

Indo-US 123 buzz

BILLY I AHMED

THE latest buzz on the political cacophony circuit is the bi-lateral treaty on nuclear cooperation under Section 123 of the US Atomic Energy Act, dubbed as Indo-US Civilian Nuclear deal.

Despite a month-long display of conspicuous opposition to the civilian nuclear co-operation treaty that India's United Progressive Alliance (UPA) coalition government has struck with the Bush administration, the Communist Party of India (Marxist)-led Left Front has abandoned.

Atomic Energy Commission Chairman Anil Kakodkar is in Vienna to negotiate with International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) to clinch the deal. The US is optimistic. There were indications from China that Beijing may not stand in the way of the deal when India goes to the 45 countries of the Nuclear Suppliers Group (NSG) that has to clear it.

In brevity, the Indo-US Civilian Nuclear deal is as follows:

Introduction

On July 18, 2005, President Bush and Indian Prime Minister Manmohan Singh reached a landmark agreement on civilian nuclear energy cooperation. The deal which marks a notable warming of US-India relations, would lift the US moratorium on nuclear trade with India, provide US assistance to India's civilian nuclear energy program, and expand US-Indian cooperation in energy and satellite technology. The critics in the United States say the agreement would fundamentally reverse half a century of US nonproliferation efforts, undermine attempts to prevent states like Iran and North Korea from acquiring nuclear weapons, and potentially contribute to a nuclear arms race in Asia.

What are the terms of the deal?

The details of the agreement are still being negotiated, but experts say some clear points are emerging. They include the following:

- India agrees to allow inspectors from the IAEA, the United Nations' nuclear watchdog group, access to its civilian nuclear program. But India would decide which of its many nuclear facilities to classify as civilian.
- India agrees to prevent the spread of enrichment and reprocessing technologies to states that don't possess them and to support international nonproliferation efforts.
- US companies will be allowed to build nuclear reactors in India and provide nuclear fuel for its civilian energy program. US companies are likely to get contract of at least US\$150 billion.

What kind of technology would India receive in return?

India would be eligible to buy US dual-use nuclear technology, including materials and equipment that could be used to enrich uranium or reprocess plutonium, potentially creating the material for nuclear bombs. It would also receive imported fuel for its nuclear reactors.

What do proponents say about the deal?

Proponents of the agreement argue it will bring India closer to the United States at a time when the two countries are forging a strategic relationship to pursue their common interests in fighting terrorism, spreading democracy, and preventing the domination of Asia by any single power.

Other experts say

The deal would encourage India to accept international safeguards on facilities it has not allowed to be inspected before. This is a major step, experts say, because the existing nonproliferation regime has failed either to force India to give up its nuclear weapons or demand that it accept international inspections and restrictions on its nuclear facilities. IAEA Director-General Mohammed El Baradei has strongly endorsed the deal, calling it a pragmatic way to bring India into the nonproliferation community.

before they can be implemented. The bodies required to approve the deal include:

Under the U.S. Atomic Energy Act, which regulates the trade of nuclear material, congressional approval is needed to pass the exemptions to U.S. laws required for the nuclear deal to be implemented. Members of Congress are showing resistance, with some calling for India to commit to strict limits on its nuclear weapons program before the deal goes through. The 45-country of The Nuclear Suppliers Group (NSG) wants the safeguards agreement to be approved by the board to carry out the further process.

What effect will the US-India deal have on the NPT?

Critics call the terms of the agreement overly beneficial for India and lacking sufficient safeguards to prevent New Delhi from continuing to produce nuclear weapons. While India has pledged that any US assistance to its civilian nuclear energy program will not benefit its nuclear weapons program, experts say India could use the imported nuclear fuel to feed its civilian energy program while diverting its own nuclear fuel to weapons production.

