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Rice to Lay Out U.S.-India Nuclear Deal Before Some Skeptical Lawmakers

By Dafna Linzer
Washington Post Staff Writer
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When President Bush announced a new phase in U.S.-India relations last month in New Delhi, he was not the only foreign visitor to attract attention. A day after his arrival, two Iranian naval ships, carrying several hundred sailors, docked at the Indian port of Kochi to begin five days of joint exercises, part of an extensive agreement Tehran and New Delhi signed in 2003.

The port call -- and the broader issue of India's military, scientific and economic ties with Iran -- have raised apprehension on Capitol Hill, where members are weighing an effort by the Bush administration to form its own strategic partnership with New Delhi.

Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice will address those concerns and others when she testifies today before the House and Senate foreign relations panels on details of the unfinished agreement, in which the United States would provide India with civilian nuclear technology.

She faces pressure from Republican and Democratic lawmakers, some of whom are pushing for changes to the deal out of concern about nuclear proliferation. In a letter yesterday, a bipartisan group of nuclear experts urged lawmakers not to authorize technology transfers until India stops producing nuclear weapons material, as the United States, Britain, France, Russia, and China are believed to have done.

In response, some administration officials said Rice could announce a new push for an international treaty to end production of all fissile material. Negotiations have been at a standstill since the administration announced two years ago that it could not support the kind of accord that had been on the table.

Last July, Bush agreed to give India access, for the first time, to civilian nuclear assistance, breaking with decades of U.S. policy that kept sensitive nuclear technologies from countries that have not signed the nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty.

For the Bush administration, the break was seen as a worthy tradeoff in pursuit of a strategy to accelerate India's rise as a regional counterweight to China. But the agreement would also give India the ability to increase its nuclear arsenal. The terms took Congress by surprise, and lawmakers asked India to separate its civilian and military programs to guarantee that no U.S. technology would be used for weapons.

Last month, Bush and Indian Prime Minister Manmohan Singh agreed on a separation plan, but

http://www.washingtonpost.com/wp-dyn/content/article/2006/04/04/AR2006040401865_pf... 4/5/2006

Congress has not yet seen it.

Administration officials say the deal addresses nonproliferation concerns because India has agreed to open some facilities to U.N. nuclear inspections. Perhaps more important, they say, is that the world's largest democracy does not pose a nonproliferation threat.

"India has an excellent nonproliferation record," Rice said last month in promoting the deal. India is not tainted by the kind of nuclear black-market scandal that Pakistan suffered when a senior government official was caught selling nuclear components to Iran, Libya and North Korea.

But the Bush administration's actions suggest it does not see India's record as blemish-free.

The administration has imposed sanctions on two Indian companies accused of supplying Iran's nuclear program. Both companies have protested the sanctions but remain on a list in the Federal Registry. In September, two Indian nuclear scientists were also accused of providing Tehran with technology that could contribute to "the development of weapons of mass destruction." The order against one was later rescinded, but the second remains banned from travel to the United States.

India's support for Iran in diplomatic forums has also caused concern. Last September, after the U.S.-India deal was announced, Rep. Tom Lantos (D-Calif.) -- a strong supporter of India -- criticized Undersecretary of State R. Nicholas Burns during a hearing when Burns said it was unclear whether India would support U.S. efforts to pressure Iran. Lantos urged India to do so to win broader support in Congress.

"We listened carefully to Lantos and his colleagues on the Hill and told the Indians that they had to be supportive of our efforts to isolate Iran, and they did so two weeks later," Burns said in an interview.

Lantos said yesterday: "I have every intention of voting for this deal. But my support is very much contingent upon the Iran-India relationship, and I have served notice that, given the nature of the current regime in Tehran, a proper policy vis-a-vis Iran is the sine qua non of my support." Lantos said he did not see how India could have equal ties to Iran and the United States, and said he registered his displeasure over the naval visit last week with India.

State Department spokesman J. Adam Ereli said Washington regretted the timing of the Iranian port call, but added: "Indian-Iranian relations are not of the scope and breadth and depth to call into question the principles that underline our agreement."

It is unclear when Congress will consider the changes to the law needed to complete the India deal. The administration wants Congress to act before summer, but some in Congress say the complex matter will probably not be taken up until after the November elections.

Researcher Julie Tate contributed to this report.

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REGRETS | 'US military's biggest mistake was the abusive treatment of prisoners at Abu Ghraib prison' Bush, Blair admit to costly errors in Iraq

DAVID E SANGER
AND JIM RUTENBERG
WASHINGTON, MAY 26

AMERICAN President George W. Bush and Prime Minister Tony Blair of Britain, two leaders badly weakened by the continuing violence in Iraq, acknowledged major misjudgments in the execution of the Iraq war on Thursday night even while insisting that the election of a constitutional government in Baghdad justified their decision to go to war three years ago.

At a joint news conference in the White House, the two leaders refused to talk about a schedule for pulling troops out of Iraq a pressure both men are feeling intensely. They stuck to a common formulation that they would pull



US President Bush and Britain's Prime Minister Tony Blair admit to mistakes in Iraq war at the White House on Thursday. AP

troops out only when properly trained Iraqi troops progressively took control over more and more territory in the country.

But in an unusual admission of a personal mistake, Bush said the

for that for a long period of time," said Bush said.

Blair said he regretted the decision to strip most members of Saddam Hussein's Baath Party of their positions in government and civic life in 2003, leaving most institutions in Iraq shorn of expertise and leadership.

Blair said that it was possible that Iraq's new prime minister, Nuri Kamal al Maliki could control security in all of the country's provinces within 18 months. But Bush said he would not begin a drawdown until his commanders said it was possible. He also said that in the end he would insist on victory over both insurgents and terrorists linked to Al-Qaeda, and he dismissed as "press speculation" reports of tentative Pentagon plans to bring American troop levels to about 100,000 by the end of this year. —NYT

US Senate approves doubling of H1B visas

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA
WASHINGTON, MAY 26

THE US Senate has approved a landmark Immigration Reform Bill that would give citizenship to millions of illegal persons and double the number of H1B visas from the present 65,000, a move that would greatly benefit thousands of Indian software professionals.

The Bill passed yesterday provides for doubling the H1B visas from the present 65,000 annually to about 115,000 and with a 20 per cent increase on an annual basis.

Various software and tech-

nology companies like Microsoft and Intel have been pressuring the US government by threatening to move jobs abroad if it does not raise the cap on H1B visas and allow more skilled workers into the country. In the version that cleared the Senate Judiciary Committee was also a new student visa classification for high tech studies.

However, the House version of the Bill has nothing on the H1B visa and according to analysts it is most likely to be neglected when legislators get down to the negotiations at the conference committee stage.

US to push for sanctions on Iran

ASSOCIATED Press
Washington, April 30

THE UNITED States rejected Iran's offer to allow a watchdog agency to inspect the country's nuclear facilities and said that it will press ahead for UN penalties against Tehran, Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice said on Sunday.

"They've had plenty of time to cooperate. I think they're playing games," Rice said. Iran on Saturday offered to allow inspections to resume if the Security Council turned over the dispute to the UN nuclear monitor, the International Atomic Energy Agency.

A report from the IAEA confirmed that Iran had successfully produced enriched uranium and defied the Security Council's Friday deadline to stop the process.

Rice said the offer to resume IAEA inspections suggests the Iranians "are indeed somewhat concerned" about actions the Se-



Condoleezza Rice
'Iran playing games'

curity Council might take to further isolate Iran.

Her remarks contrasted with comments from her predecessor at the State Department, Colin Powell, who said in an interview broadcast on Sunday in London

that Iran seems to "have pretty much decided they can accept whatever sanctions are coming their way."

Regardless, Rice said the US probably would seek a UN resolution that would require Iran to comply with demands that it stop enriching uranium. Rice mentioned a resolution under Chapter 7 of the UN Charter, which means it can be enforced through penalties or military action.

"The international community's credibility is at stake," she told ABC's *This Week*. "And we have a choice, too. We can either mean what we say, when we say that Iran must comply, or we can continue to allow Iran to defy."

Meanwhile, Iran's deputy oil minister said on Sunday he did not believe the UN would impose penalties because that would boost oil prices even higher. "I believe that the UN or its bodies will not put any sanctions on oil or the oil industry," M.H. Nejad Hosseinian said.

THE HINDUSTAN TIMES

01 MAY 2006

Rice defends pre-war planning

Agencies

WASHINGTON, May 1: Fresh from her visit to Baghdad and perhaps eager to answer questions on the "positive" developments there, Ms Condoleezza Rice has instead been forced to defend pre-war planning and troop deployment in Iraq after the decisions were criticised by her predecessor Colin Powell.

In every talk show Ms Rice appeared yesterday she was asked to respond to Mr Powell's statements to a British television network where he said that he had pressed for additional troops to be sent to Iraq.

Ms Rice would neither confirm nor deny Mr Powell's version. "I don't remember specifically what Secretary Powell may be referring to, but I'm quite certain that there were lots of discussions about how best to fulfil the mission that we went into Iraq," Ms Rice said. "And I have no doubt that all of this was taken into consideration. But that when it came down to it, the president listens to his military advisers

8 killed, Iraqis demand security



A protestor demanding measures to curb violence in Baghdad on Monday.

■ AP

who were to execute the plan," she said.

In another report, a prominent US lawmaker proposed today that Iraq be divided into three separate regions - Kurdish, Shi'ite and Sunni with a central government in Baghdad.

BAGHDAD, May 1: A bomb exploded in an outdoor market in a city south of Baghdad today, killing four Iraqi civilians and wounding two, police said.

In the capital, the bullet-ridden, handcuffed and blindfolded bodies of three Iraqi men were found, a drive-by shooting killed a Shi'ite grocer in his shop, and three roadside bombs exploded, one of them wounding two Iraqis, said police. About 200 Shi'ites rallied outside the Green Zone in Baghdad to demand that US and Iraqi forces do more to stop insurgent attacks and help Iraqis who have fled their homes because of sectarian violence. ■ AP

President Jalal Talabani met with representatives of seven armed groups and is optimistic they may agree to lay down their weapons, his office said. It was the first time a senior Iraqi official has acknowledged talks with insurgents.

02 MAY 2006

THE STATESMAN

Statesmen miss Europe on May Day

Associated Press

WASHINGTON, May 1: The Bush administration calls Iran's offer to let a watchdog agency inspect the country's nuclear facilities a stalling tactic intended to avoid UN penalties that would further isolate Teheran.

"I think they're playing games," Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice said yesterday on ABC's *This Week*. "But obviously, if they're not playing games, they should come clean. They should stop the enrichment, suspend the enrichment, suspend the enrichment." Iran's deputy oil minister played down the chance of UN action, saying punishing Teheran would send oil prices even higher.

Teheran on Saturday offered to allow inspections if the UN Security Council would turn the dispute over to its nuclear monitor, the International Atomic Energy Agency. A report by the UN agency confirmed Iran had successfully produced enriched uranium and defied the Security Council's Friday deadline to stop the process.

Iran maintains it will not make nuclear weapons and does not need or want them. But the United States, Britain and France suspect the intent of the uranium enrichment program is to make nuclear warheads.

"The international community is completely of one mind, that no one wants, needs or really can tolerate a nuclear-armed Iran in the midst of the world's most volatile region. That is the consistent view," Ms Rice told CNN's "Late Edition".

While the USA and its European allies are pushing for possible penalties, veto-wielding Security Council members, Russia



US Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice

and China have opposed the idea.

Ms Rice said the US would seek a UN resolution requiring that Iran comply with demands it stop enriching uranium. She mentioned a solution under Chapter 7 of the UN Charter, which can be forced through penalties or military action.

Iran's deputy oil minister played down the idea of penalties.

"Any action like that will increase oil prices very high. And I believe that the UN or its bodies will not put any sanctions on oil or the oil industry," MH Nejad Hosseinian told reporters in Pakistan.

Ms Rice, however, declared, "No one is talking about going to oil and gas sanctions." She cited potential steps such as freezing assets.

"Oh, I absolutely believe that we have a lot of diplomatic arrows in our quiver at the UN Security Council and also like-minded states that would be able and willing to look at additional measures if the security council does not move quickly enough," Ms Rice told CBS' *Face the Nation*.

In contrast, former Secretary of State Colin Powell said in an interview broadcast yesterday in London that Iran seems to "have pretty much decided they can accept whatever sanctions are coming their way."

Associated Press

BERLIN, May 1: More than a million people rallied in traditional May Day protests across Europe, with labor unions in Germany taking aim at corporate greed, backers of the far-right in France marching from a statue of Joan of Arc and communists in Russia honouring Lenin and Marx.

In Istanbul, a protest by demonstrators denouncing the International Monetary Fund and the US turned violent, with police firing pepper spray and tear gas to disperse the crowd.

Footage broadcast on CNN-Turk showed protesters fighting with police and one protestor cowering in a bus as a police officer beat him with his fists. Some 40 protestors were detained, police said.

In Mersin in Turkey's south-east, police detained two communist protestors who were said to be planning to celebrate international workers' day with petrol bomb attacks. In Germany, labour unions protested the impact of globalisation on Europe's largest economy, accusing firms of sacrificing jobs for quick profit and urging the government to introduce a minimum wage.

Mr Michael Sommer, the head of Germany's main union federation, complained that in addition to high unemployment, Germany has a growing army of people earning miserable wages, despite strong business profits. "We don't want American conditions," Mr Sommer told about 10,000 people at a rally in Wolfsburg, home of car maker Volkswagen AG.

"It is really time to stop this madness. Those in government must show cre-

ativity instead of putting new thumb screws on the long-term unemployed." Years of slow economic growth and massive job cuts by German firms have pushed up unemployment in Germany - it now stands at 11.5 per cent, undermining government finances and the country's generous welfare state.

German police were out in force to keep watch over demonstrations by both the far-Right and far-Left in several cities. No major incidents were reported.

The extreme right also gathered in Paris, where about 3,000 people listened to a speech by National Front leader Jean-Marie LePen after a march from a statue of Joan of Arc, whom the party views as its patron saint. Mr Le Pen, 77, called for a "patriotic union" of the far Right to support him in next year's presidential election, four years after he stunned the world by reaching the final round of the last presidential race.

Minsk demonstration
About 2,000 Opposition supporters rallied in the Belarusian capital in a show of defiance today, days after the authoritarian government tried to stop an unprecedented series of protests by jailing Opposition leaders.

The May Day rally began with an unauthorised march by 800 activists, who walked about 2 km from the Academy of Sciences to the square in the north-east of Minsk, where authorities had given permission for the meeting. There, the numbers swelled to 2,000. Police officers stood on either side of the Opposition demonstrators as they made their way to the square, warning them against breaking the law.

