

## NUCLEAR DEAL WITH INDIA

# US arms experts press for tighter provisions

AFP, Washington

US weapons experts are calling on the US Senate to tighten provisions of a landmark civilian nuclear deal with India despite warnings by New Delhi that it cannot accept any more restrictions. The experts want legislation to have an up-front declaration that India has stopped production of fissile material -- plutonium and highly enriched uranium -- for nuclear weapons and an annual certification that the deal does not fuel New Delhi's nuclear weapons program.

They also want measures prohibiting the United States from providing nuclear aid directly or through other suppliers to India if it breaks commitments made under a July 18, 2005 accord reached between US President George W. Bush and Indian Prime Minister

Manmohan Singh.

Singh has made clear that India would not accept any conditions that went beyond the agreement with Bush and a plan they endorsed in which New Delhi would have 14 of its 22 nuclear reactors placed under international safeguards.

India particularly does not want to accept any US moratorium on the production of fissile material.

But the US weapons experts said the measures were necessary because India had not joined the nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT), a global accord to limit the spread of nuclear weapons.

"In our view, these are responsible actions and steps the (US) Congress should take to ensure that the deal does not create what we would consider to be adverse and damaging proliferation prob-

lems," Daryl Kimball, executive director of the Arms Control Association, told AFP.

Kimball was among 17 experts who sent a joint letter to Senate Tuesday with a set of recommendations ahead of a likely vote by the chamber on the nuclear deal this fall.

Under the deal, Washington will aid development of civil nuclear power programs in India in return for New Delhi placing its atomic facilities under International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) safeguards.

India tested nuclear weapons in 1974 and 1998 and is currently banned by the United States and other mostly industrialized nations from buying fuel for atomic reactors and other related equipment as a result.

In July, the US House of Representatives adopted the deal

only after ensuring that even after it is passed by the Senate and becomes law, the nuclear cooperation agreement would come under full oversight authority by Congress.

The House had demanded periodic reporting from President Bush on India's compliance with key US objectives in the region as well as on issues of non-proliferation.

Bill Frist, the Republican leader in the Senate, is consulting with colleagues on when and how best to bring the legislation to the floor for debate and vote, his office said.

"It is something that he wants to get done this month," Carolyn Weyforth, spokeswoman for Frist, told AFP. Congress will have to adjourn by October 6 ahead of key mid-term elections.

