability and prosperity" of that territory.

It is not for the first time in recent weeks that Beijing has aired these views. A speech by the

MD-11
U.S. Consul General in Hong Kong, James Keith, on December 11, 2003, and some subsequent comments by the State Department have already come in for scrutiny by China.

In his latest response, Mr. Kong called upon Washington, in categorical terms, "not to do anything harmful to Sino-U.S. ties". He said Hong Kong's affairs were an 'internal' matter of direct concern to China alone. He said China was firmly opposed to the meddling by any foreign government in Hong Kong in "any form".

Given that the U.S.' comments pertained to such aspects as the demand for universal suffrage and for a direct election of Hong Kong's Chief Executive, Mr. Kong said the territory's political structure "must develop in a gradual and orderly manner". The Basic Law, which governs Hong Kong's ties with Beijing, and "the actual circumstances" in the territory were the parameters for the 'development' of its political system.

China's call to the U.S. is seen in the context of the Western view of the territory as Beijing's prize possession.

'Confirmation of N Korea's N-potential'

17/1/04
Press Trust of India

WASHINGTON, Jan. 11. — In an apparent first confirmation that North Korea produced key ingredients for nuclear weapons, Pyongyang has shown a visiting unofficial US delegation what it described as recently reprocessed plutonium.

Though only initial details of the visit were available, a US official said, "it appeared the team had been shown what the North Koreans described as recently reprocessed plutonium," *The Washington Post* reported today, a day after Pyongyang's official Korean Central News Agency also said the country showed its "nuclear deterrent force" to a group of US scientists and Congressional aides.

North Korean officials told the experts that the material "has not been placed in a nuclear device and that it was prepared to 'freeze' it to resolve the crisis over Pyongyang's nuclear ambitions," the daily said.

THE STATESMAN 12 JAN 2004

12 JAN 2004

US delegation visits N Korean N-plant

*5. Asia
Korea*

AP & PTI

5-12 14/11/09

BEIJING/SEOUL, Jan. 10. — An unofficial US team that visited North Korea today said they went to the controversial Yongbyon nuclear complex, but declined to divulge details of their private tour.

"We did go to Yongbyon," one of the team members, Stanford University professor Emeritus John Lewis, told reporters after arriving from their five-day visit to Pyongyang.

North Korea also said that it showed its "nuclear deterrent force" to an unofficial US delegation, a news agency reported. The report by North Korea's official KCNA news agency, monitored by South Korea's Yonhap news agency, quoted a North Korean foreign ministry official. It gave no further details and it wasn't clear what was meant by "nuclear deterrent force".

Pyongyang had closed the nuclear facility to outsiders after expelling UN inspectors at the end of 2002 amid an escalating war of words with Washington.

Lewis said the team could not provide any more details of their visit to North Korea until two delegation members, who are on the staff of the US Senate foreign relations committee, had reported their findings to the US govern-

ment.

"We are a private delegation. We were not there to negotiate. We were not there to be inspectors," he said while stressing that the trip was aimed at improving their understanding of North Korean issues.

The USA has been saying that North Korea is using the Yongbyon facility to reprocess spent nuclear fuel rods into plutonium for use in nuclear weapons. The visit of the US delegation to North Korea comes ahead of China's plans to convene the second round of six-party talks to find a peaceful and diplomatic solution to the issue.

This week, China's foreign ministry said it has made new progress in this regard, and is working with the USA, North Korea, South Korea, Japan and Russia to hold the second round of the six-party talks here at an early date.

Pyongyang this week offered to dismantle its nuclear weapons programme and nuclear power industry in exchange for fuel and power aid from the USA.

Calling the offer a "positive step", US secretary of state Mr Colin Powell said no date has been scheduled for when the six sides may meet, but prospects for resuming negotiations had improved.

THE STATESMAN

11 JAN 2004

N Korea to let US experts visit nuke site

REUTERS

SEOUL, JANUARY 2

A US delegation will visit North Korea next week to tour the North's controversial nuclear complex at Yongbyon, a South Korean foreign ministry official said on Friday.

USA Today said the January 6-10 visit had been approved by the Bush administration and a top nuclear scientist would be in the delegation. It would mark the first time outsiders have been allowed inside the reclusive Communist country's nuclear complex since UN inspectors

were expelled a year ago in the midst of North Korea's confrontation with the US over its nuclear ambitions.

A South Korean foreign ministry official, confirming the USA Today report, said Seoul was not a party to the visit and he was unsure what the delegation would do in Yongbyon or what specific facilities it would look at. "I would not want to put too much meaning to the visit," he said. "It is difficult to use the visit as a gauge of the next round of six-party talks."

In the six-party talks, expected to resume soon, the US and its allies are trying to get Pyongyang to abandon the

Hecker had been told he can visit Yongbyon, where the North Koreans may have reprocessed used fuel to make plutonium for a half dozen bombs, the paper cited members of the delegation as saying. A US State Department spokesman, Lou Fintor, said the US was continuing to discuss matters related to the six-party talks it hopes to hold with North Korea.