02 MAY 2006

THE STATESMAN

N-issue: Ahmadinejad writes to Bush

AGENCIES

Tehran/Washington, May 8

IRAN'S PRESIDENT Mahmoud Ahmadinejad sent an unprecedented letter to US President George W. Bush on Monday, apparently offering "new solutions" to their differences. This is the first time an Iranian head of state has written to an American President in 27 years, a government spokesman said on Monday. The White House, however, is yet to receive the missive. Iranian government spokesman Gholamhossein Elham said the letter from Ahmadinejad broached the nuclear dispute but declined to say whether it mentioned the possibility of direct talks with the US.

Past Iranian public messages to the US have been sharp rebukes, accusing Washington of bullying over Tehran's nuclear programme and of imperialistic intervention in Iraq. "In this letter, he has given an analysis ... of new ways of getting out of the current delicate situation in the world," Elham told a weekly news conference.

Iran has been referred to the UN Security Council over fears it is building nuclear arms, a charge Iran denies. Washington says it would prefer a diplomatic solution to the crisis but that



REUTERS



AFP



AFP

FROM LEFT: US President George W. Bush visits a hardware store in Washington on Monday. Iranians walk past an anti-US mural on the wall of the former US embassy in Tehran on Monday. Mahmoud Ahmadinejad at the inauguration of Tehran's 19th International Book Fair.

sanctions and military strikes are options.

Ahmadinejad's letter is the first publicly announced personal communication from an Iranian President to his US counterpart since the 1979 Islamic revolution. But its significance hinges on whether Iran changes chastising rhetoric which Washington habitually spurns.

Analysts thought there was little chance that Ahmadinejad would suggest that Iran could stop making nuclear fuel, the move which the United Nations has demanded and that Western diplomats see as the only way to defuse the atomic crisis.

On the contrary, they said Ahmadinejad was most likely to address the US from a position of

strength. After announcing that it had enriched uranium, Iran has increasingly styled itself as a regional heavyweight.

"It is a sort of announcement or approach from a position of power, that Iran is a global power to be reckoned with," Tehran-based political analyst Mahmoud Alinejad said.

Ali Ansari, a specialist in Iran

at Scotland's St Andrew's University said the letter could be Ahmadinejad's attempt to follow in the footsteps of Iranian leader Ayatollah Khomeini.

"I suspect he may be trying to emulate Khomeini's letter to (Mikhail) Gorbachev. He gave him a lesson in international politics and told him to embrace Islam," he said.

Khamenei calls for stadium ban

IRAN'S SUPREME leader Ayatollah Ali Khamenei on Monday vetoed a decision by President Mahmoud Ahmadinejad to allow women into sports stadiums. This is the first time Khamenei, who has the final word on matters of state, has openly challenged government policy. Ahmadinejad had said that the best seats in stadiums should be allocated to women and argued that their presence "promotes chastity".

Reuters, Tehran

'Nuking Tehran would be absurd'

BRITISH PRIME Minister Tony Blair said on Monday that any consideration of a nuclear attack against Iran would be "absolutely absurd," and the issue had no bearing on his decision to demote foreign secretary Jack Straw. Some analysts believed that differences over Iran led to Blair's decision to move Straw out of the Foreign Office.

AP, London

Ahmadinejad offers no concessions

Reflect on your record, George Bush told

TEHRAN: Iranian President Mahmoud Ahmadinejad's letter to American President George W. Bush may have interrupted a 26-year break in top-level contacts with arch-foe the United States, but the text is an anti-Western tirade that offers no concessions in the nuclear dispute.

In his 18-page message, the firebrand leader lashes out at the U.S.-led invasion of Iraq, questions Israel's right to exist, maps out the Islamic republic's unswerving drive to master nuclear technology and even tells Mr. Bush, a born-again Christian, he should be more pious.

It was hardly a softening of Iran's increasingly defiant tone, even if Mr. Ahmadinejad did refer to Mr. Bush as "Your Excellence."

U.S. officials have been quick to dismiss the message as a rambling philosophical treatise, saying it did not change Washington's position in a worsening dispute over Teheran's disputed nuclear programme.

Iran's press, however, hailed the letter, with moderate newspapers hoping for détente and hardliners praising Mr. Ahmadinejad's "audacity".

The letter was sent to Mr. Bush two weeks after Mr. Ahmadinejad himself said there was "no need" for talks with the U.S. on the situation in neighbouring Iraq.

"Under the pretext of the existence of WMDs, this great tragedy came to engulf both



the peoples of the occupied and the occupying country. Later it was revealed that no WMDs existed to begin with," the letter said.

Reference to Holocaust

He also touched on the Holocaust, something he had previously described as a "myth" in comments that outraged many in the international community.

"After the war, they claimed that six million Jews had been killed," Mr. Ahmadinejad wrote.

"Let us assume that these events are true. Does that logically translate into the establishment of the state of Israel in the Middle East [West Asia] or support for such a state? How can this phenomenon be rationalised or explained?"

It was unclear if this was an invitation to debate the Jew-

ish state's very right to exist, or merely a rhetorical question from someone who appears entrenched in his view that Israel should be moved or eradicated.

Either way, Washington is likely to be unimpressed — especially given that Mr. Ahmadinejad also invited Mr. Bush to reflect on his own presidential record.

"The people will scrutinise our presidencies. Did we manage to bring peace, security and prosperity for the people or insecurity and unemployment?" he asked.

"Did we defend the rights of all people around the world or impose wars on them, interfere illegally in their affairs, establish hellish prisons and incarcerate some of them? Did we bring the world peace and security or raise the spectre of intimidation and threats?" -- AFP

10 MAY 2005

THE HINDU

Bush border plan worries Mexico

JIM RUTENBERG

WASHINGTON, MAY 15

PRESIDENT Bush's plan to send National Guard troops to patrol the southern border of the United States has raised the concern of his longtime ally President Vicente Fox of Mexico, who called Bush on Sunday to express his worries.

White House officials said Bush assured Fox that a permanent National Guard presence on the border was not being considered. "The President made clear that the US considers Mexico a friend," said Maria Tamburri, a White House spokeswoman.

Tamburri said the President told Fox, "What is being considered is not a militarization of the border, but support of border patrol capabilities, on a temporary basis, by National Guard personnel."

In a televised address scheduled for Monday, Bush is expected to call for a significantly increased National Guard presence at the border. Officials have indicated that Bush could call for a force of thousands but that it would not be as high



US Border Patrol agents detain illegal immigrants near Sasabe, Arizona. AP

as 10,000, a number that had been rumored late last week.

Reports of the plan over the weekend also caused concern among lawmakers, including some Republicans, who said they feared the National Guard was already overextended with military missions abroad and with its response to natural disasters at home.

On Monday, Bush is also expected to outline several other proposals aimed at

sealing the border and cracking down on workers who are illegally in the US, and the employers who hire them. Aides said he would renew his calls for an overhaul of the nation's immigration law that includes provisions to grant illegal immigrants the right to work here legally.

White House officials have made it clear that they hope that a plan to seal the border will help Bush in that effort to strike a compromise between any bill passed in the Senate and the one passed in December in the House, where many Republicans have opposed any steps to legalize illegal workers.

Lawmakers from both parties expressed concerns on Sunday about the idea of deploying the National Guard. Senator Chuck Hagel, who helped draft the Senate immigration bill, said he was skeptical about whether the plan would work. "We have stretched our military as thin as we have ever seen it in modern times," Hagel said on *This Week* on ABC. But White House officials said last week that they believed the president's address on Monday would be welcomed by voters. —NYT

16 MAY 2006

INDIAN EXPRESS

U.N. report asks the U.S. to close Guantanamo jail

Concern over secret prisons

GENEVA: The United States should close its prison at Guantanamo Bay, Cuba, and avoid using secret detention facilities in its war on terror, a U.N. panel report released on Friday said.

In a report on U.S. adherence to the world body's anti-torture treaty, the U.N. Committee Against Torture said detenus should not be returned to any state where they could face a "real risk" of being tortured.

"The state party should cease to detain any person at Guantanamo Bay and close the detention facility," said the panel of 10 independent experts.

The committee said it was concerned that detenus were being held for protracted periods with insufficient legal safeguards and without judicial assessment of the justification for their detention.

The administration of President George W. Bush has been widely criticised for the open-ended detention of people captured in the war on terrorism at the camp that holds about 490 "enemy combatants."

But U.S. State Department legal adviser John B. Bellinger III, who led the U.S. delegation at the U.N. panel hearing earlier this month, said that the panel appeared not to have read a lot of

the information Washington had supplied, or had ignored it.

"There are a number of both factual inaccuracies and legal misstatements about the law applicable to the United States," Mr. Bellinger said.

The committee was also concerned about allegations that the United States has established secret prisons, where the International Red Cross does not have access to the detenus.

Inquiry sought

The report did not specifically say that such prisons existed, but stated the United States "should ensure that no one is detained in any secret detention facility under its *de facto* effective control."

Washington should also "investigate and disclose the existence of any such facilities and the authority under which they have been established and the manner in which detainees are treated."

The report also said the United States must eradicate all forms of torture committed by military or civilian personnel in Afghanistan, Iraq and other places of detention under its control and investigate allegations thoroughly, prosecuting any staff found guilty. — AP

20 MAY 2006

THE HINDU

Bush, Blair to discuss Iraq exit

Coalition forces may begin handover of security in provinces by July

LONDON: British Prime Minister Tony Blair will hold talks with U.S. President George W. Bush in Washington later this week and they will likely focus on the withdrawal of coalition troops from Iraq, officials said on Tuesday.

Mr. Blair will arrive in Washington "at the end of the week," his official spokesman said, speaking on customary condition of anonymity in line with policy.

The spokesman said he could not confirm the precise date of the visit because of security concerns. Mr. Bush will host a dinner before the two leaders hold a joint news conference, a spokeswoman for the Downing Street office said.

Mr. Blair was in Iraq on Tuesday to support the country's new Government.

During his visit to Baghdad, Mr. Blair said coalition troops are in now a position to begin the process of handing over control of some Iraqi provinces to local security forces.

But Mr. Blair refused to set a timetable for the withdrawal of the 8,000 British troops and said their return home will be governed by conditions on the ground and by the readiness of Iraqis to assume security responsibilities.

Meanwhile, newspaper reports aid Mr. Bush and Mr. Blair would discuss plans for an accel-

erated exit of troops from Iraq, starting in July.

The two allies will also call on world leaders to help with their withdrawal ambitions, another daily said. *The Guardian* reported that the withdrawal plan would be much faster and more ambitious than expected.

Britain would begin the process with a handover to Iraqi forces in Muthanna province in July, the daily said without citing sources.

The United States, with an estimated 130,000 soldiers on the ground, would follow suit in Najaf, a holy Shia city south of Baghdad. "Other withdrawals will quickly follow over the remainder of the year," *The Guardian* said.

22 killed in violence

At least 22 persons were killed on Tuesday in attacks including a car bombing on a busy Baghdad street, marring the first week of Iraq's new Cabinet which has set restoring security as top priority.

The car bomb in the southeastern district of Baghdad al-Jadeeda targeting a police patrol killed five persons and wounded seven. The neighbourhood has been hit repeatedly over the past three days. Also in Mosul, a former official of the Baath party which ruled Iraq under Saddam Hussein was killed in a drive-by shooting. — AP, AFP



ON A MISSION: U.S. soldiers exit a Chinook helicopter during an operation against militants in Samarra, Iraq, recently. — PHOTO: AP

US backs Israel plan

Bush Supports Redrawing Of West Bank Border

Washington: US President George W Bush has given qualified backing to Israeli proposals to unilaterally redraw Israel's boundaries in the occupied West Bank.

Speaking after talks in Washington with Prime Minister Ehud Olmert, he described the Israeli plan as "bold". But he urged Israel to resume direct talks with the Palestinians and said a unilateral solution was a last resort.

Palestinians see Olmert's plan as a land grab of territory captured by Israel in 1967 and have condemned it. Olmert said he would exhaust all bilateral options before going it alone to set Israel's final borders. But he said he would not negotiate with a government led by the militant Hamas.

Olmert is proposing a with-

drawal of tens of thousands of Israelis from isolated settlements in the West Bank, but the consolidation of other settlements housing hundreds of thousands of others.

The Palestinians say that so-

"I believe, and Prime Minister Olmert agrees, that a negotiated final status agreement best serves both the Israelis and the Palestinians and the cause of peace," he said.

The US president made a dis-

Today, Prime Minister Olmert shared with me some of his ideas. I would call them bold ideas

George W Bush | US PRESIDENT

lution would leave them unable to establish a viable state and accuse Olmert of not being serious about negotiations. Speaking after the two men met at the White House, Bush said he believed a negotiated settlement could still be reached between Israel and Palestinian Authority President Mahmoud Abbas.

inction between Abbas, who he said "speaks out for peace", and the militant group Hamas "who does not". He added: "Today, Prime Minister Olmert shared with me some of his ideas. I would call them bold ideas... (which) could be an important step toward the peace we both support." AGENCIES

THE TIMES OF INDIA

এ বারে কাশ্মীর নিয়ে চাপ বাড়াল আমেরিকা

ওয়াশিংটন, ২৮ এপ্রিল: কাশ্মীর নিয়ে কোনও রকম চাপ সৃষ্টি করছেন না। মধ্যস্থতা করারও বাসনা নেই। তবে, এই সমস্যার যাতে 'চূড়ান্ত মীমাংসা' হয়, তাই দেখতেই 'আগ্রহ' নিয়ে অপেক্ষা করছেন তারা।

পাক বিদেশ সচিব রিয়াজ খানের সঙ্গে বৈঠকের পরে এই ভাবেই নিজেদের মনোভাব জানিয়েছেন মার্কিন বিদেশ দফতরের উপসচিব নিকোলাস বার্নস। মনে করা হচ্ছে, কাল রিয়াজ-বার্নস বৈঠকে আরও এক বার পরমাণু চুক্তি নিয়ে আমেরিকার উপরে চাপ তৈরি করে পাকিস্তান। ভারত-মার্কিন চুক্তি আটকানোর জন্য জর্জ বুশের সফরের সময়েই দক্ষিণ এশিয়ায় পরমাণু অস্ত্রের ভারসাম্য নষ্টের দোহাই দিয়েছিল তারা। কিন্তু মার্কিন প্রেসিডেন্ট সেখানে এবং পরে দেশে ফিরেও জানিয়ে দেন, দিল্লির সঙ্গে এই চুক্তি চূড়ান্ত করতে ওয়াশিংটন দৃঢ়প্রতিজ্ঞ।