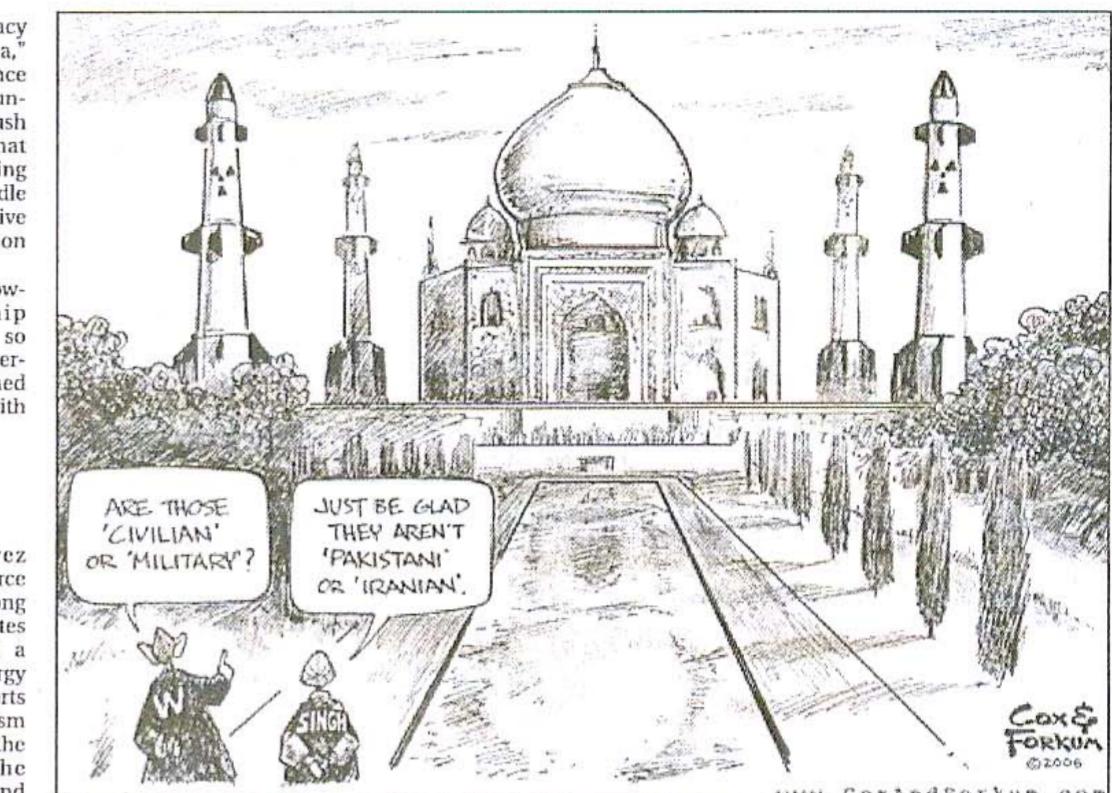
Other objections raised by experts include:

The safeguards apply only to facilities and material manufactured by India beginning when the agreement was reached. It doesn't cover the fissile material produced by India over the last several decades of nuclear activity.

What role does China play in the US-Indian nuclear deal?

It is a motivating factor in the deal, some experts say. China's rise in the region is prompting the United States to seek a strategic relationship with India. "The United States is trying to cement its relationship with India.

ducted by India, which included a fusion device (of 12 kilotons), a low yield device (of 0.2 kiloton capacity), and a thermonuclear device (of 0.2 kiloton capacity). As a result of 1974 nuclear testing by India, the United States isolated India for twenty-five years, refusing nuclear cooperation and trying to convince other countries to do the same. But since 2000, the United States has moved to build a "strategic partnership" with India, increasing cooperation in fields including spaceflight, space flight, satellite technology, and missile defense.



testing what they see as excessive U.S. participation in deciding which of India's nuclear facilities to define as civilian, and open to international inspections under the plan.

The percentage of power provided by nuclear reactors is only 3% and it is the costliest source to produce. At the same time there is no technology still in the world to deal with the nuclear wastes which wastes that can be harmful for 1000 years. And France is already suffering from this. The US stands to gain contracts worth of at least US\$100 billion in the deal.

