

# Amid protests, Rice meets Muslims

Blackburn (England), April 1 (Reuters): US secretary of state Condoleezza Rice met Muslim leaders in northwest England today in a trip during which protesters expressed anger that an architect of the Iraq war was on their home turf.

About 300 protesters chanted slogans such as "Condoleezza Rice Go Home" and "No War" while Rice and British foreign secretary Jack Straw spoke with Muslim leaders at the town hall. The protesters' noisy cries were clearly audible at a news conference after the meeting.

Rice waved at supporters and protesters alike on her arrival and seemed undeterred by the demonstrators, who were kept behind barriers by dozens of police, some on horseback. "They (protesters) have their freedom of speech and I'm glad they did it," said mayor Yusef Janvirmani, who shook hands with protesters before formally welcoming Rice.

The mayor, who opposes the war in Iraq, said Rice was



Protesters dressed as Guantanamo Bay inmates carry a coffin during a demonstration in Liverpool. (AFP)

welcome in his town and her visit would be good for the region's economy.

Any publicity was good, she said. Rice said she thought she had been "very warmly welcomed" to Blackburn and had enjoyed her visit.

Straw, asked if he was embarrassed by all the protests, said he hoped journalists would also notice the "strength of positive feeling and affection" for his Ameri-

can guest.

Rice, invited to Blackburn's constituency after he visited her home state of Alabama last year, has particularly irked Blackburn's Muslims in a visit that produced more photos of angry protesters than the positive pictures Rice's image-makers were hoping for.

Muslims make up around 20 per cent of the former cotton town's population and many were clearly angered by

Straw's invitation to America's top diplomat.

Rice had been due to visit a mosque in Blackburn until its governors withdrew their invitation out of fear the occasion would be hijacked by demonstrators.

Both Straw and Rice said the meeting with Blackburn's Muslim leaders had gone well and focused on US and British policy towards the Palestinians, Iraq, Israel and Iran.

"We hope that the message she takes back from the Muslim community in Blackburn is that we want to see change in Palestine, in Iraq, in Afghanistan," said Kam Kothia, a member of the Muslim community who met Rice.

Most Muslim anger has been directed at Rice over her involvement in the Iraq war. Rice was US national security adviser at the time of the March 2003 invasion.

Cartoons lampooned the visit with *The Independent* carrying one showing a sign at a Blackburn Indian restaurant: "We regret we do not serve Rice."

# The Gandhi difference

Blackburn (England), April 1 (Reuters): When British foreign secretary Jack Straw welcomed Condoleezza Rice to his home town of Blackburn this weekend, he told her she was in "the centre of the world".

As the US secretary of state winds up her trip to northern England, she might reflect that if Blackburn prides itself on being at its centre, the world must be a strange place.

What did she make, for example, of the man who came to greet her wearing a Union Jack necktie and carrying a Stars and Stripes flag and a placard which read: "US and Great Britain, God's battle-axe"?

Or Straw's explanation of the lyrics to The Beatles' song in which John Lennon sings about the "4,000 holes in Blackburn, Lancashire"?

It was an explanation —



Gandhi: Cordial

touching on how Lennon had been inspired by a newspaper headline about potholes in local roads — which appeared to leave Rice none the wiser even though she is on record as a big Beatles fan.

"The northwest is very different from what I could have imagined," Rice said today. Washington's top diplomat said she came to Straw's constituency, and to The Beatles' home city of Liverpool, to get away from Lon-

don's corridors of power and to meet ordinary British people.

It was the biggest visit to Blackburn by a foreign dignitary since 1931, when Mahatma Gandhi came to this former cotton town to protest against the protectionist policies of Lancashire's textile exporters.

While the Indian independence leader was given a cordial welcome, Rice, an architect of the Iraq war, was met by protests at every step.

Angry Muslims gathered outside a school she visited on Friday and 1,500 anti-war activists waited for her at a theatre in Liverpool where she attended a concert.

Dissent even followed Rice into the Liverpool concert hall where one artist dedicated her performance of Lennon's *Imagine* to the protesters standing outside in the rain.

# U.S. for banning fissile material

## Washington presents global draft treaty

**GENEVA:** The United States on Thursday presented a draft global treaty aimed at banning production of nuclear bomb-making fissile material, although it would leave existing stockpiles untouched.

Stephen Rademaker, acting assistant U.S. secretary in the bureau of international security and non-proliferation, outlined the proposal in a speech to the Conference on Disarmament, which is backed by the United Nations.

The conference has been deadlocked for years over the issue, but the search for a breakthrough has intensified because of mounting international concern over Iran and North Korea's nuclear programmes.

### Straightforward scope

"The treaty text that we are putting forward contains the essential provisions that would comprise a successful, legally binding Fissile Material Cut-Off Treaty (FMCT)," Mr. Rademaker told the Geneva forum.

"Our draft treaty has a straight-forward scope. It bans, after entry into force, the production of fissile material for use in nuclear weapons or other nuclear explosive devices," he added.

Production of fissile material for non-explosive purposes,

such as for naval propulsion, would not be prohibited, he said.

The 65-member state forum is holding a special session to try to kick-start negotiations to prevent production of highly-enriched uranium and plutonium.

Negotiations — seen as the next step in global nuclear disarmament — began briefly in 1998.

It is unclear whether Thursday's proposal will be enough to start substantive negotiations and end wrangling over the scope of the talks.

But they quickly broke down due to arguments including the scope of a future treaty and whether it should cover existing stocks and have a verification regime to check against cheating.

Developing countries want the talks widened to include total nuclear disarmament. China and others have also been pressing for parallel negotiations to prevent an arms race in outer space, something which the United States has been resisting.

Mr. Rademaker accused Iran "even today" of failing to cooperate with an investigation by the International Atomic Energy Agency into its nuclear programme. He also bluntly warned North Korea against transferring nuclear weapons or testing nuclear weapons or missiles.

— Reuters

19 MAY 2006

# Russia to snap defence ties with Ukraine <sup>14B</sup> <sub>89-12</sub> <sup>215</sup>

Vladimir Radyuhin

**MOSCOW:** Russia will halt all defence cooperation with Ukraine if the latter joins NATO, the Russian Parliament Speaker said.

"We do not welcome (Ukraine's NATO bid)... If Ukraine joins NATO, we will definitely have to stop all military-technical cooperation with it," Chairman of the Federation Council upper chamber Sergei Mironov said at a press conference in Moscow. He warned that Ukraine would lose thousands of jobs in the defence industry.

Kiev said last month it expects a green light to join the NATO alliance in 2008. Speaking after a meeting with the NATO Foreign Ministers in Bulgaria, Ukraine's Foreign Minister Boris Tarasyuk said he hoped NATO would launch a "membership action

plan" with Ukraine in September this year as the first step in Kiev's drive to join the Alliance.

Russia has already started scaling down defence cooperation with Ukraine, announcing plans to stop buying engines for combat and transport helicopters of the Mi and Ka series, as well as naval gas turbines. This hardware will now be manufactured in Russia.

Moscow also decided to withdraw from a bilateral programme with Ukraine for the construction of the AN-70 transport aircraft.

Russia's Air Chief General Vladimir Mikhailov said the Russian Air Force was pulling out the programme in favour of a joint project with India for building a tactical transport aircraft under a 2001 accord between Irkut and HAL.

14 MAY 2006

# Iran flies nuclear flag in US face

OUR BUREAU AND REUTERS

April 11: Iran defied the might of the United States today to declare itself a nuclear-power state, creating trouble for India in more ways than one.

President Mahmoud Ahmadinejad said Iran had joined the group of countries possessing nuclear technology and was determined to achieve industrial-scale uranium enrichment.

In its first reaction, the US said Iran was "moving in the wrong direction" with its nu-

clear programme and if it persisted, Washington would discuss possible next steps with the UN Security Council.

"I am officially announcing that Iran has joined the group of those countries which have nuclear technology. This is the result of the Iranian nation's resistance," Ahmadinejad said in a televised address.

"Based on international regulations, we will continue on our path until we achieve production of industrial-scale enrichment," he said, adding that the West must respect Iran's right to peaceful

atomic technology.

The announcement means problems for India and its deal with the US, under which President George W. Bush has committed cooperation in civilian nuclear power. But the deal can be implemented only after the US Congress passes an amendment to the country's atomic energy law.

Opinion is divided in Congress on the nuclear deal with opponents seeing it as a reward for New Delhi for acting like a rogue state.

India had tested nuclear bombs in violation of international regulations and has re-

Iran's act of defiance. ✓  
Iran has cited the US concession to India, which has in the past done much the same thing it is now being accused of — developing nuclear weapons technology on the sly — contrasting it with the threat of international sanctions being held out against it.

White House spokesman Scott McClellan said Washington would "be talking about the way forward with the other members of the Security Council and Germany about how to address this" if Iran continued to move in its current direction.

The US says Iran's nuclear programme is a cover for developing nuclear weapons, while Tehran insists it is for civilian purposes.

The head of Iran's Atomic Energy Organisation said earlier that Iran had enriched uranium to a level used in nuclear power plants.

Iran's announcement is a serious setback to Security Council efforts to have Tehran halt enrichment. It could escalate a confrontation with western powers leading to consideration of sanctions.

When it comes to that, India will face its second prob-

lem — whether to side with the western powers against Iran.

Already there is tension between the Manmohan Singh-led coalition and its allies, the Left, over the deal with the US and voting with Washington against Iran in the International Atomic Energy Agency. That strain could reach bursting point if India were forced to support sanctions against Iran.

Tehran's announcement follows reports in the US media of plans being made in Washington for a military attack on Iran, though Bush has called them "wild speculation".



## WHAT NOW?

fused to sign the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty, acts being cited by the deal's opponents in the US who might now find fresh ammunition in

# US offers N-carrots to Iran

## Tempting rewards on menu if Iran halts uranium enrichment

ASSOCIATED Press  
Vienna (Austria), June 6

A PACKAGE of incentives presented on Tuesday to Iran includes a provision for the US to supply Tehran with some nuclear technology if it stops enriching uranium — a major concession by Washington, diplomats said.

The offer was part of a series of potential rewards offered to Tehran by the European Union foreign policy chief, Javier Solana, according to the diplomats, who were familiar with the proposals and spoke on condition of anonymity because they were disclosing confidential details of the offer.

The package was agreed on last week by the US, Britain, France, China and Russia, the five veto-wielding members of the UN Security Council, plus Germany, in a bid to resolve the nuclear standoff with Iran.

The other offers included a proposal to allow Tehran to upgrade its civilian air fleet through purchase of aircraft parts from Boeing and Airbus.

It would also include waiving trade sanctions against Iran to allow the purchase of American agricultural technology, the *New York Times* reported, quoting several European diplomats and a senior Bush administration official.

The offer includes a commitment from the six nations (the US, Britain, Russia, France, China and Germany) to support Iran's plan for a nuclear energy programme for civilian use.

The US and Europe also agreed to back Iran's membership in the World Trade Organisation.

The most compelling item, however, might be the American offer to end its nearly three-decade-long policy against direct talks with Iran and join in the negotiations over Iran's N-programme, the *Times* said.

The *Times* said it was unclear if the package included a guarantee that the US would not attack Iran if it agreed.



French President Jacques Chirac greets German Chancellor Angela Merkel in Berlin. Chirac and Merkel are meeting to prepare this month's EU summit and discuss the crisis with Iran.

AFP

## Iran reacts cautiously to deal

AGENCE France-Presse  
Tehran, June 6

IRAN ON Tuesday gave a cautious reception to an international proposal that is aimed at resolving the crisis over its disputed nuclear drive, saying the offer contained "positive steps", and, at the same time, "ambiguities".

The package — presented by European Union foreign policy chief Javier Solana — offers a variety of incentives and fresh multilateral talks if the Islamic republic agrees to suspend uranium enrichment work.

"There are positive steps in the proposal, and there are also some ambiguities that should be

cleared up", Iran's top national security official, Ali Larijani, said on state TV. "We had good discussions", Solana said, while asserting that there was "a strong consensus between the six countries" behind the package.

"Now that the proposal is on the table, I hope we'll receive a positive response which will be satisfactory to both sides", he said, after he had also met foreign minister Manouchehr Mottaki and ending his flying visit to Tehran.

While being offered carrots, Iran also faces the stick of a robust Security Council action if it rejects the offer and continues what the West fears is a covert weapons drive.

### Merkel's appeal to Iran

GERMAN CHANCELLOR Angela Merkel urged Iran to respond positively to the package aimed at weaning it off uranium enrichment, saying on Tuesday that it offers Iranians "prospects for their future". "Today is an important day," she said after meeting French President Jacques Chirac. "I hope that Iran shows a positive reaction." Russian President Vladimir Putin praised US-Russian cooperation on Tuesday, saying that recent joint work toward solving the Iranian nuclear crisis demonstrated that the two countries can compromise.

Agencies

# Iraq killings: 8 Marines indicted

San Diego, June 2

EIGHT MARINES and a Navy corpsman could face murder, kidnapping and conspiracy charges as early as on Friday in the shooting death of an Iraqi man, a defense attorney said.

Military prosecutors plan to file the charges against the men, who are being held in solitary confinement at Camp Pendleton Marine Corps base north of here, Jeremiah Sullivan III, who represents one of the men, said on Thursday.

The Iraqi man reportedly was dragged from his home west of Baghdad and shot in April.

The *Los Angeles Times* and *NBC News* said troops may have planted an AK-47 and shovel near the body to make it appear the man was an insurgent burying a roadside bomb. Neither suggested a possible motive for the April 26 killing, in Hamandiya. The death was unrelated to the November shootings of as many as two dozen civilians in the western Iraqi city of Haditha. The Pentagon is investigating troops from a different Marine regiment in that case.

Sullivan said he learned from Marine Corps attorneys that the charges against the men in the April death have been drafted and official charging documents could be given to them as early as on Friday. Once charged, defendants have the right to an Article 32 hearing, the military equivalent of a grand jury investigation.

The eight men served in Iraq with the 3rd Battalion, 5th Marine Regiment, and are members of the battalion's Kilo Company. The highest-ranking among them is a staff sergeant. Sullivan said he is concerned the Haditha case publicity could negatively impact his case.

"There's an assumption that these guys are guilty before there's been an opportunity for a thorough, impartial investigation," said Sullivan, a former Navy JAG who runs a civilian practice in San Diego.

USA Today



A file photo of a person carrying a body of a child reportedly killed during a US raid.

AP

# ISS crew in spacewalk

A TWO-man crew retreated safely inside the international space station early on Friday after extending their spacewalk so that they could replace a video camera on a construction platform at the orbiting outpost. The task was the last during the six and a half hour spacewalk for Russian commander, Pavel Vinogradov, and US flight engineer, Jeff Williams, who successfully completed their half-dozen maintenance jobs. They got behind schedule, though, and the camera chore was still unfinished when the decision was made to extend the spacewalk for less than an hour.

**ALL WALK NO PLAY**

The longest spacewalk of eight hours and 56 minutes was performed in 2001. Nasa controllers spoke to their Russian counterparts on whether to call off that last task or proceed as planned. They decided to go ahead after the Russians agreed the crew's space suits could endure the extra time in space, and the new camera was replaced successfully. "OK. We're going out," said Vinogradov as he and Williams exited the Russian side of the station at 0418 IST in their bulky suits while the outpost soared more than 350 kilometers above Earth.

AP, Cape Canaveral

03 JUN 2006

THE HOUSTON TIMES

# White House on defensive

## Pentagon plan for Iraq withdrawal

Stewart M. Powell

WASHINGTON: The White House is on the defensive about a reported Pentagon plan to start withdrawing troops from Iraq this year after administration officials had criticised Democrats for advocating a similar step.

Press Secretary Tony Snow insisted on Monday that there was a "pretty significant difference" between troop withdrawal proposals by Democratic Senators and President George Bush's battlefield commander, Gen. George W. Casey Jr.

*The New York Times* reported on Sunday that Gen. Casey had drafted a plan that projected sharp reductions in the 127,000 U.S. military personnel in Iraq over the next 18 months, starting this September.

Last Thursday, the Republican-led Senate rejected a non-binding resolution by Sen. Carl Levin (Democrat) that called for the Bush administration to begin "a phased redeployment of U.S. forces" before the end of the year. The vote was 60-to-39 after a debate that featured accusations by Republicans that the Levin proposal amounted to a plan to "cut and run."

Asked about the similarities of those two approaches, Mr. Snow contended that Mr. Levin's proposal focused entirely on the desire "to get out" of Iraq while administration-backed plans were different because their "ultimate goal" would be "to win,

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- General Casey envisions phased withdrawal of troops

- Decision on troop level to be decided by commander: Bush

not to get out."

The Casey plan envisioned cutting the 14 U.S. combat brigades now in Iraq to five or six brigades by December 2007, the newspaper reported, with the first two brigades to leave later this year.