একই সঙ্গে তাদের সঙ্গে পরমাণু চুক্তির জন্যও আমেরিকাকে চাপ দেয় পাকিস্তান। এবং তাও এক কথায় খারিজ করে দিয়েছিলেন বুশ। এ বারও সেই পথ থেকে সরেনি তারা। রিয়াজ আবার বার্নসকে বলেছেন, শক্তি ক্ষেত্রে তাঁদেরও ঘাটতি রয়েছে। তাই পরমাণু জ্বালানি তাঁদেরও প্রয়োজন। কিন্তু এর পাশাপাশি কাশ্মীর নিয়ে ভারতের উপরে চাপ বাড়ানোর কথাও বলেন তিনি। সেটা স্পষ্ট হয়ে যায় বৈঠকের পরে বার্নসের বিবৃতিতে।

বার্নস বলেন, ভারত-পাকিস্তানের মধ্যে কাশ্মীর-সহ সব ক্ষেত্রে যে আলোচনা শুরু হয়েছে, সেটা সঠিক পথে এগোক, চাইছে আমেরিকা। বিশেষ করে কাশ্মীরের উপরে তিনি জোর দিয়েছেন। কাশ্মীর প্রসঙ্গে পাকিস্তানের দাবি, এই ব্যাপারে যেন কাশ্মীরের মানুষকেও সঙ্গে নেওয়া হয়। বার্নসের গলাতেও আজ সেই সুর শোনা গিয়েছে। তিনি বলেন, কাশ্মীর প্রশ্নে যেন সেখানকার মানুষের ইচ্ছেকেও গুরুত্ব দেওয়া হয়। স্পষ্টতই, এই বিষয়ে তাদের চাপে সফল হয়েছে পাকিস্তান।

এর মধ্যে আর্থিক সঙ্কটের জন্যই নতুন সঙ্গ পুরনো এফ-১৬ যুদ্ধবিমান কিনতেও পাকিস্তান রাজি হয়েছে। পাক অধিকৃত কাশ্মীরে ভয়াবহ ভূমিকম্পের পরেই এই ব্যাপারে ইঙ্গিত দিয়েছিলেন প্রেসিডেন্ট পারভেজ মুশারফ। এ বারে বার্নসের সঙ্গে আলোচনাতেও একই কথা বলেছেন রিয়াজ। পরে তিনি সাংবাদিকদের জানান, যতগুলি বিমান কেনা হচ্ছে তার মধ্যে পুরনোর সংখ্যা যথেষ্টই। এই নিয়ে সুর অনেকটাই নরম করেছেন তাঁরা। তবে ক'টি পুরনো এবং ক'টি নতুন, তার সঠিক হিসেব তিনি দিতে পারেননি।

— পি টি আই

SENATE WANTS N-MORATORIUM

Rice cuts no ice

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South Am.
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Press Trust of India

WASHINGTON, April 6. — Seeking to address apprehensions that the nuclear deal with India will lead to an atomic weapons race in South Asia, US secretary of state Ms Condoleezza Rice has said that her country is pushing for a regional moratorium on fissile material production. She even insisted that New Delhi had promised to be helpful on this.



Ms Condoleezza Rice

At hearings in the Senate and House International Relations Committee yesterday, she assured wary lawmakers that it would not affect efforts to stop the spread of nuclear weapons. Ms Rice warned that altering the pact could harm the new partnership with India.

"I think it (altering the pact) would be a significant setback to our efforts to deepen and broaden our relationship" with India, she said, cautioning that a failed nuclear deal would "hand the enemies of this new relationship a great victory. We would slide backward, when we should be striding forward."

Replying to a question by Democratic Senator and defeated presidential candidate Mr John Kerry, Ms

Rice said the Bush administration was trying to press hard for a fissile material cutoff treaty in South Asia to prevent production of nuclear weapons.

"We would like to see, obviously, in the regional sense in the relationship between India and Pakistan and others, a look at regional moratorium on fissile material production. We are trying to get the work done on that ourselves. We've told the Indians they need to be helpful in that. They've promised that they will," Ms Rice said.

"We've made it very clear that we would encourage that; that we would encourage India and Pakistan to look at their nuclear relationship and the way that in some of the earlier days people were concerned about safety and security between the US and Soviet arsenals," she added.

09 APR 2006

THE STATESMAN

SIANS
WASHINGTON

EVEN while conceding that the nuclear deal with India "flies in the face of old Cold War attitudes, as well as arm control thinking", President George W Bush has strongly recommended that the US Congress approve it.

"I feel very comfortable recommending to the US Congress that it's important and they ought to agree with the agreement that Prime Minister Manmohan Singh and I have reached. It's also an important relationship. For too long, the US and India were not partners in peace. We didn't deal with each other because of the Cold War. And now is the time to set the Cold War behind us. It's over, folks. It no longer is. And let's think about the next 30 years," Mr Bush said.

He was speaking at the Renaissance Cleveland Hotel to mark the third anniversary of the invasion of Iraq. His remarks on India and Pakistan followed questions from the audience after his speech that was devoted primarily to Iraq.

Since his return from a landmark visit to India in the first

week of March, the President has not missed an opportunity to underline how important the nuclear deal with India is.

"We live in a global economy, there is a demand for fossil fuels — an increase in the demand for fossil fuels in one part of the world affects the price of gasoline in our world. We're connected. Whether people like it or not, there is an interconnectedness today that affects our economy. It's in our interests, our economic interests that we work an agree-

"I feel very comfortable recommending to the US Cong that this is important"

ment with India to encourage their expansion of civilian nuclear power," he added.

Reiterating his stand to make a distinction between India and Iran, he said: "Unlike Iran, for example, India is willing to join the IAEA. They want to be a part of the global agreements around nuclear power. India has got a record in non-proliferation. India is a democracy and a transparent society. You find out a lot about India because there's a free press. There is openness. People run for office and are held

to account. There's committee hearings. It's an open process."

"And so my hope is some day somebody will be asking a question, aren't you glad old George W Bush thought about entering into a strategic relationship with India? And I believe it's in our country's interest that we have such a relationship, and at the same time, maintain close relations with Pakistan. And it's possible to do so. And we are doing so," he said.

On the question of balancing relations between India

and Pakistan, Bush said: "I was able to say in India and in Pakistan both, it is a positive development for the US to be a friend of Pakistan — it's a positive development for India and the US to be a friend of Pakistan, and it's a positive development for Pakistan and the US to be India's friends. It's an important accomplishment in order to help keep the peace."

"I don't view our relationships with Pakistan and India as a zero-sum relationship. As a matter of fact, I view our relationships with both countries

as different sets of issues and the need to nurture both relationships to achieve common objectives. And we're in a position to be able to do so now," he said. He also called President Pervez Musharraf a friend to the US, who "understands that he must help rout out al-Qaeda, which is hiding in parts of his country."

"When I first got into office, I remember asking Colin Powell to go get in between India and Pakistan. There was a lot of noise, I think it was in '01 or '02, about a potential nuclear conflict. And so there was shuttle diplomacy, between India and Pakistan, including not only our Colin Powell, but also Jack Straw, the foreign minister of Great Britain. And you never know how dangerous one of these situations can become until it's too late, but, nevertheless, we took it very seriously," he said.

"And today you don't see the need for the US shuffling, or Britain shuffling diplomats back and forth, to walk back the two countries back from a potential conflict, which would be incredibly damaging for the world. That's positive," he observed.

22 MAR 2006

Dump old laws for new friend, Bush tells Congress

Says India Has Proven Record Of Not Spreading N-Technology

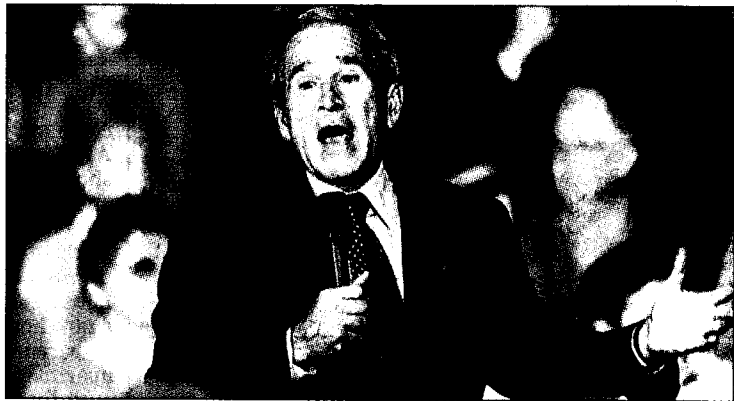
By Chidanand Rajghatta/TNN

Washington: President Bush on Wednesday urged the US Congress to rewrite old laws for a "new partner," citing India's proven record of not spreading nuclear technology, even as critics of the U.S-India deal continued to question the basis for the agreement.

The President's intervention came in response to questions during a road trip in Maryland to promote a medicare initiative, indicating the grassroots interest the deal has triggered in the US, with even small town newspapers joining the debate.

During a Q and A on medicare issues, a senior citizen who said he was at Tarapur 40 years ago when General Electric inaugurated its first nuclear plant in India thanked the President for his "far-sighted policy" in assisting India's civilian nuclear programme and said it's going to go a long way towards keeping US friendship with India.

Bush took the opportunity to promote the deal with what is be-



Bush speaks to residents at the Montgomery Station Community Center in Silver Spring, Maryland to promote a medicare initiative

ing called the "pocketbook argument"— "When India's demand for fossil fuels goes up it causes the price of our fossil fuels to go up. And so, therefore, to encourage them to use a renewable source of energy that doesn't create greenhouse gas, this (agreement) makes a lot of sense," he said.

Bush also used the platform to validate India's non-proliferation credentials which is being questioned by some American proliferation experts and the Pakistan lobby. Their charges include India's alleged dalliance in the nuclear field with Libya in the 1970s (when New Delhi in fact had rejected Libyan overtures, according to other experts) and with Iran in the late 1990s.

Pakistani military analysts, including their former envoys, have

been relentlessly drumming up these charges in the hope that some of the mud will stick despite the IAEA's certification of India's clean track record and Pakistan's own proliferation activities, Indian officials have said. Some US experts have picked up the Pakistani propaganda after being silent all these years about Islamabad's now-exposed proliferation record, they add.

But at Wednesday's pow-wow, Bush himself spoke firmly about India's non-proliferation credentials. "India has been a —is a non-proliferator, has proven to be a non-proliferator for the past 30 years. In other words, they've got a record, and in my judgment should cause the Congress to pass old law to treat them as a new partner," he said. Agencies

Bush goes the extra mile for India

Proposes Amendments In Laws To Keep Promise Made To Delhi

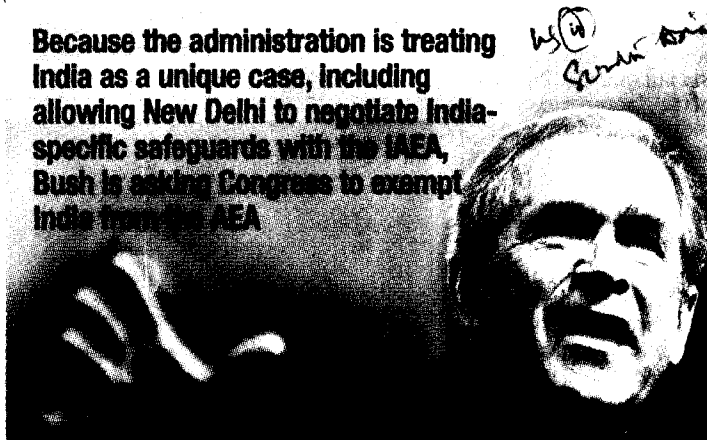
By Chidanand Rajghatta/TNN

New Delhi: Moving swiftly, US President George Bush on Thursday proposed changes to US domestic laws to enable nuclear trade with India even as pressure mounted from non-proliferation watchdogs to tighten terms of his recent agreement with New Delhi if he was so intent on making an exception for India.

The administration is said to have forwarded some preliminary legislative proposals to the Congress aimed at amending the Atomic Energy Act of 1954 and its subsequent modification in 1978, leading to the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Act. The two laws constitute the cornerstone of American non-proliferation statutes.

The Atomic Energy Act (AEA) requires that a bilateral nuclear cooperation agreement be negotiated between the US and any foreign country before major nuclear technology can be exported to that country. The Nuclear Non-Proliferation Act strengthens the

Because the administration is treating India as a unique case, including allowing New Delhi to negotiate India-specific safeguards with the IAEA, Bush is asking Congress to exempt India from the AEA



AEA by requiring full scope safeguards as a condition of supply.

Because the administration is treating India as a unique case, including allowing New Delhi to negotiate India-specific safeguards with the IAEA, the President is asking Congress to exempt India from the AEA. This exemption will be in lieu of annual presidential determination

that India is sticking to the terms of the agreement.

According to a report from Washington, the administration has proposed that instead of requiring lawmakers to vote in favour of the agreement, the accord will automatically take effect unless Congress moves to block it. "They want us to change the law and give up the ability of

having a higher standard for reviewing this unique agreement," the report quoted a Congressional source as saying. "If the deal is so good, why are they so afraid of letting Congress consider it."

While some lawmakers have reservations about the deal, the White House appears confident that it has the numbers in Congress if it comes down to a vote. Perhaps realising this, non-proliferation purists who are not against the India deal as much as they fear diluting the global non-proliferation regime want the terms of the agreement to be tightened.

Ivo Daalder of the Brookings Institution and Michael Levi of the Council for Foreign Relations have proposed that the passage of the deal should be contingent on, among other measures Congress prohibiting the sale of uranium enrichment and plutonium reprocessing technology to India and getting India to sign the Comprehensive Test Ban Treaty (which the US itself has forsaken).

N-deal: Bush seeks nod

Leading lawmakers from both chambers consulted

S. Rajagopalan

Washington, March 8

IN THE first push for congressional nod for the Indo-US nuke deal, President George W. Bush held discussions with a group of leading lawmakers on Tuesday and sought their support for the measure.

The White House meeting, lasting an hour, was attended by over a dozen lawmakers from both chambers. The group included Richard Lugar, chairman of the powerful Senate Foreign Relations Committee, Senators Hillary Clinton and John Cornyn, Representatives Tom Lantos, Duncan Hunter, Gary Ackerman and Ileana Ros-Lehtinen. Bush, giving a broad overview of the nuke deal, sought their help in seeing the measure through in what many observers believe would be a tough act.

Aware of the complexities, Bush himself wanted to know from the lawmakers the concerns on Capitol Hill on the issue. Some members reportedly pointed to prevailing concerns over undermining the non-proliferation regime, while one or two voiced fears that the deal could embolden China to come up with something similar for Pakistan. When Ackerman, the Democratic co-chair of the India Caucus, listed some of the challenges that the deal faces among sceptics, Bush quipped: "Thanks for the heads-up".

"President Bush listened very carefully to all that was said and he seemed to appreciate the input," Ackerman later said in a statement, stressing that Bush "must get on the ball and sell it to other members of Congress".

