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GUANTANAMO BAY

1. "US is under pressure to defend three jail suicides," news story in June 12 Secunderabad-based left-of center English daily DECCAN CJHRONICLE: "Death, whether as a protest or an act of desperation, was the only way out of Guantanamo for the three "war on terror" inmates found hanged in their cells. On one side there is a mini-desert in a parched corner of southeast Cuba. On the other are sharks and a huge expanse of the Atlantic Ocean. The US military is not kidding when it warns its "enemy combatant" guests that there is no escape. The Saturday suicides come as the US government fights a desperate battle to defend the camp and the judicial black hole the detainees are kept in against international criticism. Prime Minister Tony Blair of Britain, US President George W. Bush's closest ally, has called Guantanamo an "anomaly." UN Secretary-General Kofi Annan says the camp should be closed. The detention camp on the US Naval base at Guantanamo Bay was opened in January 2002 to keep followers of Osama bin Laden, the Taliban and other groups detained in Afghanistan, Iraq and other hotspots since the September 11, 2001 attacks. At first the inmates were kept in Camp X-Ray. Later they were moved to Camp Delta, a harsh purpose built complex. The US military insists conditions are "humane" and that many inmates are too "dangerous" to be considered for release, transfer or even put on trial in a civil court. There are currently about 460 detainees in Camp Delta who are divided into three different security risks. About 10 per cent are said to suffer from a serious mental illness and a large number are prescribed anti-depressants, the military admits. There have been scores of suicide attempts before the three deaths were reported on Saturday. Nearly all inmates have been at Guantanamo since it opened. The US refuses to give them prisoner of war status under the Geneva Conventions so they are called "enemy combatants." Special war crimes military tribunals have been set up, but only 10 inmates have been charged and the hearings are virtually frozen while challenges to their legality are decided by the US Supreme Court. Guantanamo became notorious when images of prisoners wearing orange jump suits who were bound, shackled and bundled into back of improvised golf carts to be taken for interrogation were published. The US media has published classified documents that showed the US defense department approved the use of sleep deprivation, exposure to hot and cold, bright lights, and loud music during interrogations."

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IRAQ ZARQAWI'S DEATH

2. "NOW TO MAKE USE OF NO AL-ZARQAWI," editorial in the June 10 nationalist THE HINDUSTAN TIMES. "The death of the most prominent insurgent in Iraq, al-Zarqawi, will definitely have a de moralizing effect on the worldwide Islamic terrorism movement ... From all accounts, he was a tremendously divisive figure ... Of course, it's too soon to say whether he died in the air strike or was killed earlier by rebel Iraqi resistance fighters who threw away the body that was recovered by US and Iraqi forces. There were indications since last year that both the al-Qaeda leadership in the Pakistan-Afghanistan border and the Iraqi resistance fighters were unhappy over the virulently anti-Shia direction given by Zarqawi to the insurgency. Besides, he expanded the Iraqi 'jihad' to foreign territories, making it a pan-Islamic struggle rather than one meant to liberate Iraq from occupation ... Zarqawi's exit may now straitjacket al-Qaeda activities in Iraq, even if temporarily. But it's unlikely to spell the end of the insurgency itself as the coalition and the emerging Iraqi security forces still seem to be unable to control sporadic violence. Which is apparently the reason why the Shia militias are stepping up their attacks on Sunni targets. The good news is that the political process in Baghdad appears to be gathering steam. Prime Minister Nuri Kamal alMaliki's cabinet could finally give Iraq a functioning government. Mr. Maliki's determination to face up to the odds is a positive sign, the nascent nature of the new Iraqi polity notwithstanding ... It's a tricky situation since radical Shias, too, are likely to continue to oppose the new government violently if they are denied the influence they seek. The Iraqi government should play on these divisions among the extremists and try to steer some of them away from violence and towards the political mainstream, while marginalizing or dividing the rest. Zarqawi's death makes this possible and opens an unexpected window of opportunity for the government to win over the alienated population."

3. "DEATH OF A TERRORLORD," editorial in the June 10 left-of-center THE HINDU. "Abu Musab al-Zarqawi had the highest profile among the militants fighting the United States-led occupation of Iraq ... Washington contributed to the myth-building exercise since it was desperate to show that the insurgency was the handiwork of a transnational terrorist network ... U.S. Ambassador Zalmay Khalilzad connected with

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reality when he observed that the militancy would not end with Zarqawi's death. It will no longer be possible to pretend that the vast majority of the insurgents are not home-grown Iraqis. While the Jordanian-born Zarqawi professed a vaguely Salafist strain of militant Islam, the indigenous resistance includes people belonging to diverse ideological persuasions ... The hope that all sections of the Iraqi people would join the resistance was destroyed when Zarqawi and others of his ilk began to murder Shias en masse. With the majority community, which exercised constructive restraint for many months, beginning to retaliate, Iraq is a bitterly divided and in-feuding society ... The policy Washington seeks to implement is one of driving militants out of pockets of territory and holding these areas until infrastructure can be rebuilt. The calculation is that the hearts and minds of ordinary Iraqis cannot be won when they lack water, power, hospitals, and schools. This plan is unlikely to take off. A process of ethnic cleansing is under way in parts of Iraq with Shia and Sunni families moving out of localities controlled by the other community ... The police forces in many parts of the country are indistinguishable from the Shia militias that have abducted and murdered Sunnis. The Interior Minister might not be able to control his forces unless he is a leading figure in one of the militias; but if he is that, he might not have the inclination to perform his official duties in a fair manner. The occupiers know that the elimination of one terror lord will not help them escape from a quagmire."

4. "BEGINNING OF END FOR AL-QAIDA?," op-ed in the June 10 centrist THE INDIAN EXPRESS by Chairman & MD, Mphasis Jaithirth Rao. "Those of us who have believed all along that the Anglo-American coalition was strategically correct in moving into Iraq, but have been the victims of executional incompetence, insensitivity and bungling, may finally have some hope. Jordanian Islamist Fascist, one Khalaylay, popularly (or more appropriately infamously) known as Zarqawi is dead ... Zarqawi specialized in brutal beheadings and enjoyed capturing these events on film. The films were routinely loaded on to the various web-sites of the fanatic variety and many were shown on Al-Jazeera ... Of course, Zarqawi was not to be faulted on the grounds that he was not patriotic. He loved his fellow-Jordanians so much that he blew up hundreds of them in a hotel in Amman. Apparently going to hotels was an infidel activity punishable by death. All of us who have been watching the appalling American incompetence in Iraq were beginning to give up. The confused and amateurish Paul Bremer started off the venture on the wrong foot ... Zarqawi and his ilk were determined to

provoke a civil war and prove to the average Iraqis that their enthusiastic participation in the recent elections was definitely a wasted exercise ... Zargawi's death is welcome in itself. What is even more welcome is its manner. The location of the safe house where he and his key acolytes were meeting as well as the timing of the meeting itself, were both betrayed by one of his own people. At long last, the "Circus" (shorthand for the Americans or the new Iraqi government) seems to have found a superb George Smiley who has successfully planted a mole (or who knows, maybe many moles) in the heart of Al-Qaida. Finally, the coalition seems to have realized that the need of the hour is a surgeon's scalpel, not a bumbling hammer ... If the Americans move away from Bremerian incompetence and hit-and-smash tactics which are both ugly and ineffective, if the focus now is on the use of intelligence (literally and figuratively), if the Iraqi government co-opts its people away from a needless civil war into an understanding that there are no heretics in a civil republic, victory is still possible. Zargawi's death is not the end of Al-Qaida in Iraq or elsewhere. The manner of his death gives us hope that it might mark the beginning of its end. And of course, Le Carre and Smiley would stand vindicated!"