Mr. Bush weighed in on the political flap on Monday, telling reporters that the decision over U.S. troop levels "will be made by Gen. Casey, as well as the government of Iraq, based upon conditions on the ground."  
—New York Times News Service

### 40 killed in blasts

AP reports from Baghdad: Powerful bombs ripped through markets in two Iraqi cities at dusk, killing at least 40 persons and wounding 89.

The deadliest attack — a bicycle bombing in Baqouba, the Sunni militant stronghold 60 km northeast of Baghdad killed at least 25 and wounded 33. Minutes earlier, a marketplace blast in Hillah, a mainly Shia city 90 km south of the capital, killed at least 15 persons and wounded 56, said police Capt Muthana Khalid.

23 JUN 2006

# Senate says no to Iraq pullout

**ASSOCIATED Press**  
Washington, June 22

**THE REPUBLICAN-CONTROLLED** Senate on Thursday rejected Democratic calls to start withdrawing US troops from Iraq by year's end, as the two parties sought to define their election-year positions on a war that has grown increasingly unpopular.

"Withdrawal is not an option. Surrender is not a solution," declared Senate Majority Leader Bill Frist, who characterised Democrats as defeatists wanting to abandon Iraq before the mission is complete.

Senate Democratic leader, Harry Reid of Nevada, in turn, portrayed Republican leaders as blindly following President George W. Bush's "failed" stay-

the-course strategy. "It is long past time to change course in Iraq and start to end the President's open-ended commitment," he said.

In an 86-13 vote, the Senate turned back a proposal from some Democrats that would require the administration to withdraw all combat troops from Iraq by July 1, 2007, with redeployments beginning this year.

Minutes later, the Senate rejected by 60-39 the proposal more popular with Democrats, a nonbinding resolution that would call for the administration to begin withdrawing troops, but with no timetable for the war's end.

The votes come a week after both houses of Congress soundly rejected withdrawal timeta-

what we can do militarily." Republicans and Democrats on Capitol Hill have staged bitter partisan debates on Iraq for two weeks, with both sides manoeuvring for the political upper hand in a mid-term election year. This week, Senate Republicans welcomed the Democratic-engineered debate because it highlighted divisions in the Democratic Party little more than four months before the Election Day and as the Republicans are trying to overcome polls showing the public favours a power shift in Congress to Democrats.

Democrats, for their part, tried to deflect attention from differences in their party on Iraq, even though the debate was over two separate Democratic proposals on the fate of US troops.



**US troops:** Not going home

bles for the 1.27 000 troops in Iraq and as polls show voters are weary about the war in its fourth year. Republicans argued the US must stay put to help the fledgling Iraqi government, while Democrats demanded that the Bush administration make clear that American forces will

not be in Iraq forever. "We must give them that support and not send a signal that we're going to pull possibly the rug out from under them," Republican Sen. John Warner said.

But Democratic Sen. Russ Feingold said: "It is time to tell the Iraqis that we have done

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THE NEW YORK TIMES



# U.S. pledges support to nuclear deal

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## Against deal-breakers by Congress: Burns

WASHINGTON: The Bush administration has pledged to support the bipartisan legislation on the New Delhi-Washington civilian nuclear deal. However, it is against "deal-breaker" amendments by the U.S. Congress that will force it to "renegotiate" the pact.

"We pledged to Congress today that we would favour, support a majority vote, a straight up and down vote in Congress at the end of the process on that bilateral agreement," Under Secretary of State for Political Affairs Nicholas Burns told a forum organised by the Congressional Task Force on U.S.-India Trade and the U.S. India Business Alliance here on Wednesday.

But he warned: "We have always said at the beginning that we wouldn't support deal breakers - requirements and amendments that would force us to go back and renegotiate this agreement. We are not willing to do that. Because of the interplay between Congress and the administration, this is a stronger Bill. Congress has been able to add its own views and I think the Bill is strengthened because of that. We are optimistic that this legislation can now go forward. We have an opportunity to have bipartisan victory for the American people."

### Panel to fine-tune text

The House International Relations Committee is meeting on June 27 for a "mark-up" or fine-tuning of the text of the bipartisan legislation authored by its Chairman Henry Hyde and ranking member Tom Lantos on the deal. The next day the Senate Foreign Relations Committee will mark up a Bill authored by its Chairman Richard Lugar and ranking Democrat Joseph Biden.

Mr. Burns said the administration was not taking anything for granted on the deal. "We know we have to earn the support of Congress and Congress has to be convinced that this particular piece of legislation being proposed by the administra-

• Administration is not taking anything for granted

• Lawmakers have right to see India-IAEA agreement

• India did the right thing on Iran

tion is in our national interest. We think it is good for our strategic relationship, good for non-proliferation regimes. It is a winner for the United States on all counts but we have a way to go here."

Lawmakers had the right to see the India-International Atomic Energy Agency safeguards agreement as also the bilateral civil nuclear agreement called "123 Agreement." On the role of the Nuclear Suppliers' Group, Mr. Burns said it was perhaps waiting to see how Congress reacted to the proposed legislation. But he did not comment when he was asked whether Washington would seek to duck rules if consensus was not forthcoming from the 45-member group.

On the crisis over Iran's suspected nuclear weapons ambitions, Mr. Burns said India was "part of the solution. If you are looking at India and trying to determine whether it has done the right thing in Iran, we think India has been part of the solution. And we are very grateful to the Indian Government for the leadership it has given."

### Bush to meet Manmohan

President Bush would meet Prime Minister Manmohan Singh at the G-8 summit in Russia next month. "I don't think it [the deal] is formally on the agenda, but this is certainly an issue that is going to be discussed at the summit. Prime Minister Singh will be there and so I would imagine that there will be a lot of informal discussions and we would hope for the full support of all the countries there," Mr. Burns told reporters.

- PTI

# Bush sheds tough image to charm EU

CHARLES BREMNER

Vienna, June 21: President Bush sought to repair his tattered reputation in Europe today, talking of his "deep desire" to close the Guantanamo Bay prison camp and conceding that his response to the 9/11 terrorist attacks had not been understood by much of the continent.

At a summit with the EU leadership in Vienna, Bush rejected as inadequate Iran's promise to reply in August to a US-European offer for talks on its nuclear programme. "It should not take the Iranians that long to analyse what is a reasonable deal," he said.

The US has offered to enter talks once Tehran shows that it has stopped enriching uranium, a process used to build nuclear weapons. "We will come to the table when they verifiably suspend. Period," said Bush.

He also gave warning that North Korea faced deeper isolation if it test-fired a long-range missile capable of reaching the US. "It should make people nervous when non-transparent regimes who have announced they have nuclear weapons fire missiles," he said.

About 1,200 people demonstrated against Bush's visit, but the President adopted a conciliatory approach at odds with the more defiant tone of his first administration.

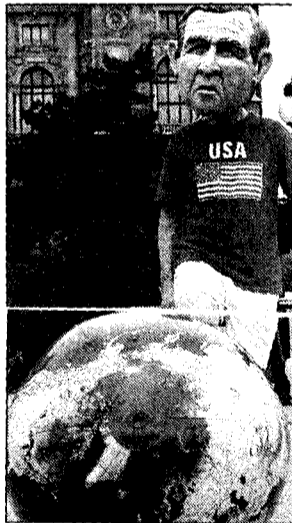
A poll published by the Pew Research Centre in the US last week suggested that a record majority of Europeans held a negative view of the US. A Harris poll this week suggested that most Europeans con-

sidered the US a bigger threat to world peace than Iran, North Korea or China.

"I think that it is absurd for people to think that we are more dangerous than Iran," Bush replied, when that figure was quoted to him at a news conference in the glittering ballroom of the former imperial Hofburg Palace. "We are a transparent democracy that debates things in the open," he said.

Bush forestalled the Europeans by raising the issue of Guantanamo Bay at the summit, saying that he understood their concerns. He spoke of his "deep desire to end the programme", adding: "I'd like it to be over with." Some of the inmates would be returned to their home countries, he said.

THE TIMES, LONDON



A protester dressed as President Bush kicks a globe in Vienna on Wednesday. (Reuters)

THE TELEGRAPH

27 JUL 2006

# Missing US soldiers found dead

## A Web statement posted by al-Qaida suggested the men had been beheaded

ASSOCIATED Press  
Baghdad, June 20

THE BODIES of two US soldiers reported captured last week have been recovered, and an Iraqi defence ministry official said on Tuesday the men were "killed in a barbaric way." The US military said the remains were believed to be those of Pfc. Kristian Menchaca, 23, of Houston, and Pfc. Thomas L. Tucker, 26, of Madras, Oregon.



Major-General William Caldwell said US forces — part of a search involving some 8,000 American and Iraqi troops — found the bodies late on Monday near Yousifiyah, where they disappeared on Friday. Caldwell said the cause of death was "undeterminable at this point", and that the bodies would be taken back to the US for DNA tests to confirm the identities.

Al-Qaida in Iraq claimed responsibility for killing the soldiers, and said the successor to slain terror leader Abu Musab al-Zarqawi, had "slaughtered" them, according to a Web statement that could not be authenticated. The language in the statement suggested the men had been beheaded. The statement said the soldiers were "slaughtered," suggesting that al-Muhajir beheaded them. The Arabic word used in the statement, "nahr," is used for the slaughtering of sheep by cutting the throat and has been used in past statements to refer to beheadings. The two soldiers disappeared after a deadly insurgent attack on Friday at a checkpoint by a Euphrates River canal south of Baghdad. Spc. David J. Babinneau, 25, of Springfield was killed.

The director of the Iraqi defence ministry's operation room, Major-General Abdul-Aziz Mohammed, said the bodies showed signs of having been tortured. "With great regret, they were killed in a barbaric way," he said. The claim of responsibility was made in the name of the Mujahideen Shura Council, an umbrella organisation led by al-Qaida in Iraq.

ONE OF THE LUCKY ONES WHO GOT BACK HOME



AP Frank Killeen of the Pennsylvania Army National Guard embraces his fiancée, Jenny John, after returning from duty in Iraq on Sunday in East Stroudsburg.

### 3 US soldiers charged with killing Iraqi prisoners

THREE US troops have been charged with murder for shooting three Iraqi prisoners and threatening to kill a fellow soldier who wanted to report the incident, the Pentagon said on Monday. The three men killed were among 100 Iraqis held after a raid on a former chemical factory south-west of Tikrit, Saddam Hussein's hometown, the Pentagon charge-sheet said. Staff Sergeant Raymond Giguere, Specialist William Husaker and Private Corey Claggett, all members of the 101st Airborne Division, face charges of premeditated murder, attempted murder and obstructing justice.

If convicted of premeditated murder, they could face the death penalty under US military law. The prosecution is the third instance in weeks of alleged war crimes by US forces in Iraq, with investigations into the killing of 24 Iraqi civilians by marines at the town of Haditha in last November, and a separate inquiry into the killing of a disabled Iraqi man by marines in the town of Hamdania on April 26. In the Haditha case, as in the prosecution announced on Monday, investigators are also looking into efforts to cover up the original incident.

The Guardian

### Japan orders withdrawal of troops

ASSOCIATED Press  
Tokyo, June 20

JAPAN ORDERED the withdrawal of its ground troops from Iraq on Tuesday, declaring the humanitarian mission a success and ending a groundbreaking dispatch that tested the limits of its pacifist post-war constitution.

Prime Minister Junichiro Koizumi said the 30 non-combat troops — deployed in early 2004 — had helped rebuild infrastructure in the area where they were based, and he pledged further aid to Iraqi reconstruction.

"Today we have decided to withdraw ground self-defence forces from the Samawah region in Iraq," Koizumi said in a nationally televised news conference. "The humanitarian dispatch has achieved its mission."

The withdrawal was decided in consultation with the US and other allies, Koizumi said. Defence chief Fukushima Nukaga told reporters earlier in the day that the pullout would take "several dozen days".

Koizumi has been a vocal supporter of US policy in Iraq, arguing that the deployment was needed to aid reconstruction, secure oil supplies and bolster ties with Washington.

He travels to Washington for a summit with President Bush later this month.

Japan, which hosts 50,000 US troops under a security treaty will continue to stand with Washington, said Koizumi, who steps down in September.

THE GUARDIAN

21 JUN 2006

# Pentagon study describes abuse by US units in Iraq

Eric Schmitt

Washington: United States Special Operations troops employed a set of harsh, unauthorised interrogation techniques against detainees in Iraq during a four-month period in early 2004, long after approval for their use was rescinded, according to a Pentagon inquiry released on Friday.

The investigation is the last of 12 major inquiries to be made public that focus on allegations of detainee abuse by US personnel in Cuba, Afghanistan and Iraq, and the first to focus on Special Operations troops, who operate with more latitude than other military units. It detailed harsh treatment that continued at isolated bases even after the abuses first surfaced at the Abu Ghraib prison.

Special Operations inter-



rogators gave some detainees only bread or crackers and water if they did not cooperate, according to the investigation, by Brig Gen Richard P Formica of the Army. One prisoner was fed only bread and water for 17 days. Other detainees were locked for as many as seven days in cells so small that they could neither stand nor lie down, while interrogators played loud mu-

sic that disrupted their sleep.

The inquiry also determined that some detainees were stripped naked, drenched with water and then interrogated in air-conditioned rooms or in cold weather. General Formica said it appeared that members of the Navy Seals had used that technique in the case of one detainee who died after questioning in Mosul in 2004, but he report-

ed that he had no specific allegations that the use of the technique was related to that death.

Despite the findings, General Formica recommended that none of the service members be disciplined, saying what they did was wrong but not deliberate abuse. He faulted "inadequate policy guidance" rather than "personal failure" for the mistreatment, and cited the dangerous environment in which Special Operations forces carried out their missions.

General Formica said that the Special Operations forces mistakenly used 5 of 12 interrogation techniques between February and May 2004 that Lt Gen Ricardo S Sanchez, then top commander in Iraq, had withdrawn in October 2003 for being too harsh. NYT NEWS SERVICE

15 Nov 2004

# US to join talks if Iran drops N-plans

**Washington, May 31** (Reuters): The US, in a major policy shift toward Iran, said today it would join European governments in talks with Tehran if it suspended its nuclear enrichment programme.

President George W. Bush said the US was taking a "leadership position" to resolve the Iran nuclear dispute diplomatically, but secretary of state Condoleezza Rice stressed that the military option was still on the table.

"The President is not going to take any of his options off the table, temporarily or otherwise," Rice said.

Rice added that the talks offer was part of a package of incentives and sanctions whose "essential elements" have been agreed with Britain, France and Germany and will be discussed further

tomorrow in Vienna. The resumption of diplomatic ties with Iran was not under consideration and Iran would incur "great costs" if it continued to pursue nuclear weapons, she said.

Iranian officials had no immediate comment on the US offer but European allies France and Britain welcomed it. "The US offer will ... give added weight to the proposals which foreign ministers will be discussing in Vienna tomorrow," British foreign minister Margaret Beckett said.

French foreign minister Philippe Douste-Blazy urged the Iranian authorities to respond in a "constructive manner" to European proposals.

Rice also said she hoped the offer would create a "climate of action" and get Iran to suspend what Washington and

Council has called for. Crude oil futures fell about \$1.5 a barrel in New York trading following the Rice comments on Iran, the world's fourth-largest oil producer.

Escalating tensions over Iran's nuclear programme and concerns that Iran may choose to retaliate by limiting crude supplies to the global market have been one of the key drivers of lofty oil prices.

The US has often said it was open to talks with Iran, but the Bush administration has repeatedly dismissed growing calls from members of the US Congress, former officials and prominent analysts for dialogue.

The US and the so-called EU3 — France, Germany and Britain — have been working with Russia and China on a "carrot and stick" package, de-

signed to persuade Iran to abandon activities that Tehran insists are only intended for peaceful energy purposes.

US officials, briefing reporters on condition of anonymity, said Russia and China generally support the package but there were still some details to negotiate during talks in Vienna tomorrow.

The US, aiming to win Russian support, has accepted language in a proposed UN Security Council resolution that would rule out the immediate threat of military action against Tehran.

The compromise involves not invoking the whole Chapter 7 of the UN Charter as Washington had been demanding, but citing specific articles that leave out the one referring to use of force.



**Rice:** Options on table

its allies consider its nuclear weapons programme.

"It's time to know whether Iran is serious about negotiation or not," said Rice.

Tehran says it is willing to negotiate on the number of uranium-enriching centrifuges it uses for research, but has stressed it would not stop running the devices entirely as the UN Security



**Iranian President Mahmoud Ahmadinejad at the funeral of his father Ahmad Ahmadinejad in Tehran. (AFP)**

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# Bush realised there was no better alternative but talks

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DAVID E SANGER

WASHINGTON, JUNE 1

AFTER 27 years in which the US has refused substantive talks with Iran, President George W Bush reversed course on Wednesday because it was made clear to him by his allies, by the Russians, by the Chinese, and eventually by some of his advisers that he no longer had a choice.

