

THE WEEK IN REVIEW

March 03-09, 3(1), 2008

CONTENTS

- **COUNTRY REVIEW..... 3**
- **ENERGY SECURITY REVIEW.....7**
- **INTERNAL SECURITY REVIEW.....8**
- **NUCLEAR REVIEW10**

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**INSTITUTE FOR DEFENCE STUDIES AND ANALYSES,
1, DEVELOPMENT ENCLAVE, RAO TULA RAM MARG, NEW DELHI – 11**

IN THE CURRENT ISSUE*

SECTIONS	HIGHLIGHTS	Page
1. COUNTRY REVIEW		3-7
China	China calls for comprehensive implementation of UN Resolution 1803; China hopes to resolve dumping incident with Japan; PLA generals call for vigilance against Taiwan independence forces; China, Russia conducts annual physical examination for cross-border rivers	
Japan	Japan offers Y3.2 billion debt relief to Sudan if North-South peace agreement is implemented; Japan and Croatia to boost cooperation	
Myanmar	UN envoy visits Myanmar	
SOUTH ASIA		
Pakistan	National Assembly session to be called in ten days time; Army to support the new elected government; PPP undecided on prime ministerial candidate; PPP and PML-N demonstrate two-third majority in Punjab Assembly	
Nepal	Chinese Minister meets Prime Minister Koirala; A new revolution if Maoists lose the elections; Prachanda reiterates electoral alliance	
Sri Lanka	Lankan diplomatic missions confront LTTE propaganda; No pause in anti-LTTE drive	
Bangladesh	Bangladesh supports 'One China' policy; India visit successful, says Army Chief	
2. ENERGY SECURITY REVIEW		7-8
China	China shows interest in Iran-Pakistan-India gas pipeline	
Crude Oil Price	Crude Oil price reach record high	
OPEC	OPEC refuses to increase Crude Oil production	
Renewable Energy	Renewed call to increase the share of renewable energy	
3. INTERNAL SECURITY REVIEW		8-9
Jammu and Kashmir	Intelligence agencies opposes safe passage to Kashmiri youths	
North Eastern States	Militant attack Manipur Legislative Assembly; Asom Government admits Jihadi activities in the State	
Other Development	Bid to revive militancy in Punjab, says Prime Minister Dr Manmohan Singh; To free terrorists in '99 was a national decision, says Jaswant Singh	
4. NUCLEAR REVIEW		10-11
India	We can move forward with both Hyde Act and 123 in a consistent manner: Boucher; India concludes India-specific safeguards agreement; No early elections: Pranab	
North Korea	US would like diplomatic relations with North Korea: Hill; China trying to restart stalled disarmament process: Dawei	
Iran	Security Council imposes third round of sanctions on Iran; Russia and China thwart a Western attempt to introduce a resolution on Iran at the IAEA; Iran will only talk to the IAEA on the nuclear issue: Ahmadinejad	

1. COUNTRY REVIEW

CHINA

- ***China calls for comprehensive implementation of UN Resolution 1803; China hopes to resolve dumpling incident with Japan; PLA generals call for vigilance against Taiwan independence forces; China, Russia conduct annual physical examination for cross-border rivers***

The Chinese Foreign Ministry has expressed the hope that the United Nations (UN) and the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) resolutions on the Iranian nuclear issue could be sincerely and comprehensively implemented. Through UNSC Resolution 1803, various restrictions were imposed on Iran: curbs on dual-use items, export credit, financial monitoring, cargo inspections on aircraft and vessels, etc. Though China voted for the Resolution, its Foreign Ministry has said that “the resolution is not aimed at punishing Iran, but promoting the resumption of negotiation and thus to reactivate a new round of diplomatic efforts.”¹

Qin Gang, the Chinese Foreign Ministry spokesman, said that China hopes to work with Japan to amicably resolve a recent incident of poisoned dumplings. At a regular press conference, he said that the incident was an “individual deliberate case and the investigation was ongoing.” Japanese media had reported in January that some people fell ill after consuming frozen meat dumplings produced by Tianyang Food Plant, based in north China’s Hebei Province.²

