

# US sanctions strategy means war: N Korea

## Washington has no intention to invade DPRK: Bush

REUTERS, Seoul

Communist North Korea said on Tuesday economic sanctions over its nuclear program would mean war and urged the United States to sit down and talk, just hours after Washington signalled that dialogue was still an option.

President Bush, who has branded the communist state part of an "axis of evil" along with Iraq and Iran, said Monday he remained open to dialogue but White House officials said the North must first end efforts to develop atomic weapons.

Pyongyang's KCNA news agency denounced the United States' brief seizure last month of a shipload of North Korean missiles bound for Yemen, calling it "part of the US-tailored containment strategy against the DPRK (North Korea)."

"The strategy means total economic sanctions aimed at isolating and stifling the DPRK," the agency said Tuesday.

"Sanctions mean a war and the war knows no mercy. The US should opt for dialogue with the DPRK, not for war, clearly aware that it will have to pay a very high price for such reckless acts," KCNA added.

A South Korean presidential envoy headed to

Washington on Tuesday in a fresh bid to defuse the crisis.

National security adviser Yim Sung-joon, was expected to suggest that the United States give North Korea security assurances and promises to resume energy supplies in return for the North abandoning its nuclear program.

The UN nuclear watchdog, meanwhile, gave Pyongyang a last chance to readmit inspectors expelled last week.

Meeting in Vienna the governing board of the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) passed a resolution warning North Korea to cooperate with its inspectors or be reported to the UN Security Council for breaching nuclear safeguards.

A South Korean official said the international community backed the ultimatum from the IAEA.

"Basically, the IAEA's decision reflects the international community's unified voice and we hope that North Korea will take the message," said Kim Moon-hwan, from Seoul's foreign ministry.

Tension has risen on the Korean peninsula since late December when North Korea expelled the agency's inspectors and fired up a reactor mothballed in 1994 when it agreed to end such

work in exchange for oil from the United States and its allies.

Washington insists that the North end its quest for nuclear weapons. A defiant Pyongyang countered with a demand that the United States, which keeps thousands of troops in the South, sign a non-aggression pact.

Bush said Monday the United States would talk with North Korea but a White House official said dialogue could start only after the North dismantles its weapon programs.

"We'll have dialogue. We've had dialogue with North Korea," Bush told reporters after a cabinet meeting.

AFP adds: US President George W. Bush said Monday he hoped to resolve a standoff with North Korea over its nuclear program peacefully and reiterated the United States has no plans to invade the Stalinist nation.

"We have no intention of invading North Korea," he said during a brief public appearance. "I believe this will be resolved peacefully and I believe it can be resolved diplomatically."

But Bush also sternly called on the Stalinist nation to abide by a 1994 anti-nuclear deal with Washington.



South Korean peace activists and North Korean defectors release white doves along the military demarcation line separating the two Koreas on Tuesday calling for a peaceful solution of the ongoing nuclear crisis in North Korea. North Korea said that the US had embarked on a strategy of using sanctions to isolate Pyongyang and this is tantamount to declaration of war.



A group of homeless people gather around a fire to keep warm with a dog wearing a T-shirt on Tuesday in Kolkata. The recent cold spell in northern India has killed at least 232 people so far.

## Pakistan rejects hot pursuit deal with US

THE DAWN, Islamabad

Pakistan on Monday said that India's official statement about nuclear weapons last week signalled an "important extension of Indian policy of using nuclear weapons".

Foreign ministry spokesman Aziz Ahmad Khan told a press briefing that the statement was "a further evidence that nuclear weapons and their use is very much part of Indian strategic policy".

Answering questions, Mr Khan elaborated that Delhi's announcement to use nuclear weapons if attacked with biological and chemical weapons was an important extension of India's policy of using of nuclear weapons.

The spokesman rejected as baseless a report which suggested that President Pervez Musharraf and US Secretary of State Colin Powell had agreed that hot pursuit of the fleeing Afghan fighters by the American forces across the

Pakistan-Afghanistan border would continue but quietly without any side making statement about it.

The spokesman emphasised that there should be no ambiguity that only Pakistani forces had been conducting anti-terrorist operations within Pakistan for the last 14 months when the anti-terror war was unleashed by an international coalition led by the US armed forces. He said that only Pakistani forces would conduct the operations in future. However, he added, Pakistan had been cooperating with the international community, including the American forces, and coordinating in efforts against terrorists.

The spokesman maintained that the only incident or accident which took place recently when an American plane had bombed a madrassah inside the Pakistan border was under investigation. It remained to be determined "what fell and where," he said.

## Laden's deputy calls for attack on all US nationals

AFP, Cairo

Osama bin Laden's Egyptian lieutenant, Ayman al-Zawahiri, has called for attacks on "all Americans", in a message attributed to him and sent to Cairo lawyer Montasser al-Zayyat.