At the meeting, Bush complimented Prime Minister Manmohan Singh for his part in negotiating the agreement. Ackerman's statement also quoted Bush as saying that the Prime Minister "brought up no commitments" on the Iranian pipeline issue.

One of the strong critics of the deal to be invit-

Barc reactor closure before schedule irks Left

THE CPI (M) on Wednesday attacked the UPA government for "accepting" closure of Barc's Cirus reactor nine years ahead of schedule to clinch the Indo-US nuclear deal. Party leaders Nilotpal Basu and Rup Chand Pal said the Prime Minister's February 27 statement was categorical that India would take all crucial decisions on the reactor itself.

Manmohan Singh's statement on the deal, however, mentioned that the Cirus reactor would be permanently closed in 2010. It was also stated that the fuel core of another Barc plant, Apsara, would be shifted from its present loca-

tion and opened to IAEA inspections in 2010, the Left leaders said. They said the position regarding the return of the used fuel was also not clear. Earlier, there were assurances that the used fuel at Tarapur would be sent back but this was not done.

Basu, however, was satisfied that the government had accepted his party's view that a discussion on the nuclear deal would not confine itself to the deal but cover wider areas of India's foreign policy. The other issues to be covered by the discussion would be the Nuclear Separation Plan, the Knowledge Initiative and the

Global Democracy Fund. Pal expressed concern that the US did not accept India as a nuclear state.

The Left leaders said the BJP had by describing Left's anti-Bush protests as "Left-Muslim" protests tried to trivialise the whole issue. The protests took place all over the country and several parties and groups were active against Bush's visits. The BJP, they said, was not playing the role of the main Opposition by posing alternatives to the Budget. The party was preventing proper discussions in the House and becoming increasingly irrelevant.

HTC, New Delhi

ing to want to see the details and a full explanation, and we intend to give them".

Conceding that it will be "a very intensive debate", he said: "We're prepared for that debate." That the Bush Administration is counting a great deal on the pro-India group of lawmakers in both Houses was clear from its invitation to co-chairs of the House caucus (Ackerman and Ros-Lehtinen) and those of the "Friends of India in the Senate" (Hillary Clinton and Cornyn). It was not immediately known what Senator Lugar said at the meeting. Lugar had peppered the State Department with 80 questions on various facets of the deal following the hearings that he chaired in recent months.

ed was Congressman Hunter, the California Republican who heads the House Armed Services Committee. In recent days, Hunter went on record saying: "The President is trying to ride the nuclear tiger. This thing has to be looked at very, very carefully. I'm sceptical."

Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice and Undersecretary of State Nicholas Burns were present at the meeting. According to State Department sources, Rice and Burns plan to hold detailed briefings for lawmakers of both Houses and make the case that the pact is a good deal for American interests as well. Burns himself has said that "on a deal as esoteric, frankly, and as complex as this one, members of the Senate and the House are go-

For Bush's benefit

By George, he's easily conned

Is it not ticklishly curious that within hours of George W Bush declaring that Pakistan must do more to contain terror Pervez Musharraf lets loose his forces — helicopter gunships included — in the North Wazirsitan area to kill 25/30 tribal militants holed up in what was officially dubbed a “camp of foreign miscreants”? Curious because in the past Pakistan has tended to deny that remnants of the Taliban and Al Qaeda elements had found safe haven in that region from where they strike against Afghanistan. The explanation is simple, the American President was touching down in Islamabad and what could be better than presenting him a bouquet of terrorists' scalps. Eye-witness accounts from Miran-shah indicate that it was a full blown military operation, launched on the basis of intelligence gleaned from across the Afghan border. Funny, earlier Pakistan had made light of intelligence inputs of that nature, and its military had deemed it too risky to enter the border badlands. What persuasive power does the US President wield? Not that it takes much to convince him of unstinted loyalty, why he sees Musharraf as another victim of terror since his life has also been targeted. To be fair, Dubya is not alone in being easily conned, Cheney and Rumsfeld are also convinced that Musharraf's Pakistan is wholeheartedly committed to eliminating terrorists.

It is, but only to those who pose a threat to Pervez & Partners. For the rest, it is a free run. Setting up shop, establishing training facilities, procuring munitions and laundering money is permissible provided the “action” takes place across the borders — with Afghanistan or J & K. The readiness with which Musharraf granted US forces ground support in his country after 9/11 proved a masterstroke in deception. For Bush rejects the realities presented by a section of American strategic experts, and takes only half-seriously what his Afghan counterpart tells him. Which happens to be a bit more than the credence he accords to Indian evidence of Pakistani perfidy. A couple of strikes in Waziristan suffices for Musharraf to be invited to ride along with the good guys.

THE STATESMAN

পরমাণু চুক্তি নিয়ে দুই দেশে দুই ছবি • মুশারফকে মার্কিন প্রেসিডেন্টের 'না'

ভারসাম্যে দিল্লিকেই এগিয়ে রেখে ফিরলেন বৃশ

নিজস্ব সংবাদদাতা, নয়াদিল্লি, ৪ মার্চ: করাচি বিস্ফোরণের পরে সফরসূচি বদলে পাকিস্তানে রাত কাটানোর সিদ্ধান্ত নিয়েছিলেন। সেই মতো কলই পাড়ি দিয়েছিলেন ইসলামাবাদে। জর্জ ওয়াকার বৃশের এই সিদ্ধান্তের পরে উৎসাহের যে বেলুটা ফুলিয়েছিলেন পারভেজ মুশারফেরা, আজ সেটা নিজেই ফাটিয়ে দিলেন মার্কিন প্রেসিডেন্ট। শীর্ষ বৈঠক এবং তার পরে যৌথ সাংবাদিক সম্মেলনে তিনি স্পষ্ট ভাষায় জানিয়ে দিলেন, ভারতের সঙ্গে কোনও ভাবেই পাকিস্তানের তুলনা চলে না।

দিল্লির শেষে তাই মুশারফের জন্য রইল শুধুই পিঠ-চাপড়ানি। আর এই ভাবে ভারতের দিকে পালা কিছুটা বুঁকিয়ে উপমহাদেশ সফর শেষ করলেন বৃশ।

কী চেয়েছিলেন মুশারফ? এক, ভারতের মতো পাকিস্তানের সঙ্গেও অসামরিক পরমাণু কেন্দ্রের জন্য জ্বালানি চুক্তি। দুই, কাশ্মীর সমস্যায় মার্কিন মধ্যস্থতা। তিন, দেশে শক্তি সঙ্কট কাটাতে ইরানের সঙ্গে গ্যাস পাইপলাইন নিয়ে কাজ চালিয়ে যাওয়া (ভারতও এই কাজের শরিক)।

কী পেলেন পাক প্রেসিডেন্ট? পাকিস্তানের সঙ্গে যে ভারতের মতো পরমাণু চুক্তি সম্ভব নয়, সেটা শীর্ষ বৈঠকেই স্পষ্ট করে দেন বৃশ। পরে যৌথ সাংবাদিক সম্মেলনে এই বিষয়ে প্রশ্ন করা হলে তাঁর পরিকার জবাব, "আমরা পরমাণু চুক্তির ব্যাপারে আলোচনা করছি। কিন্তু পাকিস্তান এবং ভারত দু'টো আলাদা দেশ। তাদের প্রয়োজন আলাদা, ইতিহাসও আলাদা।" পাক বিজ্ঞানী আব্দুল কাদীর খানের পরমাণু প্রযুক্তি



নজর রাখছেন? ইসলামাবাদে যৌথ সাংবাদিক সম্মেলনে মুশারফের দিকে তীক্ষ্ণ দৃষ্টি জর্জ বৃশের। শনিবার। — রয়টার্স

পাচার সংক্রান্ত কেলেকারির কথা না তুলেও বৃশ মুশারফকে বুঁকিয়ে দেন, কেন তাঁদের সঙ্গে এই চুক্তি সই করতে আমেরিকা অগ্রহী নয়।

এই নিয়ে পাকিস্তানের দাবি নতুন নয়। মার্কিন বিদেশ সচিব কডোলিন্জা রাইস আগেই জানিয়ে দিয়েছিলেন, এই চুক্তি সম্ভব নয়। তবু মুশারফ ভেবেছিলেন, চিনির সঙ্গে কৌশলগত সম্পর্ক গড়ে তোলার 'হুমকি' দিয়ে বৃশের কাছ থেকে অস্বস্ত ভবিষ্যৎ বোঝাপড়ার প্রতিক্ষৃতি আদায় করে নেবেন। কিন্তু আজ বৃশের কথাতেই এই সম্ভাবনায় জল পড়ে গেল।

অথচ তিন দিন আগে বৃশের

হস্তক্ষেপেই পরমাণু জ্বালানি চুক্তি নিয়ে ভারতের সব দাবি মেনে নিতে বাধ্য হন কডোলিন্জা রাইসরা। এই একটি বিষয়ে তাঁর প্রতিক্রিয়াতেই স্পষ্ট, এখন উপমহাদেশে কূটনীতির কোন ভারসাম্য চাইছেন বৃশ।

নিজের মনোভাব গোপন রাখলেন না কাশ্মীর নিয়ে মধ্যস্থতার প্রসঙ্গেও। ভারত-পাকিস্তানের পারস্পরিক সন্দেহকে উন্নতির প্রচেষ্টাকে প্রশংসা করে বৃশ বলেন, "কাশ্মীর সমস্যার সমাধান একমাত্র তখনই সম্ভব, যখন দু'দেশের নেতারা এ ব্যাপারে এগিয়ে আসবেন। মুশারফ সে চেষ্টা করছেন এবং ভারতের প্রধানমন্ত্রীও আমাকে

আশ্বাস দিয়েছেন।" উল্টে সীমান্তপার সন্ধান নিয়ে তিনি যে উদ্বিগ্ন, সেটা আসেই বুঝিয়েছেন মার্কিন প্রেসিডেন্ট। দিল্লিতে মলমোহন সিংহ এবং লালকৃষ্ণ আডবানীকে আশ্বাসও দিয়ে গিয়েছিলেন, মুশারফের সঙ্গে আলোচনা সময় বিষয়টি তুলবেন।

এখানেই শেষ নয়। পাকিস্তানে গণতন্ত্র ফেরানোর প্রসঙ্গ তুললেন এক মার্কিন সাংবাদিক। জবাবে বৃশ বললেন, "সভ্যসের বিরুদ্ধে লড়াইতে হলে এটা জরুরি। আশা করব, আপাতী বছর নির্ধারিত নির্বাচন অবাধ ও স্বং হবে।" অর্থাৎ এ ক্ষেত্রেও তিনি মুশারফকে নিজের মনোভাব স্পষ্ট করে দিলেন।

এর আগে ইরানের সঙ্গে গ্যাস পাইপলাইন নিয়ে সাক্ষাৎ পুরস্কার পেয়েছেন মুশারফ। বৃশ বলেছেন, তাঁদের আপত্তি গ্যাস পাইপলাইন নিয়ে নয়, ইরানের পরমাণু অস্ত্র তৈরির পরিকল্পনা নিয়ে। সেটা গোটা বিশ্বের পক্ষেই বিপজ্জনক। বস্তুত, ত্রিদেশীয় এই পাইপলাইন প্রকল্প নিয়ে যে আর মাথাব্যথা নেই মার্কিন প্রশাসনের, সেটা এ দিন বুঝিয়ে দিয়েছেন বৃশ। একই সঙ্গে জানিয়ে দিলেন, পাকিস্তানের শক্তি ক্ষেত্রে সঙ্কট মোচনের লক্ষ্যে আলোচনার জন্য সংশ্লিষ্ট দফতরের সচিবকেও ইসলামাবাদে পাঠাবেন।

এর পর ছয়ের পাতায়

March 5, 2006
News Analysis

U.S. Gives India Applause, Pakistan a Pat on the Back

By SOMINI SENGUPTA

NEW DELHI, March 4 — President Bush leaves this region having declared India and Pakistan strategic partners. But his declarations spoke just as loudly of the shifting balance of power in the region, and the world.

It was India that appeared to come out the biggest winner this week. Pakistan walked away with little more than a mild pat on the back after Mr. Bush's visit on Saturday. While buttressing America's alliances in the region, Mr. Bush also took home a formidable political challenge to sell his nuclear deal with India to a skeptical Congress.

India could hardly be more pleased. "IND-US CIVILIZATION," screamed a front-page headline in The Times of India on Saturday, in joyous praise for what President Bush had bestowed on the nation.

Those gifts included a nuclear deal celebrated by Indian officials, elevation as a global leader, and nary a recriminatory word on the troubles in the disputed province of Kashmir. Indian backers of a United States-India partnership were elated.

"I think we have managed to get a rather good deal," a senior Indian official said, unwilling to disclose his name because the full details of the nuclear agreement had yet to be shared with the Indian Parliament. "This is from our point of view, a hard bargain."

In Pakistan, the difference was discerned. "One thing is very clear: The U.S. is keeping India and Pakistan at two different levels," said Hasan Askari Rizvi, an independent political analyst in Lahore. "The kind of multifaceted interaction that exists between India and the United States is not to be seen with reference to Pakistan. For Pakistan, it's a limited and cautious support."

Some members of the United States Congress and analysts have already taken the Bush administration to task for making too many concessions to India, the *bête noire* of outsourcing in some American circles and a stubborn opponent of the Nuclear Nonproliferation Treaty. Mr. Bush's test is to persuade Americans that India is worth the bargain.

The balance of costs and benefits has everything to do with India's new place in the world and its rise in the American imagination.

It is the world's largest democracy, seen in some quarters as a potential check on China. It has the world's second-largest population of Muslims. Its engineers and call center workers are embedded in the largest American corporations. Its immigrants in the United States have grown swiftly in number, wealth and influence.

Perhaps most important, India's economy has galloped forward for the last several years: It is poised to post more than 8 percent growth this year and double-digit growth in the years ahead. Its potential market is vast. Mr. Bush exhorted India to open that market further, and in his joint statement with Prime Minister Manmohan Singh he listed "economic prosperity and trade" as the first among several agreements made between the countries. "Economics has featured prominently on this trip," the deputy United States trade representative, Karan Bhatia, said Friday.

But it is the nuclear deal, which commits the United States to supporting India's civilian nuclear program, that will stand as the measure of what was achieved this week.

Pakistan said it expected Mr. Bush at least to press India harder for a solution to their territorial dispute over Kashmir in exchange for the nuclear favor granted to India.

But despite Pakistani demands for equal nuclear status with India, the White House maintained that the scandal surrounding the Pakistani nuclear scientist A. Q. Khan and his illegal nuclear peddling made no such deal possible anytime soon.

There was only a passing public reference to Kashmir — and that too only to urge the leaders of both India and Pakistan to work it out between themselves.