5. "A DIVIDED WORLD," editorial-page article in June 10 centrist THE STATESMAN by Amitav Banerji, Indian career diplomat, working at the Commonwealth Secretariat: "Huntington did not describe the fault line as lying exclusively between Islam and his so-called 'western' civilization, but that has become the most common characterization - or shall we say, misrepresentation - of his thesis. 9/11 is definitely a watershed in this regard, the day the forces of international terrorism breached the moat around Castle America. Retribution followed swiftly in Afghanistan. The second Iraq war added to the sense of unease felt around the globe, and not just in the Muslim world, about unilateral action by the world's sole super-power and its allies. On the other side of the coin, Bali, Casablanca, Istanbul, Madrid and London got added to the litany of names associated with what is loosely referred to as 'Islamic terrorism'. It is a huge irony that 2001 was officially the United Nations Year of Dialogue among Civilizations This was perhaps an implicit recognition that Huntington's thesis could not completely be ignored. But that dialogue, such as it was, came to a dead halt on the 9th of September that year The Alliance seeks 'to foster respect between Islam and western societies', but it 'aims to fight against those who, in any part of the world and using all kinds of distorted arguments, promote hatred and intolerance' The challenge for both the UN and

Commonwealth initiatives will be to go beyond being talk shops and to devise ways of grappling with issues that divide societies at the level of the community. It is not not difficult to enumerate general principles - about democracy, the rule of law, respect for human rights, religious freedom, cultural sensitivity, social justice, affirmative action, and the like. It is far more difficult to devise user-friendly templates that can be tried out at the grass-roots level, to promote greater social harmony."

6. "Iraq under the threat of vengeance," edit page article by D.V.Rajashekara in June 10 Bangalore-based left-of-center Kannada daily PRAJAVANI: "Finally, the US forces managed to kill notorious terrorist Abu Musab al-Zarqawi in Iraq on Wednesday. The death of the notorious terrorist is unlikely to bring peace in Iraq, but it may prove otherwise. No doubt, it is a temporary set back to terrorists. But, one can't rule out the possibility of retaliation by terrorists in a big way. The US president George Bush and the UK Prime Minister Tony Blair expressed their happiness and issued stern warning to the terrorists saying "all the terrorists will face the same fate as that of Al-Zarqawi if they do not toe the line of peace." The U.S. and the U.K. have taken the issue of Iraq as a question of their prestige. Initially, majority of people in these countries used to substantiate the action of their respective governments. But, it seems the opinion of the people is changing. The U.S. and the U.K. had invaded Iraq on the pretext that Iraq possessed 'Weapons of Mass Destruction.' But no such weapons were found in Iraq. Worst is that even a proper form of democracy could not be installed after destroying the system that existed there. The military could not be withdrawn as chaotic situation prevailed in Iraq and at the same time the military can not stay any more. Even the recently installed temporary government is not able to establish peace in the area. People do not have confidence either in the government or the military. Terrorists are gaining an upper hand. The efforts to establish a policing system consisting of local people are on but not still successful."

7. "A killer is killed," editorial in June 12 Bangalore-based independent English daily VIJAY TIMES: "The US Defense Secretary Donald H. Rumsfeld is not given to hyperbole. He is curt. Yet, reacting to news of Abu Musab al-Zarqawi's death, as also that of this jihadi's spiritual mentor, in an air raid on Wednesday, Rumsfeld was ecstatic: "Over the past several years no single person on this planet has had the blood of more innocent men, women and children on his hands." He has reason to exult in this unexpected upswing in the fortunes of the American troops in Iraq. After the

initial lull that followed the fall of Baghdad and Saddam Hussein's evil dictatorship, the foreign forces, led by American troops, in Iraq have had a tough and often harrowing time. Sunni Islamists, unable to reconcile themselves to the unceremonious end of Saddam Hussein's murderous rule, have been waging relentless jihad against what they describe as the "occupying army of infidels." Their hero, Zarqawi, provided them with both leadership and, with more than a little help from friends and admirers in Syria, the wherewithal for their bloody insurrection, including the explosives used by suicide bombers. Despite their best efforts, the American troops were unable to track him down, largely because of the support he enjoyed in Sunni-dominated middle Iraq. By preaching a heady mix of nationalism and Islamism, Zarqawi was able to project himself as David fighting Goliath. And, by putting out video tapes of kidnapped foreigners being beheaded by him, Zarqawi portrayed himself as a jihadi who would stop at nothing to ensure the victory of Islamism. Wednesday's success suggests that real time and credible information has begun to flow in from the people of Iraq. The absence of such information has proved to be a stumbling block till now; hopefully, the breakthrough in tracking down Zarqawi marks a turning point. It also comes as a morale booster for Prime Minister Nouri al-Maliki and his fledgling alliance government. With Zarqawi out of the way, it should be easier for the Iraqi security forces to enforce a semblance of peace. As for Al-Qaeda, over which Zarqawi was believed to have been gaining control, it will no doubt suffer a setback, at least in Iraq. But that may prove to be ephemeral. Meanwhile, we should watch out for Osama bin Laden and his deputy, Ayman al Zawahri: They are bound to be enthused by Zarqawi's death that had begun to position himself as Al-Qaeda's top leader, dethroning the man who shook the world on 9/11."

8. "KINGPIN KILLED," editorial in June 12 centrist THE STATESMAN: "A crucial query that might be answered in coming weeks is just how powerful was Zarqawi. Did he really hold sway over the now-marginalized Sunnis? Was the Jordanian's outfit as closely linked with Al Qaida as it was, for obvious convenience, projected? Was he truly a master-strategist without whom the insurgency will lose direction and dissipate? These questions acquire added relevance given suspicions that he was not the huge figure he was made out to be simply because the Americans always find it necessary to put a 'face' to their foes: witness their portrayal of bin Laden, Gaddafi, Khomeini, Castro, Chavez. They have not succeeded doing that in North Korea - probably because they get tongue-tied by oriental names. Thus the ghost of Zarqawi could come to haunt them. As does

the image of George W. Bush declaring 'mission accomplished' from a warship, or Washington's points-man in Baghdad gleefully pronouncing 'We got him'. For some Americans would hope that his death would set in motion a process by which a withdrawal might be contemplated. Time alone will tell. Probably as significant as Zarqawi's elimination was evidence of progress in filling the critical slots for defense and interior in the new government. But in Iraq, as in so many similar situations, restoration of law-and-order or 'security' is only one strand in the resurgence exercise: reconstruction of infrastructure and economic revival being

the other critical ones. They intertwine, and the death of one insurgent leader will not accelerate the recovery."

9. "TOO EARLY TO CELEBRATE IN IRAQ," analysis in the June 12 pro-BJP right-of-center THE PIONEER BY Ajoy Bose. "Despite the hype by the US about Zarqawi while he was alive and the jubilation now with his killing, this may have little serious impact either on the strike capabilities of the Al Qaeda network or the larger threat of the widespread insurgency in Iraq ... Zarqawi's death would have little or no impact on the insurgency in Iraq. The disaffection with the continuing American occupation as well as its sponsored regime is far too endemic within the Sunnis for it to dissipate with the killing of one terrorist leader. Far from being demoralized, the squads of suicide bombers tht are spawned every day across Iraq are likely to grow in leaps and bounds ... Even American commentators have been sober while discussing the implications of Zarqawi's death on the situation in Iraq. This is in stark contrast to the kind of juvenile celebration in the US media after Saddam's arrest ... It is becoming increasingly clear to more and more people that regardless of whether they are able to eliminate the odd terrorist leader, there appears to be no light at the end of the tunnel for the Americans in Iraq."

10. "CONSENSUS AGAINST IRAQ," analysis in the June 10 centrist THE TIMES OF INDIA by A Srinivas. "The Iraq occupation has all but no takers in the US. Dissent assumes various forms, with former generals and ex-diplomats, not all Democrats, joining the chorus. Some oppose the 'war' because it did not work for the US; for many others the invasion was a moral outrage. It is hard to find open support for the occupation outside the state department; such is the current political climate ... Recently, in Washington DC, the American Friends Service Committee laid down rows upon rows of shoes in front of Capitol Hill to convey the magnitude of death - over 100,000 Iraqis and 2,000 US soldiers in Iraq. Attached to each pair was a tag

with a casualty's name and age. There were shoes of children as well. At one end, two announcers read out in monotone the endless list of the dead on both sides. The protest, organized by Quakers who are active in the peace movement, did not fail to arrest the attention of people in the area. It had traveled all round the US, the shoes coming from donations from thousands of people, including a few US soldiers ... Some say it, some don't - that Iraq is another Vietnam. Never mind that medical advancement has saved the lives of the severely wounded and restricted the death count to about 2,000, as against 20,000 four decades ago. Many of the wounded are physically and mentally unfit to work. They are likely to join the ranks of the homeless, the dregs of US society."