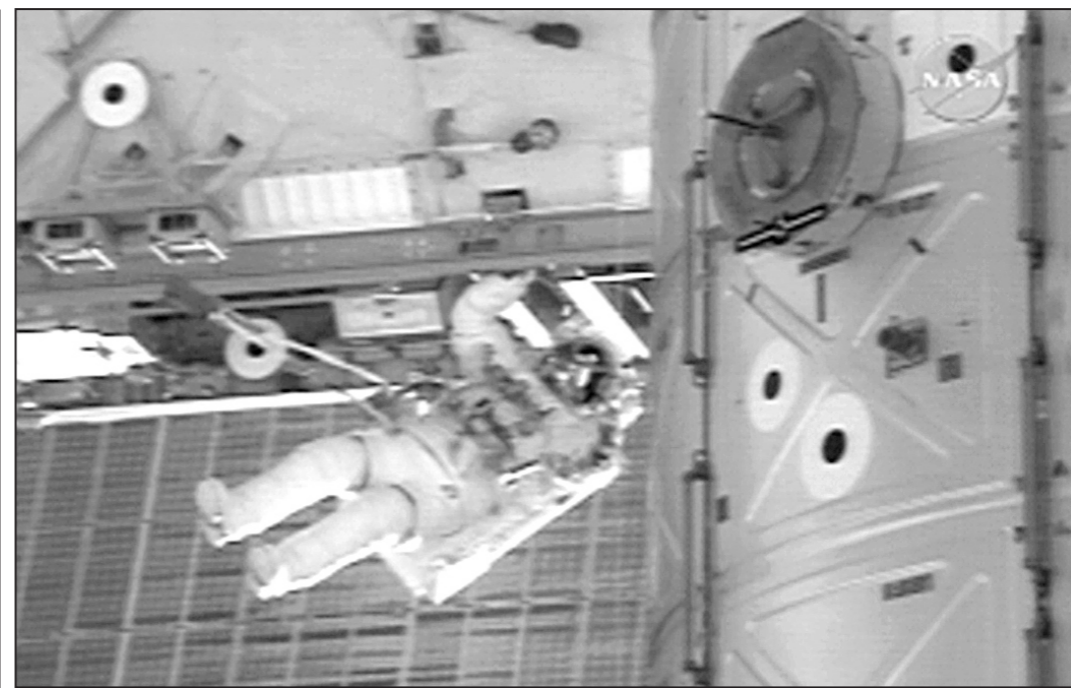


PHOTO: AFP  
This NASA video image shows US Space shuttle Atlantis Mission specialist Joe Tanner at work Tuesday outside of the International Space Station (ISS).

## Atlantis crew lose second bolt during spacewalk

AFP, Houston

Two astronauts on space shuttle Atlantis lost a bolt during a spacewalk yesterday, the second day in a row a bolt has gone missing during a spacewalk, NASA said.

The bolt was lost as astronauts Steve MacLean of the Canadian Space Agency and his American counterpart Dan Burbank continued work to install a 16-tonne truss segment with two power-producing solar panels on the International Space Station (ISS).

"There is a missing bolt on the blanket, I did not see it go," MacLean told the Mission Control Center in Houston, Texas, a little more than an hour after the spacewalk began.

"I'm looking to see if anything is floating," he said.

## IRAN'S NUCLEAR PROGRAMME

# NAM summit calls for unconditional talks

AFP, Havana

Representatives from more than 100 developing nations meeting in Havana called Tuesday for unconditional negotiations to resolve the tense standoff over Iran's nuclear programme.

Delegates at the six-day Non Aligned Movement (NAM) summit also lashed out at Israel, but dropped a proposed demand it be punished for "warcrimes."

While the Middle East was high on the agenda, with the expected arrival of the Syrian and Lebanese presidents, the gathering was also the scene of rival lobbying by Venezuela and Guatemala for a seat on the UN Security Council. Caracas claimed it had locked in the votes to get a seat.

As senior officials met for a second day, it remained unclear whether Cuban President Fidel Castro, 80, would show up in the summit in what would be his first public appearance since he under-

went intestinal surgery in July.

The officials hammered out separate resolutions on Iran and the Palestinian territories, while also fine-tuning a draft final document the heads of state and government are to adopt on Saturday.

Issues such as terrorism, Iran and the Middle East were hotly debated at the closed-door meetings, participants said.

On Iran, the officials essentially updated a resolution adopted by a NAM meeting in May, but added a paragraph stating the need for an "unconditional resumption of dialogue," the head of a prominent delegation said privately.

The statement adopted at the May gathering in Putrajaya, Malaysia insisted any country had the right to use nuclear energy and welcomed what it said was Iran's "voluntary confidence-building efforts" aimed at resolving the issue.

The delegates also worked on a document demanding that Israel

withdraw from the West Bank, stop its "aggression" in Gaza and release jailed Palestinian officials.

"When that happens it will open the door for the resumption of the political process," said Riyadh Mansour, the Palestinian envoy to the United Nations.

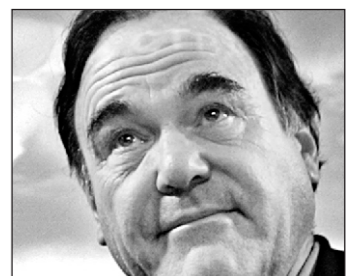
But a senior official said the delegates dropped a proposed paragraph that called the Israeli actions "warcrimes for which the perpetrators must be held accountable and brought to justice."

Mansour said statements by the NAM would add to the pressure on the Security Council to implement its resolutions on the Palestinian territories.