During the past month, according to European officials and some US officials, it became obvious to Bush that he could not hope to hold together a fractious coalition of nations to enforce sanctions—or consider military strikes on Iranian nuclear sites—unless he first showed a willingness to engage Iran’s leadership directly over its nuclear programme and exhaust every non-military option.

Few of his aides expect that Iran’s leaders will meet Bush’s main condition: that Iran first re-suspend all of its nuclear activities, including shutting down every centrifuge that could add to its small stockpile of enriched uranium. And while the

Europeans and the Japanese said they were elated by Bush’s turnaround, some participants in the drawn-out nuclear drama questioned whether this was an offer intended to fail, devised to show the extent of Iran’s intransigence.

Bush, according to one participant in those debates, told Secretary of State Con-

#### What forced US turnaround

- EU, Russia and China felt US had to directly engage Iran on its N-programme.
- Bush had wanted a “third option” beyond nuclear Iran and US military action.
- Talks offer was one way of exhausting non-military options to bring Iran on board.

doleezza Rice several months ago that he needed “a third option”, a way to get beyond either a nuclear Iran or an American military action. Rice spent a long weekend in early May drafting a proposal that included a timetable for diplomatic choreography through the summer.

There was strong opposition from the White House, particularly from Vice-

President Dick Cheney, according to several former officials. “Cheney was dead set against it,” said one former official who sat in many of those meetings. “At its heart, this was an argument about whether you could isolate the Iranians enough to force some kind of regime change.”

In the end, said one former official who has kept close tabs on the debate, “it came down to convincing Cheney and others that if we are going to confront Iran, we first have to check off the box” of trying talks. Bush offered a more positive-sounding account: “I thought it was important for the United States to take the lead, along with our partners, and that’s what you’re seeing. You’re seeing robust diplomacy.”

The question now is whether there is any middle ground between President Bush’s demand that Iran give up everything, and Iran’s insistence that it will give up nothing. Without breaking that logjam, the American-Iranian dialogue may never begin.

—The New York Times

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INDIAN EXPRESS

IRAN TO MEET EU TODAY, SAY DIPLOMATS

# USA softens stand

Agence France Presse

IAEA report

VIENNA, June 5: The US has offered to lift some of its trade sanctions against Iran as part of a package of benefits the EU will deliver to get Teheran to guarantee it will not make nuclear weapons, diplomats said.

The USA is proposing "lifting sanctions partially, not only waiving sanctions but actually lifting them," in an agreement to be worked out in multilateral talks that would start once Iran suspended uranium enrichment, said a senior Western diplomat, who requested anonymity.

Washington, which considers Iran a sponsor of ter-

NEW YORK, June 5: A new report by the International Atomic Energy Agency on Iran includes "potentially incriminating" details about traces of highly enriched uranium recently found by its inspectors on equipment at the Lavisan-Shian military site, a media report said. It is significant because Iran hasn't explained why such enrichment tools were found at a military facility, *Time* magazine said today quoting Western diplomats. ■ PTI

rorism and now fears it is covertly developing nuclear weapons, has since the mid-1990s banned most US

trade and investment with the Islamic Republic.

Lifting sanctions would allow sales to Iran of things like agricultural technology and commercial planes to replace the country's dilapidated fleet. US officials have said they want to keep the details of the proposal secret in order to avoid the appearance of threatening Iran.

In another report, Iranian officials have agreed to meet with a senior EU representative carrying a six-nation package of rewards and penalties meant to stop Teheran's uranium enrichment programme tomorrow, diplomats said.

# US says it wants to give Iran time

Washington: President George W Bush says Iran's initial reaction to a package of incentives and threats on the nuclear impasse sounds positive but it is still unclear whether Iran is serious about negotiating an end to its alleged nuclear programme.

"We will see if the Iranians take our offer seriously," Bush said in Laredo, Texas, where he was speaking about immigration overhaul. "The choice is theirs to make."

"I have said the United States will come and sit down at the table with them so long as they are willing to suspend their enrichment in a verifiable way," Bush said. "So it sounds like a positive response to me."

EU foreign policy chief Javier Solana laid out the potential rewards and consequences on Tuesday during a visit to Teheran. He later told Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice by phone that the Iranians had said they would need time to consider the proposal, State Department spokesman Sean McCormack said.

Solana called the discussions "very useful and constructive," McCormack said.

Bush said in Texas he wanted to resolve the problem diplomatically. Earlier in the day, the administration said it would give Iran "a little bit of space"

to consider the package but cautioned the offer was not open-ended. "It's a matter of weeks, not months," McCormack said, echoing the vague deadline set out by Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice before the package was presented to Teheran.

US officials would not discuss specifics, saying Iran needed time to review the package and ask questions in private. "We want to give this every opportunity to succeed," McCormack said. "The diplomacy, I would say, is at a sensitive stage."

The package includes a promise of Western technical help in developing peaceful civilian nuclear energy if Iran stops enriching uranium. The offer also includes a waiver of US legal curbs to allow export of agricultural technology, access to US aircraft parts or new Boeing Company planes and US and European backing for Iran to join the World Trade Organisation, diplomats and others said.

The proposal was agreed last week by the US, Britain, France, China and Russia — the five veto-holding members of the UN Security Council — plus Germany. The package presented to Teheran on Tuesday would be on the table for any new talks involving the United States. AP

**NUCLEAR ISSUE**

08 JUN 2006

THE TIMES OF INDIA



# Probe: US troops didn't kill Ishaqi civilians intentionally

ASSOCIATED PRESS  
BAGHDAD | JUNE 3

**A** MILITARY investigation into allegations that US troops intentionally killed civilians in Ishaqi, a village north of Baghdad, has cleared them of misconduct, the US said — even though it acknowledged the deaths of up to 13 Iraqis in the March raid.

The investigation of the March 15 attack in Ishaqi concluded that the US troops followed normal procedures in raising the level of force as they came under attack upon approaching a building where they believed an Al-Qaeda terrorist was hiding, said Maj Gen William Caldwell, a US military spokesman.

Caldwell also acknowledged there were “possibly up to nine collateral deaths” in addition to the four Iraqi deaths that the military announced at the time of the raid. The results of the investigation were released after questions were raised about the original US report as television stations aired AP television news footage of a row of dead



**A morgue worker unloads a cardboard box of severed heads at the morgue in Baqouba on Saturday. Iraqi police on Saturday found eight severed heads north of Baghdad with a note indicating at least one of the men were killed in retaliation for the slaying of four Shi'ite doctors, authorities said. AP**

children in the aftermath of the raid.

The probe was part of US investigations into possible misconduct by American troops in at least three separate areas of Iraq. Besides Haditha and Ishaqi, seven Marines and a Navy corpsman could face murder, kidnapping and conspiracy charges in the April shooting death of an Iraqi man west of Baghdad.

**Russian diplomat killed:** Meanwhile, an official at Russia's Embassy in Baghdad said today one diplomat had been killed and four embassy employees kidnapped.

“We confirm that one diplomat died and four (people) have been kidnapped,” Interfax reported the embassy official as saying.

Iraqi Interior Ministry and police sources said earlier that gunmen had killed a Russian Embassy employee and kidnapped four.

Interior Ministry sources said gunmen in three cars blocked a road where they were travelling in the upscale Mansour district and opened fire on their vehicle, killing one and then abducting four others.

INDIAN EXPRESS

# Zarqawi killed in US strike

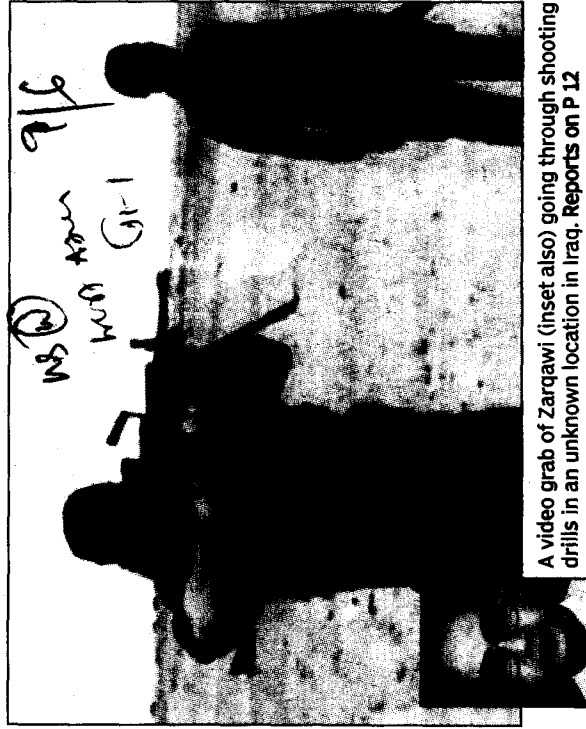
## Special Forces Bomb Safe House In Iraq Where Qaida No 3 Was Hiding

Chidanand Rajghatta | TNN

Washington: A beleaguered US notched a major hit in Iraq on Thursday by taking out the dreaded insurgent, Abu Musab al Zarqawi, in a Predator attack, a lethal strike that President George Bush described as a "severe blow" to the Al Qaida even as he cautioned that there was plenty hard work ahead.

In a brief event-specific appearance at the Rose Garden at 7.30 am, more than 12 hours after US Special Forces killed Zarqawi, Bush abjured any triumphant tone but said the ideology of terrorism had lost one of its most visible leaders. Reeling off Zarqawi's many attacks on US forces and interests, including beheadings and assassinations, that had tormented Washington, a relieved Bush said, "Now he has met his end and this man won't murder ever again."

Zarqawi's end came when US Special Forces dropped two 500 lb bombs on a safe house in Baquba, 30 miles outside Baghdad late on Wednesday. The US intelligence had reportedly tracked spiritual leader Sheikh Abdul al Rahman, who often met Zarqawi, and the strike eviscerated both, along with several aides. US officials said Zarqawi's death had been confirmed from his physical attributes and fingerprint checks, and further confirmation



A video grab of Zarqawi (inset also) going through shooting drills in an unknown location in Iraq. Reports on P 12

cide attacks in Iraq. The US had put a bounty of \$25 million on his head and his profile matched that of Osama bin Laden, who, as Bush recalled, described him as the "Prince of Al Qaida" in Iraq. But in the end, it was reported, Zarqawi was betrayed by a disgruntled or captured Al Qaida colleague who gave the Americans intel about his movements and safe-houses. There were reports in recent weeks that Zarqawi had become unpopular in insurgent circles because of the brutal nature of his attacks that often killed Iraqi civilians.

Based on the new intel, US Special Forces are said to have used Predator Hell Fire missile to take him out. The news was first flashed to National Security Advisor Stephen Hadley at a White House meeting where Bush was meeting with lawmakers returning from Iraq. The White House subsequently got confirmation from the new Iraqi Prime Minister, the US envoy in Baghdad and American field commanders.

No one though expects the insurgency to fold up overnight. If anything, the US is bracing itself for a renewed wave of attack in the coming days. But Zarqawi's death also puts the focus back on a 6 foot 5 terrorist said to be hiding in Pakistan.

through DNA matches was awaited. But the mourning on jihadi websites appeared to confirm his death. Battered in recent days by reports of US military excesses in Iraq, Bush paid tribute to his armed forces. "Special forces, acting on tips and intelligence from Iraqis, delivered justice to the most-wanted terrorist in Iraq," he said, adding that they never gave up through near misses and false leads.

A Jordan-born radical, Zarqawi attained notoriety for a particularly virulent and brutal form of sui-

But through his seven-minute address, Bush maintained a businesslike tone in keeping with his recent resolve to be more restrained in his use of language. He reminded Americans that as the "difficult and necessary" mission in Iraq continues, the terrorism and sectarian violence would also continue.

A Jordan-born radical, Zarqawi attained notoriety for a particularly virulent and brutal form of sui-

09 JUN 2006

THE TIMES OF INDIA

# Senate panel backs N-deal

Indo-Asian News Service

WASHINGTON, June 29: The India-USA nuclear deal today moved a step closer to Congressional approval with another ringing endorsement from a key panel of the US Senate. This follows its approval by a committee of the Lower House by an overwhelming majority.

Reflecting a broader bipartisan consensus, the 18-member Senate Foreign Relations Committee approved by a 16-2 majority an enabling draft bill on the lines of the House panel's "historic" legislation that set out a two-vote process for the deal's final Congressional approval. Like their counterparts on the International Relations Committee of the House of Representatives, the Senate panel's Republican chairman, Mr Richard Lugar, and leading Democrat Mr Joseph Biden chose to bring forward an altogether new bill instead of the one they had introduced last March at the Bush administration's bidding. Approval of the

## India must side with developing nations: CPM

NEW DELHI, June 29: The CPI-M today told the government that India's long-term interests at the WTO talks could be served best by maintaining solidarity with developing countries. In a statement on the current Mini-Ministerial Meeting of the WTO, the CPI-M politburo said the government's softening of its position on agriculture and non-agricultural market access (NAMA) at the Hong Kong Ministerial was unjustified. The government had maintained that its stand was justified to advance India's offensive interests in services. "Such a trade-off is unacceptable since it would compromise the interests of an overwhelming majority of the Indian population employed in agriculture and industrial sectors," the party said.

It was a matter of profound regret that India sided with the US and other developed countries in pushing Annexure C on Services during the Hong Kong Ministerial despite opposition from a large number of developing countries, the CPI-M said. ■ SNS

enabling legislation by the Senate panel made up of 10 Republicans and eight Democrats would pave the way for its introduction before the two Houses of US Congress some time in mid-July when it reconvenes after a 10-day recess.

Both Washington and New Delhi are keen to complete the two-step approval process by August.

### Advanced reactor

Mr RK Sinha, director, Reactor Design and Development Group of the Bhabha Atomic Research Centre said in Mumbai today that India's first Advanced Heavy Water Reactor, whose design has been completed, is not envisaged to be placed under civilian category once the Indo-US civilian nuclear deal is signed, adds PTI.

THE STATESMAN

# Rice mission to pacify allies

Islamabad, June 27 (Agencies): US secretary of state Condoleezza Rice arrived in Islamabad today on a mission to make Pakistan and Afghanistan stop their bickering and work better together to fight Taliban forces.

However, Rice said she expects President Pervez Musharraf to fulfil his promise to hold democratic elections next year. "There has to be, the world expects there to be, democratic, free and fair elections in Pakistan in 2007," Rice said.

Rice's return to the region, just three months after accompanying President George W. Bush there, comes at a time when both the Afghan and Pakistani leaders are suffering from slumps in popularity and their credibility is being questioned abroad.

Though her first stop was Pakistan and a meeting with President Pervez Musharraf, the top US diplomat gave stout backing to Afghanistan's President Hamid Karzai.

"This is an extraordinary leader and we're going to back

him, and back him fully," said Rice, who had wanted her visit to Kabul to be kept secret for security reasons until she arrived in Asia.

Rice praised both allies for their efforts in the war on terrorism, but knows she has her work cut out in a region where Osama bin Laden and other al Qaeda leaders have evaded capture for nearly five years.

"The piece we need to work harder on is the cooperation that is US-Afghan-Pakistani in that region," Rice said. "We want (in Pakistan) to talk

about what more we can do."

The level of violence in Afghanistan, especially in the south, is now the worst it has been since the Taliban were driven from power in 2001, with over 1,100 people killed since January.

Rice said part of her mission was to assess how much money to ask US Congress to allocate to Afghanistan next year. Anti-U.S., anti-Karzai riots rocked Kabul earlier this month, and prompted observers to review progress made in Afghanistan.



Condoleezza Rice in Islamabad on Tuesday. (Reuters)

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US HOUSE TO TAKE UP BILL FOR VOTING

# Cautious optimism over nuclear deal

**Statesman News Service**

NEW DELHI, June 27: There is cautious optimism in Ministry of External Affairs circles that the bipartisan bill for India-United States civilian nuclear cooperation will pass muster today, when it comes up for vote in the US House international relations committee.

The mark-up comes up less than four months after President George Bush and Prime Minister Manmohan Singh announced to the world from the lawns of Hyderabad House in New Delhi that they had reached a deal.

"We have made history," Prime Minister Dr Manmohan Singh had told the US president on 2 March.

Following the legislative

## Partial results achieved: Aziz

ISLAMABAD, June 27: Noting that partial results have been achieved in the peace process to normalise relations with India, Pakistan has said the time has come to move towards dispute resolution to settle Kashmir and other contentious issues. "Our efforts to normalise relations with India have achieved partial results and the time has now come for dispute resolution, especially the core dispute of Kashmir," the Pakistani Prime Minister, Mr Shaukat Aziz, told a conference here yesterday attended by the Indian envoy. ■ PTI

proposal presented by the United States administration, there had been proposals presented by the House committee chairperson, Henry Hyde and the ranking Democrat member, Tom Lantos.

