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CONTENTS
April 19, 2000

Global Nuclear Issues

1. U.S., Russia, and START II

India

2. Nuclear Analysis
3. Security Planning
4. India-Tibet-China Relations
5. India-U.S. Relations
6. Foreign Relations Analysis: United Nations

Pakistan

7. Nuclear Analysis
8. Security Planning
9. Pakistan-U.S. Relations
10. Pakistan-China Relations
11. Domestic Issues

Kashmir

12. Indian Initiatives
13. Pakistan Initiatives
14. Military Initiatives
15. U.S. Role: Sikh Massacre

Sri Lanka

16. Spring Offensive and Negotiations

Global Nuclear Issues

1. U.S., Russia, and START II

The Russian Duma approved the START-II treaty, which had been signed by Russian President Yeltsin and U.S. President Bush in 1993. Under the terms of the treaty, both the U.S. and Russia would reduce their nuclear arsenals to about 3,000 warheads each by the end of the year 2007. Russian President-elect Vladimir Putin said that Russia would not begin its disarmament process until the beginning of 2007. High-level delegations from Russia and the U.S. met in Geneva to discuss the next treaty, START III. Pakistani newspaper "Dawn" reprinted a Los Angeles Times analysis which argues that the U.S. might violate the terms of START II despite Russian ratification because the U.S. fears "rogue states" more than it fears Russia.

India

2. Nuclear Analysis

R. Ramachandran evaluates the substance of the upcoming NonProliferation Treaty debate between nuclear and non-nuclear states. He argues that nuclear states (not including Pakistan and India) will emphasize the May 1995 vote that postponed indefinitely any debate on the treaty's effectiveness at promoting nuclear disarmament. Non-nuclear states will seek to engage in that debate because, Ramachandran suggests, the treaty has been an ineffective agent of nuclear disarmament. "Outlook" magazine reprinted Booker Prize winner Arundhati Roy's famous essay, "The End of Imagination." Roy argues that nuclear weapons' massive destructive capability, combined with the prestige and passion associated with them, make them as dangerous to states that possess these weapons as they are to non-nuclear states. M.R. Srinivasan, former chairman of India's Atomic Energy Commission, lauds India's success at producing sophisticated nuclear power plants. He argues that nuclear power reduces dependence on foreign oil, does not pollute, and generates technological progress that benefits many industries.

3. Security Planning

Despite Defense Minister George Fernandes' regular reports of a Pakistani military buildup in Kutch (on the border dividing Sindh in Pakistan and Gujarat in India), India's top-ranked military officer in the area does not anticipate a military conflict soon. Major General B.S. Dhillon said that desert temperatures rising to 131 degrees are not conducive to summer military operations.

4. India-Tibet-China Relations

The Dalai Lama reaffirmed his intention to visit Taiwan despite objections from Beijing, but explained that his trip would be "spiritual in nature." Separately, the Dalai Lama said that "increasing awareness among Chinese intellectuals about Tibetan spirit of genuine autonomy and not independence has drawn more support to my approach."

5. India-U.S. Relations

A mid-level U.S. delegation, led by John Barker, entered New Delhi for negotiations that are expected to pave the way for the thirteenth round of high-level nuclear dialogue between Indian External Affairs Minister Jaswant Singh and U.S. Deputy Secretary of State Strobe Talbott. The talks are expected to broaden their scope to include mutual concerns regarding terrorism and export controls on "sensitive technologies."

The U.S. Senior Advisor for Arms Control, John Holum, said that both India and Pakistan have lost

security as a result of pursuing nuclear capabilities. He said that he does not "envy the situation that India put itself in by virtue of conducting nuclear tests in 1998." U.S. Secretary of Defense William Cohen expressed concern that a conflict between India and Pakistan "would get out of control and would be in no one's interest."

6. Foreign Relations Analysis: United Nations
A "Jang" (Pakistan) editorial argues that U.S. "qualified backing" has made India's bid for a Security Council seat "as potent as it has ever been." The editorial continues to say that, although veto power by Permanent Members has always been discriminatory, extending this discriminatory authority to countries such as India will not enhance the legitimacy of the Security Council.

Pakistan

7. Nuclear Analysis
Steven Bryen, former head of the U.S. Defense Technology Security Administration, claimed that Pakistan might be building radiation bombs for itself and possibly for export. He argues that production of radiation bombs is the only explanation for radioactive material that was confiscated in early April by Uzbekistan en route from Kazakhstan to Pakistan.