What Pakistan got instead was affirmation of its standing as a vital ally in the war on terrorism and what many here will interpret as modest blessing of President Pervez Musharraf's brand of democracy, despite Mr. Bush's nudge to conduct transparent elections next year.

Likewise, Indian officials point out that strategic ties with Washington can help India achieve its aspirations on the world stage — chief among them, ending the country's nuclear isolation in the world and yielding the legitimacy it has long sought as a nuclear weapons state.

Mushahid Hussain, a member of the Pakistani Parliament and close to General Musharraf, said at least the new strategic partnership between Pakistan and the United States should yield a "a peace dividend" for South Asia.

To please two lovers is by nature an impossible task, and in this instance, Mr. Bush did not leave South Asia without leaving a trail of ambivalence — and even outright anger — in both countries.

And while both India and Pakistan may be grateful in receiving what support Washington has to offer, it was not clear that either nation could embrace all that Mr. Bush expected of his new friends. In India, for starters, Mr. Bush's message of crusading for democracy worldwide raised eyebrows. "As a global power, India has an historic duty to support democracy around the world," is what he told the invitation-only audience here at Purana Qila, a fort, on Friday. He used the word "democracy" 16 times in his speech.

Ashok K. Mehta, a retired general who writes about India's foreign policy, pointed out that India was not in the habit of spreading democracy, not even in its own neighborhood. "We would like countries to uphold democratic values but we will not thrust that down their throats," is how Mr. Mehta put it, on his way out of the Bush address.

Indeed, Mr. Bush's list of rogue states — he mentioned Myanmar, Cuba and Syria in his final speech in New Delhi — are all among India's friends. Then there was the explicit reference to Iran, as a country ruled by a clerical minority. India has a longstanding and vital relationship with Iran. "In a world where

the Bush administration is perceived in a not very positive light, India is going to have a challenge in structuring its other relationships," said Sundeep Waslekar of the Strategic Foresight Group. "This challenge will be most demonstrated in how we manage our relationship with Iran."

But India is already marching ahead with deepening its engagement with the military junta that rules natural gas-rich Myanmar, formerly Burma. It has bid, with China, on an oilfield in Syria. Fidel Castro — and Hugo Chávez of Venezuela — are regarded here as friends, even if they are not held in the same esteem in the United States. Sachin Pilot, a member of Parliament, put it neatly, "We agree to disagree."

Bush raises 'cross border infiltration'

Bush was given a comprehensive response: Kasuri

B. Muralidhar Reddy

ISLAMABAD: The U.S. President, George W. Bush, raised the issue of 'cross border infiltration' during his talks with President Pervez Musharraf on Saturday.

This was revealed by the Pakistan Foreign Minister, Khurshid Mehmood Kasuri, at a news conference here. "Yes he did raise it. Let me inform you that it was met with a comprehensive and telling response from President Musharraf," he said.

A visibly upset Mr. Kasuri told an American journalist that there was lot of 'misinformation' about Pakistan in the western media on cross border infiltration and appealed to him to reflect the Pakistani perspective on the subject.

The Minister said in the course of discussions with Mr. Bush, Pakistan tried to explain why certain types of news cannot be trusted without taking into account the motivating factors.

Mr. Kasuri said despite the presence of 1.7 lakh American troops in Iraq there were bomb

blasts and violence every day and it certainly does not mean the U.S. is not sincere in catching the culprits. Similarly he said despite the presence of 17,000 American and NATO troops in Afghanistan and an additional 19,000 Afghan troops, the problem of terrorism persisted.

"We have deployed 80,000 on our Afghan border. It is way above the combined strength of the American, NATO and Afghan forces. Have you been successful in Afghanistan? We must understand there are people out there ready to die for a cause. What is required is a political and military approach to tackle the issue," the Minister said.

Mr. Bush at the joint press conference with Gen. Musharraf, in response to a question on what more the U.S. expected from Gen. Musharraf, said there's a lot of work to be done in defeating Al-Qaeda.

"The President and I know that. We spent a good while this morning talking about the work that needs to be done. The best way to defeat Al-Qaeda is to find, is to share good intelligence to

locate them, and then to be prepared to bring them to justice. So, one, the first question that I always ask is whether or not our intelligence-sharing is good enough, and we're working on it to make sure it's good enough. Intelligence is gathered in a lot of different ways, but the key thing is that, one, it be actionable, and two, it be shared on a real-time basis.

"Secondly, in order for Pakistan to defend herself from Al-Qaeda, she must have equipment necessary to move quickly, without tipping off the enemy. The President is training up Special Forces teams to do just that. And so while we do have a lot of work to be done, it's important that we stay on the hunt. Part of my mission today was to determine whether or not the President is as committed as he has been in the past to bringing these terrorists to justice, and he is. He understands the stakes; he understands the responsibility; and he understands the need to make sure our strategy is able to defeat the enemy," Mr. Bush said.

05 MAR 2006

Hundreds held in Pakistan to foil protests against Bush visit

WS. @
Srinan Anu

Imran Khan says his arrest is to appease U.S. President

ISLAMABAD: Cricketer-turned politician Imran Khan was on Saturday put under house arrest by Pakistan police which detained hundreds of Islamist leaders and Opposition activists across the country to thwart protests against U.S. President George W. Bush's visit.

Mr. Khan was detained at his home here in the early hours as he prepared to take out a march from Rawalpindi to Islamabad, according to leaders of his Tehrik-e-Insaf party.

Besides Mr. Khan, 26 of his associates were also taken into preventive custody by authorities, the leaders said.

Police used batons to disperse party activists who gathered in central Rawalpindi shouting slogans like "Killer Bush go back."

Party cadres held

Some of the party cadres were also arrested.

Mr. Khan, who had been detained last week also for attempting a similar rally in Lahore, told local TV channel Geo that his house arrest was "just to appease Bush".

Opposition parties had pledged to observe 'Black Day' and take out demonstrations to protest the American leader's visit.

To prevent any major rallies, police detained from across the country some 350 activists of the Islamic alliance Muttahida Majlis-e Amal (MMA) and Opposition parties including some local



SHOW OF ANGER: A protester at a demonstration against the visiting U.S. President George W. Bush, in Karachi on Saturday. - PHOTO: REUTERS

leaders. Hanif Abbasi of MMA was detained at his home in Rawalpindi, while the alliance's leader Qazi Hussain Ahmed, detained a few days ago, remained in house arrest in Lahore.

Despite the crackdown, around 500 protesters gathered in the eastern city of Multan and took out a peaceful rally while nearly in Lah

Police blocked a key bridge to prevent any protesters from entering Islamabad from the northwest region which is dem

05 MAR 2006

THE HINDU

পরমাণু জ্বালানিও নয়, কাশ্মীরে মধ্যস্থতাও নয়: মুশারফকে বৃশ

১৪
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১৪

ইসলামাবাদ, ৪ মার্চ (পি টি আই)—
পাকিস্তানকে পরমাণু জ্বালানি দেওয়ার
আশায় জল ঢেলে দিলেন জর্জ বৃশ।
গতকাল ভারতের সঙ্গে স্বাক্ষরিত চুক্তির
প্রক্রিয়াকে পাকিস্তানের সঙ্গেও একই
ধরনের চুক্তি চেয়েছিলেন মুশারফ।
প্রেসিডেন্ট বৃশের সঙ্গে একান্ত বৈঠকে
আজ সেই প্রস্তাবও দেন। কিন্তু বৃশ তা
প্রত্যাখ্যান করে সরাসরি জানিয়ে দেন,
ভারত ও পাকিস্তানকে এই মুহূর্তে একই
সারিতে ফেলে না আমেরিকা। ভারত যে
আন্তর্জাতিক বিশ্বাসযোগ্যতা অর্জন
করেছে, পাকিস্তানকে তা পেতে এখনও
অনেক দূর যেতে হবে। সন্ত্রাস দমন ও
পরমাণু প্রযুক্তির গোপনীয়তা রক্ষায় পাক
সরকারের ব্যর্থতার প্রতিই আঙুল
তুলেছেন তিনি। বৃশের মতে, ভারত এবং পাকিস্তান—
দুই প্রতিবেশী দেশের পরিস্থিতিতে, প্রয়োজন ও ইতিহাস আলাদা। এটাকে মাথায়
রখেই সিদ্ধান্ত নেবে আমেরিকা। একইসঙ্গে সন্ত্রাস দমনে আরও তৎপর
হতে বলেছেন মুশারফকে। পাশাপাশি খরিজ করে দিয়েছেন কাশ্মীর
প্রশ্নে মধ্যস্থতার প্রস্তাব। মুশারফ এবং মনমোহনকেই উদ্যোগ নিতে
বলেছেন। শান্তি উদ্যোগের ওপর পূর্ণ আস্থা রেখে বলেছেন, ভারত
সফরে প্রধানমন্ত্রী মনমোহন সিং তাঁকে জানিয়েছেন যে পারম্পরিক
সহযোগিতা বাড়িয়ে ও নানা পদক্ষেপ নিয়ে কাশ্মীরসহ সব সমস্যা
মেটাতে চান। মুশারফও এতে ভাল সাড়া দিচ্ছেন বলে তিনি



মৌখিক বিবৃতি দেওয়ার আগে ইসলামাবাদে
শনিবার। ছবি: এ এফ পি

জানিয়েছেন। এই প্রচেষ্টা আরও এগোবে
বলে আমেরিকাও আশাবাদী। অতএব,
মধ্যস্থতার জায়গা কোথায়? ভারত-পাক
সমস্যায় নাক গলালে সমস্যাই বরং
জটিল হবে। পরমাণু জ্বালানি এবং
কাশ্মীরে মধ্যস্থতায় রাজি না হয়ে
অর্থনৈতিক সহযোগিতার নানা প্রস্তাব
দিয়ে আর পারভেজ মুশারফের পিঠ
চাপড়ে জর্জ বৃশ তাঁর পাকিস্তান সফর
সেরাচ্ছেন।
মার্কিন প্রেসিডেন্ট বলেন, দিন বদলাচ্ছে।
দু'দেশের সম্পর্কের বরফ গলাচ্ছে।
অতীতের তিক্ততা ও অবিশ্বাস তুলে
কছাকাছি আসছে ভারত-পাকিস্তান।
পাক অধিকৃত কাশ্মীরে ভূমিকম্পে
দুর্গতদের ত্রাণে ভারতের ভূমিকার তৃপ্তী
প্রশংসা করেছেন তিনি। সাংবাদিক বৈঠকে আজ মুখোমুখি হন বৃশ এবং
মুশারফ। গত বৃহস্পতিবার করাচিতে পাক জঙ্গিদের হামলায় এক মার্কিন
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সীমান্ত নিরাপত্তা নয়, সন্ত্রাসরোধেরও সহায়ক হবে এটা। সন্ত্রাস দমন না
হলে ভারতীয় উপমহাদেশের সঙ্গে আমেরিকার নিরাপত্তাও যে ব্যাহত

গৃহবন্দী



ইসলামাবাদ, ৪ মার্চ (পি টি আই)—
প্রাক্তন ক্রিকেট অধিনায়ক
ইমরান খানকে গৃহবন্দী করে রাখা
হয়েছে। আটক করা হয়েছে তাঁর
জনা ২৪ সমর্থককে। প্রেসিডেন্ট
বৃশের পাকিস্তান সফরে বিক্ষোভের
আয়োজন করেছিল ইমরানের দল
তেহরিক-এ-ইনসাফ। রাওয়াল-
পিন্ডি থেকে ইসলামাবাদ অধি-
এক মিছিলে যোগ দেওয়ার জন্য
বেরোনোর মুখে তাঁকে আটক করা
হয়। ইমরানের বাড়িতে অস্ত্র ১০
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Bush: Pakistan needs to do more

Best way of resolving Kashmir issue is through dialogue

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B. Muralidhar Reddy

ISLAMABAD: United States President George W. Bush on Saturday sent out a clear message that Pakistan had to do "a lot of work" to defeat the terrorist outfit, Al-Qaeda. He ruled out forging with Islamabad an accord similar to the civilian nuclear deal Washington clinched with New Delhi.

On a 24-hour visit here, Mr. Bush reiterated gently but firmly the U.S. concerns vis-à-vis Pakistan about terrorism, proliferation and democracy.

In response to Pakistan President Pervez Musharraf's plea for facilitation on Kashmir, Mr. Bush said the best way of resolving the issue was through dialogue between New Delhi and Islamabad.

Alternative to radicalism

At a joint press conference with Gen. Musharraf after two hours of talks, the U.S. President repeatedly talked about the threat posed by terrorists. He said Gen. Musharraf envisioned a modern state, which provided an alternative to radicalism.

"There's a variety of things we can continue to cooperate on. Perhaps the most important one of all is to defeat these terrorists, some of whom are lodged here in Pakistan, some of whom have tried to kill your President. And close cooperation is needed to defeat them," Mr. Bush said in response to a question.

Gen. Musharraf talked about the difference between terrorism and extremism and the need for a strategy to tackle both. "Then we need to strategise... We have strategised on how to deal with terrorism, and then strategised also on how to deal with extremism, which is very different from terrorism. So we have strategised both. Then we need to come to the implementation part."

Mr. Bush took political and diplomatic circles by surprise, saying part of his mission to Pakistan was to "determine whether or not the President is as



JOINT STAND: Pakistan President Pervez Musharraf and his United States counterpart, George W. Bush, on way to address a joint press conference in Islamabad on Saturday. - PHOTO: REUTERS

committed as he has been in the past to bringing these terrorists to justice, and he is." Asked what more the U.S. expected him to do in the war against terrorism, Mr. Bush said Gen. Musharraf understood the stakes, responsibility and "the need to make sure our strategy is able to defeat the enemy."

Mr. Bush said Pakistan was an important partner in the fight against proliferation and it agreed to join the Container Security Initiative, an international effort to stop the spread of

dangerous material shipments. "We'll continue to work together to ensure that the world's most dangerous weapons do not end up in the hands of the terrorists." Elaborating why Washington was not looking at the option of extending the nuclear deal with Islamabad, he said India and Pakistan were two different countries with "different needs and histories." U.S. Secretary of Energy Sam Bodman would soon be in the region to work with the Pakistan Government on the country's energy needs.

To a question on the Iran gas pipeline, Mr. Bush said, "Our beef with Iran is not the pipeline; our beef with Iran is the fact that they want to develop a nuclear weapon. And I believe a nuclear weapon in the hands of the Iranians would be very dangerous for all of us. It would endanger world peace. So we're working very hard to convince the Iranians to get rid of their nuclear ambitions."

In his opening remarks, Gen. Musharraf said he had expressed during his talks with Mr. Bush

Pakistan's deepest regret over the killing of a U.S. diplomat in Karachi on Thursday. "I'm extremely grateful to the President for showing understanding and showing also the resolve not to let such terrorist acts interfere with the normal process of our strategic cooperation."