The Indian government had repeatedly said that it would not accept any provisions that were outside the 18 July 2005 joint statement.

United States Congressmen were especially keen to link civilian nuclear

cooperation with India's relations with Iran and to stop fissile material production.

They were also miffed that they would not get to approve the 123 bilateral agreement being negotiated with India.

Further, they also wanted to take a look at the India-specific safeguards that has still to be negotiated for the civilian nuclear plants.

The bipartisan bill which has been drafted by

Hyde and Lantos reportedly makes reference to India's support for the US stand on the Iran nuclear issue, to join US efforts on the negotiations of the Fissile Material Cut-off treaty and to join the Proliferation Security Initiative.

However, none of these provisions are present as binding clauses, thereby will not affect the operational part of the bill.

According to Indian officials, these policy statements, while unnecessary from India's point of view, can nevertheless be tolerated, as they are not binding. Tomorrow, the Senate foreign relations committee will also take up a bill on the issue. The bill is drafted by the Senate Republican chairman, Richard Lugar and the senior-most Democrat member, Joseph Biden.

98-7 28/6

# Bush administration to support legislation on Indo-US deal

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**PRESS TRUST OF INDIA**  
WASHINGTON, JUNE 22

THE Bush administration has pledged to favour and support a bi-partisan legislation on the Indo-US civilian nuclear deal, but asserted it was against "deal-breaker" amendments by the US Congress that would force it to "go back and renegotiate" the pact.

"We have pledged to the Congress today that we would favour, support, a majority vote, a straight up and down vote in the Congress at

the end of the process on that US-India bilateral agreement," said Undersecretary of State for Political Affairs Nicholas Burns, the administration's pointsman for the pact that would enable the United States to share civilian nuclear technology with India.

"I am sure Congress will want to add its own ideas on the Bill," Burns told a forum on the deal, organised yesterday by the Congressional task force on US-India trade and US-India business alliance.

## Bush-Manmohan to meet at G-8 summit

WASHINGTON: In their first direct interaction after firming up the Indo-US nuclear deal, President George W Bush will meet Prime Minister Manmohan Singh next month in Russia at the G-8 summit in St Petersburg, according to US Undersecretary of State Nicholas Burns.—PTI

However, he warned, "We have always said that we wouldn't support deal breakers—requirements and

amendments that would force us to go back and renegotiate this agreement."

On June 27, the House International Relations Committee is scheduled for a 'mark-up'—or text finetuning—of a bi-partisan legislation authored by its chairman Henry Hyde and ranking member Tom Lantos. Next day, the Senate Foreign Relations Committee would mark-up a bill authored by its chairman Richard Lugar and ranking Democrat Joseph Biden.

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# North Korea offers to talk on missiles, US says no

REUTERS  
SEOUL, JUNE 21

NORTH KOREA wants talks with the United States over its planned missile test, *Yonhap* news agency reported on Wednesday, a sign Pyongyang might be ready to step back from the mounting crisis.

But Washington ruled out any special talks over the issue which it, along with South Korea and Japan, says poses a grave danger to a region already deeply worried by North Korea's nuclear ambitions.

"We know that the US is concerned about our missile test launch," *Yonhap* quoted North Korea's deputy chief of mission at the United Nations in New York, Han Song-ryol, as saying.

"Our position is to solve this situation through discussions," Han said, but added that Pyongyang had a right to develop and test missiles.

Washington says there is evidence North Korea might test-fire its long-range Taepodong-2 missile and has activated its ground-based interceptor missile-Defence system in case Pyongyang goes ahead with a launch.

A senior US official travelling with President George W Bush in Europe rejected the suggestion of bilateral talks.

"Their desire for bilateral talks is well known, as is our position on bilateral talks," the official said in Vienna.

US Ambassador to Japan Thomas Schieffer told reporters in Tokyo: "They have the opportunity to do that through the six-party talks," referring to bilateral discussions.

Schieffer said all options were on the table in terms of a response to any missile launch, although other US officials have said that Washington was unlikely to try to shoot it down.

2007 JUN 21 15:2  
22 JUN 2006  
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MILITARY PRESS

# New challenge for U.S. in Afghanistan

Country's future under scrutiny

Declan Walsh

An early morning traffic accident in Kabul involving a U.S. military vehicle rapidly degenerated on Monday into the worst upheaval in the Afghan capital since the fall of the Taliban, as angry protesters burned vehicles and buildings, ransacked shops and aid agencies and hurled rocks and invective at American soldiers.

By the time the authorities imposed a rare night-time curfew in the normally peaceable capital, eight persons had been killed and more than 100 injured. The upheaval was a shock to a city long considered an oasis of security, and a serious blow to the authority of President Hamid Karzai, who is struggling to contain an escalating insurgency in the south.

It was also an alarming day for an American military, already battling large-scale violence in Iraq and squaring up to an emboldened and nuclear-minded Iran. Now the future of Afghanistan, often trumpeted as a triumph for U.S. foreign policy, is coming under increasing scrutiny.

On Monday, the U.S.-led coalition said it killed up to 50 Taliban fighters in a bombing raid on a village in Helmand province, where 3,300 British troops are deploying. The air strikes take the death toll from the past two weeks to more than 350, according to the highest estimates.

The trouble in Kabul was triggered by an accident involving a U.S. military convoy that careened through a busy Kabul intersection, crashing into a dozen

vehicles and killing one person, according to a military statement. But accounts differed about whether American troops fired into a large crowd that gathered. A spokeswoman, Lieutenant Tamara Lawrence, said the U.S. soldiers only fired shots in the air. But a senior Kabul police officer, Sher Shah Usafi, said they fired into the crowd, killing one person. The response was explosive.

Afghan police and soldiers rapidly deployed as rioters smashed police posts, flung rocks at U.S. Humvee troop carriers and marched on the presidential palace, some chanting "death to America!" Vehicles were set ablaze, businesses ransacked and aid agencies looted. Residents cowered inside their homes until a measure of calm returned in the late afternoon.

## Civil war

In a televised address on Monday night, Mr. Karzai appealed to Afghans' painful memories of their destructive civil war in the 1990s in a call for people to "stand up" to the rioters. "These people are the enemies of Afghanistan," he said. "You should stand up against these agitators and not let them destroy our country again."

Yet the rioting reflected the simmering anger that many Afghans harbour at everything from the slow pace of reconstruction to the conspicuous wealth of foreigners in Kabul and the aggressive driving tactics of U.S. soldiers and private security contractors. — ©Guardian Newspapers Limited 2006



# Bush springs Iraq surprise

*Turns up in Baghdad, gives pep talk to new PM*

**AGENCIES**  
Baghdad, June 13

PRESIDENT BUSH, seeking to bolster support for Iraq's fledgling government and for US war policy at home, made a surprise visit to Iraq on Tuesday to meet newly named Prime Minister Nouri al-Maliki and discuss the next steps in the troubled, 3-year-old war.

It was a dramatic move by Bush, travelling to violence-rattled Baghdad less than a week after the death of terror chief Abu Musab al-Zarqawi in a bombing attack. The president was expected to be in Baghdad a little more than five hours.

Bush met with al-Maliki in heavily fortified green zone at a palace once used by Saddam Hussein. It now serves temporarily as the US Embassy. Bush told Iraqi Prime Minister Nuri al-Maliki that Iraq's future is "in your hands" but promised US help.

"I have expressed our country's desire to work with you, but I appreciate you recognise the fact that the future of your country is in your hands," Bush told Maliki in a meeting broadcast by video back to Camp David, the presidential retreat.

"I have come to not only look you in the eye; I've also come to tell you that when America gives its word, it will keep its word," Bush said. "If given the right help, I'm convinced you will succeed."

US Vice President Dick Cheney, US Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice, Defense Secretary Donald Rumsfeld, and other senior aides, who listened in on the meeting via video link, heard Bush's remarks at the secluded retreat in Maryland. "I'm impressed by the strength of your character and your desire to succeed. And I'm impressed by your strategy," said Bush. "We discussed the security strategy, we discussed an economic strategy, a reconstruction strategy, and all of it makes sense to me," he said.

"The decisions you and your cabinet make will be determinant as to whether or not a country succeeds that can govern itself, sustain itself and defend itself," said the US president. Bush's secret trip to violence-ridden Baghdad came six days after the death of al-Zarqawi. It was Bush's second trip to Baghdad in less than three years.

## 75,000 forces to be deployed in Iraq

Iraq's new prime minister promised on Tuesday to show "no mercy" to terrorists. Iraqi security forces planned to deploy 75,000 Iraqi and multinational forces in Baghdad as part of al-Maliki's ambitious plan to crack down on security in the capital, a top Iraqi police official said.

AP, Baghdad



REUTERS

President George W. Bush with Iraq's Prime Minister Nouri al-Maliki at the US Embassy in Baghdad during his surprise visit.

## Zarqawi death not end of war: Prez

**ASSOCIATED Press**  
Camp David, Maryland, June 13

US PRESIDENT George W. Bush was briefed by his top war commanders on Tuesday about how to deal with violence in Iraq as senior national security advisers gathered at his presidential retreat to chart how to help the newly named government in Baghdad.

The meeting came as the administration sought to boost public support for the unpopular war and capitalise on the death of a top terrorist leader, Abu Musab al-Zarqawi. "I fully recognise that's not going to end the war," Bush said. He asked the commanders to

congratulate the troops "for bringing Zarqawi to justice." Bush and Vice President Dick Cheney were briefed by video conference by Gen. George Casey, the top US Commander in Iraq, Gen. John Abizaid, who has overseen the wars in Iraq and Afghanistan, and Zalmay Khalilzad, the US Ambassador to Iraq. Bush endorsed the views of his advisers.

"I thought your assessment of the situation in Iraq was very realistic and I think your recommendations to us on how to win in Iraq — to have an Iraq that can govern itself, sustain itself, defend itself — your recommendations are valid," the president said.

washingtonpost.com

## U.S. Aims to Improve Military Ties With China

Advertisement

By Edward Cody  
Washington Post Foreign Service  
Tuesday, May 16, 2006; A14

SHENYANG, China, May 15 -- Adm. William J. Fallon, commander of U.S. forces in the Pacific, flashed what aides described as a broad grin as he sat in the cockpit of a twin-engine FB-7 fighter-bomber, China's most advanced domestically produced warplane.

"They had to drag me out of there," recalled Fallon, a veteran carrier pilot, as he described the first such close look by a U.S. official of the modern two-seater, which is scheduled to become a key part of China's air defenses.

Fallon's visit to China's 28th Air Division, based near the eastern city of Hangzhou, and his pilot's inspection of the newly deployed FB-7 were high points in a week-long tour of Chinese military installations and meetings with senior officers, including Defense Minister Cao Gangchuan. At a windup briefing here Monday, Fallon said the visits marked a significant step forward in his drive to increase contacts between the U.S. and Chinese militaries as a way to dissolve suspicions and reduce chances that the two Pacific powers will go to war.

"They really went out of their way to accommodate nearly everything I wanted to do," he said. The goal, he added, is to push for more contacts, "to see more things and different things, and to be more open and transparent in military matters."

Seeking to accelerate the movement, Fallon said, he invited senior Chinese officers to observe U.S.-led joint military exercises next summer near the Pacific island of Guam, promising them the opportunity to review U.S. bases and board U.S. warships during air-sea drills. Implicit in the invitation, he added, was the idea that, if the Chinese attend, they would reciprocate by inviting U.S. officers to observe future Chinese exercises "in a manner we would like to make a standard for both countries."

"That's what this is all about," he said, adding: "There are extensive contacts in every area. The one lag, the one exception, is in military-to-military contacts. We set out last year to right that."

U.S. officers and diplomats, for instance, were not invited to observe large-scale exercises by Chinese and Russian forces last August in the East China Sea and the Russian Far East. Partly as a result, the exercises were interpreted as a gesture by Moscow and Beijing to show they have the means to protect their regional interests without reference to the United States, even though it is the overwhelming power in the Pacific.

More broadly, transparency has been a key U.S. demand in recent years as China modernizes its 2.3 million-strong military and increasingly takes its place as a major power in the Asia-Pacific region.

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Defense Secretary Donald H. Rumsfeld has asked publicly several times why, in the absence of direct threats, China would need the military establishment it seems to be building if, as its leaders proclaim, its intentions are peaceful.

China has vowed to use force, as a last resort, to prevent Taiwan from gaining formal independence, raising the danger of conflict -- a threat that influences every military calculation here. Taiwan, 100 miles from China's southern coast, has ruled itself since Chiang Kai-shek's defeated Nationalist forces fled there in 1949, but Beijing has continued to regard it as a province that must eventually return to the Chinese fold.

Partly to back up that threat, the Chinese defense budget has increased by more than 10 percent annually in recent years, reaching \$35.4 billion in 2006. Pentagon specialists estimate that if unreported equipment purchases are taken into account, the real expenditures could be several times that.

Fallon said this subject came up in his 90-minute discussions with Cao, a general who is vice chairman of the Communist Party's policymaking Central Military Commission. The response was that, with such a large military, even a little expenditure on each soldier adds up fast, Fallon reported.

In the exchange, Cao also asked Fallon why the Pentagon, in its recent Quadrennial Defense Report, suggested China is the country with the greatest potential to pose a challenge to the U.S. military in the future.

"As we discussed these items, it struck me that we have a long way to go," Fallon said.

The United States and China cut off military contacts in 2001 after a U.S. Navy EP-3 surveillance plane and a Chinese fighter collided over the South China Sea, killing a Chinese pilot and forcing the U.S. aircraft to make an emergency landing on China's Hainan Island. The 24-member crew was allowed to leave only after prolonged negotiations and a U.S. statement that China interpreted as an apology.

Since taking over as head of the Honolulu-based U.S. Pacific Command in February 2005, Fallon has campaigned to restore and strengthen the ties, seeking to multiply contacts at all levels of the two countries' military hierarchies.

In his initial visit late last year, Fallon saw little and was disappointed with the lack of openness. But Rumsfeld visited China in October, touring the strategic command headquarters. Fallon said Chinese and U.S. officers will meet in June to discuss exchanges of lower-level officers in the two strategic commands.

Cao also endorsed restoring and expanding military-to-military relations, telling the official New China News Agency that they are "an important part of bilateral relations." But he did not immediately respond to Fallon's invitation for Chinese officers to observe next summer's Valiant Shield exercises around Guam.

Fallon said that, in addition to the air base near Hangzhou where he sat in the FB-7, he visited an air force training academy near Xi'An, home of the celebrated terra cotta warriors -- which he also viewed -- and the 39th Infantry Regiment south of Shenyang, in Liaoning province 400 miles northeast of Beijing and a short distance from the North Korean border.

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March 9, 2006

## U.S. Confirms Test of Missiles Was Conducted by North Korea

By NORIMITSU ONISHI

TOKYO, March 8 — North Korea was reported to have test-fired two short-range missiles within its borders on Wednesday, even as six-nation talks over its nuclear program remain deadlocked.

The missiles were launched in the direction of China, the Japanese news media first reported, citing unidentified defense officials. American officials in Washington confirmed the reports.

"Indications are that North Korea launched two short-range missiles," Scott McClellan, a White House spokesman, said in a statement. "We have consistently pointed out that North Korea's missile program is a concern that poses a threat to the region and the larger international community."

American officials said that North Korea had test-fired similar short-range missiles in recent years but had refrained from testing medium- or long-range missiles since firing one that passed over Japan in 1998.

The commander of the American forces in South Korea, Gen. Burwell B. Bell, said Tuesday that North Korea in recent years had been focusing its missile program on developing short-range missiles that could be used in a conflict on the Korean peninsula.

General Bell told a Senate Armed Forces committee hearing that North Korea had put on the back burner efforts to develop the kind of long-range intercontinental missiles that could reach the United States.

"In the years since the late 90's, the last six years, seven years, we have seen very little activity by the North Koreans to actively continue to develop and test long-range missile systems," General Bell said.

"There is no doubt in my mind that they have the capability to begin more technological investigation and to begin a regimen to lead to testing and potentially to lead to fielding. But there's no evidence of it right now."

Six-nation talks over North Korea's nuclear program have been stalled since November. North Korean officials have said they will not return to the talks unless the United States lifts its financial crackdown on companies that Washington contends are tied to illegal activities by North Korea.

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# Bush does not rule out Iran N-strikes

**Tehran, April 18 (Reuters):** President George W. Bush refused today to rule out nuclear strikes against Iran if diplomacy fails to curb the Islamic Republic's atomic ambitions.

Iran, which says its nuclear programme is purely peaceful, told world powers it would pursue atomic technology, whatever they decided at a meeting in Moscow.

Iran's defiance of world pressure to halt the programme drove oil prices to a record high of \$72.64 a barrel, raising fears of a cut in supplies from the world's fourth biggest crude exporter.