The benefits that India is going to reap are almost nil but the question is what will the US be going to have to get in return and why are they so interested in having the deal

with India. The motive behind it could be, India and China's has shown a prodigious growth and US's is having confrontation with Iraq, Iran and turbulent Pakistan. So the US is searching for a new loyal strategic partner and America knows that it is much better to maintain a good relationships with India than with China or Pakistan for the moment.

However, loyalty is an unknown term for the US. As long as the US needs are required something, it maintains a happy-go-relations with its partner, but when its needs are fulfilled the US simply dumps his loyal partner as spent force.

The author is a columnist and researcher.

Musharraf outwits political leaders

BARRISTER HARUN UR RASHID

BISMARCK (1815-98) once said that politics is the art of the possible. Pakistani politicians are conducting themselves in accordance with Bismarck's dictum. Furthermore, observers say that leading politicians are behaving like a chameleon changing colours to achieve its purpose.

Politics is all about power and power brings prestige, influence and affluence. Few human beings can resist it. Only those who have high moral code can show guts against all odds to compromise with principles.

When the Pakistan President declared virtual 'martial law' under the guise of emergency rule, Ms. Bhutto declared that she would have nothing to do with President Musharraf and would boycott elections under the emergency rule because elections would not be fair and free. In retrospect, it appears that her statement was directed to overseas audience so that the US would exert pressure on the President to lift the emergency.

It worked for a while because on 16th November, the US Deputy Secretary of State John Negroponte visited Pakistan and met President Musharraf. Negroponte urged the



President to rescind the emergency, quit the uniform and hold elections.

The President agreed to quit uniform and hold elections but dismissed the demand for lifting

emergency. He quit the uniform on 29th November, became a civilian and took an oath for the third time as the President.

Musharraf fears that if emergency were withdrawn, legal chal-

lenges for the Presidential election for the third time will be revived together with the restoration of the Supreme Court of independent-minded judges which the President dismissed on 3rd November.

bet for the US at present.

President Musharraf seems to be an astute politician and knows how to please the US. He wanted to show that emergency rule had been declared to fight the Taliban. He has sent his soldiers to fight with the diehard Islamic militants in Swat, close to Afghan border. His action against the militants has earned support of the Bush administration.

Washington conveniently forgot Musharraf's action of dismissal of judges of the Supreme Court, banning the popular TV shows aired from Abu Dhabi, and arresting of human rights activists under the emergency rule.

Since Musharraf met at least two demands and took action against Islamic militants, the Bush administration has softened its attitude toward him. Furthermore the US is more concerned with war on terror in Afghanistan rather than restoration of democracy in Pakistan.

Another deep concern for the US is that the nuclear-armed Pakistan should not fall into the hands of Islamists as they would likely to make nuclear weapon or its technology easily accessible to the Jihadis who have been fighting in Iraq and Afghanistan. President Musharraf in the saddle is the safest

The difference between the two leading politicians is that while Bhutto is prepared to share power with President Musharraf, Nawaz Sharif has declared that he will not, because he claims that the rule of Musharraf is illegal.

The participation of election by parties of Bhutto and Nawaz Sharif will invariably put a stamp of legitimacy on the rule of President Musharraf for another five years.

While President Musharraf is in power, another ally Bhutto is likely to share power with him. What an ideal combination is presented for the US in Pakistan.

The rising middle class in Pakistan is, however, extremely disenchanted with the stance of both Bhutto and Nawaz Sharif in compromising their position with the military dictator. They are also disappointed that the US supports a military ruler who does not want to go from office.

Lawyers regularly protest, journalists resist the clamp-down action on media and human rights activists are vocal in protesting the abuses of human rights by President Musharraf. The President knows that the civil society is disorganized and poses no threat to his rule. Rather, these kinds of protests demonstrate that President Musharraf tolerates

opposition to his rule and strengthens his government in the eyes of international community.