Gen. Musharraf emphasised the strategic partnership between the U.S. and Pakistan and said Saturday's meeting laid the foundations for a very strong, sustainable, broad-based and a long-term relationship.

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US diplomat, 4 others die in Karachi blast

Karachi: In an audacious attack just two days before President George W Bush's visit to Pakistan, a suicide bomber rammed his explosive-laden car into a vehicle carrying an American diplomat, killing him and four others outside the highly-guarded US consulate here.

Over 50 people were also injured in the blast that tore through the parking lot of the luxury Marriott hotel, about 20 metres away from the consulate at around 9 am. Bush, who is on a three-day visit to India, said he would go ahead with his trip to Pakistan as scheduled on Saturday. "Terrorists and killers cannot prevent me from going to Pakistan," he said in New Delhi, disclosing that one American diplomat was among the dead. Although no terrorist outfit has taken responsibility for the blast, officials said it was apparently timed to coincide with the American Presi-

dent's visit. Provincial health minister Shabbir Qaimkhani said that four people, including a woman, were killed in the explosion. A body charred beyond recognition found at the site is believed to be that of the suicide bomber.

Earlier police said two near simultaneous blasts rocked the area but later clarified there was only one blast carried out by a suicide bomber. The blast was so powerful that it caused fire in several parked vehicles whose fuel gas cylinders also exploded. Over 10 cars were destroyed in the attack.

According to initial investigations, the suicide attacker deliberately rammed his car into the vehicle carrying the American diplomat. The Pakistani driver of the car was also killed in the blast.



Pakistani paramilitary soldiers run past burning cars after a blast outside a five-star hotel in Karachi on Thursday

Indo-US joint statement: Areas of cooperation

The text of the Indo-US joint statement issued after talks between PM Manmohan Singh and US President George W. Bush:

President George W. Bush and Prime Minister Manmohan Singh on Thursday expressed satisfaction with the great progress the US and India have made in advancing our strategic partnership to meet the global challenges of the 21st Century.

Both our countries are linked by a deep commitment to freedom and democracy; a celebration of national diversity, human creativity and innovation; a quest to expand prosperity and economic opportunity worldwide; and a desire to increase mutual security against the common threats posed by intolerance, terrorism, and spread of weapons of mass destruction. The successful transformation of the Indo-US relationship will have a decisive and positive influence on the future international system as it evolves in this new century. Reviewing the progress made in deepening the global partnership between the US and India since their Joint Statement of July 18, 2005, the President and the PM reaffirm their commitment to expand even further the growing ties between their two countries.

For economic prosperity, trade

- Agreed to intensify efforts to develop a bilateral business climate supportive of trade & investment by:
 - > Welcoming the report of the US-India CEO Forum, agreeing to consider its recommendations aimed at substantially broadening our bilateral economic relations, and directing the Chairs of the Indo-US Economic Dialogue to follow up expeditiously with the CEO Forum;
 - > Endorsing the efforts of the US-India Trade Policy Forum to reduce barriers to trade and investment with the goal of doubling bilateral trade in three years;
 - > Agreeing to advance mutually beneficial bilateral trade and investment flows by holding a high-level public-private investment summit in 2006, continuing efforts to facilitate and promote foreign direct investment and eliminate impediments to it, and enhancing bilateral consultations on various issues including tariff and non-tariff barriers to trade in goods and services, and preventing the illicit use of the financial system.
- Sought to expand cooperation in agriculture by:
 - > Launching the Knowledge Initiative on Agriculture with a three-year financial commitment to link our universities, technical institutions, and businesses to support agriculture education, joint research, and capacity building projects, including in the area of biotechnology.
 - > Endorsing an agreed workplan to promote bilateral trade in agriculture through agreements that: lay out a



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Indian lunar mission Chandrayaan-1.

- Welcomed the US Department of Commerce's plan to create a license exception for items that would, otherwise, require an export licence to end-users in India engaged solely in civilian activities.

For global safety & security

- Noted the enhanced counter-terrorism cooperation between the two countries and stressed that terrorism is a global scourge that must be rooted out in every part of the world.
- Welcomed the increased cooperation between the US and India in the defence area, since the New Framework for the US-India Defence Relationship was signed on June 28, 2005, as evidenced by successful joint exercises, expanded defence cooperation and information sharing, and greater opportunities to jointly develop technologies and address security and humanitarian issues.
- Reaffirmed commitment to the protection of the free flow of commerce and safety of navigation, and agreed to the conclusion of a Maritime Cooperation Framework to enhance security in the maritime domain, to prevent piracy and other transnational crimes at sea, carry out search and rescue operations, combat marine pollution, respond to natural disasters, address emergent threats and enhance cooperative capabilities, including through logistics support. Both sides are working to finalize a Logistics Support Agreement at the earliest.
- Reiterated commitment to international efforts to prevent proliferation of weapons of mass destruction.
- Building on the July 2005 Disaster Relief Initiative, noted the important disaster management cooperation and their improved capabilities to respond to disaster situations.
- Recognised the importance of capacity building in cyber security and greater cooperation to secure their growing e-interdependencies, including to protect e-transactions and critical infrastructure from cyber-crime and terrorism.

Deepening democracy, meeting international challenges

- Recalled their joint launch of the UN Democracy Fund in September 2005 and offered the experience and expertise of both governments for capacity-building, training and exchanges to third countries that request such assistance to strengthen democratic institutions.
- Agreed that the Virtual Coordination and Information Centres set up in

- September 2005 should be strengthened and a bilateral meeting aimed at developing a practical programme for utilization of its services be held soon.
- Expressed satisfaction at the expedited USFDA drug approval processes that strengthen the combat against HIV/AIDS at the global level and encourage greater corporate participation to meet this challenge, including the establishment of the Indo-US Corporate Fund for HIV/AIDS.
- Agreed to expand bilateral efforts and continue cooperation in the area of medical research and strengthen technical capacity in food and drug regulations in India, as well as address the concern on avian flu.

W. B. Govt. Tender
Sealed Tenders are invited for supply of Miscellaneous articles etc. and repairing of different Misc. items for the office of the Superintendent of Police, Paschim Medinipur for the year 2006-2007. Tender should be addressed to the Superintendent of Police, Paschim Medinipur and to be dropped in the Tender Box of this office by 10.03.2006 at 12:00 hrs with security deposit of Rs. 15,000/- (Rupees fifteen thousand) only.
....ICA-790(4)/2006

- The declaration welcomed India's membership in the Coalition Against Wildlife Trafficking, a partnership through which we will collaborate in the fight against illegal trade in wildlife and wildlife parts; we also welcome the opportunity to strengthen long-standing work together on the conservation of wildlife through cooperation on park management and ecotourism.

EASTERN RAILWAY

CORRIGENDUM

Corrigendum to Tender Notice No. ELS/HWH/DRM-05-06/01 for provision of RDSO approved electric head code system at cashed/HWH.

1. **Date of opening** : 24.03.2006 at 14.30 hrs. (if the office is to be closed on that specific date due to some unavoidable circumstances, the opening of tenders is to be done on the next working day) instead of opening date of 10.03.2006 (Friday).

2. **Period of sale of tender documents** : From 24.02.2006 to 23.03.2006 on all working days at working hrs. (10.00 hrs. to 17.00 hrs.) instead of the period from 24.02.2006 to 09.03.2006.

3. **Last date of submission of tender** : 24.03.2006 upto 14.00 hrs. instead of 10.03.2006 (Friday).

4. **Qty.** : 7(seven), nos. 1 e 3 & 4. Rakas released.

1. **Note**: All the other terms and conditions will remain unchanged. Detailed information regarding the scope of work will be available with tender schedule.

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THE HINDUSTAN TIMES

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washingtonpost.com

Bush, on Way To India, Stops In Afghanistan

President Meets With Troops, Karzai

By Jim VandeHei and John Lancaster
Washington Post Staff Writers
Thursday, March 2, 2006; A14

NEW DELHI, March 1 -- President Bush made an unannounced visit to Afghanistan on Wednesday to rally U.S. troops and boost the country's embattled president, Hamid Karzai, at a time when Afghanistan is facing a sharp rise in deadly violence that poses the most serious threat yet to the U.S.-backed government.

Bush made his first trip to Afghanistan -- and the first by a U.S. president since Dwight D. Eisenhower in 1959 -- under heavy guard, detouring en route to a high-profile visit to India. On the ground for only four hours, he met with troops at Bagram air base, participated in a ribbon-cutting ceremony at the new U.S. Embassy in Kabul and ate lunch with Karzai and other Afghan officials.

In brief public comments, Bush focused largely on the democratic progress made since a U.S.-led invasion toppled Islamic Taliban rule in late 2001 -- not on the recent surge in suicide bombings and other violence.

"I hope the people of Afghanistan understand that as democracy takes hold, you are inspiring others, and that inspiration will cause others to demand their freedom," Bush told reporters at the presidential palace in Kabul. The country held its first democratic elections for parliament in September. "As the world becomes free, the world will become more peaceful," he said.

Still, the elaborate security precautions for the presidential visit served as a vivid reminder that nearly five years after Bush declared that he wanted Osama bin Laden, the initiator of the Sept. 11, 2001, attacks, "dead or alive," the al-Qaeda leader remains at large.

"I am confident he will be brought to justice," Bush said. He said there are U.S. and Afghan forces "on the hunt, not only for bin Laden but also those who plot and plan with him." Intelligence officials believe bin Laden is hiding in the treacherous mountain border region of Afghanistan and Pakistan, a U.S. ally in the fight against terrorism that will be rewarded with a Bush visit on Saturday.

The director of the Defense Intelligence Agency, Lt. Gen. Michael D. Maples, told Congress on Tuesday that the insurgency in Afghanistan is growing and will intensify this spring, presenting the biggest threat to the Karzai government. The United States has about 19,000 troops in Afghanistan and has said it plans to reduce troop levels by about 3,000 later this year.

In a speech to U.S. troops before leaving Afghanistan, Bush said, "I can assure you this government of yours will not blink, will not yield."

http://www.washingtonpost.com/wp-dyn/content/article/2006/03/01/AR2006030100345_pf... 3/6/2006

White House officials said the visit to Afghanistan had been planned for weeks but was not publicly announced because of the serious security concerns in region, which is home to many al-Qaeda fighters and anti-American militants.

Bush landed at Bagram and flew to Kabul, protected by heavily armed helicopters. At one point, gunners on the helicopter carrying reporters directed short bursts of machine-gun fire at undisclosed targets. Later, Bush was twice forced to pause during his news conference because of the loud noise of military aircraft overhead.

In the short news conference with Karzai, Bush hit on many of the complicated issues he will confront during his four-day tour of a region that is at the center of debates over nuclear proliferation, terrorism and democracy. Bush, aware that India and Pakistan have different relationships with regional power Iran, warned that the "most destabilizing thing that can happen is for Iran to have nuclear weapons."

Bush suggested the United States had still not finalized a deal with India to separate its civilian and military nuclear programs, a major goal for the trip. And he promised to press Pakistan's president, Gen. Pervez Musharraf, on Afghan concerns about "cross-border infiltrations." Afghan officials believe many of the recent violent attacks have been planned and launched by armed groups based in Pakistan.

On Wednesday, Pakistani security forces struck a militia training camp near the Afghan border, killing 45 fighters, including a Chechen commander linked to al-Qaeda, the army announced. Terrorism will be at top of the agenda when Bush and Musharraf meet this weekend.

[On Thursday, two bombs exploded near the U.S. Consulate in Pakistan's largest city, Karachi, killing three people and wounding 34, the Associated Press reported, citing police.]

Bush landed in New Delhi on Wednesday night but attended no events. In his first trip to the country, the world's largest democracy, the president will juggle talks over India's nuclear program with new overtures to tighten relations on issues from fighting terrorism to increasing trade.

Despite greatly improved relations between Washington and New Delhi in the past few years, Bush is a controversial figure in India. His visit has sparked loud opposition from Muslims as well as leftist political parties allied with the government of Prime Minister Manmohan Singh.

Hours before Bush's arrival, tens of thousands of protesters, most of them Muslims, gathered in a dusty fairground in the capital to proclaim him an unwelcome guest, waving black-and-white flags and chanting "Bush is a killer" as hundreds of police in riot gear looked on.

"I believe that Bush has harmed peace all over the world," said Arif Mahmood, 32, a Muslim cleric at the protest. "There are good people in America and we have nothing against those people. But we hate all the people who support this government and its policies. Eighty percent of American policy is about bullying the rest of the world."

A new survey of attitudes toward the United States in the Indian newsmagazine Outlook found that 46 percent of Indians "love the country," 14 percent hate it and 55 percent believe that "India can trust the United States in times of need." On the other hand, 72 percent answered yes to the question "Is America a bully?"

For India's powerful socialist and communist parties, the visit has become a lightning rod for criticism that Singh's government, led by the Congress party, has acceded too readily to American pressure on

issues such as Iran.

"We do want India to have relations with countries, but it has to be on an equal footing," Brinda Karat, a member of Parliament from the Communist Party of India (Marxist), said in an interview. "The Bush visit, and the context of the Bush visit, shows that what is being demanded of India is not as an equal partner."

Still, there is no denying the warming trend between the two countries following decades of Cold War estrangement, when India was a leader of the Non-Aligned Movement, and more recent tensions stemming from India's nuclear tests in 1998.

The improvement reflects the Bush administration's eagerness to cultivate India as a partner in efforts to fight terrorism and promote democracy, and as a strategic counterweight to China. It also reflects India's growing economic importance.

Harish Khare, a columnist for the English-language Hindu newspaper, wrote Wednesday that Bush's visit had evoked "all the dormant emotions Indians feel towards the U.S.: outright hostility, unspoken suspicion, and a grudging admiration for the American model."

Much of the anxiety surrounding Bush's visit centers on the nuclear deal, which would lift the U.S. ban on the sale of civilian nuclear technology to India if it separates military and civilian nuclear facilities and opens up the civilian ones to international inspections.

Singh's government has embraced the plan as crucial to the country's energy future. But opposition politicians and some nuclear strategists have criticized it as a threat to India's nuclear deterrent, prompting Singh to declare in an address to Parliament on Monday that the government would not agree to any arrangement that compromises its weapons program.

His critics have not been persuaded. Karat said the deal has "very clear repercussions on the rights India would have to maintain its own nuclear program," and she accused the Bush administration of "shifting the goal posts" during negotiations.

Karat and other leftist politicians also have used the Bush visit to press for the removal of U.S. Ambassador David C. Mulford, who recently caused a stir in India by publicly suggesting that if the government did not support U.S. efforts to curb Iran's nuclear program, Congress would not approve the civilian nuclear deal with India.