Bush said in Washington he would discuss Iran's nuclear activities with China's President Hu Jintao this week and avoided ruling out nuclear retaliation if diplomatic efforts fail.

Asked if options included planning for a nuclear strike, Bush replied: "All options are on the table. We want to solve this issue diplomatically and we're working hard to do so."

Speculation about a US attack has mounted since a report in *New Yorker* magazine said this month that Washington was mulling the option of using tactical nuclear weapons to knock out Iran's subterranean nuclear sites.

The US, which accuses Iran of seeking atom bombs, was expected to push for targeted sanctions against Tehran when it met the UN Security Council's other permanent members — Britain, France, China and Russia — plus Germany in Moscow.

"I recommend that they do not make hasty decisions, be prudent and study their path

in the past. Any time they have pressured Iran they have got adverse results," Iran's foreign ministry spokesman Hamid Reza Asefi said.

"Whatever the result of this meeting might be, Iran will not abandon its rights (to nuclear technology)," he added later.



Members of the Basij militia take part in the military parade in Tehran. (Reuters)

110-8  
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## The limits to openness

**T**he latest Trade Policy Review (TPR) of the United States, carried out by the World Trade Organisation (WTO) in late March, shows how the largest economy and one of the most open markets in the world, is itself not immune to pressures and resistance to free and fair trade. This is a result of conflict between the use of trade instruments as a tool of foreign policy and requirements of fair trade as also between the political imperatives of the nation state to pay heed to different interests. According to the review, the U.S. has recorded "solid" economic growth since its last review in 2004, and also remained a "key engine of global growth" by keeping its markets open. This, it notes, also helped the U.S. contain domestic inflation. However, the WTO stresses that "it is important to maintain the openness by pre-empting possible protectionist sentiment." It is obvious that protectionism could emerge as a dominant sentiment only if the openness of the U.S. economy is not perceived as a threat to employment. The review apparently has this aspect in mind when it says that resistance to protectionism might "require effort in the U.S., including through a reduction in public absorption, and in the rest of the world through increased spending." Nearly 38 per cent of all tariff items entered the U.S. duty-free in 2004 and the average MFN (most favoured nation) tariff was just four per cent. However, the average MFN tariff on agricultural products was 9.7 per cent, while tobacco, peanuts, footwear and a few other farm products enjoyed a tariff protection ranging from 50 per cent to 350 per cent. Payments to U.S. agricultural producers as a share of net farm income continued, though at a lower level of 16 per cent in 2004 compared to 48 per cent in 2000. The U.S. also failed to comply with some rulings of the WTO dispute settlement mechanism.

The U.S. has accorded MFN treatment to all member-nations of the WTO, except one, Cuba, though MFN status is the right of all members of the global organisation. What is more, the U.S. has concluded a total of 15 bilateral and regional free trade agreements (FTAs) — 12 of them in the past two years — and is negotiating many more. Several of the FTA partners and potential partners of the U.S. can hardly be called democracies or upholders of human rights. Though the U.S. investment regime has been open and non-discriminatory *vis-à-vis* foreigners, it maintains FDI restrictions on coastal shipping, domestic aviation, and financial services. The Exon-Florio Amendment is still in force and this can be used to thwart, in the name of U.S. national security, attempts at takeover of U.S. enterprises by foreign investors or mount pressures to widen the present FDI restrictions. With the President's trade negotiating authority set to expire in July 2007, a major responsibility rests with the U.S. in ensuring the success of the Doha round of the WTO by adopting an equitable approach to the negotiations.

# US plans nuke hit on Iran: Report

PHILIP SHERWELL

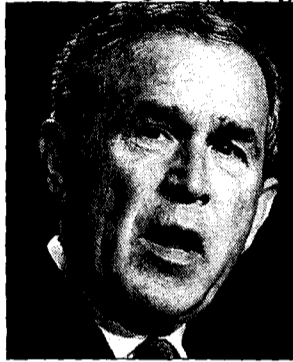
Washington, April 9: The Bush administration is planning to use nuclear weapons against Iran to prevent it acquiring its own atomic warheads, claims an investigative writer with high-level Pentagon and intelligence contacts.

President George W. Bush is said to be so alarmed by the threat of Iran's hard-line leader, Mahmoud Ahmedinejad, that privately he refers to him as "the new Hitler", says Seymour Hersh, who broke the story of the Abu Ghraib Iraqi prisoner abuse scandal.

Some US military chiefs have unsuccessfully urged the White House to drop the nuclear option from its war plans, Hersh writes in *The New Yorker* magazine. The conviction that Ahmedinejad would attack Israel or US forces in the West Asia, if Iran obtains atomic weapons, is what drives American planning for the destruction of Tehran's nuclear programme.

Hersh claims that one of the plans, presented to the White House by the Pentagon, entails the use of a bunker-buster tactical nuclear weapon, like the B61-11, against underground nuclear sites. One alleged target is Iran's main centrifuge plant, at Natanz, 200 miles south of Tehran.

Although Iran claims that its nuclear programme is peaceful, US and European intelligence agencies are certain that Tehran is trying to develop atomic weapons. In contrast to the run-up to the Iraq invasion, there are no disagreements within western intelligence about Iran's plans.



Bush: 'Hitler' scare

This magazine disclosed recently that senior Pentagon strategists are updating plans to strike Iran's nuclear sites with long-distance B2 bombers and submarine-launched missiles.

And last week, the *Sunday Telegraph* reported a secret meeting where military chiefs and officials from Downing Street and the foreign office discussed the consequences of an US-led attack on Iran.

The military option is opposed by London and other

European capitals. But there are growing fears in No 10 and the foreign office that the UK-led push for a diplomatic solution to the Iranian nuclear standoff, will be swept aside by hawks in Washington.

Hersh says that within the Bush administration, there are concerns that even a pummelling by conventional strikes, may not sufficiently damage Iran's buried nuclear plants. Iran has been developing a series of bunkers and facilities to provide hidden command centres for its leaders and to protect its nuclear infrastructure.

The election of Ahmedinejad last year, has hardened attitudes within the Bush Administration.

Bush and others in the White House view him as a potential Adolf Hitler, a former senior intelligence official told Hersh. "That's the name they're using. They say, 'Will Iran get a strategic weapon and threaten another world war?'"

THE DAILY TELEGRAPH

THE TELEGRAPH

10 APR 2006

## N-deal: Rice rebuts critics on the Hill point by point

The enthusiastic banter from both Republican and Democratic Congressmen and Senators about her much speculated bid for the White House in 2008, underlines the high political standing that Rice enjoys in Washington today.

Deploying her credibility to great effect in back-to-back hearings in the Senate and the House of Representatives that lasted more than six hours, Rice never once flinched from the basic framework of the deal that President George W. Bush had agreed with Prime Minister Manmohan Singh. After he returned to Washington from his trip to the subcontinent early last month, Bush had ordered a full court press on moving the nuclear agreement with India through the Congress.

Rice's defence at the two important legislative panels—the Senate Foreign Relations Committee and the House International Relations Committee—was to be the ace in the Bush Administration's political poker with the Congress. Rice's performance exceeded all expectations in India. Bush's campaign and Rice's testimony ex-

tracted the long-awaited political support from key Democrats, including former Presidential Candidate Senator John Kerry and Senate Minority leader Joseph Biden.

While Indian and American media were writing off the prospects for the passage of the nuclear deal in the US Congress even before the game had begun, Rice yesterday demonstrated that the deal was not only credible but also politically doable.

Responding to exaggerated Congressional concerns on India's ties with Iran, Rice had the courage to point out that it is the US that does not have relations with Tehran while most other countries do.

Putting the Iran question in perspective, Rice said, "Italy is Iran's largest trading partner. Japan is a very large trading partner of Iran. The truth of the matter is that we are the ones that have no relationship with Iran; most of the world does have relations with Iran."

Rice also provided the most cogent arguments so far on why the deal must remain India-specific and why it cannot be extended to Pakistan.

When Kerry suggested that China could undermine the Indo-U.S. nuclear deal by threatening a similar deal with Pakistan, Rice said, "We've been very clear—publicly, privately—with China, with Pakistan itself, that Pakistan is not an appropriate state for this kind of an exception. It's just a different history."

Whether it was policy or procedure, Rice was respectful in articulating her differences with the critics of the deal. But she has made it amply clear that no re-negotiation of the deal is possible.

Nor would she modify the sequence of implementing the nuclear deal, that would also involve the 45-nation Nuclear Suppliers Group and the International Atomic Energy Agency. Whatever might be the eventual outcome in the US Congress and the NSG, Rice's defence of the nuclear deal, running into more than 100 printed pages of single space text, would be remembered for long in New Delhi for one simple reason.

By any measure, it is the strongest public defence of India's policies by any foreign leader since the nation's independence nearly sixty years ago.



# Rice rises in India's defence

## Says nuclear deal will be a net gain for global non-proliferation regime

**S. Rajagopalan**  
Washington, April 5

IN A spirited defence of the nuclear deal in the US Congress, secretary of state Condoleezza Rice projected it as "a strategic achievement" that is good for both India and the US, and a net gain for the global non-proliferation regime.

She told members of the Senate foreign relations committee — some clearly sceptical about the deal — that this "pathbreaking" initiative will neither lead to an arms race in South Asia nor complicate the US's policies towards countries like North Korea and Iran.

Rice faced a barrage of questions from Senators of both sides. Those voicing reservations included chairman Richard Lugar and ranking member Joseph Biden. Some of the issues raised included: how prudent it will be to trust India, will it not be better to provide India a limited year-to-year waiver instead of changing the law to suit a country that has not signed the NPT; whether the

deal will not inadvertently help India to expand its arsenal.

But Rice sought to assure them that India could be trusted and dwelt on the major obligations India was willing to assume. India was agreeing unilaterally to adhere to controls such as the Missile Technology Control Regime. India will also adopt a system of safeguards that will be negotiated with the International Atomic Energy Agency.

Rice told the Senators how important it was to end the nuclear isolation of India. Past non-proliferation policies did not prevent India or Pakistan from testing nuclear weapons and only brought them to the brink of war.

"Now let us consider the future that we could have instead", she said and stressed that the deal will "advance international security, enhance energy security, further environmental protection and increase business opportunities for both countries".

One of the most important spin-offs will be to deepen strategic partnership by removing the long-

standing impediments to civil nuclear cooperation, she said. "We believe this initiative will unlock the progress of our expanding relationship in other areas".

Rice also disputed assertions about India's "training" of Iranian naval cadets in Kochi last month. The US, Rice said, had voiced its concerns about India's proposed pipeline project with Iran. But she pointed out that India was the only non-aligned country to vote for the referral to the UNSC.

As for India not willing to accept a unilateral freeze or cap on its nuclear arsenal, she said, "No one can credibly assert that India would accept what would amount to an arms control agreement that did not include other countries, like China and Pakistan". Rice also pointed out that India was not seeking to renegotiate or amend the NPT.

"India is not and is not going to become a member of the NPT as a nuclear-weapons state. We are simply seeking to address an untenable situation", she said.



Condoleezza Rice at the Senate hearing.

She told lawmakers that it was "simply not credible" to compare India to North Korea or to Iran. While Iran and North Korea were violating their IAEA obligations, India was making new obligations by bringing the IAEA into the Indian programme and seeking peaceful international cooperation.

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# Rice Condemns Burma as Oppressive Holdout in Asia

By Alan Sipress  
Washington Post Foreign Service  
Thursday, March 16, 2006; A16

JAKARTA, Indonesia, March 15 -- Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice sharply criticized Burma's military government Wednesday for denying the aspirations of its people. She described it as an oppressive holdout in a region moving increasingly toward democracy.

Speaking during the second day of a visit to Indonesia, Rice condemned Burma's rulers for bankrupting their once vibrant economy and shuttering universities that had previously attracted top scholars.

Her tough remarks, which echoed earlier administration criticisms, capped an address surveying the state of U.S. relations with countries across Southeast Asia.

"A country that was once the jewel of Southeast Asia is now out of step with the entire modern experience of the region," Rice told an audience of scholars, politicians, businessmen and students at the Indonesia Council on World Affairs. Citing Burma's decision late last year to relocate its capital to a remote, interior site, she said, "The Burmese regime is now literally retreating into the depths of the country, closing its people off from the world and robbing them of their future."

The U.S. government has progressively imposed economic sanctions on Burma over the last decade in hopes of pushing its ruling generals toward political change and winning the release of the detained democracy activist Aung San Suu Kyi. Burma's military rulers have maintained tight control since they rejected the results of a 1990 election won in a landslide by Suu Kyi's National League for Democracy.

With few formal contacts remaining between Burma and the United States, U.S. officials have been looking to the leaders of Burma's neighbors to press the cause of political change.

"Democracy still faces determined opponents, and where freedom is under attack it must be defended," Rice said, noting that Indonesians had successfully established a democratic system in recent years after the country's longtime dictator, Suharto, was ousted in 1998 during mass protests.

Two weeks ago, Indonesian President Susilo Bambang Yudhoyono traveled to Burma and called on its rulers to keep the rest of Southeast Asia informed about internal political changes. He also urged them to allow in monitors from countries in the region.

While these steps were modest, they reflect a new willingness by Burma's neighbor countries to intervene in its domestic affairs. Members of the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) had

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long rejected what they called meddling in one another's internal matters.

Late last year, ASEAN agreed to dispatch Malaysia's foreign minister, Syed Hamid Albar, on a mission to Burma to assess whether the government intended to proceed with democratic reforms as it had promised. But Burma has repeatedly rebuffed Albar's request to visit.

Rice praised ASEAN for its recent efforts to move Burma toward democracy. She also noted that the U.N. Security Council was reviewing the situation there.

"So long as the proud people of this great nation remain oppressed, there can be no business as usual in Southeast Asia," Rice said.

During her remarks, Rice emphasized the U.S. desire to cooperate with ASEAN in confronting a variety of security challenges. Several Southeast Asian governments, including U.S. allies, have criticized the Bush administration for its apparent reluctance to engage with the organization. They have warned that the U.S. approach is ceding influence to China.

Rice outlined three areas of concern, including the hazard posed by pirates and other criminals to crucial shipping lanes in the Malacca Strait, a narrow strip of water between Indonesia, Singapore and Malaysia. She also cited the danger of epidemic illnesses, most recently bird flu, and the continuing threat of terrorism carried out by radical groups such as the Jemaah Islamiyah underground in Indonesia and Abu Sayyaf in the Philippines.

On the economic front, Rice said the United States would continue to promote free trade in the region.

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# Bush regime open to ideas on nuclear deal

Expresses willingness to show flexibility on '123 agreement,' which is an outline of a final civil nuclear deal

WASHINGTON: On the eve of crucial meetings on the Capitol Hill on the nuclear deal with India, the Bush administration has said it is open to ideas and suggestions from Congress members on the agreement provided they are not deal-breakers requiring re-negotiations.

It also expressed willingness to show flexibility on the '123 agreement,' which is an outline of a final bilateral civil nuclear deal. Under Secretary of State for Political Affairs Nicholas Burns will take up the agreement with visiting Indian Foreign Secretary Shyam Saran this week.

Mr. Burns, who will discuss the deal with lawmakers on Wednesday, told reporters after his address at the Council on Foreign Relations that "there is a difference between ideas and suggestions that are meant to strengthen the agreement and ideas and suggestions that make us go back and negotiate it [the treaty]. We are open to the for-

mer and not to the latter." He also said the Bush administration would be clearing these ideas and suggestions with India.

## Complex accord

"This happens all the time in the American system. The administration proposes an initiative, Congress has its own ideas and the administration then decides whether we want to agree to that or can agree to that. We will have to take these one at a

time," he said. Mr. Burns said the administration was open to any ideas "as long as it does not require us to go back and break the agreement" stressing that "the accord, being so complex, cannot be reassembled again."

"The reason why the India issue is not on the agenda of the Board Meeting [of the Nuclear Suppliers' Group] of late May is because we are not sure when Congress is going to act," he said. Mr. Burns also indicated that the administration was willing to

show flexibility on agreement that can come after Congress has approved the civilian nuclear energy legislation currently pending before Congress.

He said he would be discussing the agreement with Mr. Saran but did not believe there would be a signing ceremony. "We are flexible that the 123 agreement will come after Congressional approval. But I think there is a lot of interest in Congress of what is going to be in it."

- PTI

# US report says Iran big challenge

DAVID E SANGER

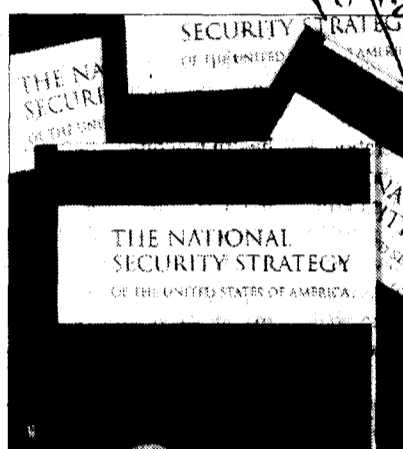
WASHINGTON, MARCH 15

AN updated version of the Bush administration's national security strategy, the first in over three years, gives no ground on the decision to order a pre-emptive attack on Iraq in 2003, and identifies Iran as the country likely to present the single greatest future challenge to the US.

