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IN TODAY'S REPORT:

[I. United States](#)

- [1. ROK-Russian Spying Row](#)
- [2. US-PRC Military Cooperation](#)
- [3. US-India Nuclear Talks](#)
- [4. India-Pakistan Relations](#)
- [5. British Nuclear Arms Reduction](#)

I. United States

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1. ROK-Russian Spying Row

Reuters ("SOUTH KOREA EXPELS RUSSIAN DIPLOMAT," Seoul, 07/08/98) and the Associated Press ("S. KOREA TO EXPEL RUSSIAN DIPLOMAT," Seoul, 07/08/98) reported that the ROK Ministry of Foreign Affairs said in a statement Wednesday that it was expelling Russian diplomat Oleg N. Abramkin. The statement said that Abramkin "has engaged in activities which violate a diplomat's status." The statement added, "We hope that despite this decision, South Korea and Russia's friendly, cooperative relations will continue to develop." The move appeared to be retaliation for Russia's earlier expulsion of Cho Sung-woo, counselor at the ROK embassy in Moscow, on espionage charges. The Russian Foreign Ministry on Tuesday said that Cho had received classified materials from Valentin Moiseyev, deputy director of the ministry's first Asian department, who had previously worked in the DPRK, first as a newspaper reporter and then later in trade. Moiseyev is expected to be charged with treason within a week for handing over the information to Cho, officials in Moscow said. On Wednesday, the Russian news agency Interfax quoted Deputy Foreign Minister Grigory Karasin as calling the ROK action "an absolutely unwarranted and inequitable response."

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2. US-PRC Military Cooperation

State Department Spokesman James Rubin ("STATE DEPT. NOON BRIEFING, JULY 7, 1998," USIA Transcript, 07/07/98) said that the US and the PRC will hold in July the first annual meeting under the Military Maritime Consultative Agreement, to promote safety in naval and air operations. The US and PRC militaries have also agreed to send personnel in the near future to observe a joint training exercise of the other side on the basis of reciprocity, with the size, location, and timing of the exercise to be discussed and decided by the two sides. Rubin stated, "the more militaries understand about what each other is doing, the less likelihood there is for misunderstanding and miscalculation and accidents to occur that will endanger either the relationship of the countries or would involve risk to a particular situation."

US Defense Department Spokesman Ken Bacon ("PENTAGON SPOKESMAN'S REGULAR BRIEFING JULY 7, 1998," USIA Transcript, 07/08/98) said that the US has already had joint search-and-rescue exercises with the PRC. The US formerly conducted a series of joint search-and-rescue exercises with the British forces operating out of Hong Kong, and have continued the same types of exercises with the PRC since its takeover of Hong Kong. Bacon added that the PRC has agreed to send two observers to RIMPAC 1998, an annual Naval exercise that takes place in the Pacific. PRC observers will also watch Cooperative Cope-Thunder, an air exercise that will take place in Alaska involving air force representatives from the United Kingdom, US, Australia, Japan, and Singapore. Bacon stated, "What was new and a breakthrough on the President's trip to China was an agreement to have reciprocal observer missions watching joint exercises in the two countries." He added, "Previously, we have invited the Chinese, and they haven't always invited us to watch their exercises." Bacon argued, "I think it's actually a rather important confidence-building measure. It shows that, one, we have nothing to hide in these exercises involving several countries. And two, it shows the Chinese that we're willing to come and watch our exercises and other countries working together."

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3. US-India Nuclear Talks

The Associated Press (Donna Bryson, "NUCLEAR TEST BAN TREATY SEEN AT HEART OF U.S.-INDIA TALKS," New Delhi, 07/08/98) reported that US Deputy Secretary of State Strobe Talbott will meet his Indian counterpart, Jaswant Singh, on Thursday in Frankfurt, Germany, for the second round of negotiations on India's nuclear program. The two officials met in Washington in June and further talks are planned. Jasjit Singh, director of the independent Institute for Defense Studies and Analyses in New Delhi, said that for India to agree to sign the Comprehensive Test Ban Treaty (CTBT) would require reshaping domestic public opinion. Singh said that a resumption of US aid and loans, or allowing India unrestricted access to dual use nuclear technology, would help the Indian government overcome domestic opposition to the CTBT.

State Department Spokesman James Rubin ("STATE DEPT. NOON BRIEFING, JULY 7, 1998," USIA Transcript, 07/07/98) said that the US strongly believes that the deployment of nuclear weapons in South Asia would be a dangerous development. He added, "We think that it's up to India and Pakistan to make some important decisions, and we're hopeful that some of the dialogue in India now is a signal that they maybe have realized the wisdom of going forward with the Comprehensive Test Ban. But we are not on the verge of achieving that at this point; we're in the process of discussing it." Rubin also said that US President Bill Clinton's planned trip to India is on hold pending further discussion.

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4. India-Pakistan Relations The New York Times (Barbara Crossette, "PAKISTAN SAYS INDIA USES FALSE THREATS TO JUSTIFY NUCLEAR ARMS," New York, 07/08/98) reported that Foreign

Secretary Shamshad Ahmad, in a speech to the Asia Society in New York, said Tuesday that India was using a fictional threat from the PRC and unverified charges of Pakistani terrorist infiltration into Kashmir to justify its nuclear weapons program. Ahmad stated, "We say that to verify these charges, let neutral international observers be stationed on both sides. India has always refused." He criticized the US for focusing too much on the issue of nuclear weapons and not enough on the regional security concerns in South Asia, saying that for Pakistan to give in to demands to relinquish the nuclear option would be tantamount to "forfeiting our right to exist." He said that the possibility of Pakistan signing the Comprehensive Test Ban Treaty before India was being discussed "at all levels" in the Pakistani government.

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5. British Nuclear Arms Reduction

The Associated Press ("U.K. TO HALVE NUCLEAR WEAPONS, SELL SOME DEFENSE ASSETS-TIMES," London, 07/08/98) reported that the Times of London said Wednesday that Britain plans to cut its nuclear deterrent in half over the next three years. Britain will retain fewer than 200 operationally available nuclear warheads, a cut of more than 70 percent since the end of the Cold War. The newspaper said that the government will reduce to 48 from 96 the maximum number of warheads on its fleet of three Trident submarines, and the fleet will be increased to four at the start of the century.

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