11. "VICTORY AGAINST TERRORISM" editorial in the June 10, 2006 Mumbai-based centrist Gujarati daily evening newspaper JANMABHOOMI. "The U.S. has scored a superb victory in the war against terrorism. Abu Musab al-Zarqawi, considered Osama bin Laden's right hand, was killed in a U.S. air strike north of Baghdad. A Jordanian by birth, Zarqawi embodied the worst form of terrorism and was responsible for several inhuman acts, including the killings of innocent civilians, mainly in Iraq. With the help of Arab nations and strong support from his mentor Bin Laden, Zarqawi had unleashed a reign of terror through his team of suicide bombers. As result of his death, there is a possibility that Al-Qaeda might intensify attacks against the U.S. and the U.K. Despite facing enormous difficulties in the strife-torn region of Iraq, America's success in nailing down dreaded terrorist Zarqawi is an achievement in itself. This will also deal a blow to Al-Qaeda's operation around the globe. In addition, it underscores the fact that all nations of the world need to unite in putting an end to the era of terrorism and making the world a safe place to live." Similar editorials appeared in the June 10, 2006 editions of Gujarati dailies DIVYA BHASKAR and GUJARATMITRA.

 IRAN

12. "THREE VIGNETTES FROM IRAN," analysis in the June 11 left-of-center THE HINDU by Praful Bidwai.

a. "It only takes a couple of days in Iran to realize that there is something seriously wrong with the stereotype disseminated by the global media which portrays Iran as a closed, unfree, pre-modern, anti-Western, pathologically authoritarian society - one that's monolithic, obsessed with

Islam, in which men willingly subjugate themselves to the Ayatollahs, and women cower and skulk, with their hair and ears completely covered, arms and ankles invisible, and curves hidden by loose-fitting garments. As I discovered during a recent visit, this stereotype is a parody. There is nothing that the Iranians love more, barring picnicking, than talking - and talking freely, with abandon, even to strangers. This is not only because they are curious about India. (Shahrukh Khan and Amitabh Bachchan are household names). Iranians are no more pre-modern or obsessed with the past than Indians. Nor are they particularly anti-Western. Over a million live in the United States alone and closely interact with their families back home. American products, including the latest Hollywood films, are easily available in Iran - where consumerism is as rampant as in India's shopping malls. True, Iran carries the legacy of the 1979 Islamic Revolution against the Shah, an American puppet. But many Iranians distrust the U.S. mainly for political reasons: it's an arrogant, interfering power which overthrew Iran's first elected Prime Minister (in 1953), pillaged its oil, supported Iraq in its eight year-long war with Iran, and imposed sanctions upon Iran ... Iran's fastest-growing faith seems to be Hinduism of the New-Age guru variety. (Buddhism comes a close second). Sathya Sai Baba, Rajneesh, Mahesh Yogi and Sri Sri Ravi Shankar are familiar figures in middle class drawing rooms. For many in the elite, Yoga is far more important than Haj ... There is a yawning gap between the prescribed dress code for women and actual attire. A significant minority defy the code in different ways. They wear short scarves, partially expose their hair or ankles, and use lipstick. At home, they dress even more casually, much like Indian women, but with Western clothes ... Iranian women don't defy the dress code en masse. But they are by no means servile, submissive or obsequious. The dress code has not broken their back. They walk and speak with dignity, pride and confidence.

b. "TWO images capture Iran's reality far more authentically than the familiar, stereotypical, stern face of Ayatollah Khomeini (or Mahmoud Ahmadinejad), and scenes of mutilation of the United States flag in street protests. The first is a picture of two chador-clad women squatting in a public garden, smoking. The second is that of thousands of stone-throwing students battling the police ... Iranians of all classes regularly defy injunctions against consuming alcohol. Every evening, one can see vendors lining Tehran's pavements with suitcases carrying two important commodities: liquor, and cassettes of foreign films dubbed in Farsi. A discreet call to the bootlegger's cell phone will ensure

home delivery of a 4.5-litre can of alcohol locally distilled from raisins/dates, or imported vodka or whisky. Parties are rarely held in middle-class homes where liquor does not flow freely ... At a more conscious level, irreverence towards authority takes the form of demands for the relaxation of restrictions on individual freedom, greater pluralism, and extension of human rights. Although the reformist current was weakened following Mohammed Khatami's departure as President last year, it is certainly not out of the reckoning. The reformist sentiment is widespread and manifests itself through the creative arts, civil society movements, as well as explicitly political initiatives. Signs of the cultural renaissance that's under way in Iran are everywhere in literature, film, painting, theatre, and the plastic arts. Iran has an active and growing civil society with a strong awareness of its autonomy from the state and its close identification with citizens. Particularly noteworthy are Iran's small but growing feminist movement, fast-expanding environmentalist groups, radical students' organizations, and campaigns for human rights.

c. "Iran's feminists have been able to make a mark at least in terms of putting the issue of women's exclusion and discrimination against them on the agenda ... Iran has a vibrant intellectual tradition and an active academic community that spans different disciplines. In caliber of its teachers, and especially its material infrastructure, Tehran University compares respectably with the best of Indian universities except on the freedom of expression and debate ... Despite state repression and censorship, the progressive intelligentsia, which stands for a fully institutionalized democracy with inviolable human rights, has been able to sustain journals of ideas and create new forums of debate. A lively debate is under way in Iran's intellectual parlors and cafes on the nuclear issue. Although it does not find public expression because of official censorship, personal conversations suggest that there is very little support for a hard-line position favoring Iran's acquisition of nuclear weapons. There is a strong consensus that Iran should have the option of developing nuclear power for electricity generation and that its right to do so under international law should not be sacrificed. At the same time, many Iranian intellectuals are worried that in the current international discourse, the issue of Iran's right to peaceful nuclear activities is being subordinated to Iranian citizens' human rights."

13. "FAUX ENEMY" Op-ed article by K. Subrahmanyan in the June 12, 2006, Mumbai-based centrist English-language daily

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a. "Iranian President Mahmoud Ahmadinejad has reacted positively to the latest proposals on the nuclear issue brought to Teheran by the special envoy of the European powers and US, Javier Solana. The proposal offers to Iran direct participation of US in the negotiations and guarantee Iran's territorial integrity in return for Iran suspending its enrichment activities during negotiations. The United States, which had been refusing to engage in direct negotiations with Iran for the last 26 years, has climbed down, offering Iran a major face-saving device. Iran has been declaring that it has no intention to make nuclear weapons. But it insists on exercising its right to enrich Uranium for peaceful purposes. In such circumstances there are no reasons why Iran should not accept the compromise in which the Russians have offered to get the Iranian enrichment of Uranium carried out in their soil. Iran had a clandestine enrichment programme from 1987 onwards with the assistance from Dr A Q Khan of Pakistan. The International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA), after three years of investigation, is not able to certify as yet that Iran has more clandestine materials, equipments or research programs.