The strategy document declares that US-led diplomacy to halt Iran's programme to enrich nuclear fuel "must succeed if confrontation is to be avoided," a near final draft of the document says. But it carefully avoids spelling out what steps the US might take if diplomacy fails, and it makes no such direct threat of confrontation with North Korea, which boasts that it has developed nuclear weapons.

When asked about the omission in an interview, Stephen J Hadley, Bush's national security adviser and the principal author of the new report, said, "The sentence applies to both Iran and North Korea."

The 48-page draft of the new "Na-



tional Security Strategy of the United States," which was released by the White House on Thursday, is an effort to both expand on and assess the security strategy published by the administration in September 2002, a year after the terrorist attacks against New York and the Pentagon upended US foreign policy.

But in a reflection of new challenges, the document also covers territory that the first strategy sidestepped, warning

China, for example, against "old ways of thinking and acting" in its competition for energy resources.

The administration expresses worry that Russia is falling off the path to democracy that Bush spent much of his first term celebrating. In a much tougher tone than the 2002 document, it emphasises that the future of the relationship with Russia "will depend on the policies, foreign and domestic, that Russia adopts."

Hadley said the effort was not intended to formulate new strategy, but to "take stock of what has been accomplished and describe the new challenges we face."

But chief among the sections that remain unchanged is the most controversial section of the 2002 strategy: the elevation of pre-emptive strikes to a central part of US strategy. "The world is better off if tyrants know that they pursue WMD at their own peril," the strategy says. It acknowledges misjudgments about Iraq's weapons programme that preceded the invasion three years ago, but it is clearly unwilling to give ground on that decision.

17 MAR 2006

INDIAN EXPRESS

washingtonpost.com

## U.S. Presses China and Russia for U.N. Council Action on Iran

By Colum Lynch  
Washington Post Staff Writer  
Saturday, March 11, 2006; A07

UNITED NATIONS, March 10 -- The United States, France and Britain remained at odds with Russia and China on Friday over what role the Security Council should play in pressing Iran to abide by the United Nations' demand to cease the enrichment of uranium that could potentially be diverted to a nuclear weapons program.

The Bush administration, backed by France and Britain, pressed Moscow and Beijing at a meeting of the council's five veto-wielding members to support the swift adoption of a Security Council statement urging Iran to seek a negotiated settlement to an escalating nuclear crisis or face the possible threat of sanctions.

Britain and France, the chief drafters of the proposed statement, are hoping to present a text to the 15-nation Security Council as early as Monday, after a morning meeting of the council's permanent five members, according to a council diplomat who requested anonymity because the five permanent members have agreed to secrecy before they reach agreement.

But Russian Foreign Minister Sergei Lavrov proposed that a high-level international meeting be convened to forge a common approach to Iran, telling a Russian television interviewer that there was no agreement on the council's role in handling the nuclear crisis. He proposed a conference outside of the United Nations among the five veto-wielding nations and the U.N. nuclear watchdog agency. U.S. officials worry such an approach is intended to slow momentum that could lead to U.N. sanctions.

Friday's meeting marked a new and politically delicate phase in a 2 1/2 -year diplomatic confrontation between the major Western powers and Iran, which says it is pursuing a peaceful nuclear energy program. The United States says Iran's energy program is a cover for an atomic weapons effort.

The International Atomic Energy Agency says Iran has repeatedly concealed its nuclear activities, contributing to international suspicions it is pursuing a weapons program. But the agency's director general, Mohammed ElBaradei, maintains he does not have sufficient evidence to prove Iran is developing nuclear weapons.

On Friday, President Bush sought to maintain pressure on Iran, telling a gathering of the National Newspaper Association that Tehran represents a "grave national security concern" for the United States, and citing its nuclear ambitions and its threat to "destroy our ally Israel."

Although U.S. officials did not reject Lavrov's proposal, they said it was time for the Security Council to

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address Iran's nuclear activities. "From our perspective, right now where the diplomatic action is, is at the Security Council," said State Department acting spokesman Tom Casey. "We think that's where the focus ought to be."

Bush's closest ally, Britain's Prime Minister Tony Blair, meanwhile, warned that Iran will face "a serious situation," an apparent reference to sanctions, if it continued to fail to meet its obligations.

But U.N. Secretary General Kofi Annan urged caution, saying that "the best solution is a negotiated one." He said he will cut short an upcoming visit to Africa if "I am needed" to help defuse the crisis.

France and Britain on Wednesday distributed elements of a proposed Security Council statement on Iran. The paper, whose contents were first reported by the New York Times, highlights Iran's efforts to skirt its obligations under the nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty and appeals to its leaders to comply with demands by the IAEA, a diplomat said.

The European paper calls on the IAEA's ElBaradei to report on Iran's activities within 14 days. The paper asserts that "Security Council action is necessary to reinforce IAEA authority . . . and to put Security Council weight behind the IAEA's resolutions." It also calls on "Iran to halt construction of heavy water reactors" that can be diverted to a nuclear weapons program, and to "implement and ratify the additional protocols."

Although the European paper does not explicitly threaten Iran with punitive measures, it says that "continued enrichment-related activity would add to the importance and urgency of further action by the Council." U.S. Undersecretary of State for Political Affairs Nicholas Burns told a congressional committee on Wednesday that the United States would press for targeted sanctions against Iran if it failed to comply with the council's demand.

U.S. and European diplomats say that they are planning to seek the adoption of a Chapter 7 resolution, which can lead to the imposition of sanctions or even the use of military force, if Iran fails to cooperate with the IAEA. "The pattern of Iranian behavior suggests at least the desire to acquire weapons capability. We have no hard evidence, but deep suspicions remain," said a British official whose briefing was carried out on the grounds that he remain anonymous.

After Friday's meeting, China's U.N. ambassador, Wang Guangya, said the council's permanent members had "good talks," focusing on "ways of strengthening the hand of the IAEA" in its standoff with Iran. But Wang and Russia's U.N. ambassador, Andrei Denisov, declined to say whether they could support the European draft statement.

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# US to quit Abu Ghraib

Baghdad: The US military said on Thursday that its new lock-up near Baghdad airport to house prisoners now held at the notorious Abu Ghraib prison should be ready in three months.

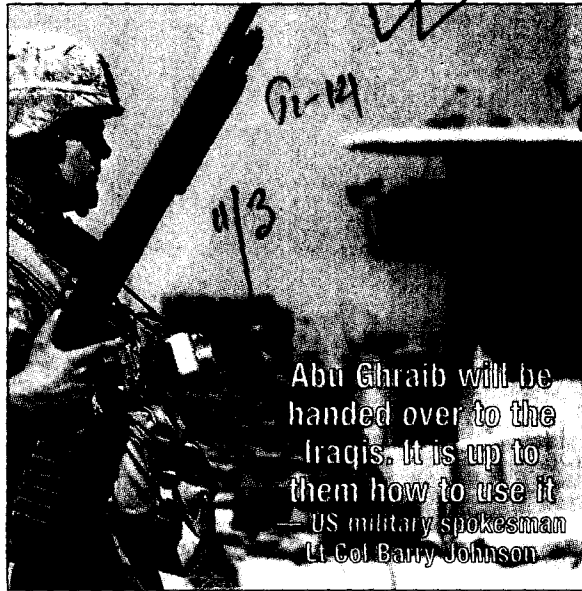
Once the US moves prisoners to the new jail at Camp Cropper and other facilities, a process that could take some months, Abu Ghraib will be returned to Iraqi prison authorities, said Lt Col Barry Johnson, a US military spokesman in Baghdad.

Lt Col Kier-Kevin Curry, a spokesman for detainee operations, said completion of the new prison at Camp Cropper, where Saddam Hussein and his co-defendants are being held, would set the transfer in motion. "Once we transfer operations from Abu Ghraib, the facility will be turned over to the Iraqi government," he said.

General Peter Pace, the chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, said it would be up to the Iraqi government to decide whether to close the notorious prison.

The prison, which currently holds over 4,500 detainees, came to symbolise American mishandling of some prisoners in Iraq, both during the US-led invasion and in the fight to subdue the largely Sunni Muslim insurgency.

Widely publicised photos of prisoner abuse by US military guards and interrogators at the jail led to global criticism of the US war in Iraq and fuelled the insurgency. Planning for the new facility at Camp Cropper began in 2004, Johnson said. Agencies



Abu Ghraib will be handed over to the Iraqis. It is up to them how to use it  
— US military spokesman Lt Col Barry Johnson

## 'Punish docs involved in Guantanamo force-feeding'

Paris: A letter by 263 doctors says the force-feeding of Guantanamo Bay prisoners is unethical and demands that the American Medical Association (AMA) punish personnel involved. In a letter to *The Lancet*, the doctors say the World Medical Association prohibits force-feeding and the AMA is a signatory to the edict. "Physicians do not have to agree with the prisoner, but they must respect their informed decision. Those breaching such guidelines should be held to account by their professional bodies," says the letter, which will be in Saturday's issue of the medical weekly.

A US spokesman described the force-feeding as humane and undertaken only when a prisoners had to be kept alive, but one inmate has alleged it amounted to torture. Force-feeding entails restraining a prisoner and thrusting a tube up his nostril, through his oesophagus and into his stomach.

The *Lancet* letter names John Edmondson, ex-commander of the hospital at Guantanamo, as having "instigated" force-feeding and says Edmondson claimed the practice had been "authorised through a lawful order of a higher military authority". "This defence, which has previously been described as the Nuremberg defence, is not defensible in law," said the letter. AFP



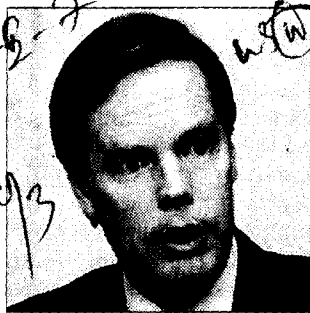
## Nuke deal with India does not hamper dealing with Iran: Burns

SRIDHAR KRISHNASWAMI  
WASHINGTON, MARCH 9

THE Bush administration has rejected the notion that proceeding with the civilian nuclear energy agreement with India undercuts America's dealing with Iran on the issue, stressing that the US looks at both the cases differently.

Testifying before the full international relations committee of the House of Representatives on Wednesday, Under Secretary of State for Political Affairs Nicholas Burns said that unlike "autocratic" Iran, India was not rejecting the IAEA.

"Iran is autocratic and adversarial and one of the greatest threats to the world today. In-



dia... is ready to bring the IAEA in for the first time to place safeguards on a great majority of Indian facilities. The Iranians are trying to kick the IAEA out," Burns said adding, "So these two countries are going in opposite directions, both in our relationship and with that of the IAEA."

Replying to queries as to the kind of international support the

nuclear deal with India had, he said the IAEA, France, UK and Australia have supported it.

"We are far better off bringing India into the Non proliferation system... India is seeking inclusion; Iran is seeking exclusion," Burns added. He also emphasised that India had voted at the IAEA on the Iran issue.

The Under Secretary of State for Arms Control and International Security Robert Joseph said that unlike India, Iran had signed the NPT and had committed itself to the treaty.

"Pakistan, Israel and India did not sign the NPT. Iran has signed it. Iran has committed not to acquire nuclear weapons and yet it is determined to do exactly that," he said. —PTI

10 MAR 2006

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March 10, 2006

## U.S. to Abandon Abu Ghraib and Move Prisoners to a New Center

By ROBERT F. WORTH

BAGHDAD, Iraq, March 9 — The American military said Thursday that within the next several months it planned to relocate all its detainees from Abu Ghraib prison, the sprawling penal compound west of Baghdad that became notorious throughout the world after photographs were made public of American soldiers abusing Iraqi prisoners there.

The prison will then be turned over to the Iraqi government, American military officials said.

Gen. Peter Pace, chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, talked about the plan to leave Abu Ghraib after a Senate hearing in Washington. But General Pace and military officials in Baghdad said the exact timing of the move was unclear.

"We do have plans to, and are in the process of building other facilities to move the detainees who are under U.S. control out of Abu Ghraib," General Pace said.

The general said "it should be several more months" before the new American-run detention center is finished. "Then it'll be up to the Iraqi government as to what they want to do" with Abu Ghraib, he said.

The military had previously said it wanted to move out of Abu Ghraib, largely because the prison is the target of frequent insurgent attacks and requires an unusual degree of protection. But the comments Thursday were more specific about the plan and a time frame for it.

The transfer also will remove the American military from the site of one of the most damaging scandals it has faced. The images of Iraqi detainees being beaten and sexually humiliated at the prison became a touchstone for Arab and Muslim rage against the United States in the spring of 2004, and a potent recruiting tool for insurgents in Iraq and elsewhere.

The prison complex was also a widely feared center for torture and execution under Saddam Hussein. After the fall of Mr. Hussein to an American-led invasion in 2003, there were calls for Abu Ghraib to be demolished. But members of Iraq's governing council, one of whom had been imprisoned there for 13 years, resisted, saying it was needed as a prison.

After the prisoner abuse by the Americans became public, President Bush proposed to raze the Abu Ghraib complex, but an American military judge ordered that it be preserved as a crime scene.

Nine American soldiers were ultimately found guilty in the Abu Ghraib abuse case, which also prompted a number of military and Congressional investigations.

Several high-ranking Iraqi officials said they were unaware of the American plans to move prisoners out of Abu Ghraib, or of any Iraqi plans for the complex after its transfer. The American military's schedule for moving out of the prison coincides roughly with the formation of a new Iraqi government, which is now under way.

"Perhaps we should make it into a school or a hospital," said Adnan Pachachi, a former foreign minister who is a member of Iraq's new Parliament. "It symbolized the mentality of Saddam Hussein, and then it also became the symbol of everything that went wrong during the occupation."

American military officials said the schedule for transferring prisoners out of Abu Ghraib would depend partly on the construction of a detention center at Camp Cropper, a prison on the military base at Baghdad's airport where "high-value detainees" are now held, including Mr. Hussein and his aides.

The American military also runs two other prisons for detainees suspected of insurgent activity, with a total of 14,589 inmates in all four facilities, said Lt. Col. Keir-Kevin Curry, a military spokesman. One is Fort Suse, north of the capital, and the other is Camp Bucca, the largest prison, in southern Iraq.

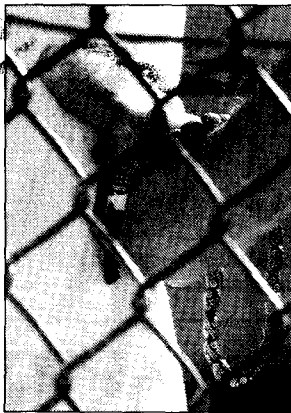
The prison abuse scandal at Abu Ghraib led to a number of changes in the American detainee system in Iraq. Investigations found there had been a shortage of professional interrogators to handle the growing number of detainees, and units inside Abu Ghraib had turned to untrained military policemen and policewomen for help. American military officials have said they now have enough interrogators, but the number of detainees has continued to grow, posing serious challenges for the system.

# US prison detainee refuses to cooperate

Guantanamo Bay US Naval Base (Cuba), March 3. (Reuters): An al Qaida member refused to appear before a Guantanamo war crimes tribunal yesterday or to cooperate with a US military defence lawyer whom he considers an enemy.

That left the court struggling to figure out how to comply with President George W. Bush's order to present a "zealous" defence for all the foreign terrorism suspects charged at the naval base in Cuba. The remote military prison, which UN human rights investigators have urged Washington to shut, is home to nearly 500 captives, but only 10 have been charged with a crime.

Ali Hamza al Bahlul, a Yemeni and acknowledged al Qaida member, is charged with conspiring with Osama bin Laden to commit crimes against civilians and property. He was allegedly bin Laden's bodyguard and made al Qaida



A detainee with prayer beads at Camp Delta, Guantanamo Bay, Cuba. (Reuters)

recruiting videos, but has said he had nothing to do with the September 11 attacks.

Bahlul refused to enter the courtroom for a pre-trial hearing at the remote base yesterday and the presiding officer, Colonel Peter Brownback, said he would not order him shackled and dragged in invol-

untarily.

Bahlul's attorney, Major Tom Fleener, has ignored Brownback's instructions to file certain motions in the case and said it was because his client told him to do nothing on his behalf.

"Mr Fleener, I told you to represent him," Brownback said, sounding exasperated. "The issue is not as simple as you say 'Do it,' and I do it," Fleener replied. "He doesn't want me, and can't be forced, I believe, to have me."