The other parties involved are China, Japan, South Korea and Russia. A first round ended inconclusively in August. "We do not wish to get into the details of our diplomatic exchanges," he said in response to a query about the

report. By inviting Hecker to Yongbyon, the government of Kim Jong Il may want to prove it has nuclear weapons as a way of bolstering a tough negotiating stance, the newspaper said. North Korea acknowledged a secret programme to enrich uranium for bombs in 2002, according to US officials.

They said this broke a 1994 deal that froze the North's nuclear programme, and the administration ended fuel oil shipments called for by the pact.

The North then expelled inspectors from the International Atomic Energy Agency and apparently resumed its bomb-making efforts at Yongbyon.



North Korean leader Kim Jong-Il (in sunglasses) inspects a farm in South Hwanghae Province. Reuters

programme in exchange for aid and better ties with the West. USA Today said the US delegation would include Sig Hecker, director from 1985 to

HK in cry for democracy

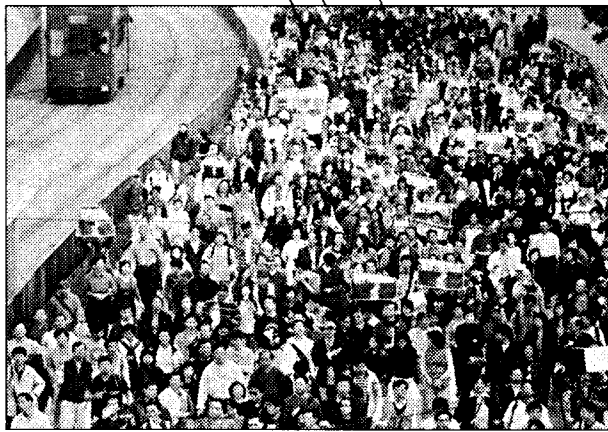
Sheriff plans to drag Jacko to court

Reuters
Hong Kong, January 1

AN ESTIMATED 20,000 protesters took to the streets of Hong Kong on New Year's Day in a calling for a swift transition to full democracy in the former British colony.

Shouting "Return power to the people" and "One man, one vote" and demanding direct elections for the city's rulers, political activists, workers and families filed slowly from Victoria Park in the busy Causeway Bay shopping district to government offices in the central business district.

Richard Tsoi, spokesman for rally organisers Civil Human Rights Front, estimated that at least 20,000 people had joined the march, the first major pro-democracy rally since a spate of huge protests last July had



REUTERS

Scene from Thursday's rush hour protest in Hong Kong.

plunged Hong Kong into a political crisis. Organisers said 100,000 people had joined the march by 6 p.m., five times more than expected. Before they set off, religious groups prayed that Hong Kong's voters would be al-

lowed to elect their own leaders. A massive July 1 protest last year saw more than 500,000 people take to the streets to denounce a Beijing-backed security bill, which critics said would impinge on basic rights and freedoms.

THE SHERIFF of Santa Barbara County denied that Michael Jackson was roughed up by jailers during his arrest, and threatened to press charges against him for making a false accusation against an officer.

Sheriff Jim Anderson said Jackson was treated "with the utmost respect and courtesy" during his arrest and was "in no way manhandled or abused". He said Jackson thanked authorities when the interrogation was over, whistled and sang during the ride to jail.

Jackson alleged that he was bruised and his shoulder dislocated because of rough treatment, and that he was locked in a faeces-smeared restroom. The sheriff said it was not a bathroom but a big empty cell which had just been cleaned.

AP, Los Angeles

Taiwanese President signs historic referendum law

6
SF 2
1/1/04

Associated Press

TAIPEI, Dec. 31. — President Chen Shui-bian signed a law today that expands Taiwan's young democracy by legalising islandwide referendums. "This is truly a historical moment," he said as he approved the measure that lawmakers passed about a month ago.

It was a bittersweet event for

President Chen. Passage of such a law has been a key goal for his Democratic Progressive Party.

But Opposition parties — which have a slight majority in the legislature — took control of the Bill and rejected several key elements proposed by the President's party.

The Opposition designed the law so that the President is unable to call referendums in most cases. The measure also gives the legislature

the power to reject referendum issues proposed by the public.

The ruling party unsuccessfully tried to repeal parts of the law which it claimed gave the legislature too much power over the referendum process.

Today, the president said he still wants to change the law.

"We hope that when the referendum law is completed, common global values and the fundamental

human right to hold referendums will really take root in Taiwan," President Chen said.

The new law does allow the President to call a "defensive referendum" when the island's sovereignty is threatened by an external force, such as China.

The two sides split during a civil war 54 years ago, and Beijing has threatened to use force to take over Taiwan.