It is not clear why the Western European countries and the US finally decided to climb down and be reasonable. Recently more information has become public that the problem about Iranian enrichment is largely black market supplies of equipment and technology from European companies. They have been assisting Iran through export of plants and equipment illegally, even while preaching non-proliferation. The major proliferators have been those Western European companies who supplied to Pakistan and through Pakistan to North Korea, Iran and Libya. Non-proliferation expert Dr. Leonard Weiss has referred to 'The Guardian,' which says that a joint report prepared by British, French, German and Belgian Intelligence Agencies for the European Union claim that since early 2004, the Pakistanis were making extensive efforts to procure materials and components for their nuclear and missile programs.

b. "The document is said to have listed 20 government entities in Pakistan, active in the procurement effort, and hundreds of companies around the world that are said to be involved in some aspect of the production of weapons of mass destruction. According to the experts, a successor to the Khan network has been revived, and this is Pakistan-controlled. The US is not in a position to hold Pakistan accountable for proliferation to Iran, though the IAEA has produced incontrovertible evidence on that issue. According to reporter Willaim Langeuresche, the Americans were fully

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acquainted with Khan's proliferation to Iran from 1987. He quotes US correspondent Mark Hibbs, who wrote about Pakistan proliferation to Iran in the 'Nucleemics Week' in May, 1991 and received a call from Richard Kennedy, US Ambassador for nonproliferation, who admitted that Khan was under US observation. This account also tallies with Dutch PM Ruud Lubbers' account that the CIA was interested in Khan and intervened twice in 1976 and in 1986 to get him freed from Dutch prosecution. One sometimes wonders whether the US was attempting to use Khan to mislead the Iranians in their enrichment efforts initially. They may have gotten genuinely alarmed when they found that the Iranians were able to develop an effective programme on their own. The Americans know that if the full facts of Khan's proliferation to Iran were to come out, then the permissiveness of previous US administrations will become public. The hands of the European powers are not also clean on proliferation. Therefore, the US and the Western Europeans could push the Iranians up to a point and not beyond that. Their threat did not work partly because the Iranians should have been aware of their vulnerability. The Europeans can stop the Iranian proliferation if they have the adequate political will to stop their companies from proliferating nuclear technology to Iran. One can only speculate whether they have reached that stage and are therefore in a position to reach a compromise solution with Iran. The next time some US Ayatollah or a Congressman like Tom Lantos talks off India's stand on Iranian proliferation, they should be asked to explain about the US-AQ Khan-Iran proliferation linkage."

TIPS REPORT

14. "POINTS TO PONDER," editorial in the June 10 centrist THE ASIAN AGE. "New Delhi's sharp rejection of a US report on human trafficking that indicted India for not doing enough to stop this scourge, came as a pleasant surprise. Because of the pusillanimity which the Manmohan Singh government has shown in its recent dealing with Washington, one had thought that India no longer had the moral courage to tell it, 'Mind your own business' ... The South Block's strong response - "we reject judgmental and prescriptive approach by a foreign government" - was an apt reply to Washington which never tires of preaching morality to the world, totally oblivious of its own moral turpitude. Having said that, one must also add that New Delhi will ignore the issues raised in the report at its own peril. It is true that a country like India does not need lessons in

governance and law enforcement. But it is also true that we cannot shut our eyes to the sordid realities plaguing our society. Is it not a fact that thousands of Bangladeshi and Nepali girls are sold in the red light areas of Delhi, Mumbai and Collate? The US state department report has placed India on a Tier 2 watch-list because of what it said were existing bonded labor practices and the lack of adequate action to effectively end this. Is it not true that thousands of small children are being forced to work in prison-like conditions in the carpet industry in Uttar Pradesh and zari workshops in Mumbai? Even six decades after Independence, thousands of Indian citizens are victims of some form of slavery ... The real proof of a nation's greatness is that not a single citizen goes to bed on empty stomach. Presence of shops selling chilled bottles of Pepsi and Coke in rural India where many people are deprived of drinking water, is not merely ironic, it is heartless. It was all very well to reject the US report, which was an affront to our national pride, but the government cannot wish away the points, which have been raised in the report

 INDIA-PAKISTAN RELATIONS

15. "A STRATEGIC SATELLITE, analysis in the June 10 centrist THE ASIAN AGE by Seema Mustafa.

a. "There is a reality about India-Pakistan relations that sudden bonhomie cannot wish away. The reality is decades of distrust and suspicion, nurtured and cultivated by vested interests that include governments in Pakistan and political parties in India. The Hindu-Muslim angle remains the cornerstone of this distrust, as does the deeply embedded view that Islamabad and New Delhi can never really wish well for the other ... The hugs and kisses since the two governments started talking did create an impression that new doors had opened, and that finally the ice had melted and spring had embraced bilateral relations. It is true that the people have discovered a certain commonality - in music, movies, cricket, food, culture and even a worldview if Kashmir is kept out of the conversation - but that both governments remain hostage to a strategic establishment that has grown roots and does not hesitate to scream "foul" at the first hint of change. This is a powerful establishment in both India and Pakistan, and can have a debilitating effect as both nations have witnessed over and over again. But the problem does not lie with the strategic community inclusive of the military, the intelligence agencies and of course the experts. The problem lies with the fact that

today both India and Pakistan are blessed with leaders trying to make history without having the stature to carry their people. This is more true of India than Pakistan, for one primary reason. In Pakistan the elite are used to decisions being taken in secrecy, with transparency not being an active word in the government book. In India, decisions without transparency are viewed with suspicion, create unease, and set off alarm bells to which the responses then are - to use an over used word hawkish ... Governments here have more leeway in developing relations with countries like the United States, largely because many of our top guns have worked in international banks, many are still drawing a pension, many have their children studying or working in the US, many in urban India look upon it as their Mecca and many others still believe in the Cold War concept of the "one or the other" alternative preferring to throw their lot in with Washington, as against the "alternative" Moscow, or for that matter, Beijing.

b. "Here the specific reference is to Siachen. The absence of transparency killed not just the initiative, but Prime Minister Manmohan Singh's visit to Pakistan. This is because he was, probably under US tutelage as Washington has been very keen for the resolution of this issue as a sign of good intent by all, trying to work out a deal through the back channels that was doomed to fail for more reasons than one ... The present dispensation's fondness for Washington is not supported by an independent, strategic thought process, but by personal likes and desires. The task force set up to look into relations with the US under K. Subrahmanyam has reportedly submitted its report to the Prime Minister, but this is expected to be little more than a justification to place all Indian eggs in the American basket. India has started to be identified by the world as a US satellite - the government prefers to term this as a "strategic ally" - with the developing world in particular tailoring its responses accordingly. The word "independent" has disappeared from foreign policy, with Washington now determining official Indian response to its neighbors and larger policy issues. For instance, even the main ingredients of the Siachen solution being considered by the government had been put together in the laboratories of Sandia in the US! India has to take her own position in the world. Many commentators have written with some admiration of the success of Iran's recent policy, where it was able to make the US blink after nerve-wracking weeks and months. Others have spoken admiringly of China and Russia for working together to counterbalance the US influence in this region. Even those in awe of the United States have had to admit that Indian policy is not carved out of independent

thought and lacks strategic depth. Instead of rolling over and playing dead for the Americans - not my words, but those of an intelligence head - the government must take support from the power of the Indian people to carve out an independent destiny in keeping with the nation's pride and sovereignty."

16. "WHO WILL PROTECT THE HINDUS?" editorial in the June 12, 2006, Mumbai edition of right-of-center Marathi daily SAAMNA. ". We are very happy to know that Shiv Sainiks disrupted a press conference addressed by chairman of the All Parties Hurriyat Conference Syed Ali Shah Geelani. Despite the risk to their lives, the Shiv Sainiks dared to swoop on the venue and raise slogans against Pakistan, terrorism and Geelani. The Sainiks told the Hurriyat hardliner that they had not come to kill him or beat him but they would not allow him to hold an 'anti-national' news conference in Jammu. As the police could not control the situation, Geelani was forced to leave the venue. The entire Kashmir valley has been taken over by Islamic fundamentalist groups. Geelani's Hurriyat Conference is, in fact, one of the major separatist outfits, which openly supports Pakistan's claim for control over Kashmir. Considering the volatile situation in Kashmir, Geelani's inflammatory speeches and rabble-rousing tours should be banned by the Indian government. But, our 'Manmohan Singh style' administration does not believe in prompt action against a rebel like Geelani who makes anti-India remarks hours after he is released on bail."