Bahlul has repeatedly sought and been refused permission to act as his own attorney or have a Yemeni lawyer. Tribunal rules require that defendants have US military lawyers who are able to review secret evidence that the defendants cannot see.

Defence attorneys and legal monitors said those rules violate international law guaranteeing the right to self-representation and the right to choose a lawyer.

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## U.S. Lawmakers Warn Europe on Arms Sales to China

By [Name] and [Name]

Published: March 2, 2005

WASHINGTON, March 1 - Senior members of Congress from both parties emerged from a meeting with President Bush on Tuesday warning Europe that if it lifts its ban on arms sales to China, the United States may retaliate with severe restrictions on technology sales to European companies.

The warning came after Mr. Bush, on his trip to Europe last week, twice cautioned the Europeans not to lift the restrictions, in place for 15 years. His insistence was based, at least in part, on a new American intelligence assessment that Beijing is rapidly becoming better equipped to carry out a sophisticated invasion of Taiwan and to counter any effort by the United States to react to such an attack, administration officials and intelligence analysts say.

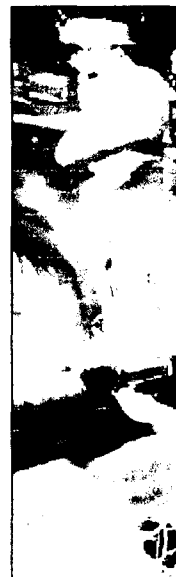
After the White House meeting on Tuesday, Senator Richard G. Lugar, the Indiana Republican who is chairman of the Foreign Relations Committee, said that if the ban is lifted - as European leaders have said they plan to do in coming months - Congress could react with "a prohibition on a great number of technical skills and materials, or products, being available to Europeans." The ranking Democrat on the committee, Senator Joseph R. Biden Jr. of Delaware, called a lifting of the ban "a nonstarter with Congress."

Their statements reinforce warnings that Mr. Bush and Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice made in meetings with Europeans over the past several weeks that the weapons sales would amount to a transfer of even more sophisticated military technology to China. But European officials say that the concerns are overstated, and that they are

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Chinese soldier demonstrations completing three training at a base in the Province in the country.

### ARTICLE TOC

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considering a compromise proposal that would keep advanced technologies from being exported.

3.

Although Mr. Bush and Ms. Rice have spoken publicly about the sale of heavy weapons, Pentagon officials say the biggest concern is the technology that goes with it, including radar and battlefield communication systems that could take China's rapid military buildup to a new level. And to make their case, the officials have begun to discuss how such technology would give China an increased ability to intimidate Taiwan with the threat of invasion if it moves too aggressively toward independence.

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The motivations for the officials to discuss this intelligence in interviews over the past two weeks are varied, and certainly include concerns about how the Chinese buildup could affect American security interests. But the discussion also comes as Congress takes up Mr. Bush's new spending proposals, which devote a majority of supplemental funding to land forces and the war in Iraq, while missions related to perceived threats from China fall mainly to the Navy and the Air Force.

embargoes :

In addition, some administration hawks are concerned about China's rapid growth as a military power in the Pacific at a time that American attention is focused on the Middle East.

The new intelligence reports indicate that since Mr. Bush came to office, China has raced ahead with one of the most ambitious military buildups in the world - including building 23 new amphibious assault ships that could ferry tanks, armored vehicles and troops across the 100 miles to Taiwan, and 13 new attack submarines.

"Their amphibious assault shipbuilding alone equals the entire U.S. Navy shipbuilding since 2002," one intelligence official said.

The official said Chinese military purchases abroad and domestic production of ships and warplanes "definitely represents a significant increase in overall capacity." At the same time, any advances in radar and communications ability would improve how rapidly and effectively those ships and planes could support an invasion or counter American moves in the region.

Military experts in European capitals and in Washington say they do not dispute the American intelligence reports on the growth in quality and quantity of Chinese arms. But European political leaders argue that the sanctions were placed to punish China because of its killing of pro-democracy demonstrators in Tiananmen Square 16 years ago, not because of its military power.

Now that a new generation of leaders has taken over in Beijing, they say, the specific cause of the sanctions is removed.

Continued

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# Foreign affairs get \$33b boost

## US To Focus On Aids Cure And Democracy Abroad

**Washington:** Foreign aid was a big winner in the White House budget unveiled on Monday, with a 13.7% hike in programmes such as efforts to promote reforms in developing countries and combat Aids.

President Bush requested \$33.7 billion for foreign operations for the 2007 fiscal year starting October 1, up from a projected \$20.9 billion in spending in 2005-2006. In its budget message, the administration said its assistance programmes would have "a strategic focus on countries where democracy is threatened or a lack of democracy threatens others in the region".

Officials said three areas accounted for virtually all of the increased budget request: aid for developing states, funding for the global fight against HIV/Aids and reconstruction help for Iraq.

Funding for the Millennium Challenge Corporation, which helps countries that agree to economic reforms, would rise to \$3 billion from the \$1.8 billion projected for the current fiscal year.



**Bush is trying to restore America's positive image**

The budget for Economic Support Fund, which promotes economic and political stability in areas where US has security interests, would also move up from \$2.6 billion to \$3.2 billion.

Public diplomacy, and the need to refurbish a US image that has lost its lustre in much of the world since the Iraq war, also took their place in the budget.

In his budget proposal, Bush also directed the Voice of America to enhance broadcasts of international and US news to Venezuela, Zimbabwe and Afghanistan, countries where the administration wants to strengthen democratic processes. Some parts of the world would see less money should the president's proposal be enacted, including Eastern Europe.

Core humanitarian and development programmes—including those paying for disaster aid, education, agriculture and environmental efforts—would see nearly \$433 million less than last year, according to an analysis by the Global AIDS Alliance. Agencies

### Bush's Budget Proposals

- Increase the defence budget by 6.9% to total a record \$439 billion before accounting for the wars in Iraq and Afghanistan.
- \$70 billion in new money to execute the war in Iraq.
- Slashing grants for education; the country's single passenger railway; community development and local law enforcement; and health research.
- Forecasts a record \$423 billion deficit for the year ending September 30 —Proposes to kill or dramatically slash 141 programmes for savings of almost \$15 billion.
- Initiate landmark tax cuts permanent and providing \$52 billion in health care tax breaks through 2011.

THE TIMES OF INDIA

# Europe may have known US 'outsourced' torture

JON BOYLE

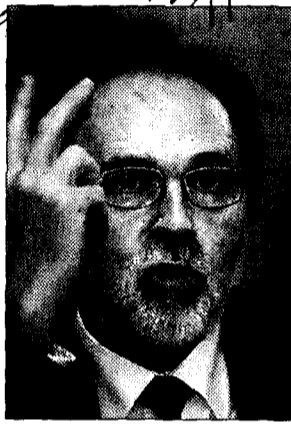
STRASBOURG, FRANCE,  
JANUARY 24

A EUROPEAN human rights investigator said on Tuesday there was evidence the United States had "outsourced" torture to other countries and it was likely that European governments knew about it.

But Swiss Senator Dick Marty, who heads an investigation by the Council of Europe human rights watchdog, said he had not uncovered any irrefutable evidence to confirm allegations that the CIA operated secret detention centres in Europe.

His remarks, in a preliminary report, kept pressure on the CIA and European governments over allegations that the US intelligence agency flew prisoners through airports in Europe to jails in third countries where they may have been tortured.

"There is a great deal of coherent, convergent evidence pointing to the existence of a system of 'relocation' or 'outsourcing of torture'," Marty said in his initial report into the



**Swiss Senator Dick Marty said on Tuesday there was much evidence of 'outsourcing of torture' by the US. Reuters**

allegations for the 46-nation Council, based in the eastern French city of Strasbourg.

He said it had been proved that "individuals have been abducted, deprived of their liberty and transported to different destinations in Europe, to be handed over to countries in which they have suffered degrading treatment and torture."

Marty estimated that over 100 people had been involved in "renditions"—delivering

prisoners to jails in third countries, where they may have been mistreated or tortured.

But Marty said there was no firm evidence of detention centres in Europe similar to the one operated by the US at Guantanamo Bay in Cuba. The US government has neither denied nor confirmed the reports of secret detention centers, first made in the *Washington Post* newspaper in November. US Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice has said Washington has done nothing illegal.

Denis MacShane, a British Member of Parliament, said Marty's report "has more holes than a Swiss cheese". European Security Commissioner Franco Frattini called on EU member states to cooperate fully with the investigations but said the European Commission would not draw conclusions yet because the investigation is still going on.

The allegations have named Romania, Poland, Ukraine, Kosovo and Bulgaria as hosts to secret detention centers. No country has acknowledged playing any active role in the network. —Reuters

INDIAN EXPRESS

26 JAN 2006



# US airstrike misses Zawahri, angers Pak

Islamabad/Washington, Jan. 14 (Reuters): A US airstrike on a Pakistan village targeted al Qaida's second-in-command, US intelligence sources say, but Pakistani officials said Ayman al-Zawahri was not there and condemned the attack.

The strike near the Afghan border yesterday killed at least 18 people, including women and children, and three houses were destroyed, according to residents of Damadola village in Bajaur tribal area.

CIA-operated unmanned drones were believed to have been used in the attack, US sources said. A Pakistani intelligence official said four missiles had been fired.

Pakistan condemned the airstrike and summoned US ambassador Ryan Crocker. Information minister Sheikh Rashid Ahmed said he had no information about Zawahri, though another Pakistani official said Osama bin Laden's deputy was not in the village.

"Al-Zawahri was not there at the time," the official, who declined to be identified, said.

Al Arabiya satellite television said today Zawahri was alive, quoting a source which it said has contact with al Qaida.



Ayman al-Zawahri: Lucky again

The US has offered \$25 million each for Egyptian Zawahri and bin Laden, who have been on the run since US-led forces toppled Afghanistan's Taliban government in 2001 after the September 11 attacks on US cities.

They are believed to have been hiding along the border under the protection of Pash-tun tribes.

Pakistani intelligence sources said Zawahri was believed to have made visits to

the Bajaur area, though yesterday he was not in Damadola, 200 km northwest of Islamabad.

Pakistan's foreign ministry said foreigners had been in the vicinity, and were the probable target of the attack from forces based in Afghanistan.

"As a result of this act there has been loss of innocent civilian lives which we condemn," the ministry said.

Anger has been building in

Pakistan over repeated US attacks, and today hundreds of protesters chanted anti-American slogans at Inayat Killi village, near Damadola.

The incident came days after Pakistan, an important ally in the US-led war on terrorism, lodged a strong protest with US-led forces in Afghanistan, saying cross-border firing in the Waziristan tribal area last weekend killed eight people.

President Pervez Musharraf, addressing officials in the town of Swabi to the north of Islamabad, made only a passing reference to the attack in Bajaur, saying it was being investigated.

People from Damadola said no foreigners, only local people, were present and killed in yesterday's attack.

"I know all the 18 people killed. There was neither Zawahri nor any other Arab among them. Rather they were all poor people of the area," Haroon Rashid, the area's National Assembly representative, was quoted by the Afghan Islamic Press news agency as saying.

US sources in Washington said the remains of the dead would have to be examined to determine whether Zawahri was among them.

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## U.S. to Shift Envoys to China, India

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Russia, Germany to Lose Diplomatic Posts in Early Restructuring

By Bradley Graham and Glenn Kessler  
Washington Post Staff Writers  
Friday, February 10, 2006; A17

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China and India have emerged as the big winners -- and Russia and Germany as the top losers -- in the first round of a broad restructuring of U.S. diplomatic posts ordered by Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice.



Rice announced plans last month to shift hundreds of Foreign Service positions from Europe and other developed countries to more challenging assignments in Asia, the Middle East and elsewhere as part of an increased U.S. focus on battling terrorism and bolstering security in threatened regions. But the secretary and her aides released few details at the time.

Two State Department lists obtained by The Washington Post this week -- one showing which diplomatic positions will be eliminated, the other specifying which embassies and consulates are due to expand -- provide a clearer picture of the impact of the moves.

Of 61 positions slated for elimination in the initial batch, 10 will fall in Russia and seven in Germany. U.S. embassies in several other countries -- Belgium, Poland, Italy, Spain, Ukraine, Japan and Brazil -- will lose two or three posts. All told, 38 of the cuts will come in European nations.

On the plus side, of 74 new U.S. diplomatic positions, China will get 15, including a dozen at the U.S. Embassy in Beijing. India ranks second with 12 new posts, seven of them in New Delhi. And Indonesia is third with five new slots in Jakarta. Other countries that are to receive at least three more U.S. diplomatic slots include Nigeria, Israel, Lebanon, Vietnam, Tajikistan, Bolivia, Ecuador, Venezuela and Nicaragua.

The lists of closures and add-ons constitute just the beginning of a major rearrangement that State Department officials say will affect a substantial portion of the 6,400 Foreign Service positions. A senior State Department official involved in the planning said the first round grew out of assessments by regional bureaus of jobs they could "safely give up" and of "places where there was a crying, urgent need to have additional representation."

"This is a down payment for a shift that will probably take place over several years," the official said.

Rice has portrayed the restructuring as an essential feature of her larger "transformational diplomacy" campaign, which envisions a more active role for U.S. diplomats in fostering the growth of democratic states worldwide. Although the shifting of posts has been welcomed generally by the American Foreign Service Association representing U.S. diplomats, the potential scale of the change has unsettled some State Department employees.

"We're waiting to see just how far the secretary plans to go with this," said one Foreign Service officer

[http://www.washingtonpost.com/wp-dyn/content/article/2006/02/09/AR2006020901963\\_p...](http://www.washingtonpost.com/wp-dyn/content/article/2006/02/09/AR2006020901963_p...) 2/15/2006

who has discussed the plan with senior department officials.

One particular concern, the officer said, involves future levels of security and support for the expanded embassies and consulates. The new jobs listed so far have been confined to political, economic and public diplomacy positions. No mention has been made of additional security personnel to enhance protection, office management specialists to handle heavier administrative loads or technology experts to deal with computer problems and other technical issues.

Asked about this aspect, the senior State Department official said parallel plans are being drawn to provide extra support staff.

Some of the overseas posts on the initial cut list had been due to receive fresh replacement officers, who already had begun foreign language training or taken other steps to prepare for the positions. State Department officials say that fewer than 30 such "broken handshake" cases exist and that the affected officers are being helped to secure alternate assignments.

To find volunteers for the newly created positions, the State Department issued a memo last month advising Foreign Service personnel not to wait for the formal bidding process normally used to decide assignments. Instead, willing officers were encouraged to make their interest known to the relevant regional bureaus.

"Bureaus will be authorized to extend handshakes even before the positions appear" on the bid list, the memo said.

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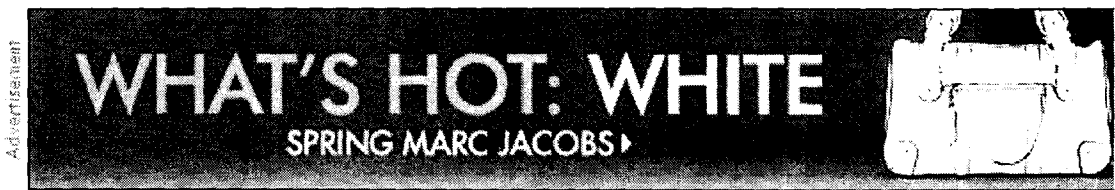
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Saturday, January 21, 2006; Page A18

A YEAR INTO her tenure, Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice has proposed important shifts in the country's diplomatic posture. She plans to move 100 State Department officers out of Washington and Europe and closer to the challenges of the 21st century -- how to forge partnerships with emerging powers such as India, how to contain fast-spreading global diseases, how to combat the nihilistic strains of political Islam. She promises to create a new unit of Arabic speakers to defend U.S. policies in Middle Eastern media, and she wants to move diplomats out of fortified compounds in the capitals and into important provincial cities. These sensible reforms ought to be doable, but Ms. Rice has also committed herself to two more daunting efforts. She has reiterated her ambitions for the new and beleaguered Reconstruction and Stabilization Office. And she has created a new post of director of foreign assistance with the rank of deputy secretary in the hope of bringing cohesion to fragmented aid programs.

The Reconstruction and Stabilization Office was created in 2004 to coordinate the civilian part of assistance to failed and failing states. The idea was that the collapse of order in poor countries can threaten U.S. interests, creating havens for drug dealers or terrorists or other threats. But this new boutique within the State Department quickly got lost in the vastness of its mandate. Rather than restricting itself to delivering a few practical tools -- for example, a database of linguists working for the federal government who have skills relevant to reconstruction -- it got sidetracked by ambitions to create an early-warning system for state failure and bogged down by differences with the Pentagon. In last year's budget negotiations, Congress refused to approve the \$100 million that the administration requested for the office. Its director has left for a think tank.