On the security front, while attending the 11th National People’s Congress (NPC), General Guo Boxiong, Vice-chairman of China’s Central Military Commission (CMC) said that “we should make utmost efforts with greatest sincerity to safeguard and promote the peaceful and stable development of cross-Straits relations, and strive for the prospect of peaceful reunification.” He stressed upon the fact that the Chinese military should be vigilant against the secessionist activities of “Taiwanese independence” forces, and strive hard for the prospect of China’s peaceful reunification.³

In a bilateral initiative, experts from China and Russia have started an annual water quality examination on four rivers and a lake across their border to strengthen pollution control. Both countries share about 3,500 kilometres of trans-border water bodies including the four rivers and the lake. In 2006, a Joint Monitoring Plan on Border Rivers was signed by the two countries, after a chemical spill contaminated the Songhua River, the largest tributary of the Heilongjiang River, forcing the suspension of water supplies to 3.8 million people for several weeks in 2005.⁴

JAPAN

- ***Japan offers Y3.2 billion debt relief to Sudan if North-South peace agreement is implemented; Japan and Croatia to boost cooperation***

Japan has offered to waive Sudan’s 3.2 billion yen debt (approximately US \$31 million) on the condition that the North-South peace agreement is thoroughly implemented. At a meeting in Tokyo,

¹ “China calls for serious, comprehensive implementation of UN Resolution 1803,” *People’s Daily* (online), March 4, 2008, at <http://english.people.com.cn/90001/90776/90883/6366058.html>

² “China hopes to “properly resolve” dumpling incident with Japan,” *People’s Daily* (online), March 4, 2008, at <http://english.people.com.cn/90001/90776/90883/6366060.html>

³ “PLA generals call for vigilance against “Taiwan independence” forces,” *People’s Daily* (online), March 5, 2008, at <http://english.people.com.cn/90001/90776/90785/6367084.html>

⁴ “China, Russia conduct annual “physical examination” for cross-border rivers,” *People’s Daily* (online), March 6, 2008, at <http://english.people.com.cn/90001/90776/90883/6367964.html>

while discussing with Nafie Ali Nafie, the Japanese Foreign Minister Masahiko Komura expressed concern over the deteriorating conditions in Darfur and urged necessary actions.⁵

Meanwhile, Japan and Croatia have agreed to expand and strengthen their cooperation on various global issues. According to the Japanese Foreign Ministry, cooperation will focus on important issues like: North Korea's nuclear ambitions, problems surrounding Kosovo's independence from Serbia, reforms of the UN Security Council, and other issues of common concern. During his meeting with the Croatian President Stjepan Mesic, Japanese Prime Minister Yasuo Fukuda asked for Croatia's cooperation in tackling the nuclear and abduction issues with North Korea particularly.⁶

MYANMAR

- *UN envoy visits Myanmar*

The United Nation Secretary General's Special Envoy to Myanmar, Ibrahim Gambari, paid a four-day (March 6-10) visit to Myanmar. During his visit, Gambari met diplomats and staff members from UN agencies, Aung San Suu Kyi, and Information Minister Brigadier General Kyaw San; he could not meet the regime's supremo Senior General Than Shwe.⁷ In the aftermath of the visit, the regime's spokesman Brigadier General Kyaw San expressed displeasure at Gambari's visit.

SOUTH Asia

PAKISTAN

- *National Assembly session to be called in ten days time; Army to support the new elected government; PPP undecided on prime ministerial candidate; PPP and PML-N demonstrate two-third majority in Punjab Assembly*

President Pervez Musharraf has stated that he would convene parliament in 10 days time, and vowed full support for the incoming government. "Durable, stable governments should be formed at the Centre and provinces for five years," Musharraf said at Jacobabad on March 7.⁸ For his part, Army Chief General Kayani affirmed in Islamabad that the Army would support the newly elected democratic set-up and stay outside the government structure.⁹

Meanwhile, the Pakistan People's Party (PPP) once again postponed the announcement of its prime ministerial candidate subject to further discussion on the issue among party members.¹⁰ There were some reports of differences between Asif Zardari and Makhdoom Amin Fahim.¹¹ Having together secured a two-thirds majority in the Punjab assembly,¹² Asif Zardari and Nawaz Sharif met in