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Bush Visits South Asia

President Meets With Leaders in Afghanistan, India

Stephen P. Cohen
Senior Fellow, Brookings Institution
Thursday, March 2, 2006; 2:00 PM

Stephen P. Cohen, a senior fellow at the Brookings Institution who specializes in South Asian security issues, was online **Thursday, March 2, at 2 p.m. ET** to discuss **President Bush** 's trip to South Asia and his visits with leaders in Afghanistan and India. Bush made a surprise stop in Kabul Wednesday and held a joint press conference with Afghan leader **Hamid Karzai** . Today the President and Indian

Prime Minister **Manmohan Singh** reached a major deal under which the U.S. would provide nuclear power assistance to India while conducting routine inspections of its nuclear facilities. The visit coincides with increasing concern over Iran's development of nuclear capabilities.

The transcript follows.

Stephen P. Cohen: Hi, this is Steve Cohen, my apologies for signing on a bit late, but there's been big news from New Delhi, and its hard to think and talk and write at the same time. Let's get to the first Q and A now.

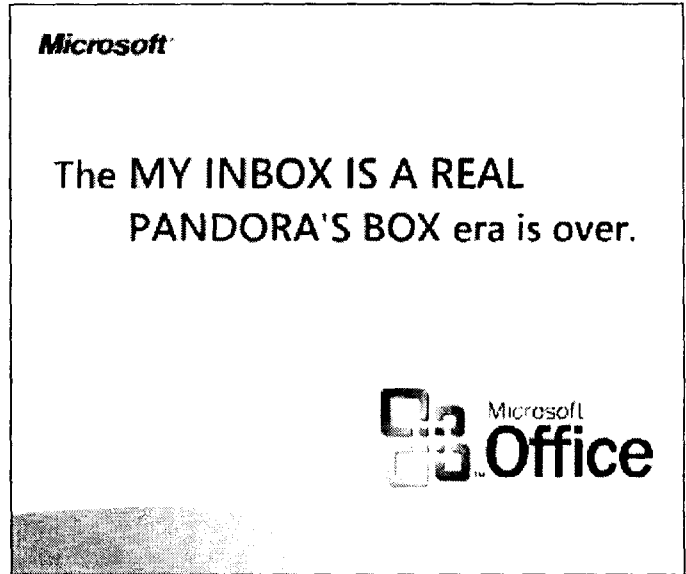
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Manchester, N.H.: Dear Stephen P. Cohen, will the NPT die its natural death? I see that NPT did not produce any tangible benefits so far, and will not, going forward. Thanks.

Stephen P. Cohen: I hope it does not die , but that it is reincarnated in some more effective fashion. I was disappointed in Bush's lack of reference to the broader proliferation problem, the administration may say more now that the India deal is done. I'd like to see a new or modified NPT regime include more than the "Proliferation security Initiative." States that really feel insecure will seek the bomb, the answer is not a treaty, but addressing their (in)security needs in some cases, it may be direct action in others, and it may be a half-way house, such as that provided to India, in still others. The basic NPT agreement has been unraveling, this is going to have to be an issue that the Bush administration deals with, especially because the India agreement modifies the NPT in some ways.

Washington, D.C.: Why do U.S. presidents combine visits to India with Pakistan all the time, whereas

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whenever they visit China, or Japan, the President goes to China or Japan only, like any other major country in like Russia. Don't you think it makes India feel bad?

Stephen P. Cohen: I believe that originally he wanted to go to India early in his first term, but 9/11 changed priorities around. I agree, that it might have been better if he had made two separate trips, linking the Pakistan visit (which was very important, however) to perhaps a trip to Turkey or Central Asia, and doing India in connection with a visit to (perhaps) another Asian democracy (Sri Lanka?).

Gujranwala, Pakistan: The current basis of U.S.-Pakistan relationship is negative: antiterrorism and anti-proliferation. What could be in your view, positive long-term basis for this relationship?

Stephen P. Cohen: You've identified the problem correctly--Pakistan is important for negative reasons. A re-democratized Pakistan, that had a normal relationship with India, would be a great asset. I've discussed this at length in my just-published book, "The Idea of Pakistan." Right now, Pakistan could turn out to be America's biggest foreign policy problem of the next five years, although I do believe that there are more than enough Pakistanis to run a modern, free, and economically viable state. This is also in India's interest.

Chicago, Ill.: Why are non-proliferation experts in the U.S. so angry over allowing civilian nuclear technology access to democratic India while allowing it readily to China which has a dictatorship at the helm and has been a terrible proliferator?

Stephen P. Cohen: Many of them dealt with India over the last several decades, and the Indians simply lied about their military program (which was embedded in a supposedly civilian program), while lecturing the US about its nuclear weapons and the need for eliminating all nukes. So, they have a history of distrust and anger, which is exactly matched by those in the Indian nuclear program. With luck and political skill, these passions can be put aside, and a workable deal, that will separate the Indian military and civilian program to Congress' satisfaction (and that of the Nuclear Suppliers group), can be consummated, but I foresee a lot of debate and many hearings in Congress. However, even if the deal does not go through this time, the idea is a good one, and both sides may try it again before the end of Bush's term as president. India should realize that another president may not be as interested in South Asia, and that Bush's political influence in the US itself is in decline.

New York, N.Y.: The oft-stated U.S. policy objectives in SA seem to be to 1. help India develop into a great power status and 2. bring Pakistan back from religious extremism and help develop it into a model modern Muslim state. While #1 is do-able, do you think #2 is probable, especially given the perceived radioactivity of U.S. and Bush in particular in Pakistan, even in its moderate society?

Stephen P. Cohen: India will emerge as a great power based on its own actions, notably continuing and accelerated economic reform; it is also undergoing many domestic revolutions (caste, class, federal, and others), that I discuss in my "India:Emerging Power" book, published a few years ago. However, it will be an inward looking great power; this is the calculation that I think is important in projecting India as nuclear weapons state, and why I think that those who are opposed to the deal are wrong. The US can provide marginal help to India, but I wish that along the way India would provide help to the US in

running our elections fairly and efficiently! (in the last Indian election everyone voted electorally, there were no hanging chads, no frauds, and it was done quickly and fairly).

In the case of Pakistan I am still hopeful--but as my former boss, George Schultz said, "hope is not a policy." We need to put more pressure on Pakistan to reform domestically, and we need to back that up not with military aid but with verifiable aid and assistance to Pakistan's educational sector, the judiciary, and by interacting and supporting the major centrist Pakistani political parties. Many Pakistanis are angry with the US for supporting military dictatorships (even though Musharraf is a benign one), our policy must be to demand that the next elections be truly free, this means allowing the parties and the press to operate free from government direction(he noted in his Asia Society speech that the free Pakistani press was at times harassed by "security forces", so he's aware of the problem).

New York, N.Y.: Hi Mr. Cohen,

Do you think that after all said and done will the U.S. renege on its promises and will it not push India into joining China and Russia in a broader strategic alliance. What would be the consequences to the world order?

Stephen P. Cohen: China, Russia, and India all value their relationship more with the US than their relationship with each other. This is a world of five or six powers, the US may now be the most important, but it does not pose a threat to the others that would force them together in any kind of alliance relationship. Nuclear weapons, if nothing else, make military competition impossible, although all of these states will be competing for oil and energy resources, and still have ideological differences.

Winston Salem, N.C.: How can the President agree to approve a giant commercial nuclear deal with India who will still only allow partial inspection of its nuclear program while not ever signing the TREATY ON THE NON-PROLIFERATION OF NUCLEAR WEAPONS? What kind of standard is he upholding?

Stephen P. Cohen: First, India cannot sign the NPT except as a non-weapons state, which it won't do, as it tested after the cutoff date. Second, our own law, not the NPT, prohibits assistance to India's civilian energy program. The NSG is another restraint, but that operates on the basis of consensus, and the Russians are building reactors in India at this moment. So, this deal represents a half-way house, designed to accommodate a friendly state that has a nuclear weapons program, but insists that the military program be separated from its civilian framework, and that India participate actively in the global non-proliferation regime.

Los Angeles, Calif.: As an India expert are you surprised how far the country has come in just the last few yrs? It never used to be in the news as much. But now it seems to be the one of the more happening countries in foreign policy and trade. Just this amateur's two cent observation.

Stephen P. Cohen: I'm astonished, and generally pleased. I go to India every six months or so, and find significant changes in some ways even in this period of time. However, India still has half of the world's

poorest people, plenty of domestic violence (especially in the eastern side, where there is a belt of instability), casteism in the universities and schools, and an agricultural base that is badly in need of repair. India was asleep for fifteen years or more, but I find today's India more aware and more realistic about its own problems than ever before.

Dulles, Va.: What, in your opinion, is different between the current trip of President Bush and that by President Clinton to India?

Stephen P. Cohen: The Clinton visit began the turnaround of American perceptions of India; it was brilliant in terms of human contact, he was like a rock star among groupies; Bush is no Clinton in this regard, but has moved American policy very quickly, moving to remove many of the obstacles that had clouded it for decades. This requires new thinking in both countries, which is always painful, but I think they are on the right track not to become "allies," but at least more understanding and responsible partners in a wide variety of economic, cultural, and even strategic arenas.

Reston, Va.: Does finally the U.S. acknowledge that India, for her own security, needs nuclear weapons? Surrounded by suspicious countries like China and Pakistan, India needs to defend herself?

Stephen P. Cohen: The US can hardly say that it doesn't, but a legitimate question is how many nuclear weapons does India really need? Must it be able to kill every Pakistani living in Lahore four or five times over to deter Pakistan? And the same with Chinese in Shanghai? Or does India need to be able to drop a bomb on Los Angeles or London to be regarded as a great power? Just asking these questions indicates how absurd the issue is; India may need a modest nuclear force to deter a nuclear attack, but it will also have to act in such a way that it does not trigger off a meaningless arms race with its neighbors.

Alexandria, Va.: Wasn't some form of violence predictable, as demonstrated by the consul bombing in Karachi, if George Bush decided to visit Pakistan. Osama bin Laden is nearby and isn't he very popular in the area. Hasn't the possibility of large street demonstrations been considered, which could cause problems for the government? Or was just another example of George Bush's "Bring them on" mentality?

Stephen P. Cohen: No, I think the calculation was that he HAD to take some risk and show that he was willing to support Musharraf; I hope he takes the opportunity, however, to deliver some tough messages (preferably privately) to Pakistan's president/army chief.

Portland, Maine: Which corporate executives from the nuclear industry accompanied President Bush to India? Which corporations are the likely beneficiaries if this agreement on nuclear sharing is approved by the U.S. Congress? Specifically, what is the likelihood that President Bush and the Republicans are influenced by past and future campaign and party contributions from Energy, Duke Energy, and Westinghouse in favoring the promotion of the nuclear energy industry at home and abroad in the Bush energy policies?

Stephen P. Cohen: As far as I know none went with him, but he did meet with Indian and American CEOs who were already in Delhi at a newly-created CEO forum. Perhaps they did not go with because he stopover first in Afghanistan.

Minot, Nd.: Do you believe that the U.S.-India strategic partnership will alter the world like the U.S.-China deal in the 1970s?

Stephen P. Cohen: No, that brought the US and China into alignment against the USSR, this only acknowledges India's role as one of several major powers in the world; I don't think that it will lead to a close US-India "alliance" against anyone, but if a situation arises, then Washington and Delhi will be better-able to work together. (or not, should they disagree on the proper response).

Santa Clara, Calif.: Dear Mr. Stephen Cohen,

Does this deal mean US has now recognize India as a nuclear power? Also, what does it do to India's case of making herself a permanent member of UN Security council?

Thank you.

Stephen P. Cohen: India's UN ambitions will not be affected by this agreement--soon. other countries, notably France and China, are not eager to see India come on to the UNSC, and of course Japan and Germany have claims to a seat as well. I think that UN "reform" is dead.

Chicago, Ill.: If you had a crystal ball, what would you predict the Indo-U.S.. relationship to be like 5 and 10 years from now?

Stephen P. Cohen: This is the toughest question I've had, but in some ways the most important. Maybe I'll write a book on the subject! My view is that this should be taken one step at a time, that most of these long-range projections turn out to be wrong or irrelevant (remember all those books about a rising Japan, and then a threatening China?). India will continue to be preoccupied domestically, pushing through its various social and economic revolutions, and the US should be supportive, although there's not much that it can do directly. Strategically, I see the two countries working together, but the danger is that we will expect too much from India too soon, perhaps in the Middle East, and that the Indians will want us to go and bash the Pakistanis if there is another crisis in the region.

Alas, my crystal ball refuses to provide new answers, but this is a question that ought to be asked NOW, and then we ought to look at the answers five and ten years from now. Generally, policy analysts are very bad at looking at their own record and trying to figure out why they were wrong. We tend to gloat about those few times when we were right!

Washington, D.C.: Any polls on the how the American public views this deal? Does it even register? It doesn't, by at least one measure -- the deal is NOT on the list of The Post's five most read articles on the

site.

How does this indifference affect the possible passage of the deal? How about I phrase it more forwardly: Do Americans really care whether we supply nuclear power to India or not?

Stephen P. Cohen: Good points, my answer is that it is up to the politicians to phrase the issue so that it can be understood and appreciated by many people. This is one reason why Bush has stressed the energy aspect of the n-deal, he repeatedly says that this means that India will not need as much oil/gas, and that this will somehow lower the price for Americans. I find this unpersuasive factually, but politically very skillful--it reminds me of Clinton's justification for his trip to INDIA--that there were two million Americans of Indian origin, and hence this trip to a country that he had just sanctioned was politically justifiable.

Bethesda, Md.: What specific energy needs does India have that makes this deal so important for them?

Stephen P. Cohen: India (and China) are going to require huge amounts of energy to sustain growth, and to sustain consumption of the growing middle class. This has to come from outside of India, which has very large but very polluting and inefficient coal reserves. You may see India buying coal from West Virginia, doing more gas exploration, and building a whole new generation of nuclear power plants. Even then it will not be enough. Energy competition is real, it is a shame that the US does not pay enough attention to the biggest way of providing more energy, conservation.

Fairfax, Va.: On an off beat note, Bush said that he has never seen a welcome like the Indians gave him yesterday. Did you find that statement a bit interesting and funny?

Stephen P. Cohen: Maybe he was jet lagged, it struck a peculiar note in my ears. Yet, the pics show him smiling,--he wanted to visit India long ago, and this is being billed as his great foreign policy accomplishment. (which is one reason some people will want to sabotage it when the legislation goes to Congress).

Towson, Md.: Today's deal between India and the Bush administration is garnering a lot of attention. One of the main reasons according to the experts is that it stamps India's arrival among the global players. Or it is seen as a turning point between two nations that seemingly are getting closer and closer. Is the importance overstated? And can you put it in relative terms? Thanks.