21 JAN 2006

To make a success of this venture, Ms. Rice needs to narrow its focus. There's no point drawing up lists of the 20 states most likely to "fail" imminently; private organizations such as the International Crisis Group already do this, and there's nothing the U.S. government can do with this sort of information beyond the diplomatic and foreign-assistance efforts that it should be undertaking anyway. But if reviving the Reconstruction and Stabilization Office is a challenge, it is nothing compared with the job that awaits the new director of foreign assistance, Randall L. Tobias.

Mr. Tobias arrives from the administration's global AIDS initiative, which he has run effectively. His approach was to take money that was relatively unencumbered with congressional strings and use embassy officials stationed in poor countries to figure out how to spend the money well. He is assuming responsibility for a foreign assistance program that could not be more different. Congress has imposed so many restrictions on the aid's use that officials can't deploy it flexibly, and this problem has been compounded by their sometimes-supine attitude to autocratic governments. Rather than routing aid through pro-democracy groups in countries such as Egypt or Russia, the Agency for International Development has often accepted such countries' insistence that money flow only through the government and its allies.

By appointing an aid czar with deputy secretary of state status, the administration has created an opportunity but not yet a result. Mr. Tobias needs to use his authority to persuade Congress to vote more flexible money and to give the aid professionals the courage to support democratic opponents of autocratic clients. And Ms. Rice will need to back him. She has described foreign assistance as central to what she calls "transformational diplomacy." It will take some tough battles to lend substance to those words.

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» **Sebastian Mallaby** | Condoleezza Rice has caught up with the 1990s consensus that we're threatened by disintegrating states -- but not the question of whether we can do anything about them.



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## Keeping The Progress Going

Afghanistan May Need More of Our Help Than Iraq

By Harold Ford Jr.

Saturday, January 21, 2006; Page A19

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I returned recently from a six-day trip to Iraq, Afghanistan and Pakistan inspired by the progress that has been made in the region. Afghans and Iraqis yearn for a new beginning predicated on freedom. In both places, the keys to a new future are identical: better security and improved services. Each country is at a different point in its development on both of these fronts, and each is at an important crossroads.

Contrary to conventional wisdom, Afghanistan stands at a more difficult and precarious junction than does Iraq. With a smaller U.S. military presence, Afghanistan is bracing for a larger NATO role in administering services and policing provinces and borders. This transition comes just as the insurgency in Afghanistan is gaining momentum.

As former ambassador Paul Bremer asserts in his new book about his time in Iraq, it's best to destroy an insurgency in its infancy, before it gains strength. We should not help give birth and momentum to an Afghan insurgency by repeating the mistakes we made in Iraq. Instead, we should work with our allies to kill the fledgling insurgency in Afghanistan now, when we have the chance.

In addition, we need to continue to provide technical resource

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support, and we should begin training Afghan police leadership in U.S. and European police academies. We also need to redouble our efforts to help Afghan farmers make the transition from opium poppies to other crops, and to move the Afghan economy into the mainstream. The opium trade is financing the final vestiges of the Taliban and steadily entrenching an underground and criminal economy in Afghanistan.

In Iraq, the challenges are different, though no less significant. With the election over, Iraq must form a coalition government sooner rather than later to sustain the Iraqi people's commitment to the political process and the American people's commitment to continuing the present large-scale effort.

Shifting responsibility for rebuilding to provincial reconstruction teams is a good start. It should accelerate the infrastructure work already underway and place more responsibility in the hands of the Iraqis for building and maintaining new construction and essential services. Here are a few additional recommendations for President Bush:

- The president should end the domestic spying program. It has severely damaged his standing and credibility with the American people. If the president wants the Foreign Intelligence Surveillance Act court to work faster and produce speedier resolutions to serious national security questions, we can introduce legislation in Congress to make adjustments. Frankly, I am still unsure how his hands were tied under FISA, but I'm willing to work with him to ensure that he has the authority he needs to keep the country safe. At the end of the day, we are a nation of laws. We cannot be in the business of exporting democracy and liberty if we cannot protect it at home.
- We cannot leave Iraq and Afghanistan until they have adequate systems in place to govern and defend themselves. There is conflicting rhetoric coming out of the administration on this front. One day we hear that a pullout or drawdown of U.S. troops is imminent. The next we hear the opposite. I want the troops home as much as anyone, but having to send another generation to that region to fight 10 or more years from now because we left too early would be a worse outcome than the situation we now face. We need to do this right the first time.
- The president should continue working with our allies and repairing our relationships around the globe. The United States alone cannot fight and win a global war on terrorism. We need the help of every freedom-loving nation.
- The president should make a major commitment to building a new United Nations, perhaps by involving former presidents Bill Clinton

and George H.W. Bush in the effort. As much disdain as the current administration has for the United Nations, it can play an important role in peacekeeping, negotiating political agreements and providing humanitarian relief.

· Last, and most important, energy reform should be our top legislative priority this year. Until we reduce our dependence on oil, our national security will continue to be disproportionately and dangerously tied to our need for supplies of it from the Middle East.

Just as Afghans and Iraqis are at a crossroads, so are we. We can adhere to policies that have led to some disturbing results, or we can learn from our mistakes and correct our course. I left Afghanistan and Iraq with a firm belief that we can still help each nation move toward stability. But we must have the clarity of mind and strength of character to acknowledge our shortcomings and make changes where necessary. The stakes are too high to do otherwise.

*The writer is a Democratic representative from Tennessee.*

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# INDO-US DEAL | 'It is better to have India under IAEA safeguards than not to have them at all' Kerry backs N-agreement 'in principle'

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE  
NEW DELHI, JANUARY 12

**E**FFORTS underway to carry the Indo-US nuclear deal forward received a boost today with US Senator and Democrat candidate John Kerry expressing his support, "in principle", for the July 18 understanding.

Kerry, who met Prime Minister Manmohan Singh on Wednesday, said he had conveyed his support during the visit but was still awaiting details. "In principle, I support this. It is better to have India under the IAEA safeguards than not to have them at all," he said, addressing the media after his official meetings in Delhi.

The Senator said Singh had assured him that India would

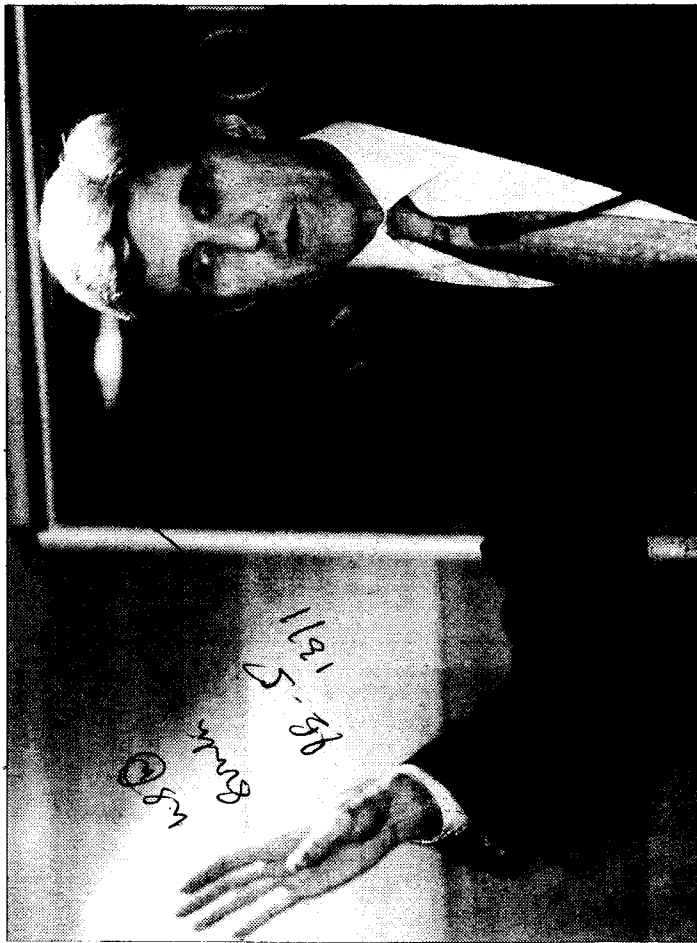
sign the Fissile Materials Cutoff Treaty once it was finalised. In that sense, Kerry felt, the deal would increase "visibility" on efforts to firm up the treaty which has been in the works for some time. Further, Kerry was clear that the deal does accord India nuclear power status. "It would be disingenuous to say that once the agreement goes through in its present form, it would not accord India that status. It does."

Though sounding positive on the deal, Kerry—who is also a member of the Senate Foreign Relations Committee—said he would like to first see the "four corners" of the agreement which is still being finalised. Before leaving for New Delhi, Kerry met Under Secretary for Political Affairs Nicholas Burns—Washington's chief

interlocutor on the deal—and was apprised of the progress so far in the negotiations. "If India brings the majority of its reactors under safeguards, I think it would be a step in realising non-proliferation objectives," Kerry said.

The agreement, he said, would impact the Nuclear Suppliers Group and the Missile Technology Control Regime besides the Atomic Energy Act. "I told the prime minister that we can't just look at the agreement in its bilateral context, as it will also have an impact multilaterally," he said.

On the Iran nuclear crisis, the senator said that all countries must take the situation with "utmost seriousness", and said he favoured a discussion on the issue in the UN Security Council.



US senator John Kerry addresses the media after a meeting with former Indian diplomats in New Delhi on Thursday. PTI photo

# US warns LTTE of high war costs

*Washington training Lanka military: envoy*

**P K Balachandran**  
Colombo, January 11

THE UNITED States has warned the LTTE that if it returned to war, it would find the cost to be "high".

"Through our military training and assistance programmes, including efforts to help with counter-terrorism initiatives and block illegal financial transactions, we are helping to shape the ability of the Sri Lankan government to protect its people and defend its interests," US Ambassador Jeffrey Lunstead told a gathering at the American Chamber of Commerce (AMCHAM) on Monday.

"Let me be clear, our assistance is not given because we anticipate or hope for a return to hostilities. We want peace. We support peace. And we will stand by the people of Sri Lanka who desire peace," he said.

"If the LTTE chooses to abandon peace, however, we want it to be clear, they will face a stronger, more capable and more determined Sri Lankan military."

"We want the cost of a return to war to be high," the envoy stressed.

While slamming the LTTE, he congratulated the Sri Lankan government for its continued restraint in the face of provocations by the terror group.

The US Ambassador charged the LTTE of misleading the Tamils and said that instead of leading the community to peace and prosperity, it was blocking their path to peace and development. He questioned its legitimacy.

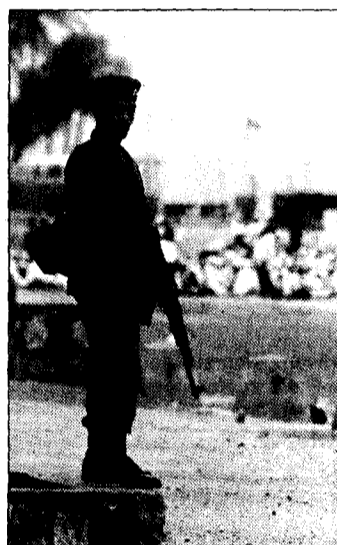
"The LTTE's current actions call into question its leadership of the Tamil people. What kind

## Soldiers foil deadly ambush

TROOPS FOUND a boobytrapped fragmentation mine in Sri Lanka's far north and suspected rebels lobbed grenades at army bunkers, the military said on Wednesday, while the LTTE accused the army of abducting a Tamil youth from his home in the army-held northern enclave of Jaffna and threatening to shoot his mother.

When troops were withdrawing after picket duties, they found a claymore mine and two detonators with a 30-metre wire, an army spokesman said on Wednesday. While the soldiers checked it out, a small group of LTTE cadres lobbed grenades, but no one was injured.

Reuters, Colombo



A soldier keeps watch while Muslims pray as part of the Id al-Adha festival in Colombo.

of leaders block their people from realising their most fundamental democratic aspirations?"

"What kind of leaders allow their people to continue to suffer from a lack of investment and industry?"

"What kind of leaders continue to pursue violence when the clear benefits of peace are obvious?" Lunstead asked.

"These are not acts of leadership. They directly undermine LTTE claims to legitimacy and they keep the aspirations of the Tamils bottled up," he said.

"We are helping to shape the ability of the Sri Lankan government to protect its people and defend its interests," he asserted.

## Solheim to meet Prabhakaran

ERIK SOLHEIM, the Norwegian minister for international development, who looks after the peace process in Sri Lanka is hoping to meet LTTE leader Velupillai Prabhakaran when he visits the island in the last week of January. The two are expected to meet on January 25 at the LTTE's political headquarters in Kilinochchi, but there is no guarantee that it will take place because Prabhakaran is known to be wary of meeting foreign dignitaries.

HTC, Colombo

THE HINDUSTAN TIMES

12 JAN 2006

# Bush defends Iraq policy

The American President has an interaction with former Secretaries of State and Defence.

David E. Sanger

Colin L. Powell said nothing – a silence that spoke volumes to many in the White House on Thursday morning. His predecessor, Madeleine K. Albright, a bit stirred up after hearing an exceedingly upbeat 40-minute briefing to 13 former Secretaries of State and Defence about how well things are going in Iraq, asked President George W. Bush whether, with the war “taking up all the energy” of his foreign policy team, he had let the nuclear programmes in Iran and North Korea spin out of control and allowed Latin America and China policy suffer by neglect.

“I can’t let this comment stand,” Mr. Bush shot back, telling Ms. Albright and the rare assembly of her colleagues, who reached back to the Kennedy White House, that his administration “can do more than one thing at a time.” The Bush administration, he insisted, had “the best relations of any country with Japan, China and Korea,” and had programmes to make alliances around the world.

That was, it appears, one of the few heated moments during an unusual White House effort to bring some of its critics into the fold and provide a patina of bipartisan common ground to the strategy Mr. Bush has laid out in recent weeks for Iraq.

But if it was a bipartisan consultation, as advertised by the White House, it was a brief one. Mr. Bush allowed five to 10 minutes for interchange with the group – which included three veterans of the Vietnam era: Robert S. McNamara, Melvin R. Laird, and James R. Schlesinger – before herding the whole group into the Oval Office for a “family picture.”

Those who wanted to impart more wisdom to the current occupants of the White House were sent back across the hall to meet again with Stephen J. Hadley, the national security adviser, and Gen. Peter Pace, the chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff. But as several of the participants noted, by that time Mr. Bush, Vice-President Dick Cheney, Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice, and Defence Secretary Donald H. Rumsfeld had gone on to other meetings.

When cameras were in the room, Mr. Bush displayed no hint of defensiveness, only gratitude. “I’m most grateful for the suggestions that have been given,” he said. “We take to heart the advice, we appreciate your experience and we appreciate you taking the time.”

The morning session, which largely took place in the Roosevelt Room of the White House, had shades of the first days of Bush’s presidency in 2001, when he frequently held bipartisan meetings in

the White House to discuss education or budget priorities.

“I think he’s now testing whether enough time and bitterness have passed since the parties, and the country, were so deeply split during the 2004 campaign,” said Ari Fleischer, the former White House press secretary, who attended many of the early bipartisan meetings. “My belief is he wants to make such meetings worthwhile again.”

But a lot of bitterness remains, and several of the former Cabinet members invited on Thursday observed that Mr. Bush had waited more than 1,000 days into the war in Iraq – and after many mistakes had been made – to gather together the men and one woman who once held their own skull sessions in that room, and who once used the West Wing as a backdrop for arguments over Vietnam and Somalia, the Balkans, and the 1991 Gulf War.

The session on Thursday morning began with briefings from Gen. George W. Casey Jr., the senior American commander in Iraq, and by secure video connection from Baghdad, Zalmay Khalilzad, America’s Ambassador there.

“The message was, briefly stated, that the political process is working,” said William J. Perry, who served as Defence Secretary under President Bill Clinton.

Mr. Khalilzad admitted that the absence of support for Iraq from neighbouring Arab countries was a problem, but he assured the group that he was working on it and thought it would improve as the year wore on. There was discussion of how intelligence tips about insurgent activity were up, and how training of Iraqi troops was going well.

When he took the floor, Mr. Bush left no doubt that he believed his strategy to be the only path to victory, and he gave no hint, participants said, of self-doubt. “It would be a stretch to say he was really interested in many thoughts from around the table,” said one former official, who asked not to be identified so that he could speak frankly about a private meeting with the President.

In the few minutes that he engaged with his guests, Mr. Bush seemed to call on the oldest officials present: Mr. McNamara, whose own second-guessing about his decisions on Vietnam have now become legendary; Mr. Laird; and George P. Shultz, Secretary of State to President Ronald Reagan and still an important behind-the-scenes adviser to some in the Bush administration. (Henry Kissinger, whom Mr. Bush also consults periodically, had to cancel at the last minute; Warren M. Christopher and Caspar W. Weinberger could not make it.) –New York Times News Service

THE HINDU

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