"We hope the Security Council will begin the process of standing up to its responsibility," he told AFP.

Several delegations also engaged in intense lobbying to garner support for specific issues.

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## 'Iraq war was a mutated form of revenge'

AFP, Tokyo

US filmmaker Oliver Stone, who dramatised the horror of September 11 with "World Trade Center," yesterday condemned the Iraq war as a "mutated" form of revenge.

Stone, appearing in Tokyo to promote the new film, told reporters that Americans, after the attacks five years ago, "were angry and wanted revenge that day. That's the truth."

"And we did take revenge in Afghanistan, successfully, but we did not finish that war," Stone said.

"Then ... the desire for revenge was mutated, or changed, or derailed into this war in Iraq," Stone said. "I personally condemn the war in Iraq. And I think it has become worse, and a nightmare for the world and my country."



PHOTO: AFP  
Afghan President Hamid Karzai (2R) and visiting Pakistani Prime Minister Shaukat Aziz (2L) cut a ribbon during the inauguration of the Jalalabad-Torkham road in Nangarhar province yesterday.

## Indian plane diverted after security scare

AFP, Dubai

An Indian Airlines plane flying into Dubai was diverted to an air base in the Gulf emirate late Tuesday after a security scare which turned out to be unfounded, a civil aviation official said yesterday.

The plane, with 153 passengers and crew, flew from Bombay, where airport authorities were warned of an unspecified "threat" aboard the aircraft as it approached the airspace of the United Arab Emirates (UAE), said the official in the General Civil Aviation Authority, the UAE's civil aviation regulator.

The jet was diverted to Al-Minhad air base in Dubai, which is part of a seven-strong UAE federation. Authorities searched the plane and the passengers but nothing suspicious was found, the official told AFP, requesting anonymity.

## British police seize hundreds of guns during Kent raids

AFP, London

British police seized hundreds of guns during coordinated dawn raids in the southeast county of Kent, a spokesman said, adding that one man was arrested.

Three raids, involving some 30 officers in the town of Dartford, were carried out in tandem with similar operations by US authorities in New Jersey, officials said.

The raids were part of Operation Trident, which for several years has targeted the arms trade linked to drug trafficking in black communities in the British capital.

A 55-year-old man was in custody, the spokesman said.

"This is the biggest firearms haul we have ever had," Detective Superintendent Kevin Davis.

"The premises raided were used to store hundreds and hundreds of weapons. I have never seen anything like it," he said.

"Guns are mounted on every available wall space in the property and live ammunition was found lying on the floor.

"There are guns everywhere. It will take us at least three days to log it all and bag up the evidence."



PHOTO: AFP  
A room full of guns is pictured in a house raided by British police in Dartford in Kent, in southern England yesterday.

## Saddam prosecutor demands trial judge step down

AFP, Baghdad

The prosecutor in the genocide trial of ousted Iraqi leader Saddam Hussein demanded yesterday that the chief judge resign, saying he was too lenient with defendants who had threatened lawyers and witnesses.

"Defendants have gone too far, with unacceptable expressions and words. Defendants have uttered clear threats. The chief prosecutor's office requests the judge step down from this case," prosecutor Munqith al-Faroon said at the opening of the latest hearing.

Presiding judge Abdullah al-Ameri dismissed the demand.

"The judge should coordinate and make peace so nobody takes advantage of his fairness... I have been working in the judicial system for the past 25 years," Ameri said.

Saddam and six other former aides, including his cousin Ali Hassan al-Majid, dubbed "Chemical Ali", face genocide and other charges over the brutal Anfal campaign of 1987-88 in which prosecutors say 182,000 Kurds were slaughtered.

If found guilty they face execution by hanging.

Saddam and his former regime

maintains they were engaged in a necessary counter-insurgency operation.

Since the trial opened last month, Saddam has often threatened the prosecutor and questioned witnesses who have given graphic testimony against his forces over the Anfal campaign.

On Tuesday, Saddam threatened one of the witnesses' lawyers as he defended the fight of the Kurdish guerrillas or peshmerga -- which means "those who face death" in Kurdish -- against the old regime.