 INDO-U.S. NUCLEAR DEAL

17. "NUCLEAR SEPARATION TO COST INDIA BILLIONS," analysis in
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 the June 11 centrist THE ASIAN AGE by Seema Mustafa.

a. "India will have to spend "tens of billions" of dollars on separating its military and civilian nuclear facilities, setting up a new nuclear infrastructure and on dismantling the Cirus and Apsara reactors. Nuclear scientists have anonymously floated the figure of \$40 billion for separation and another \$60 billion for establishing the proposed civilian nuclear sector. Significantly, these figures were neither confirmed nor denied by Department of Atomic Energy chief Anil Kakodkar when he was questioned about the costs at a press conference. Informed sources told this correspondent that at this stage even the government could not cite figures for implementing the finer details of the

US-India civilian nuclear energy agreement, but that it was safe on the basis of a cursory break-up to predict that the costs involved would be "staggering" and close to the above figures worked out by nuclear scientists. For instance, any effort to determine the cost to the nation of this ambitious exercise of separating the facilities would have to take into account the billions of dollars spent in setting up a new facility, refurbishing an old one apart from what will be spent now on dismantling Cirus, relocating Apsara and creating additional nuclear facilities in the civilian sector. The sources said dismantling a radioactive facility was as, if not more, expensive than setting it up ... A decision has now been taken under the nuclear agreement to dismantle it with the cost expected to be far more than what was spent on construction, taking a conservative total expenditure on Cirus alone to over \$50 million. In an area where costs are shrouded in secrecy, this is an indication of what New Delhi will spend in virtually shutting down Cirus and relocating Apsara. The US has offered eight nuclear reactors for sale to India with the cost estimated at \$20 billion. For this alone the government will have to spend between two and three billion dollars a year although the total budget of the Department of Atomic Energy, if this fiscal year is an indication, is just \$2.01 billion.

b. "The government has failed to respond to questions about the costs involved for India ... The government will incur the cost of two nuclear reactors for every one under construction if it is committed to keeping the Indian strategic programme intact ... Under the new agreement the military facility might lie idle for long periods, but the government will not be allowed to use it for civilian purposes, unlike the P-5, who can move between civilian and military use at will. This will add to the nation's costs ... The question of feasibility has not been addressed by the government as yet, with scientists still openly worried about how the Department of Atomic Energy "intends to achieve and maintain such an alien and artificial situation" ... The sources pointed out that the purpose of the DAE was to replace uranium with thorium and that costs should include the loss of revenue incurred in replacing the world's first thorium reactor with commercial reactors at three times the cost. The scientific community is of the view that the US' intention is to cap India's nuclear weapons capability and "then roll it back to zero". The current US administration would like to hike costs to a point where India would have to cap its military capacity automatically, the sources said."

18. "FALSE EXPECTATIONS, WRONG ENGAGEMENTS," op-ed in the

June 10 centrist THE ASIAN AGE by India's former Permanent Representative to the United Nations ambassador N Krishnan.

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a. "The future of Indo-US cooperation is needlessly being held hostage to the implementation of the civilian nuclear deal ... Suffice it to say that if the pending legislation fails in the US Congress, that would be the best thing that could happen to liberate Indo-US relations to develop in a more natural and balanced manner ... It needs to be appreciated that given the present global and regional realities, an Indo-US strategic partnership is not sustainable and not to our advantage. The term "strategic partnership" is no doubt seductive. To be sure, the obvious asymmetry between the two countries need not come in the way of a partnership, provided other factors crystallize positively. The two also share common values and principles. Yet, the lack of convergence on geostrategic interests cannot be overlooked ... The opening paragraph of the March 2, 2006 Indo-US Joint Statement makes it clear that the objective "in advancing our strategic partnership (is) to meet the global challenges of the 21st century." But there is little convergence of views or interests on global challenges, be it the promotion of freedom and democracy or the fight against terrorism and nuclear proliferation. The Americans have rubbished India's desire for a UN Security Council permanent seat ... The US will stop at nothing to achieve its purpose - whether it accords with international law or not. The US-designed Proliferation Security Initiative is such an exercise.

b. "We may be similarly pressured into cooperating in other related exercises, without sanction of international law, all in the name of non-proliferation ... Against this backdrop, prospects for joint Indo-US strategic action on global and many regional issues are remote. Yet, it is true that Indo-US relations have moved from estrangement to engagement ... Both countries had to take a fresh look at each other after the end of the Cold War. For the Americans, the turning point, paradoxically, was India's 1998 nuclear tests ... By its own admission, the US is only now beginning to acknowledge India's importance. It is impressed with our economic growth, the relative youth of our population, the large number of highly qualified professionals we are turning out, the storehouse of power we are building up in the knowledge and information industry, and our demonstrated capability in R&D ... The US continues to engage in doublespeak and double standards, whenever its supreme interests demand it ... As illustrated by the nuclear deal, the Americans are good at moving goalposts. Look at India's unilateral test moratorium, a voluntary declaration which is

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now sought to be made into a legally binding commitment forever through US congressional action. All this is not because the Americans are bad guys, but because they always go for their supreme national interests, regardless of the rest of the world ... A strong, confident India can effectively look after its interests. I have yet to meet a single person of any standing who would wish for India to become either a client state or satellite of the US, but the beguiling ambiguity of the strategic partnership will, I am afraid, surely make us into one, if we are not on our guard.

Prospects for Indo-US cooperation are bright, minus the nuclear deal and the 'strategic partnership' label. A strategic partnership will lead to false expectations and wrong engagements, spurring disillusionment and disenchantment ... Let us consign the "strategic" label to the archives. That would be, to borrow a felicitous phrase from our PM, in our 'enlightened national interest'."

19. "BUSH WARMS UP FOR NUKE DEAL VOTE," front-page dispatch in June 10 centrist THE TELEGRAPH by Washington-based Diplomatic Editor K.P. Nayar:

a. "The Bush Administration has decided to take the plunge and go for a vote in the U.S. Congress on the Indo-U.S. nuclear deal. Simultaneously, opponents of the deal are marshalling a group of Nobel Prize winners who will release a joint letter in Washington criticizing the deal as a way of putting psychological pressure on U.S. lawmakers to vote against the agreement. The Bush Administration is considering two options. One is to get the House International Relations Committee (HIRC) to approve the enabling legislation for the deal and leave it to the full House of Representatives to vote on the bill at a later date. The other option is to get both chambers of the U.S. Congress to pass non-binding, 'sense-of-the-House' resolutions in support of the deal and await the results of ongoing Indo-U.S. negotiations on various loose ends before passing the bills before the Senate and the House into law. Crucial talks on these loose ends will start in New Delhi with a U.S. delegation. The White House believes that either of the options it is proposing to the U.S. Congress will send a message to India that the administration and the legislature are working in tandem in Washington. That, in turn, will encourage New Delhi to fulfill its part of the bargain for implementation of the deal, it is hoped. But a major problem here is that Indian lobbying for the deal is, at times, not only without direction, but also counter-productive

b. "The U.S.-India Political Action Committee (USINPAC), an Indian-American organization, which is at the centre of efforts to mobilize Congressional support for the deal, announced backing from Henry Hyde, the HIRC chairman, for the agreement. But within hours, Kristi Garlock, Hyde's spokeswoman, told The Hill, an influential publication on the US Congress, that the USINPAC's claim was untrue. Such incidents are embarrassing for those on Capitol Hill who are genuinely working to secure Congressional approval for the deal because they give the impression among US legislators that the Indians are trying to mislead them and create a mirage of support, where it does not exist. It is in significant contrast to the way opponents of the deal are methodically going about their business. There is considerable concern in Indian and Indian-American circles here about the proposed declaration by Nobel laureates that they are opposed to the deal. The campaign to mobilize Nobel Prize winners against the deal is being organized by the Federation of American Scientists (FAS)."

20. "U.S. CONGRESS AND THE N-DEAL: SUBSTANCE TO PROGRESS," op-ed in the June 12 centrist THE INDIAN EXPRESS by Strategic Affairs Analyst C Raja Mohan. "The big shift in the American focus from substance to the process is reflected in a new report on the Indo-US deal released last week by the prestigious US Council on Foreign Relations ... As the administration and the Congress intensify their consultations, many of the old issues that dominated the debate have become less central ... New Delhi has everything to gain by accelerating the negotiations on its side of the bargain in tandem with the Congressional consideration of nuclear cooperation with India. This would provide an informal but important political reassurance to the US Congress as well as provide an opportunity for the governments in New Delhi and Washington to bring the process to an early closure once the enabling legislation for cooperation is in place."