⁵ "Japan offers Y3.2 billion debt relief for Sudan if peace goals met," *Japan Today* (online), March 7, 2008, at <http://www.japantoday.com/jp/news/430310>

⁶ "Japan, Croatia to boost cooperation," *Japan Today* (online), March 6, 2008, at <http://www.japantoday.com/jp/news/430202>

⁷ "Gambari winds up his visit to Burma," *Mizzima News* March 10, 2008 at <http://www.mizzima.com/MizzimaNews/News/2008/Mar/30-Mar-2008.html>

⁸ "NA session to be convened within 10 days: Musharraf," *Daily Times*, March 8, 2008 at http://www.dailytimes.com.pk/default.asp?page=2008\03\08\story_8-3-2008_pg1_1

⁹ "Army not distancing itself from president: Gen Kayani announces support for elected govt," *Dawn*, March 7, 2008 at <http://www.dawn.com/2008/03/07/top2.htm>

¹⁰ "PPP delays naming premier candidate," *Dawn*, March 7, 2008 at <http://www.dawn.com/2008/03/07/top1.htm>

¹¹ "Clash between Asif, Fahim averted," *Dawn*, March 9, 2008 at <http://www.dawn.com/2008/03/09/top3.htm>

¹² "PML-N, PPP show 2/3rds PA majority," *Daily Times*, March 9, 2008 at http://www.dailytimes.com.pk/default.asp?page=2008\03\09\story_9-3-2008_pg1_2

Bhurban on March 8, to work out a detailed framework for the forthcoming coalition government at the centre.¹³

Amongst other developments, as many as 42 people were killed and 58 others were wounded in a bomb blast in Darra Adamkhel on March 9 during a tribal peace jirga.¹⁴ In another incident of violence, two suicide bombers attacked the Navy War College in Lahore on March 4, killing four naval personnel and injuring 21 others.¹⁵

NEPAL

- *Chinese Minister meets Prime Minister Koirala; A new revolution if Maoists lose the elections; Prachanda reiterates electoral alliance*

The Chinese Assistant Minister for Foreign Affairs He Yafei, in a bilateral meeting with the Nepalese Prime Minister Girija Prasad Koirala, on March 2 emphasised on the importance of a peaceful and stable Nepal, to facilitate economic cooperation between the two countries. The two sides, amongst other issues, discussed the possibility of an extension of the Tibet railway link to Kathmandu.¹⁶

Meanwhile, Dr. Baburam Bhattarai has announced that the Communist Party of Nepal-Maoist (CPN-Maoist) would launch a revolution if it does not win the elections. The main reason cited for this move was the agenda of the Maoists, which Bhattarai claims, no other political party is capable of handling.¹⁷ Whereas, any possibility of an electoral alliance with the Maoists was rejected by the Unified Marxist Leninist (UML), the CPN-Maoist Chairman Prachanda in a recent statement stated that such a possibility is not ruled out. Prachanda in a recent announcement also said that reports of him being the future President of Nepal are redundant.¹⁸

Meanwhile, on March 6, Prime Minister Girija Prasad Koirala, while hailing the Nepal Army for its glorious history of performing extraordinary duties with discipline and courage, emphasised upon a “broad, transparent, inclusive and sustainable” structure for the Nepali Army.¹⁹

SRI LANKA

- *Lankan diplomatic missions confront LTTE propaganda; No pause in anti-LTTE drive*

Sri Lanka diplomatic missions in various countries have been asked to sensitise the international community about the Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam’s (LTTE) separatist propaganda. This international awareness programme, as it is being called, has been reported as a successful effort in

¹³ “Asif, Nawaz to tackle the nitty-gritty today: Power-sharing agreement,” *Dawn*, March 9, 2008 at <http://www.dawn.com/2008/03/09/top2.htm>

¹⁴ “Tribal peace jirga attacked: 42 killed, 58 injured in Darra Adamkhel,” *Dawn*, March 3, 2008 at <http://www.dawn.com/2008/03/03/top1.htm>

¹⁵ “First suicide attack on naval institution: Two bombers strike war college in Lahore,” *Dawn*, March 5, 2008 at <http://www.dawn.com/2008/03/05/top1.htm>

