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India

- 1. Security Planning**
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The Indian government prepared a white paper on the activities of Pakistan's Inter Services Intelligence agency (ISI). However, it has chosen not to present the white paper to Parliament. Instead, Home Minister L.K. Advani announced that the government would "inform Parliament about the ISI's activities from time to time."

2. India-China Relations

India and China celebrated the 50th anniversary of their bilateral relations. [India was one of the first countries to recognize the government of the People's Republic of China.] A Chinese Communist Party delegation visiting New Delhi called on Bharatiya Janata Party President Khushabhau Thakre and explained that China's relations with India "have nothing to do" with China-Pakistan ties.

U.S. National Security Advisor Samuel Berger is scheduled to visit Beijing this week. Chinese Foreign Ministry spokesperson Sun Yuxi said that his government would seek clarifications on apparent changes in U.S. South Asia policies, including the U.S. stance on India's nuclear policy. Foreign Minister Tang Jiaxuan said that Chinese policy regarding South Asian nuclear development has not changed: "both India and Pakistan must renounce their nuclear weapons development programs."

3. Foreign Relations: Vietnam, Turkey

Indian Defense Minister George Fernandes met with his Vietnamese counterpart in Hanoi. India agreed to overhaul aircraft in the Vietnamese Air Force and assist in the manufacture of small and medium-scale weapons. Vietnam expressed interest in purchasing Indian helicopters.

Turkish Prime Minister Bulent Ecevit visited New Delhi on March 31 and concluded anti-terrorism and pro-trade agreements with India. Siddharth Varadarajan explains how the end of the Cold War has dissolved old strategic identities and makes possible a new warming of relations between Turkey and India.

4. Military Hardware

Jane's Defense Weekly reported that the Swedish firm Bofors will send the latest version of its 155mm field howitzer to India for extensive field trials on a "no cost, no commitment" basis in May. The Hindu reported that an Israeli Firm, Soltam Systems, would upgrade India's 130mm field artillery pieces into 155mm weapons. The Indian navy is expected to test its short-range, surface-t-surface missile, Dhanush, in late April.

Pakistan

5. Nuclear Issues

Uzbek customs authorities have seized ten containers filled with "radioactive materials" that Pakistan had attempted to import from Kazakhstan.

6. Security Planning

Chief Executive Pervez Musharraf said that the Pakistani defense budget would not increase. Available funds would be directed toward deterrence of India. Moonis Ahmar argues that an uncorrupt military could be an agent of positive economic, political, administrative, and educational reform in Pakistan.

7. Pakistan-U.S. Relations

Pakistan's Interior Minister, Inter-Services Intelligence Chief, and National Security Advisor are all scheduled to visit their counterparts in the U.S. next week.

8. Pakistan-China Relations A Chinese delegation led by Ma Yue Vice, chairman of the Chinese Council for the Promotion of International Trade, met with Pakistani Finance Minister Shaukat Aziz on March 31, during which Pakistan and China agreed to expand bilateral trade and economic relations.

9. Foreign Relations: Southeast Asia

Chief Executive Pervez Musharraf traveled to Malaysia, Singapore, Indonesia, and Brunei. Economic agreements were signed in each of these countries.

Kashmir

10. Border Skirmishes

As a part of India's "pro-active drive against militants" in Indian-administered Kashmir, heavily-armed helicopter gunships of the Indian Air Force were used last week, for the first time in the decade-old militancy, to demolish terrorist hideouts.

11. India-Pakistan Dialogue

Pakistan formally proposed to India that the two countries resume stalled talks on the Kashmir issue. The Times of India reports that this is the first time Pakistan has officially proposed resumption of dialogue since the October 1999 military takeover. Chief Executive Pervez Musharraf emphasized that Pakistan was willing to have these negotiations go forward without international mediation. Pakistani President Rafiq Tarar said that "the dream of establishing durable peace in South Asia could not be realized unless the Kashmir issue is resolved in accordance with the aspirations of the Kashmiri people."

India rejected the invitation. An Indian Foreign Office spokesperson said that "the cessation of Pakistan's cross-border terrorism and the abandonment of its vicious propaganda are essential ingredients for any meaningful dialogue." Following India's rejection of the Pakistani offer, a Pakistan spokesperson announced that Attiya Inayatullah, a National Security Council member, would discuss the Kashmir issue with UN Secretary-General Kofi Annan on April 4.

Analysis: an editorial in "Dawn" argues that India's rejection of the Pakistani offer to negotiate is unreasonable: "General Musharraf has just made an important gesture by saying that Pakistan will not insist on mediation but is ready to hold direct talks with India. What more does India want?" Another "Dawn" editorial begins, "'Unfortunate' is the first word which springs to mind after India's knee-jerk rejection of Pakistan's well-meant offer to hold talks." "The News" also emphasizes the positive and "statesmanlike elements" of the Pakistani offer that was made "at a peak tension time."

Former Pakistan Foreign Secretary Niaz Naik visited Delhi on April 1. Rumors that he was engaging in "back-channel talks" with Indian officials were strongly denied by the Indian Foreign Office spokesperson.

Sri Lanka

12. Domestic Conflict

The Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam (LTTE) began a major initiative to capture the northern Jaffna Peninsula this week. The Sri Lankan army reported that 150 rebels were killed and 350 were injured, compared with 85 army soldiers who were killed and 600 who were injured. President Chandrika Kumaratunga said that she would agree to a ceasefire only if the LTTE agreed to a "full deal" regarding Norway-mediated peace talks.

13. International Mediation

Sri Lankan deputy foreign affairs minister Laxman Kirialle said that, "if India acts positively, our war with the LTTE will end soon." He urged India to police the Indian Ocean more effectively and suggested that the LTTE smuggles many of its weapons from India.

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