Saddam accused him of being an agent of "Iranians and Zionists" and threatened to "crush his head".

On the opening day of the trial on August 21, Saddam had also threatened the prosecutor Faroon after he charged that Saddam's forces had raped Iraqi women during the Anfal campaign.

"If he says an Iraqi woman was raped in my era and he does not prove it, I will hunt him down for the rest of my life," Saddam said at the time.

On Wednesday, new Kurdish witnesses continued testimony against Saddam and the other accused.



## Jumping robot

AFP, Tokyo

Toyota said yesterday it has developed a robot leg that can jump like a human's, an evolution from today's stiff-jointed machines.

The one-meter (3.3-foot) leg has a joint on its toe letting it jump as high as four centimeters (1.6 inches) by bending and stretching its toe and another knee-like joint, Japan's top automaker said.

"This is a basic technology that can be applied to a two-legged robot in future," said a Toyota Motor Corp. spokesman.

"It was a difficult step for robots," she said. "But it was made possible after making a number of prototypes."

## Top Israeli gen quits over Lebanon war

AFP, Jerusalem

A top Israeli general resigned yesterday, becoming the first official to quit over the Lebanon war and fueling calls for further heads to roll over the conflict that failed to achieve its main aims.

Major General Udi Adam, who led Israel's northern command during the 34-day offensive, submitted his resignation to army chief of staff Dan Halutz as a storm of criticism over the war looked set to push into a second month.

"The chief of staff has accepted Adam's request and he will be replaced in accordance with IDF (Israel Defence Forces) procedures," the army said.

The war left 162 Israelis dead and failed to achieve its main objectives of retrieving two soldiers captured by Hezbollah guerrillas in a raid on July 12 and halting a barrage of rocket attacks by the Lebanese Shiite militants.

Israel was heavily criticised abroad for its devastating use of force in Lebanon, where more than 1,200 people, mostly civilians, were killed and thousands of homes and infrastructure targets bombed.

The conflict cost Israel an estimated 5.7 billion dollars but failed to sever the Shiite militia's capability to bombard the north of the country, or secure the release of the two

soldiers.

"The chief of staff should take General Adam's example. He admitted to the government that the army was not ready for the war and he has to take responsibility," National Infrastructure Minister Benjamin Ben-Eliezer said.

Local media reports claimed that Adam stepped down because of differences with Halutz over the conduct of the month-long offensive against Hezbollah, which ended under a UN-brokered ceasefire on August 14.

Amihai Ayalon, a leading member of the centre-left Labour party, said his party leader Defence Minister Amir Peretz -- widely lambasted for his handling of the war -- should also follow Adam's example.

"Amir Peretz should change jobs. General Adam should not be the only one to pay the price of the shortcomings," he said.

Anram Mizna, a former head of northern command, former Labour leader and former mayor of the northern metropolis Haifa that was bombed by Hezbollah attacks during the war, also called for Halutz to resign.

"Adam's resignation was inevitable. It's just the beginning. The chief of staff cannot remain in his job. He no longer enjoys the confidence of regional commanders, officers and soldiers," he told public radio.

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# First big galaxies were forged 700m years after 'Big Bang'

### Astronomers believe as they peer into deep space

AFP, London

Astronomers peering into deep space believe that the first big galaxies in the Universe were forged around 700 million years after the "Big Bang" that initiated the cosmos.

In a record-breaking scan of the skies, a team led by Japanese astronomer Masanori Iye found a galaxy whose light has taken 12.7 thousand million years to reach Earth.

The galaxy must have formed when the Universe was only 750 million years old, according to their study, which appears today in Nature, the British weekly science journal.

It is the oldest galaxy whose age has been spectroscopically confirmed.

Under this, astronomers analyse the so-called "redshift" of stars. The Universe is expanding because of the Big Bang, and the light from receding objects moves towards longer, redder wavelengths. The older an object is, the greater its redness.