¹⁶ “Yafei tells PM China is ready to support Nepal,” *Nepal News*, March 3, 2008, at <http://www.nepalnews.com/archive/2008/mar/mar03/news06.php>

¹⁷ “A new revolution if Maoists lose the election, says Dr. Bhattarai,” *Nepal News*, March 5, 2008, <http://www.nepalnews.com/archive/2008/mar/mar05/news02.php>

¹⁸ “Prachanda reiterates there will be electoral alliance,” March 7, 2008, at <http://www.nepalnews.com/archive/2008/mar/mar07/news02.php>

¹⁹ “PM Koirala Hails NA’s Role for Peaceful Nepal,” *Himalayan Times*, March 7, 2008, at <http://www.thehimalayantimes.com/fullstory.asp?filename=aFanata0vfqzpc0a8a1sa.axamal&folder=aHaoamW&Name=Home&dtSiteDate=20080307>

garnering support from Sri Lankans residing abroad.²⁰ In a recent statement, President Mahinda Rajapakse reiterated that the use of force, which he termed as “liberation operations on the LTTE cadres”, would continue against the Tigers and that he would make sure that they are exterminated totally from Sri Lankan soil. “We are no longer a poor country thriving on aid and subsidies of the world. Our per capita income has risen to US\$ 1,625 now. We need not put our head down to anybody, but we are prepared to listen to constructive criticism and prudent advice of others,” the President said.²¹

Meanwhile, *Daily News* has reported that the LTTE has resorted to new tactics by allowing their female cadres to take their children to bunker lines on the Forward defences. A military spokesman termed it as a move to tarnish the image of the Security Forces.²² Meanwhile, in Tamil Nadu, two Sri Lankan Tamils were arrested on charges of constructing a boat for the LTTE. It is reported that Rs.3 million were received from the LTTE through hawala transfer to make the 70 feet long boat.²³

BANGLADESH

- *Bangladesh supports 'One China' policy; India visit successful, says Army Chief*

The Foreign Adviser Iftexhar Ahmed Chowdhury has stated that Bangladesh's support to "One China" policy will remain constant. He reaffirmed Bangladesh's position when Chinese Ambassador in Dhaka Zheng Qingdian met him at the foreign ministry on March 2. The Chinese envoy apprised Iftexhar of Taiwan's renewed attempt to seek UN membership through a soon to be held "referendum". Iftexhar said, "There is no China but One China, and the People's Republic of China is its name. Bangladesh will categorically reject any attempts by any part of China such as Taiwan to seek UN membership." He further stated that, “Relations with China are at the heart of Bangladeshi's foreign policy. There shall be no change in this now, and I do not believe there can be any change in this in the future.” The Chinese envoy appreciated the support from the Bangladesh Government on the Taiwan issue.²⁴

Army Chief General Moeen U Ahmed returned home on March 2 after a week-long tour of India, which he termed ‘successful’. During his visit, General Moeen met Indian Defence Minister AK Antony, External Affairs Minister Pranab Mukherjee and Chiefs of the three Indian Services. The General hoped that the proposed Dhaka-Kolkata passenger train service would start soon. "It will be good for all if the train service between India and Bangladesh begins. I hope the train service will be started as soon as possible after settling the issue of security of the two countries," General Moeen said.²⁵

Meanwhile, the Workers' Party of Bangladesh (WPB) opposed the caretaker government's move to hold local government polls before parliamentary elections. “The government step to hold local government elections before the parliamentary polls seems to be part of certain political scheme,” said WPB President Rashed Khan Menon while speaking to media persons in Dhaka on March 2.²⁶

²⁰ “Lankan missions confront LTTE propaganda,” *Daily News*, March 3, 2008, at <http://www.dailynews.lk/2008/03/03/sec11.asp>

²¹ “No pause in anti-LTTE drive,” *Daily News*, March 3, 2008, <http://www.dailynews.lk/2008/03/03/pol01.asp>

²² “Bunker babies: Latest Tiger ruse,” *Daily News*, March 6, 2008, at <http://www.dailynews.lk/2008/03/06/sec01.asp>

²³ “Indian police cripple,” *Daily News*, March 5, 2008, at <http://www.dailynews.lk/2008/03/05/sec02.asp>