In Pakistan army is an institution of discipline and commands respect from people. They are so well entrenched and their tentacles so widespread that it will be an uphill task to dislodge them from the position they now occupy via President Musharraf. The US understands that and political leaders in Pakistan have no courage and determination to fight to change this scenario.

Observers believe that the position both Bhutto and Sharif has adopted may not serve their selfish or national interests in the long run. At the end of the day President Musharraf has come out victorious and got what he wanted. He has outwitted the wily politicians.

Italian diplomat, political pragmatist and adviser to the Medici family of Florence, Niccolò Machiavelli (1469-1527) said, "I have never said what I believed and never believed what I said." The conduct of Pakistani leading politicians seems to follow the rules of political game set out by Machiavelli.

The author is former Bangladesh Ambassador to the UN, Geneva.

How long will the Palestinian's suffer?

MONAEM SARKER

HERE have been lots of seminars, conferences and meetings on UN declared International Day of Solidarity with the Palestinian peoples on 29 November 2007. But what will be the outcome? How long this problem will continue and where lies the solution of the conflict, nobody knows. How long will the Palestinian people suffer?

"When pretext is far worse than crime, it amounts to something far more dangerous and then justice loses all its meaning and wordslose the limits of depiction, and where killing becomes diligence, and calamity turns into a tradition, without any reaction against it, and where sheer coincidence never applies to the methodical action, and where voice is stifled in condemnation statements that are no more than ink on paper, and where conduct disregard consciousness, nothing can humanity have to boast of or be proud of." This is the first para of the Introduction of a book (CAIN'S APPLE) written by Zakaria Shahin (Journalist of the London-based Al- Arab newspaper).

Well-meaning people around the globe agree that the world is witnessing two models of killing culture; they are the USA & Israel. America which had exterminated 60 millions of the indigenous Red

Indians, became a role model for Israel which has adapted American heritage and followed the same pattern for the same end.

Hertzl, the founder of the Zionist movement, wondered how the occupation of land could be achieved and what to do about the local communities, that is what could the Zionist do with the Palestinian people who own the land?

In America, the conquest of the open New Land was a primitive way, where settlers used to gather on the borders and would advance violently and rapidly at the same time to occupy as much lands as they could conquer and grab. But this method is naive, he would say, and is no longer valid in the era of arms & colonialism. Hertzl thought that it would be no good to pick up a spear & a bayonet and go after bears, but.....'we' will have to form a tough team of hunters and 'we' would gather the whole herd in one place, then 'we' would throw a destructing bomb on them. The Hertzl plan is still being followed by Israel through the killings of the Palestinians and the horrible massacres that cannot be condemned enough.

In the tumult of daily massacres in Palestine and Iraq, President George W. Bush once mentioned about the relationship between the USA and Israel. He said 'Our nation is more powerful and secure because Israel is a true ally on

whom we can rely.' This message does not differ much from Sharon's own words declaring bluntly that 'Israel is the greatest and the best foreign investment.'

This expression, which Bush used to open his speech, did not prevent him from relying on the 9/11 events that were exploited by Israel to the highest degree. Bush reaffirms that what happened in America and what is happening in Israel now imposes the need for a partnership in means and goals and requires common action through an alliance that brushes away differences. What unites America and Israel is not only partnership, but also a similar situation. As soon as the Americans brought to perfection the killing means in Iraq and Afghanistan, the scene in Palestine ignited. This ignition is not sheer coincidence, since the mindset is one, weaponry is one and the objective is one. The US army commanders do not hide the fact that they send their troops for training in Israel and the US Defense Department 'The Pentagon' relies for its ammunitions in Iraq on Israeli factories and is planning to establish joint strategic military plants there.

During the last decade, the settlement, code named 'New Middle East', was going through presenting a solution to the Arab-Israeli conflict, but nowadays, occupying Iraq in the USA in fact laid its hand on the Iraqi oil resources

estimated at some 112 billion barrels, that is 1/4 of the world's proven oil reserve, in addition to the oil of the other Gulf Countries.