8. Security Planning
Seven Saudi ships participated in a weeklong joint naval exercise with Pakistan.

Pakistan's High Commissioner to India, Ashraf Jehangir Qazi, said that India's resolution before the Non-Aligned Movement, which would suspend military-ruled countries from the organization, was immature and designed simply to shift the focus away from Indian atrocities in Kashmir

9. Pakistan-U.S. Relations
Thomas Pickering, U.S. Under-Secretary of State for Political Affairs, said that "if the leadership in Islamabad does not respond positively to Mr. Clinton's call to abjure violence, it will become increasingly isolated."

Pakistan arrested four men on suspicion of having links with Osama bin Laden. Separately, headlines suggesting that Pakistan offered to facilitate U.S./Afghanistan talks lead to articles that include the following statement by Pakistan's Interior Minister, Moinuddin Haider: "I told [U.S. officials, including the FBI director] that Osama is not in Pakistan but in Afghanistan, which is an independent country. They should contact the Afghan government and have a direct contact with Osama bin Laden."

10. Pakistan-China Relations
Chief Executive Pervez Musharraf reaffirmed Pakistan's support of the one-China policy and expressed his hope that Taiwan, like Hong Kong and Macau, will return to the Chinese fold. "The Organizer" (India) reports that strategic experts in Pakistan strengthened their relationship with the U.S. in response to Pakistan's warming relations with China.

11. Domestic Issues
Officials from both the Asian Development Bank and the International Monetary Fund expressed confidence that they would present billion-dollar packages to Pakistan in the near future. Intikhab Hanif (in "Dawn") argued that Pakistan's recent international diplomatic engagement with India, the U.S., Arab countries, and southeast Asian states would soon be replaced by a renewed emphasis on domestic economic and political development.

Kashmir

12. Indian Initiatives

Indian Prime Minister A.B. Vajpayee laid three pre-conditions for reopening talks with Pakistan: (1) regret for the Kargil intrusion; (2) an end to anti-India rhetorical campaigns; and (3) respect for earlier bilateral understandings. Indian Defense Minister George Fernandes declared that India was ready for talks with Pakistan if Pakistan reduced the level of shelling along the Line of Control. Pakistan's High Commissioner to India, Ashraf Jehangir Qazi, responded, "if you lay down what appears to the other side to be preconditions, the assumptions of which are not accepted, ... the end result inevitably is going to be no talks at all. Is that what India wants?" An editorial in "The News" (Pakistan) described the demands as "baloney" and said that although "India is a big country, sometimes its leaders think small."

Following Pakistan's rejection of India's preconditions, U.S. Assistant Secretary of State Karl Inderfurth urged India to engage the Pakistani government in talks "sooner rather than later."

Indian analysis: Manoj Joshi (in Indiatimes) provides a chronology of Kashmir autonomy plans since 1950. K.K. Nayyar, Chairman of India's Forum for Strategic and Security Studies, argues that it would be wrong to engage in peace talks with a state that is exporting terrorism; in response, Inder Malhotra, a senior columnist, argues that "an inflexible refusal to communicate with a neighbor, especially when armed with nuclear weapons, can be sterile and even counterproductive."

13. Pakistan Initiatives

Pakistan's federal minister for Kashmir, Abbas Sarfraz Khan, reiterated that Pakistan would continue "moral political, and diplomatic support to the Kashmiris who are struggling for the right to self-determination. Following Pakistan's rejection of India's proposal for talks with preconditions, Chief Executive Pervez Musharraf said that U.N. resolutions continue to provide the only guidelines that reasonably could lead to a resolution of the Kashmir conflict.

Pakistan analysis: Farrukh Saleem argues that, "if Ayub Khan and Jawaharlal Nehru could amicably divide up water resources in the 1960s, solving the Kashmir issue in the new millennium is actually a simpler riddle." He argued that the Indus Waters Treaty provides a blueprint that could be directly emulated in the Kashmir milieu.

14. Military Initiatives

India's inspector-general of the Border Security Forces, U.C. Chabra, claimed that 1,000 militants were massing on the Pakistani side of the Line of Control.

15. U.S. Role: Sikh Massacre

On the day U.S. President Clinton arrived in New Delhi, 36 Sikhs were massacred in Kashmir. On April 15, Clinton acknowledged that "I'm sure they were murdered because I was there. Those people lost their lives because I went to India and Pakistan."

Sri Lanka

16. Spring Offensive and Negotiations

A Foreign Ministry spokesperson said that the government army would not stop fighting until peace talks showed evidence of progress.

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