²⁴ “Dhaka supports 'One China' policy, says Iftexhar”, *Daily Star*, March 4, 2008, at <http://www.thedailystar.net/story.php?nid=26034>

²⁵ “India visit successful”, *Daily Star*, March 2, 2008, at <http://www.thedailystar.net/story.php?nid=25744>

²⁶ “Workers' Party opposes upazila polls before JS”, *Daily Star*, March 6, 2008, at <http://www.thedailystar.net/story.php?nid=26378>

The International Narcotics Control Board (INCB) has reported that Bangladesh has become the prime transit route for trafficking heroin to Europe from South East Asia. "There is evidence that heroin consignments destined for Europe are increasingly passing through Bangladesh," stated the INCB's annual report 2007 that was released worldwide on March 5. It further added that "The geographical nature of Bangladesh, in particular its long borders with India and Myanmar, makes it particularly suitable for heroin trafficking."²⁷

2. ENERGY SECURITY REVIEW

CHINA

- *China shows interest in Iran-Pakistan-India gas pipeline*

China has reportedly conveyed to Pakistan that in the event of India backing out of the IPI gas project – the proposed multi-billion dollar, 2,700-kilometre gas pipeline originally intended to link Iran, Pakistan and India – it would be willing to import 1.05 billion cubic feet (bcf) of gas per day. Both the Pakistani and the Iranian Foreign ministry spokespersons have reiterated the growing Chinese interest in the pipeline project. The Indian reaction to this development has been lukewarm. The prevailing belief in the Indian establishment is that China is unlikely to pay the gas prices being demanded by Iran. While addressing the Indian Parliament recently, Indian Petroleum Minister Murli Deora stated, "No official communication has been received regarding China joining the IPI gas pipeline project. Such multilateral projects involve protracted discussions as all the aspects have to be carefully examined."²⁸

CRUDE OIL PRICE

- *Crude Oil price reaches record high*

Crude oil prices reached a record a US \$104 a barrel on the New York Mercantile Exchange last week, breaking the 1980s record high of \$39.50 a barrel which, adjusted for inflation, is \$103.76. Last week had opened with crude prices touching \$103.95 a barrel, which analysts attributed to a falling dollar.²⁹ Crude oil prices peaked to another high again after the Organisation of the Petroleum Exporting Countries (OPEC), at its meeting on March 5, 2008, decided not to increase crude oil production.

OPEC

- *OPEC refuses to increase Crude Oil production*

OPEC has rebuffed American calls for increased crude oil production to curb rising energy prices. The cartel, while deciding against cutting production in a bid to offset a seasonal slow down in oil prices, was unconvinced that there was an oil supply shortfall in the global economy. Reiterating its position that the market remained well supplied, OPEC President Chakib Khelil argued that the sharp rise in oil prices was caused by mismanagement of the US economy and financial speculation. This

²⁷ "Bangladesh transit route for heroin trafficking", *Daily Star*, March 7, 2008, at <http://www.thedailystar.net/story.php?nid=26539>

²⁸ "Iran gas: China waits as India wavers", *Asia Times online*, March 5, 2008, at http://www.atimes.com/atimes/South_Asia/JC06Df03.html

²⁹ "Oil Prices Pass Record Set in '80s, but Then Recede", *New York Times*, March 3, 2008, at www.nytimes.com/2008/03/03/business/worldbusiness/03cnd-oil.html?_r=1&oref=slogin -

view has been bolstered by energy analysts who also agree that the global economy is well supplied.³⁰

RENEWABLE ENERGY

- *Renewed call to increase the share of renewable energy*

United States Deputy Secretary of State John Negroponte, while opening the Washington International Renewable Energy Conference or WIREC 2008, stated that it is imperative to expand the use of renewable energy such as wind power and bio-fuels to reduce dependence on foreign oil and slow global warming. The three day conference gathered representatives from more than 10 governments, corporations and non-governmental organisations. Mr. Negroponte stressed the importance of solar power, wind and bio-fuels in heralding new frontiers in production and accelerating economic growth in a sustainable manner.³¹