In a separate study, also published in Nature, University of California at Santa Cruz astronomers Rychar Bouwens and Garth Illingworth used the orbiting US Hubble telescope to explore the formations of galaxies in the early Universe.

They found hundreds of galax-

ies at redshifts around 900 million years after the Big Bang.

But when they looked at higher redshifts, at about 700 million years after the Big Bang, they found unconfirmed evidence for only one galaxy, when they had expected to find many more.

This backs theories about a "hierarchical" formation of big galaxies -- that these huge clusters were built up over time as smaller galaxies collided and merged, they believe.

"The bigger, more luminous galaxies were just not in place at 700 million years after the Big Bang," said Illingworth.

"Yet 200 million years later, there were many more of them, so

there must have been a lot of merging of smaller galaxies during that time."

A paper published last November by astronomers in the United States estimated that the first stars were born when the Universe was around 100 million years old.

Dating the first stars and galaxies is important. These bodies were fuelled by hydrogen, the lightest and simplest element, that came after the Big Bang, which occurred around 13 billion years or so ago.

In turn, they crunched out heavier elements such as carbon, nitrogen and oxygen that eventually became the basis of life.

## Don't say Pluto, say 134340

AFP, Paris

Once the proud outermost planet of the Solar System, Pluto has been consigned to the status of a small-town telephone number after the world's paramount astronomical body tore up its membership of the cosmic A-list.

The enigmatic, icy world spotted in 1930 has been given the official moniker of 134340 Pluto and lumped among 136,562 asteroids and other small bodies by the Minor Planet Center (MPC), part of the Paris-headquartered International Astronomical Union (IAU).

Pluto's satellites, Charon, Nix and Hydra, have been numbered 134340 I, 134340 II and 134340 III respectively under the latest minor planet list, compiled on September 7.

The IAU last month declared Pluto to be a "dwarf planet" that should not belong among the hallowed ranks of Mercury, Earth, Venus, Mars, Jupiter, Saturn, Uranus and Neptune.

# Maoists accuse Nepal's army of arms transport from India

AFP, Kathmandu

Nepal's Maoist rebels yesterday accused the country's army of transporting arms from India, refusing to accept denials by ceasefire monitors and the military.

"We believe arms and ammunition have been brought from India. The vehicles were brought in last night (Tuesday) so the army might have hidden it," said Krishna Bahadur Mahara, the Maoist's spokesman.

"If the vehicles contained weapons, it could have a serious impact on the peace process," Mahara warned.

The rebels and Nepal's government have observed a ceasefire for nearly five months amid a fledgling and fragile peace process.

Ceasefire monitors drawn from government and Maoist ranks inspected the vehicles after they entered an army barracks near Kathmandu late Tuesday.

"There were 15 trucks, seven armoured personnel carriers, five jeeps and two local trucks -- none contained weapons," said Charan Prasai, a member of the ceasefire code of conduct monitoring team who inspected the vehicles.

The Indian government issued a statement on the issue in New Delhi, calling the Maoists' allegations "baseless".

But demonstrators protesting over the alleged arms shipments blocked traffic and burned tyres in Kathmandu, eventually dispersing when police arrived, witnesses said.

The army, which is under the control of a coalition interim government, denied any weapons had been transported.

"It was a regular convoy that came from different parts of the country," said Major Tanka Bhatta, an army official from the camp 60 kilometres (37 miles) west of Kathmandu where the vehicles were parked.

"There are no weapons being transported," Bhatta said.

Nepal's mainstream political parties and the Maoists, who were once foes, formed a loose anti-royal alliance and staged mass protests that in April forced King Gyanendra to end 14 months of direct rule.

Since the restoration of parliament, the two sides have agreed to draft a temporary constitution that will allow the rebels to join the interim government.

Elections to a body that will rewrite Nepal's constitution have also been agreed.

But the peace process has dragged, with only one meeting held between rebel leaders and Nepalese Prime Minister Girija Prasad Koirala.

At least 12,500 people have died in the Maoist insurgency, which began in 1996.