21. "CHINESE REACTION TO INDO-U.S. RELATIONS," analysis in the June 12 centrist THE INDIAN EXPRESS by Strategic Affairs Pundit K Subrahmanyam. "China would consider the enhancement of Indo-U.S. relationship as a challenge for itself to soft balance U.S. by nurturing its interaction with India. One must therefore expect Beijing to come up with further initiatives on trade, defense, investments and technology cooperation ... While China is aware of the need for India's civil nuclear energy demand being met in global interest and

most likely will ultimately agree to go along it does not prevent the Chinese from bargaining hard and getting as much out of it as possible ... Our political class will do well to learn from China and grasp the new reality of the balance of power system necessitates India dealing with all five balancers of power actively and leverage its relationship with one power with another."

NEPAL

22. "NEIGHBOURLY THOUGHTS<" editorial in the June 10 centrist THE INDIAN EXPRESS. "Both in style and substance, Prime Minister Manmohan Singh has made Nepal Prime Minister Girija Prasad Koirala's four-day visit to New Delhi a memorable one. But the hopes for the beginning of a beautiful new relationship between India and Nepal, however, must be kept on hold amidst the potential negative reaction from the Maoists to the Koirala sojourn. In breaking protocol to receive Koirala at the Delhi airport on Tuesday, Singh was making a bow to the man who has emerged taller than ever before on the horizon of Nepal. Singh was also signaling India's readiness to treat the emerging democratic Nepal with all the respect it deserves. On substance, the package of economic assistance offered by India should go a long way towards addressing the immediate fiscal crisis in Nepal as well as the long-term developmental challenges ... Delhi has matched its generous economic package with a strong political support for the Seven Party Alliance and its stewardship of the difficult political transition ahead in Nepal. India's refusal to equate the Maoists with the government in Nepal, reluctance to countenance a large role for the United Nations in the peace process, and a readiness to resume arms supplies are bound to sharpen the growing anxieties of the Maoists ... With a nervous Maoist leadership renewing its rhetoric against the political parties and India, both Kathmandu and New Delhi must avoid a new confrontation with the rebels. The unfinished agenda from Koirala visit must focus on a genuine political engagement with the Maoists if they are ready to renounce violence and put the gun down."

23. "NEW RELATIONS," editorial in June 12 centrist THE TELEGRAPH: "The economic aid is the easiest part of India's new relationship with Nepal. What is more challenging is to come to terms with the political changes in Nepal. Despite its economic and military support to Nepal, the Indian role is viewed with suspicion in Kathmandu. True, India has a major stake in the stability and security of Nepal because

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of the latter's geopolitical importance. But it is time to change some of the old attitudes. New Delhi cannot afford to be seen as a defender of a dictatorial monarchy or of a corrupt political system. It cannot do so even on the excuse of keeping the Maoists at bay. Fortunately, there are signs of attitudes changing in New Delhi, which helped to bring the Maoists and the democratic parties closer. India must play its role with caution in order to win friends in a new Nepal."

24. "LESSON LEARNT," editorial in June 12 centrist THE STATESMAN: "Because times have changed in Nepal, India needs to appraise its policy. It is just as well that while promising full support to that country's economic recovery and reconstruction, Delhi has adopted a cautious approach by saying this would be 'within its means' - meaning it would not commit itself at this juncture when the political situation in that country is still uncertain. Obviously India has learnt from its hasty support of King Gyanendra's offer to restore power to the people which provoked widespread criticism in both countries. There is no alternative to close cooperation between the two countries but to ensure its success Kathmandu must guarantee security for Indian business interests and joint ventures. Of late these are being targeted by mafia gangs. President Abdul Kalam's suggestion to introduce the Providing Urban Facilities in Rural Areas scheme also deserves attention. Apart from Kathmandu valley, large parts of the country are still in a primitive stage. It would be in India's interest to help in this field when the situation stabilizes. While dealing with the next government Delhi must also determine that whatever agreements it signs are done with finesse so as to leave no doubts in Nepalese minds about this country's intent."

25. "REBUILD NEPAL," editorial in the June 12 centrist THE TIMES OF INDIA. "India has to play a proactive role in getting Maoists to give up arms and join the democratic process. But the way MEA (Ministry of External Affairs) has been going about this is problematic. New Delhi is reportedly trying to get the US and European Union to join India in backing the Koirala government to squeeze Maoists. South Block is also opposed to the UN mediating between the SPA and Maoists because that would give legitimacy to the rebels. But this move could very well backfire by making Maoists walk away from negotiations. Now that everyone accepts Maoists as legitimate players in Nepal, there is no reason to keep the UN out as mediator. That does not preclude India from using back-door diplomacy to get Maoists to join the political mainstream ... MEA's noises against

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international mediation could well be interpreted by Kathmandu as India playing neighborhood bully. New Delhi must realize that treating South Asia as its own turf won't pay dividends."

26. "HELPING A FRIEND," editorial in June 12 left-of-center THE HINDU. "The Manmohan Singh Government would also do well to oppose all external intervention in Nepal's internal affairs. That Mr. Koirala chose India as the primary source of assistance is a tribute to an extremely close longstanding relationship ... New Delhi now, more than ever, to display sensitivity and a sure touch as the Koirala Government and the Maoists move on to the next stages of a challenging political transformation ... India may have to strike a delicate balance between its traditional opposition to intervention by extra-regional forces in Nepal's affairs and the need to address the practical issues as they arise ... With the abolition of the 'King in Parliament' concept, including his veto on laws, Nepal is on the fast track to becoming a republic. Republican India should have absolutely no problems with this."

27. "HELPING NEPAL HELP ITSELF" editorial in the June 12, 2006, Mumbai edition of centrist English daily DNA. "India's policy towards Nepal during the popular struggle for the return of democracy was ambivalent and even confusing. New Delhi had vacillated between its desire to prop up an unpopular monarch and its commitment to further democracy in the country. Fortunately, the latter sentiment prevailed. But this time round, when Prime Minister G P Koirala came to India on his first visit after taking over as head of the seven-party government, Delhi appeared more surefooted of its role in the Himalayan nation. On the economic front, India showed unexpected generosity. It has announced a Rs 1000 crore aid package to rebuild the country's shattered economy. The funds will be used to construct rail and road infrastructure as well as a new airport. India is also said to forgive debts owed by Nepal on defense purchases. Not everyone was happy with the package or indeed by the visit itself. Among the critics were the Maoists, the rebels-turned-allies of the seven-party alliance that came to power after King Gyanendra succumbed to popular pressure and restored democracy. Therein lies the rub. The Nepal government has begun talks with the Maoists in an effort to bring them into the mainstream and to get them to lay down their arms. But India, like many other countries, is eyeing the Maoists warily and is aware that they have not given up their ideology or their extortionist ways. Delhi is not comfortable with the possibility of UN mediation between the

two sides, though it is open to allowing the world body to oversee decommissioning of arms by the Maoist"

U.S.-PAKISTAN RELATIONS

28. "PAKISTAN AND U.S.: TWO TOGETHER, TWO APART," analysis in the June 10 left-of-center THE HINDU.

a. "United States Defense Secretary Donald Rumsfeld recently lavished praise on Pervez Musharraf for his role in the war on terror. But there is no hiding that relations between the Pakistan President and the U.S. have come under considerable strain in recent weeks, particularly after President George W. Bush's March visit to India and Pakistan. Inevitably, Pakistan compared the Bush visit to the two countries ... With severe anti-U.S. and anti-West sentiments prevailing among all sections of Pakistanis, expressed vociferously in the media and by the country's political elite, the visit caused a massive loss of face for President Musharraf. It was bad enough being told in public that the U.S. viewed its relationship with India through a different prism from that of its ties with Pakistan. Worse was the injunction to do "more" to bring in Osama bin Laden, and the worst, the suggested role for India in Afghanistan ... As a country that continues to see Afghanistan as providing "strategic depth" against India, Pakistan is deeply resentful of any Indian involvement in that country. President Bush's invitation to India to involve itself more in Afghanistan came at a time when the Pakistan establishment had begun to put out the allegation that India was backing subversive activity in Balochistan. For both critics and supporters of the Pakistani establishment, it was clear after the Bush visit that the country's most important ally did not buy that allegation. In the months since, President Musharraf has been attempting to regain some of his credibility through methods that seem to border on defiance ... The Pakistan Government has also hit out indirectly against the U.S. by dismissing accusations by the Government in Kabul that it was assisting the Taliban to launch attacks in southern Afghanistan. This is also a U.S. allegation. In strong words, Islamabad has accused the Karzai Government of blaming Pakistan for its own failure to end the conflict in Afghanistan. President Musharraf has also lost no opportunity to show that unbothered by U.S. opposition to the Iran-Pakistan-India gas pipeline, he is determined to go ahead with the project.