3. INTERNAL SECURITY REVIEW

JAMMU AND KASHMIR

- *Intelligence agencies oppose safe passage to Kashmiri youths*

Daily Excelsior has reported that intelligence agencies have opposed on 'security grounds' the proposal to provide safe passage to nearly 3500 Kashmiri youths, held up in Pakistan-occupied-Kashmir (PoK). It may be noted that that PDP, National Conference and CPM besides some separatist organisations have been supporting the demand for providing safe passage. Some human rights activists, however, put their number at about 10,000. They have reportedly undergone arms training in camps run by Pakistan the Army, Inter Services Intelligence (ISI), Lashkar-e-Toiba (LeT), Jaish-e-Mohammed (JeM), Hizbul Mujahideen (HM) and some other smaller outfits. "There is no guarantee that after their return these youths will not be exploited by the militant outfits after allowing them to lie low for few months," the Intelligence agencies have said, pointing out that there have been a number of instances where surrendered militants after availing all benefits, or even joining Government service, have rejoined militant groups or were found working for militants as 'Over Ground Workers'. Intelligence agencies have cautioned that safe passage would give a boost to militancy, which has clearly been on the decline during the last three to four years.³²

NORTH-EAST INSURGENCY

- *Militants attack Manipur Legislative Assembly; Asom Government admits Jihadi activities in the State*

Unidentified militants carried out a grenade attack against the heavily-guarded Manipur Assembly complex in Imphal on March 8, 2008. No one was, however, wounded in the attack. The incident prompted police and intelligence officials to tighten security around the Assembly complex. The

³⁰ "Oil Hits \$104 as OPEC Rebuffs Bush", *New York Times*, March 5, 2008, at www.nytimes.com/.../05cnd-opec.html?em&ex=1204866000&en=173ea2465113b66e&ei=5087%0A

³¹ "US pushes for greater share of renewables in energy security", *NDTV.Com*, March 5, 2008 at <http://www.ndtv.com/convergence/ndtv/story.aspx?id=NEWEN20080043107&ch=3/5/2008%208:47:00%20AM>

³² "Intelligence opposes safe passage to Kashmiri youths" *Daily Excelsior*, March 8, 2008, at <http://www.dailyexcelsior.com/web1/08mar08/news.htm#1>

grenade was hurled from near the first gate, which is reserved for the Governor, the Speaker and the Chief Minister.³³

In another development, the Asom Government has admitted that the Harkat-ul-Mujahideen (HuM), Harkat-ul-Jehad (HuJ) and Jamat-ul-Mujahideen (JuM) are active in Asom and the North-East. The Asom Forest Minister Rockybul Hussain told the State Assembly on March 6, that the State Government has intensified vigil along the international border with Bangladesh by setting up an intelligence agency led by the Border Security Force.³⁴

INTERNAL SECURITY REVIEW - OTHER DEVELOPMENTS

- ***Bid to revive militancy in Punjab, says Prime Minister Dr. Manmohan Singh; To free terrorists in '99 was a national decision, says Jaswant Singh***

In response to Shiromani Gurudwara Prabandhak Committee (SGPC) chief Avtar Singh Makkar's letter seeking a review of the 'black list' containing names of Sikh youths with alleged militant links, Prime Minister Dr. Manmohan Singh has noted that the Government has credible information of efforts to revive militancy in Punjab, and hence he cannot do away with the list. "The list cannot be done away with as the Government and our agencies have credible information of efforts being made by extremist groups to revive militancy in Punjab ... Much of this is concentrated in countries abroad, like the UK, Germany, Canada and especially Pakistan, where such groups receive a great deal of encouragement from remnants of extremist groups as well as support from other hostile forces," Dr. Singh's letter said. Dr. Singh cautioned that extremist groups elsewhere have not given up their attempts to revive militancy in the State.³⁵

Speaking on the floor of the Rajya Sabha on February 5, former external affairs minister Jaswant Singh noted that the decision to release three dreaded terrorists in exchange for 156 hostages aboard the hijacked Indian Airlines plane at Kandahar in 1999 was taken at an all-party meeting. "It was a national decision not a single party decision," the former minister said.³⁶