Stephen P. Cohen: It is a big symbolic thing, but India was recognized as a rising or emerging power long ago--I wrote a book with that title in 1979, although I had a question mark in the title, the question mark was removed in my 2001 book, published by Brookings, "India: Emerging POWER", which pretty accurately tracked India's movement from obscurity to near-front rank status. I wrote that India had to be treated as Asia's third great state, but it does operate outside of Asia, increasingly, in many ways, so India's movement was faster than even I thought it would be.

Twincities, Minn.: Sir, the strategic reason(s) cited for the nuclear deal with India are very solid. My concern is a 'what if' scenario: What if somewhere down the road India is no longer as friendly to the U.S. as it appears to be now? Won't the nuclear capabilities we are helping build there come back to bite us? Has the U.S. government (including the White House and Congress) thought through this? Appreciate any insights you may have.

Thank you.

Stephen P. Cohen: I share your apprehension, but the two governments have a pretty good understanding of the limits of the new relationship. Will the next US administration (or Indian one), be as strongly committed? Possibly, as the objective reasons for the new relationship are deep-rooted, notably the new economic ties, shared commitment to democracy, the Indian-American community, a shared view of the world made up of several (not just one) great powers, etc., but the relationship is not very well institutionalized, and in some ways is still very unequal and uneven.

Falls Church, Va.: In a nutshell, where do the agreements we'll have with India leave Pakistan? So far, they've had our ear to a certain extent, but they're also certain to feel left out and 'demoted'. What's our answer to their demand to have nuclear-parity with India?

Stephen P. Cohen: If Pakistan were to come clean on its past nuclear policies, and sharing of technology with other states, and were to be less troublesome regarding interference in its neighbors to the east and west, I'd make them a similar offer--but China may do this in any case.

Ottawa, Canada: Hi Mr. Cohen,

Do you see any reduction in madrassa schooling in Pakistan in the near future? Is Musharraf sincere in his efforts to reform the school system in his country, and what kind of Pakistan do you see once he is out of politics/military?

Stephen P. Cohen: Madrassas fill a hole left by the deterioration of the Pakistani public school system, or its non-existence. Zia and his successors systematically dismantled this system, most madrassas are not teaching jihadi subjects, but few of them provide a proper education for the modern world, and a few also teach Jehadi 101. Musharraf has not kept to his promises, he seems to be afraid to take on the Islamists, who have street power, if not popular support. yet he is also unwilling to allow the "normal" centrist political parties to operate freely, and chased their leaders outside of Pakistan. Not a good way to run a country.

Falls Church, Va.: Now that even Mohamed El Baradei of the IAEA has expressed his satisfaction with the U.S.-India nuclear agreement, how hard do you think it will be for the agreement to make it through Congress?

Does the U.S.-India agreement formally open the door to countries like France (which just signed a similar agreement with India), to actually start exporting nuclear materials and technology?

Stephen P. Cohen: he was the very first person to express his support--more reactors for the IAEA to inspect!

France may want to join Russia in building reactors in India, and the US will also try to sell some, and several countries will want to provide Uranium fuel for India's existing reactors, IF (and repeat, IF) the Nuclear Suppliers group ratifies the deal. What happens, however, if Congress rejects it--will the NSG still approve it? (or possibly , vice versa?).

Tokyo, Japan: I am an Indian living in Japan. Many Indians like me admire America but also have suspicions that U.S. does only lip service on democracy. For example, the communist China could get any hi-tech items traded but the democratic India is shut out of this process. Don't give the excuse of some international norms. We all know how China circumvents those rules. Is India friend or foe according to official America?

Stephen P. Cohen: HI, I'm visiting Japan next week. You point out an anomaly in our policies, but you have to remember that India itself hangs out with some very undemocratic leaders, notably Burmese generals and the PLO; both states have to balance out a commitment to democracy with "realist" calculations of balance of power, etc.

Stephen P. Cohen: SORRY, I must break away, it's been good chatting with you, Please check out the Brookings web page (<http://www.brookings.edu/>) for more of what I (and others) have written about India, Pakistan, and this trip.

Regards

Steve Cohen

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We now have to get together, send Iran firm message: Bush to India, Pak

PH 1 PRESS TRUST OF INDIA 23/2
WASHINGTON, FEBRUARY 23

HOURS after he described India and Pakistan as "natural allies", US President George W Bush sought the two countries' support against Iran's controversial nuclear programme. He said it was important to send a "firm message" to Tehran that the "development" of a nuclear weapon by it is "unacceptable".



His message

"What's important is that India, Pakistan, and the United States work together to send a firm message to the Iranians that a development of a nuclear weapon is unacceptable," he told Pakistani reporters at the White House when asked about the proposed pipeline project between India, Iran and Pakistan.

He said he "fully" understood that energy supplies were important for India as well for Pakistan.

An AFP report from Paris said Bush discussed the need for "international consensus" over India's nuclear energy activities over phone with French President Jacques Chirac, who finished a two-day visit to India on Monday.

INDIAN EXPRESS

Finalisation of N-deal uncertain: Burns

Racing against a deadline: Bush's arrival

INDO-US DIALOGUE

NILOVA Roy Chaudhury
New Delhi, February 23

THE US says "90 per cent" of the negotiations for the nuclear deal with India have been completed. But the remaining 10 per cent may be enough to prevent the sealing of the deal during US President George W. Bush's visit to India next week.

On Thursday, US undersecretary of state for political affairs Nicholas Burns said some "differences remained". After talks with foreign secretary Shyam Saran, he said, "Both of us want to complete these negotiations but there are still some remaining differences between us and those differences need to be worked out. We simply don't know whether we will have an agreement before President Bush's visit. We are trying our best, both sides".

Burns and Saran are due to meet again on Friday in a last-ditch attempt to iron out the differences on the bilateral civil nuclear collaboration agreement. They also met Prime Minister Manmohan Singh to brief him

Main hurdles

India against putting over 14 of the 22 reactors on civilian list

US wants fast breeder reactor programme on civilian list

Last-ditch attempt to sort out differences to be made on Friday

about the negotiations. But it appears unlikely that a formal separation plan for India's civilian and military nuclear facilities will be in place by March 1, when Bush arrives, sources in the government said.

India does not have a "dedicated military nuclear programme" and differences revolve around the number of reactors that will be placed on the civilian list. Sources said New Delhi is not willing to place more than 14 of its 22 nuclear reactors (of which four operational reactors and two yet-to-be-commissioned reactors are already under IAEA safeguards) on the civilian list. Also at issue is the fast breeder reactor programme, which Indian scientists insist cannot be placed on the civilian list, despite US demands, because it is "at a prototype stage" and critical for the future of the Indian nuclear pro-

First Lady to visit places of US link in Hyderabad

ASHOK Das
Hyderabad, February 23

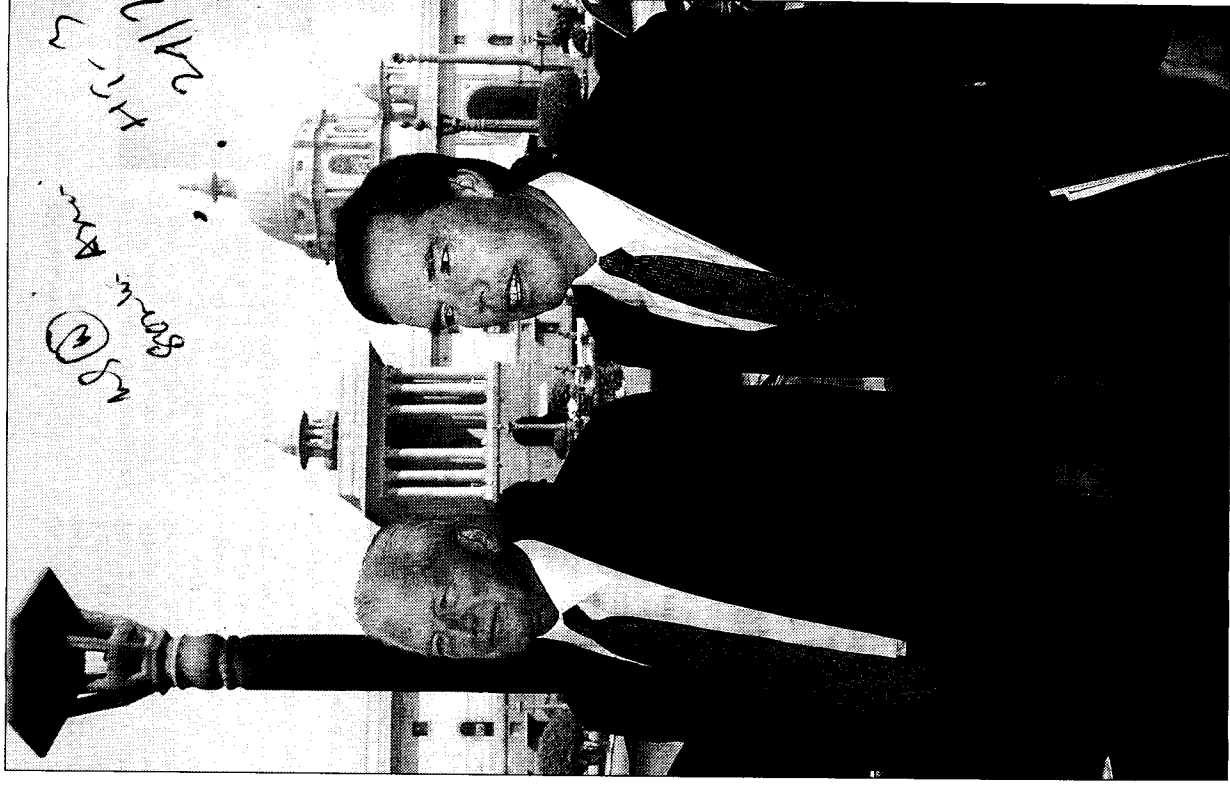
THE US First Lady, Laura Bush, is likely to attend two programmes in the city when she and her husband -President George W. Bush visit the state Capital on March 3.

Officials say this will be the first visit by any US First Lady to a South Indian city. Bill Clinton, who was the first US President to visit Hyderabad on March 24, 2000, was accompanied by his daughter Chelsea.

Andhra Pradesh government had suggested five places which should be visited by Laura Bush. They included Chow Mohalla Palace (the sprawling palace of the erstwhile Nizams of Hyderabad), the Charminar, Salar Jung museum (where the Nizam's jewellery is currently on display), University College of Women and the Freedom Foundation (an AIDS care and treatment centre). However, she is expected to attend only two programmes due to security reasons and time constraint.

The US team ruled out Chow Mohalla, Charminar and Salar Jung Museum as they were situated in the Old City of Hyderabad where a mob had gone on a rampage over the Danish cartoon controversy on Friday last.

Besides, several Muslim organisations have threatened to stage demonstrations during the visit of the US President.



REUTERS

Nicholas Burns and David Mulford in New Delhi on Thursday.

Bush sees flash of nuke light

K.P. NAYAR

Washington, Feb. 22: President George W. Bush said today his visit to India beginning on March 1 will revolve around five issues, which he plans to discuss with Prime Minister Manmohan Singh.

In the first peek into the agenda for the summit, Bush said the five issues are: terrorism, cooperation in civilian nuclear energy, support for global democracy, health and environment as well as free and better bilateral trade.

Speaking at the Asia Society, which is celebrating the 50th anniversary of its founding, Bush was cautiously optimistic about the fate of the July 18, 2005, nuclear deal, which he announced with Singh at the White House.

"I will continue to encourage India to produce a credible, transparent and defensible plan to separate its civilian and military nuclear programmes," Bush said.

In the same breath, as if to lower expectations of a breakthrough in negotiations to sort out problems in the way of the deal before his arrival in India, Bush added: "Implementing this agreement will take time and it will take patience."

Bush's use of the terms "credible, transparent and defensible plan to separate its civilian and military nuclear programmes" was not a sign

FIVE PILLARS

- Fight against terrorism
- Cooperation in civilian nuclear energy
- Support for global democracy
- Health and environment
- Free and better bilateral trade

of hope as his top negotiator on the deal, under-secretary of state Nicholas Burns, begins final negotiations in New Delhi with foreign secretary Shyam Saran on Thursday.

Critics of the deal have pointed out that these terms were not part of the July 18 joint statement and that their subsequent use by US negotiators amounted to "shifting the goal posts".

Alluding to the problems in the negotiations, Bush revealed that entering into the nuclear deal and working out its details was "not an easy decision for India, nor is it an

easy decision for the US".

But he insisted that America wants to help in realising India's ambitious goal of producing 25 per cent of its electricity needs from nuclear power plants by 2050.

Bush went beyond previously known details of intelligence cooperation, though these may not be sweet music to Left parties.

"To defeat the terrorists, our intelligence and law enforcement agencies are cooperating on a regular basis to make air travel more secure, increase the security of cyberspace, and prevent bio-terrorist attacks," he said.

"Our two governments are sharing vital information on suspected terrorists and potential threats."

■ PM on Mulford, Page 8

US slams Nepal poll as hollow exercise

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

WASHINGTON, FEBRUARY 9

WHILE the US slammed the elections in Nepal as a hollow attempt on the part of the King to legitimise power, the pro-government candidates in the Himalayan kingdom continue to sweep the polls.

"The United States believes Nepal's municipal elections called by the King today represented a hollow attempt to legitimise power," the State Department spokesman Sean McCormack said on Wednesday. He said there was a clear lack of public support for the elections and the voter turnout in the capital is estimated under 25 per cent. "Outside Kathmandu, turnout was reportedly half that level in some places," he said.

He said the administration had detained large numbers of political activists before the elections, restricted media, and refused to allow independent outside monitors.

McCormack pointed out that "the only effective way to deal with the threat posed by Maoists is to restore democracy in Nepal." "We call upon the King to release all political detainees and initiate a dia-



Activists protesting in Kathmandu against the Nepalese army opening fire on protesters in Dang on Thursday. AP

logue with the parties. His continuing refusal to take these steps is leading his country further down the path of violence and disorder," he added.

Protesters protested Kathmandu on Thursday, as early results show pro-government candidates sweeping local elections that were marred by rebel attacks, the shooting of protesters and low turnout.

In initial returns for 15 of the 36 cities and towns where polls were held, the pro-government Rastriya Prajatantra Party won 10 mayoralties, the pro-government Nepal Sadbhawana won two and independent candidates won three, the Election Commission said.

India: 'Polls not credible'

NEW DELHI: India on Thursday raised questions over the credibility of the Nepal poll. With no mainstream political party participating in these elections, New Delhi felt such an exercise fails to contribute to restoration of democracy.

"The fact is that the elections have been held against the backdrop of a boycott by the major recognised political parties, sharp curtailment of their legitimate activities, and continued arrest and detention in various forms of many of their leaders," said the MEA spokesperson. India said lack of involvement by all parties was essential for "credible electoral exercise." —ENS