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b. " It is almost as if the man who declared (in a recent interview to The Guardian) that he is not a poodle of the U.S. is desperate to prove as much to his people. Analysts say the ties between the two countries are at their lowest ebb since 9/11. But does this mean that President Musharraf and the U.S. are gradually drifting apart? Not yet, is the short answer to that. The ties that bind the two are built on the strongly felt basic and immediate needs of both. In simple terms, President Bush needs Pakistan for his 'war on terror.' Pakistan, which received more than \$3 billion from 2001 to 2005 from the U.S., needs the cash and the international standing. But their dependence on each other by no means makes it an equal partnership ... While the U.S. only wants Pakistan to meet its present military objective, Pakistan, the lesser partner, has always built into the relationship, through what the former Foreign Secretary, Tanvir Ahmed Khan, describes as "auto-hypnosis," expectations that were never agreed upon ... But the key to understanding the future of the relations between President Musharraf and the Bush administration may lie more in U.S. reactions to its ally's apparent defiance ... Perhaps nothing exemplifies this complex pas de deux better than l'affaire A.Q. Khan ... No one knows what General Musharraf's plans are for the next elections - he has hinted at another term for himself - but it does seem the Bush administration wants him in the saddle, at least for now. So where does that leave President Bush's democracy agenda in Pakistan? Seasoned observers like Mr. Tanvir Ahmed Khan point out that given the deep military cooperation between the two, the U.S. may not push the issue. Instead, there may be suggestions to President Musharraf to broaden his political base so that he is in a stronger position to deliver on his commitments to the U.S. While the Bush administration wants its military objectives met at the earliest, President Musharraf is fighting for time until the next elections. Will he in a better position to do what the Americans want after the elections? It may cease to matter."

 AFGHANISTAN

29. "US failure to see popular resistance: Growth of extremism," edit page article by M.B.Naqvi in June 12 Bangalore-based left-of-center English daily DECCAN HERALD:

a. "The recent offensive mounted by the Taliban in Afghanistan is continuing. It discloses a complex situation caused by all round failures of all concerned in that country. On the face of it, it is surprising that the

Taliban have been able to attack Afghan targets in surprisingly large numbers after they were supposed to have been wiped out from Afghanistan. They have been able to overwhelm police stations and abduct as many as 45 persons on a single day. Taliban had been smashed by much superior American forces five years ago. How come they have been able to regroup and expand so much so easily both in Pakistan and in Afghanistan so as to be able to cause serious problems for the NATO forces in Afghanistan? The major part of the problem is quite like Iraq in some respects. The occupation of Afghanistan by foreign troops was totally unwelcome to all Afghans who are traditionally independence loving. Their initial response was, all said and done, nationalistic albeit vaguely. But like Iraq, the Islamic extremist forces have found public bewilderment and resentment a fertile recruiting ground for various militias, particularly Taliban. There is an air of inevitability about it. The continuing growth of Islamic extremism in recent years is directly related to American military operations that in popular perception lack moral justification and have no legal basis. This was bound to happen and Americans had failed to foresee popular resistance. The Americans have also to answer for their own indifference to what happens in, or to, Afghanistan after they had initially secured what they presumably wanted: ouster of the Taliban regime, permanent bases in Afghanistan and a government in Kabul that would basically articulate and implement what are American thoughts and interests. All these having been secured the Americans lost interest in Afghanistan and moved on. They did not pursue the goal of restructuring and rebuilding Afghanistan and did not care to mobilize the international community to cough up what they had committed. Economic conditions in Afghanistan remain chaotic and miserable. This is also an exciting cause for the growth of Taliban. The American administration is very strong on denying the sources of funding to Islamic extremist groups whom they dub terrorists. How come the American experts did not foresee where the funding for Taliban would come from and to block those sources. There is simply no doubt about the fact that Taliban's funding comes from the wide-scale production, trade and profits of poppy. The drug lords for special local reasons find it convenient to protect themselves by cultivating Islamic extremist groups, particularly Taliban.

b. "They secure themselves in the here and in the hereafter in the standard Islamic faith by doling out funds for what they perceive to be good. The poppy cultivation is the only profitable business for Afghans, though it is controlled by warlords and drug barons, often doubling as Governors

recognized by the Karzai government. One returns to the American role in not helping develop Afghanistan economy. This is stunningly strange. The Taliban regime had brought down poppy cultivation drastically. Today poppy cultivation is now the main crop of Afghanistan and is sustaining many Afghan cultivators, producers, drug barons, traders and of course cartels and corporations of all sorts that buy poppy and produce the drugs that fetch handsome profits to all, though cultivators share remains measly. The question recurs: why did the Americans ignore the economic facts of life in Afghanistan? It forces people to wonder as to really what was the American design under which they acted the way they did. It can be taken for granted that Pentagon would have all manner of emergency plans and options ready all the time. But American governance being as open and so expertise-based as it is, it is passing strange that there were no American experts who could point out what the consequences of the proposed action would be. Beyond this is the sphere of speculation. What after all was America intending to gain from the ouster of Taliban, apart from arresting Osama bin Laden. OBL was after all, an American product and well known to American intelligence, not to mention the family relations of the Bushes with Bin Ladens inside America with some overlapping of economic interests. Was it all because of President Bush's personal pique? The sole reason for Americans to mount the invasion was to smash the Taliban because they harbored OBL who masterminded 9/11 and do what? All the rest that the US has done was somewhat easy and expedient with no thought for the morrow. It is hard to believe that United States works on the personal whims of their President. Speculation becomes unavoidable and also easy on the basis of writings of Neocons, particularly the Project for an American Century, not to mention many strategy papers adumbrating the doctrines of pre-emption in utter disregard of international law."

CHINA

30. "CHINESE LESSONS," editorial page article in June 12 centrist THE TELEGRAPH by Pratap Bhanu Mehta, president, Center for Policy Research: "Party officials are some of the greatest beneficiaries of 'privatization' of public assets. Party officials are curiously also the most westernized, with their children more likely to study abroad than those of anyone else. Indeed, amongst Chinese elites, this is quietly given as an argument for why relations between China and the United States of America will not

deteriorate too much. Apart from the structural interdependence of the Chinese and US economies, China's elites, like India's, are, through family networks, more imaginatively dependent on the US than is acknowledged. Much of this contradiction has not yet registered in public consciousness, but it could gather momentum. Even those who agree on the need for political reform in China are not quite sure how to proceed, without opening the floodgates where political life acquires a momentum of its own. The one thing we know from all reform processes is that the will and orientation of state elites is as potent a cause as mass discontent. And the capacity to shepherd reform through will depend upon who the elites manage to hang together with - elite conflicts are more likely to cause chaos than mass discontent. While it is clear that China probably has a more cohesive ruling class than any other reform country, and it is also clear that this class is thinking, it is not entirely clear quite which way it will go. Predictions on China are notoriously difficult because the principal actors themselves seem to be, to use Deng's phrase, 'feeling the stones.' And all the stones are not quite as visible as they would like them to be. But, at least, the broad-ranging discussions China seems to be having about different parts of the world suggests that it is trying to grope its way forward."