"By God, do not prevent new Muslim souls from taking part in the Jihad (holy war), which consists of killing all Americans, just like they kill us all," Zawahiri purportedly said in an e-mail, the lawyer told AFP.

"The Jihad against the enemies of God who kill us all over the world surely comes at a price. This price is minimal, whatever it is, since it is a matter of satisfying God and reaching paradise," he wrote in the message.

"Do not question an act which leads to paradise," read the message sent to the Internet site of Al-Mostaqbal (the future), an organisation founded by Zayyat.

## Lankan talks side-step disarmament issue

REUTERS, Nakorn Pathom

The Sri Lankan government and Tamil Tigers Tuesday side-stepped the divisive issue of disarming the rebels inside military zones during peace talks to end the island's two-decade ethnic war.

On the second day of talks at a resort south of the Thai capital Bangkok, both sides discussed resettling displaced Tamils in the north of the country, a step tied to security because of army calls for the rebels to begin disarming.

The army says this is needed to allow the displaced to return to their homes inside strategic military zones. The rebels have so far refused to comply.

"We decided to deal with the problem in a sensible way -- to deal with the things that can be immediately solved," Chief government negotiator G.L. Peiris told reporters after the morning session, adding that efforts would focus on resettling people in other areas first.

Peiris said the two sides hoped to

draw up a timeframe in the next two days on demining and providing returnees with basic needs.

The war killed more than 64,000 people and drove more than a million from their homes, many of which are now destroyed or in heavily mined areas.

The government military zones are huge army camps in which residents are not allowed into for security reasons.

There had been concerns before the latest round of peace talks started that a focus on shrinking the zones would make the negotiations more tense than the three successful previous rounds of negotiations.

"That was a morning very well spent. That will disappoint people who expected the whole process to break down," Peiris said.

Norwegian mediators also said the talks went smoothly.

"The negotiations were conducted in a very good atmosphere," said Vidar Helgesen, the deputy foreign Minister of Norway.

## Israel bars Palestinians under 35 to leave WB

### Army kills 3 during incursion

AFP, Gaza City

Israel Tuesday confined senior Palestinian officials to their cities and barred all other Palestinians under 35 from leaving the West Bank or Gaza Strip, in further reprisals for a double suicide bombing in Tel Aviv.

The army, under orders to crack down further in the hunt for Palestinian militants, also killed three Palestinians during an incursion in the Gaza Strip overnight.

Chief Palestinian negotiator Saeb Erekat said Israel had issued orders to Palestinian Authority ministers and senior officials not to leave their cities as part of a plan to use Sunday's bloody bombing to smash what remains of Yasser Arafat's Palestinian Authority.

"This is new proof that Israel wants to destroy the Palestinian Authority," he told AFP.

No Israeli officials were available to comment on the new measures, although a senior Palestinian security official in Rafah said that even women under 35 were being refused permission to cross into Egypt.

And an official at the Palestinian

ministry of labour in Gaza said that 4,000 workers aged under 35 who had been previously allowed to enter Israel to work had been turned back, with only 1,350 others allowed through.

The Israeli navy also imposed a blockade on the Gaza coast, forbidding fishermen to go out in the Mediterranean, Palestinian officials said.

Israel, which recaptured most of the West Bank more than six months ago and exerts close control on the Gaza Strip, said Monday it would further tighten restrictions on Palestinian movement after the Tel Aviv bombing which killed 22 people as well as the bombing.

It prevented a top-level Palestinian delegation, including Erekat, from travelling to London for talks on internal reforms with other regional and international players, at the invitation of Prime Minister Tony Blair.

The ban was heavily criticised by London, provoking a heated exchange between Israeli Foreign Minister Benjamin Netanyahu and his British counterpart Jack Straw, but the United States refrained from condemning it.

The latest restrictions were imposed as Israel carried out a raid into the Maghazi refugee camp in the southern Gaza Strip, shooting dead three Palestinians, according to Palestinian officials.

An Israeli army spokesman said Palestinians had opened fire on the soldiers who had replied, hitting several of them.

Sunday's blast, after a period of relative calm for Israel -- although the death toll rose steadily in the territories -- came just three weeks before Israel's general elections, piling pressure on Sharon, elected almost two years ago on a pledge to bring security to the Jewish state.

The campaign for the January 28 Israeli elections was officially launched on public television and radio Tuesday.

Israeli radio broadcast a series of campaign messages for each party and the electoral video clips were due to be aired for the first time in the evening.

An Israeli judge was expected to decide Tuesday whether or not to ban the clip of a far-right party rewriting the national anthem, with Arab lyrics calling for the expulsion of Jews.



## Spielberg to get first Walk of Fame

AFP, Los Angeles

Three-time Oscar-winning movie director Steven Spielberg will this week become the first Tinseltown personality to receive a coveted star on Hollywood's Walk of Fame in 2003, officials said Monday.