Meanwhile, Union Minister of State for Home Sriprakash Jaiswal told the Lok Sabha on March 4 that 'most individuals' and 'terrorist groups' operating in India have linkages with groups and agencies across the border, mainly in Pakistan and PoK. Jaiswal, also noted that LeT, JeM, Harkat-ul-Jihad-al-Islami (HUJI), and HuM were among terrorist groups that have international networks.³⁷

³³ "Bomb hurled at Manipur House," *Telegraph*, March 9, 2008, at http://telegraphindia.com/1080309/jsp/northeast/story_8998091.jsp

³⁴ "Government admits jihadi activities in Asom," *Sentinel*, March 8, 2008, at http://sentinelassam.com/sentinel_en/main%20news.htm

³⁵ "Bid to revive Punjab militancy: PM," *Daily Excelsior*, March 9, 2008, at <http://www.dailyexcelsior.com/web1/08mar09/news.htm>

³⁶ "To free terrorists in '99 was a national decision: Jaswant," *Indian Express*, March 6, 2008, at <http://www.indianexpress.com/story/280722.html>

³⁷ "Most terror groups linked to Pak: Jaiswal," *Times of India*, March 5, 2008, at http://timesofindia.indiatimes.com/Most_terror_groups_linked_to_Pak_Jaiswal/rssarticleshow/2836960.cms

4. NUCLEAR REVIEW

INDIA

- *We can move forward with both Hyde Act and 123 in a consistent manner: Boucher; India concludes India-specific safeguards agreement; Meeting of UPA-Left committee to be held soon; No early elections: Pranab*

US Assistant Secretary of State, Richard Boucher during a recent visit to New Delhi said that the Hyde Act will have to be considered while operationalising the civilian nuclear agreement with India but indicated that it is unlikely that the legislation would impinge on the agreement. He said, “The Hyde Act is a domestic legislation and the 123 Agreement is an international agreement. I think we can move forward with both in a consistent manner.” The statement assumes significance in the light of the recent statement made by the US Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice to the US House Foreign Affairs panel last month that “we will support nothing with India that is in contradiction to the Hyde Act. It will have to be completely consistent with the obligations of the Hyde Act. We’ll have to be consistent with the Hyde Act or I don’t believe we can count on Congress to make the next step.”³⁸

In other developments, Indian External Affairs Minister Shri Pranab Mukherjee stated that India has concluded negotiations with the International Atomic Energy Agency for safeguards agreement and the UPA-Left committee meeting will be held soon to decide the future course of action.³⁹

The Manmohan Singh government has decided to convene a meeting of the UPA-Left committee on the nuclear deal in light of the recent completion of India-specific safeguards agreement at the IAEA. This came after a demand by the Left parties for such a meeting to discuss the India-specific safeguards agreement.⁴⁰ It is expected that the meeting will take place before Parliament goes into recess on March 20, 2008.

In other news, Shri Pranab Mukherjee dismissed any possibility of early elections. In light of the highly populist budget, speculation was rife that the Congress was preparing for early elections.⁴¹

NORTH KOREA

- *US would like diplomatic relations with North Korea: Hill; China trying to restart stalled disarmament process: Dawei*

Ambassador Christopher Hill has said that the US would like the establishment of diplomatic relations with Pyongyang. However, he reiterated that the North Koreans had been informed that this would not happen until it gives up its nuclear weapons.⁴²

In other reports, China is in discussions with the United States and North Korea on how to bridge differences and restart talks on ending the North Korean nuclear programme. Talks on disarming North Korea have been on hold since Pyongyang missed an end-2007 deadline to provide a complete

³⁸ “Hyde Act is only a domestic legislation, says Boucher,” *Hindu*, March 5, 2008, at <http://www.hinduonnet.com/thehindu/thscrip/print.pl?file=2008030555191200.htm&date=2008/03/05/&prd=th&>

³⁹ “Talks with IAEA complete: Pranab,” *Hindu*, March 8, 2008, at <http://www.hindu.com/thehindu/holnus/000200803081978.htm>

⁴⁰ “UPA-Left meet soon, Govt to put Russia, France, IAEA on the table,” *Indian Express*, March 08, 2008, at <http://www.indianexpress.com/printerFriendly/281802.html>

⁴¹ “Pranab sees no early elections,” *Hindu*, March 9, 2008, at <http://www.hinduonnet.com/thehindu/thscrip/print.pl?file=2008030956800100.htm&date=2008/03/09/&prd=th&>

⁴² “U.S. relations with North Korea possible, diplomat says,” *LA Times*, March 4, 2008, at <http://www.latimes.com/news/nationworld/world/la-fg-norkor4mar04,1,6958771,print.story?ctrack=1&csset=true>

declaration of its nuclear arms programme as agreed under a multilateral deal.⁴³ Chinese Vice Premier Wu Dawei told reporters that they had proposed several means to restart the process both to US and to North Korea.