 INDIA, PAKISTAN, CHINA AND THE US

31. A strategic satellite, edit page article by Seema Mustafa in June 10 Secunderabad-based left-of-center English daily DECCAN CHRONICLE:

a. "There is a reality about India-Pakistan relations that sudden bonhomie cannot wish away. The reality is decades of distrust and suspicion, nurtured and cultivated by vested interests that include governments in Pakistan and political parties in India. The Hindu-Muslim angle remains the cornerstone of this distrust, as does the deeply embedded view that Islamabad and New Delhi can never really wish well for the other. Both governments are willing to lie down and be tickled endlessly by Washington, but when it comes to each other, every word is dissected and every action viewed under the prism of dislike and intolerance. The hugs and kisses since the two governments started talking did create an impression that new doors had opened, and that finally the ice had melted and spring had embraced bilateral relations. It is true that the people have discovered a certain commonality in music, movies, cricket, food,

culture and even a worldview if Kashmir is kept out of the conversation but that both governments remain hostage to a strategic establishment that has grown roots and does not hesitate to scream "foul" at the first hint of change. This is a powerful establishment in both India and Pakistan, and can have a debilitating effect as both nations have witnessed over and over again. But the problem does not lie with the strategic community inclusive of the military, the intelligence agencies and of course the experts. The problem lies with the fact that today both India and Pakistan are blessed with leaders trying to make history without having the stature to carry their people. This is more true of India than Pakistan, for one primary reason. In Pakistan the elite are used to decisions being taken in secrecy, with transparency not being an active word in the government book. In India, decisions without transparency are viewed with suspicion, create unease, and set off alarm bells to which the responses then are to use an over used word hawkish. The spirit of democracy is still so much a part of the Indian psyche that even a hint that a government is moving ahead on strategic issues quietly, without consulting Parliament and the people, is sufficient to generate hostile public opinion that acquires sufficient force to stall a deal or an agreement. That is of course, if a government is responsive but given the fact that elections are being held in some part of India every year, it is only the foolhardy political class that can afford to completely ignore the public. Governments here have more leeway in developing relations with countries like the United States, largely because many of our top guns have worked in international banks, many are still drawing a pension, many have their children studying or working in the US, many in urban India look upon it as their Mecca and many others still believe in the Cold War concept of the "one or the other" alternative preferring to throw their lot in with Washington, as against the "alternative" Moscow, or for that matter, Beijing. But governments here definitely do not have the sanction to improve relations with Pakistan, particularly if the process is kept under a shroud of secrecy and whispers start suggesting that something not very acceptable is afoot. Here the specific reference is to Siachen.

b. "The absence of transparency killed not just the initiative, but Prime Minister Manmohan Singh's visit to Pakistan. This is because he was, probably under US tutelage as Washington has been very keen for the resolution of this issue as a sign of good intent by all, trying to work out a deal through the back channels that was doomed to fail for more reasons than one. First, it was not a transparent

exercise and transparency has to be one of the main criteria if relations between New Delhi and Islamabad are to proceed on an even keel. Second, it was foisted on the military as a fait accompli and was rejected by the military commanders who were in no mood to withdraw without the authentication of the last held positions. Third, there was no civilian answer to the question: what if Pakistan re-occupies the positions last held by the Indian troops, except for generalities centering around international guarantees that have never held in India-Pakistan relations and opening another front as if that was actually feasible. Four, while the deal would have brought international accolades for Prime Minister Singh, he and his advisers were unable to convince India that its long term interests had been factored into the agreement, and that it was indeed, to use a favorite MEA phrase, "win win" situation for all. The argument that the Army would be able to save its troops and pull back from a difficult location, was countered by the generals who pointed out that the Army had not made the sacrifice to pull back without the minimum guarantees, and that the Indian military had finally overcome the weather conditions and was in no mood to concede ground through an agreement that did not recognize their presence in the area at all. Prime Minister Singh has postponed his visit as a result. The question here is: what makes the political leadership read the country wrong? The answer is: because it is drawing its inspiration from Washington and not the people of India. This is no longer as far-fetched as it sounds, for in almost everything the government now does, it is "in consultation" with the US. The Stratfor intelligence review has reported that Washington, through the recent visit to New Delhi of its Joint Chief of Staff, Peter Pace, has given clearance to the Manmohan Singh government to test the Agni III missile in August. The missile, according to the DRDO chief, has been ready for testing for months, but the political clearance did not come, simply because the US did not want India to develop the missile at this stage.

c. "The objections have been withdrawn if Stratfor is correct, and it often is on such issues because it would like India to "trouble" China and Pakistan a little, and also because an August test will not impact on the civilian nuclear agreement. Analysts have pointed out that of the two "emerging giants" India and China, the latter has forged ahead for a variety of reasons, one being its ability to contain the conflicts around itself and forge a relatively trouble free zone. New Delhi, on the other hand, has completely failed to seize the initiative on this front with its own relations with Nepal, Bangladesh, Pakistan and Sri Lanka not particularly hassle-free. Ad hoc responses, a lack

of vision, complete absence of clarity, fear of transparency are just some of the reasons why strategic planning in India has not come of age. The neighbors have developed this distrust of India that they all prefer to work with Washington and Beijing, but not New Delhi. The present dispensation's fondness for Washington is not supported by an independent, strategic thought process, but by personal likes and desires. The task force set up to look into relations with the US under K. Subrahmanyam has reportedly submitted its report to the Prime Minister, but this is expected to be little more than a justification to place all Indian eggs in the American basket. India has started to be identified by the world as a US satellite the government prefers to term this as a "strategic ally" with the developing world in particular tailoring its responses accordingly. The word "independent" has disappeared from foreign policy, with Washington now determining official Indian response to its neighbors and larger policy issues. For instance, even the main ingredients of the Siachen solution being considered by the government had been put together in the laboratories of Sandia in the US. India has to take her own position in the world. Many commentators have written with some admiration of the success of Iran's recent policy, where it was able to make the US blink after nerve-wracking weeks and months. Others have spoken admiringly of China and Russia for working together to counterbalance the US influence in this region. Even those in awe of the United States have had to admit that Indian policy is not carved out of independent thought and lacks strategic depth. Instead of rolling over and playing dead for the Americans not my words, but those of an intelligence head the government must take support from the power of the Indian people to carve out an independent destiny in keeping with the nation's pride and sovereignty."

 NORTH KOREA

32. "N. Korea threat on US spy flights," news story in June 12 Secunderabad-based left-of center English daily DECCAN CJHRONICLE: "North Korea's Air Force Command on Sunday threatened to "punish" the US for its spy flights over the communist state, recalling the fate of a US Navy plane it shot down 37 years ago. In a statement carried by the Korean Central News Agency, the Air Force said that a US RC-135 reconnaissance aeroplane had made flights over its territorial waters on June 6, 8 and 10. Describing the alleged US espionage flights as "openly crying out for a pre-emptive attack" on the communist state, the command

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warned of a possible repeat of 1969, when it shot down another US Navy plane, killing all 31 crew. "The (North Korean) Air Force seriously warns the US imperialists that it will sternly punish the aggressors if their planes continue illegally intruding into the sky on espionage missions," it said. "They had better not forget the miserable end EC-121 met in the 1960s." North Korean fighters shot the reconnaissance aeroplane down off the country's east coast in the Sea of Japan (East Sea) in April 1969. Another US-North Korean incident occurred when North Korea fired missiles at an SR-71 spy plane in August 1981. The Blackbird jet was undamaged. North Korea has been sensitive to US spy flights, with its media citing military sources as issuing a monthly report on US aerial espionage. Sunday's statement was rare in that it was issued in the name of the Air Force Command. North Korea has claimed the US is preparing to invade the communist country despite repeated US denials. The two sides are locked in a standoff over North Korea's nuclear weapons program. Pyongyang declared in February 2005 that it had built nuclear weapons. During six-way talks in September, North Korea agreed in principle to dismantle its weapons program in exchange for diplomatic and economic benefits and security guarantees. But North Korea has boycotted the talks since November when it said US financial sanctions imposed on Pyongyang over allegations of money laundering were blocking progress. Pyongyang has said that it would return to talks which involve Korea, the United States, China, Japan and Russia only after the sanctions are lifted. One North Korea expert here said on Sunday's strongly-worded North Korean statement may have been designed to draw US attention back to the deadlocked nuclear issue after Washington snubbed Pyongyang's offer of bilateral talks. "Given North Korea's traditional pattern of diplomacy, it is time to get tough to bring the US interest back," Nam Sung-Wook, a North Korea expert and professor at Korea University, said. The US has rejected an invitation from Pyongyang for US nuclear negotiator Christopher Hill to visit the country and has urged the communist state to come back to six-way talks unconditionally."

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