The maker of such blockbusters as "Jaws" (1975), "E.T. The Extraterrestrial," (1982) and "Raiders of the Lost Ark" (1981) will win his place on Los Angeles' Hollywood Boulevard at a ceremony on Friday.

"We are very pleased that Steven can join us for this ceremony," said Hollywood's honorary mayor Johnny Grant. "This is one we have been looking forward to for a long time!" he added.

The team flew to the town aboard

# Saddam still has time to avert war: Bush

## UN experts start using helicopters for inspection

AFP, Baghdad

UN inspectors used helicopters for the first time Tuesday as they expanded their hunt for Iraq's alleged weapons of mass destruction, which earned them a charge of spying from President Saddam Hussein.

The charge was dismissed by both the inspectors' spokesman and the United States, which has called up nearly 20,000 army reservists and National Guard troops as part of preparations for a possible invasion of Iraq, but President George W. Bush said Saddam still had time to avert a military showdown.

A dozen experts flew from Baghdad, where the UN inspectors have their headquarters, in the early hours of Tuesday to a phosphate plant near al-Qaim, some 400 km west of the capital, close to the border with Syria, an AFP photographer reported.

The team flew to the town aboard

three white-painted helicopters marked "UN," escorted by two Iraqi helicopters.

They arrived in al-Qaim around 9:30 a.m. (0630 GMT). The inspectors, wearing protective clothes and masks, began checking the factory, which had already been visited on December 10.

UN spokesman Hiro Ueki said at the time that the factory was involved in processing uranium before the 1991 Gulf War.

The inspectors, who relaunched the arms inspection process on November 27 after a four-year break, have six helicopters, according to Ueki.

They will use them both to travel across the country and carry out aerial inspections.

Ueki on Monday rejected Saddam's charge that the inspectors had, under US pressure, been diverted into carrying out "intelligence activity."

"All I can say is that the inspec-

tors are not spies. We are doing our job professionally, objectively, and the best we can," he said.

Bush said the Iraqi leader's accusation, taken with what Washington charges is his incomplete weapons declaration to the United Nations, sent a discouraging signal.

"That was an interesting statement on his part and when you combine that with the fact that his declaration was clearly deficient it's discouraging news for those of us who want to resolve this issue peacefully," said Bush, who has pledged to disarm Iraq by force if necessary.

Bush charged that Saddam was "a threat to the American people" and "a threat to our friends and neighbours in the Middle East."

The Iraqi leader "is a person who's used weapons of mass destruction. And so therefore the world has said to Saddam, 'You won't have any weapons of mass

destruction, get rid of them,'" said Bush.

The US leader said it looked like Saddam had thus far not complied with a UN disarmament resolution, but added that "he's got time and we continue to call upon Saddam Hussein to listen to what the world is saying."

Baghdad's official media Tuesday dubbed Bush the "worst of liars" for his claim that Iraq remained a threat to the United States and its allies.

"Now that UN inspectors have looked and found nothing suspicious in Iraq, how can anyone believe that this country is capable of threatening the United States, a country from which it is separated by continents and oceans?" asked the ruling Baath Party's mouthpiece Ath-Thawra.



Annie Wang (R) of Vancouver lines up with some of the twenty members of the "Miss Chinese International Pageant 2003" as they are introduced to the media in a Hong Kong hotel on Tuesday. The annual beauty pageant organised by a Hong Kong television company will be held in the territory on the January 23 and features Chinese girls from twenty different cities from around the world.

## Indian troops kill 7 rebels on Bhutan border

AFP, Guwahati

Indian troops shot dead seven tribal separatists in two separate encounters along the Bhutan border, an official said Tuesday.

An army spokesman said three militants of the outlawed National Democratic Front of Bodoland (NDFB) were killed late Monday in India's northeastern state of Assam, which borders the tiny Himalayan kingdom of Bhutan.

"The NDFB militants were trying to sneak into Assam from their camps in Bhutan when army soldiers on a routine patrol challenged them," the official told AFP.

The encounter, 250 kilometres (156 miles) west of Assam state capital Guwahati, lasted for more than two hours.

On Sunday, troops shot dead four NDFB militants close to the border in similar circumstances, the official said.

They recovered three AK-56

assault rifles, four grenades, and a mortar, besides a huge cache of ammunition from the dead militants.

The NDFB, fighting for an independent homeland for the Bodo tribe in Assam, operates out of bases in southern Bhutan to carry out their hit-and-run guerrilla strikes on federal soldiers.

Another rebel group, the United Liberation Front of Asom (ULFA) is also fighting for an independent homeland and operating out of Bhutan.

Bhutan has admitted that ULFA alone has six camps in the country, including the outfit's general headquarters and military training bases inside thick jungles.

Although Bhutan has not taken action against the separatists for fear of retaliatory attacks, last month it threatened to use its military might to remove them.