It should be remembered, Twentieth Century was not the replica of Nineteenth Century and the Twenty First Century will be quite different from Twentieth Century. Oil and gas will dominate the present century as long as no alternative energy source is invented. The world is changing every day; we can recall why Saddam Hossain was hanged: because he wanted to replace dollars with Euro. Now the president of Iran, Ahmadinezhad, is demanding oil price be paid in Euro, so America is contemplating to crush Iran.

The so-called New World Order of the 'Pax Americana' maintains that 'we' are the central position, and should maintain this position. The US has to take the lead of the world bearing the torch of the right and might morally, politically and militarily, in order to be the model for all the people of the world.' (See Jesse Helms).

Just after the collapse of the Socialist Block following the first Gulf War, the multi-polar old world order came to an end, only to be replaced by the so-called New World Order. The USA considers 9/11 a turning point between the past and the future in matters related to the political, strategic, economic and legal affairs and their mode of handling these affairs. All the nations of the world need to be conscious of the fact and take this into consideration. By occupying Iraq in the USA in fact laid its hand on the Iraqi oil resources

The author is DG, Bangladesh Foundation for Development Research.

News Brief

India to rebid army utility copters

NEW DELHI: India will ask for new bids in its planned \$600 million purchase of 197 light observation helicopters after Bell Helicopters protested the selection of a Eurocopter aircraft.

The government first floated the requirement for Army helicopters to replace 1970s-era Chetak and Cheetah helicopters in 2004, then added requirements for offsets in 2005. The Army plans to expand its aviation corps. The tender drew bids from five contenders: Agusta-Westland of Italy, Bell of the United States, Eurocopter of France, and Kamov and Kazan of Russia.

In March, Bell Helicopters officials complained to ministry officials that the selection process had not been transparent. They said ministry officials had talked with Bell 10 times after the trials, but never mentioned Bell's bid was falling short in two areas. The matter was referred to an internal committee, which in mid-June recommended the purchase be rebid.

India plans to buy 60 helicopters outright from the foreign helicopter-maker, then license-produce 137 at state-owned Hindustan Aeronautics Ltd. (HAL) in Bangalore.

SOURCE: www.defensenews.com

South Korea develops laser weapons

South Korea is developing a mobile truck-mounted laser weapon capable of destroying North Korean missiles and artillery shells, a report said Nov. 10.

A defense ministry research team and defense firms have been involved in the development of high energy laser weapons.

From 2010, South Korea hopes to deploy the weapon, which can counter North Korean missiles and long-range artillery shells deployed along the border, it said.

South Korea faces a potential military threat from nuclear-armed North Korea, which has improved its

missile system to cover all East Asia.

In July 2007 North Korea test-fired seven missiles, including the Taepodong-2, which in theory could reach the U.S. west coast. This year the North has tested a series of short-range missiles.

The North's missile launches have heightened tensions in the region in the past decade. In 1998 North Korea sparked alarm in Japan by test-firing a long-range missile over that country.

SOURCE: www.defensenews.com

Taiwan may upgrade "patriots"

The U.S. Defense Security Cooperation Agency (DSCA) announced Nov. 13 the possible sale of an upgrade to Taiwan's Patriot PAC-2 Plus missile defense system. The upgrade is for Taiwan's three fire units that encircle Taipei.

The five units will get new long- and short-range radios, radar enhancements, target identification and remote launching systems, four telemetry kits for live-fire training and electric power plants.

The proposed sale will help improve the security of the recipient and assist in maintaining political stability.

SOURCE: www.defensenews.com

China has officially criticized the upgrade approval. Foreign Ministry spokesman Liu Jianchao said the upgrade violated U.S. promises to gradually reduce weapon sales to Taiwan since the U.S. switched recognition from Taipei to Beijing in 1979. Liu called the sale "rude interference in China's internal affairs."