IRAN

- *Security Council imposes third round of sanctions on Iran; ElBaradei urges Iran to be as active and cooperative as possible in its working with the IAEA; Russia and China thwart Western attempt to introduce a resolution on Iran at the IAEA; Iran will only talk to the IAEA on the nuclear issue: Ahmadinejad*

The UN Security Council imposed a fresh round of sanctions on Iran on March 3, 2008. The Council adopted its third resolution against Iran over its nuclear programme. Unlike the two previous resolutions which were adopted unanimously, this resolution saw one abstention by Indonesia which stated that it “remained to be convinced of the efficacy of adopting additional sanctions at this juncture.” The resolution authorises inspections of cargo to and from Iran that is suspected to include prohibited equipment, tightens monitoring of Iranian financial institutions and extends travel bans and asset freezes against persons and companies involved in the nuclear programme. Also, it adds 13 names to the existing list of 5 individuals and 12 companies subject to travel and asset restrictions.⁴⁴

IAEA Director General, Dr. Mohammad ElBaradei said, “I urge Iran to be as active and cooperative as possible in working with the agency to clarify this matter of serious concern.”⁴⁵ Iran’s ambassador to the Agency, Ali Asghar Soltanieh, called the intelligence data “forged and fabricated” and denounced the new Security Council resolution on Monday as “irresponsible” and “an arrow aiming at the heart of” the atomic energy agency.

In other news, Russia and China thwarted an attempt by the US and its allies to introduce a resolution on Iran's nuclear defiance at a meeting of the International Atomic Energy Agency. Reports indicated that their decision was a result of lingering unhappiness about not being informed earlier of plans for such a resolution. Moscow had earlier in the week threatened not to back the new UN Security Council sanctions against Iran unless the West gave up its IAEA resolution plans.⁴⁶

Last week also saw Iranian President Mahmoud Ahmadinejad say that Iran would henceforth only talk to the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) about its nuclear programme. President Ahmadinejad said, “From now on, Iran's nuclear issue is only within the agency, within the framework of mutual obligations and the Nuclear Non-proliferation Treaty. We won't negotiate with anyone outside the agency.” In light of these statements, it remains to be seen whether Iran would continue its talks with EU foreign policy chief Javier Solana.⁴⁷

***S. Samuel C. Rajiv is on leave and this issue does not therefore cover Afghanistan and Iraq. Dr. M. Amarjeet Singh is standing in as Editor during Samuel Rajiv’s absence.**

⁴³ “China In Efforts to Bridge U.S., North Korea Differences,” *New York Times*, March 6, 2008, at <http://www.nytimes.com/reuters/world/international-korea-north-china.html?sq=nuclear&st=nyt&scp=6&pagewanted=print>

⁴⁴ “Security Council Adds Sanctions against Iran,” *New York Times*, March 4, 2008, at http://www.nytimes.com/2008/03/04/world/middleeast/04nations.html?_r=1&sq=nuclear&st=nyt&oref=slogin&scp=3&pagewanted=print

⁴⁵ “ElBaradei urges Iran to clarify atom arms allegations,” *Washington Post*, March 3, 2008, at http://www.washingtonpost.com/wp-dyn/content/article/2008/03/03/AR2008030300868_pf.html

⁴⁶ “Russia, China Scuttle Resolution Plans,” *Washington Post*, March 4, 2008, at http://www.washingtonpost.com/wp-dyn/content/article/2008/03/04/AR2008030400416_pf.html

⁴⁷ “Iran Says It Will Only Talk to IAEA,” *Washington Post*, March 5, 2008, at http://www.washingtonpost.com/wp-dyn/content/article/2008/03/05/AR2008030502507_pf.html