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Nuclear Issues

1. Likelihood of Nuclear Conflict

The US National Intelligence Estimate, produced by the US Central Intelligence Agency and other US intelligence agencies, assessed that the likelihood of an escalation to nuclear war was high during the height of the conflict last year between India and Pakistan. The report prompted the US to shift its focus from nonproliferation to easing tensions between the two countries.

2. Pakistan Nuclear Exports

Contrary to its recently published guidelines, Pakistan's Commerce Ministry in a newspaper advertisement offered for export eleven radioactive substances and seventeen types of equipment, including enriched and depleted uranium and nuclear reactors. Information Minister Javed Jabbar said, "This is a fulfillment of our commitment to transparency." Pakistan General Mirza Aslam Beg said, "The purpose of this is very clear: it is to earn much-needed money." The US expressed surprise, and a US State Department official said, "This is not exactly what the US had in mind when we talked to them about nuclear controls." The US State Department issued a statement which said that the advertisement fulfilled state regulations only, but Pakistan's control regulations still fell short of international standards. Pakistan's foreign office has denied any intention to export nuclear-related materials.

An editorial in the Times of India questioned why there was no explanation as to why the advertisement appeared. It further argued that this was a disguised threat by Pakistan that if it was not provided with economic assistance, it would respond with nuclear proliferation. Gerald Steinberg, a researcher at Israel's Begin-Sadat Center for Strategic Studies, said that Pakistan does not make a clear distinction between military and civilian uses of nuclear capabilities, but also said there is no evidence that Pakistan has transferred nuclear technologies or materials to the Middle East.

3. Indian Nuclear Entities

The US Department of Commerce's Bureau of Export Administration removed India's Nuclear Science Centre and Uranium Recovery Plant from its entities list, a "blacklist" of organizations to which US companies have a difficult time exporting materials that can be used for missile and nuclear weapons programs.

4. CTBT

Japan Vice Minister of Finance for International Affairs H Kuroda said, "India should sign the CTBT as quickly as possible so that Indo-Japanese relations can be normalized." Japan is fine-tuning its policy on nuclear proliferation and the Kashmir issue in anticipation of Prime Minister Yoshiro Mori's upcoming visit.

5. Pakistan Nuclear Testing

Pakistan's former Atomic Energy Commission chairperson PK Iyengar said he was certain that

Pakistan was preparing a hydrogen bomb for testing.

Speaking at a political rally, Pakistan Muslim League leader Kulsoom Nawaz, wife of deposed Prime Minister Nawaz Sharif, said critically, "The military rulers are about to put the nuclear program in cold storage and a decision has been made to sign the Comprehensive Test Ban Treaty."

India

1. Russian Military Hardware

Russian Asian Affairs Foreign Ministry official Anwar Azimov reported that the strengthening of ties between India and the PRC was positive because of the impetus it would give to the Russian-proposed Russia-PRC-India strategic alliance. India's deal to buy 310 T-90 tanks from Russia, 100 fully assembled and 210 to be made in India under license, has stalled as Russia wants US\$120,000 per tank more than India wants to pay.

2. Foreign Relations: PRC

A PRC military delegation will visit India during August and two Indian naval vessels will make port calls in Beijing in September. The PRC had suspended military-to-military contacts in May 1998 following India's nuclear tests.

An editorial in the Times of India on Sino-Indian relations argued that India was still uncertain how to pursue great power status in the post-Cold War, and the challenge relative to the PRC was to reengage in certain policy areas while resisting in others. A feature article in The Week reported that the visit by PRC Foreign Minister Tang Jiaxuan to India demonstrated a warming of Sino-Indian relations, but also moved concretely towards resolution of the border issue.

3. Strategic Relations: France

France concluded its fifth round of strategic talks with India ended positively and the two countries exchanged ideas on topics of concern. Indian warship INS Mysore will make a port call to the French port of Toulon on August 13 and then will participate in a joint naval wargames with France.

Pakistan

1. Military Regime

The rival political parties of former premiers Benazir Bhutto and Nawaz Sharif united at a conference to criticize Pakistan Chief Executive Pervez Musharraf for not restoring democracy. Musharraf later said that Bhutto and Sharif do not have a place in Pakistan's politics today, and that he hoped grass-roots leadership would grow out of the planned non-party local elections. The Musharraf government also rejected a demand for immediate restoration of democracy made by the All Party Conference (APC), and said the APC only wishes to empower certain political parties.

2. Pakistani Military

Pakistan is establishing naval bases in the Arabian Sea, and Indian Defense Minister George Fernandes reported that India is factoring these bases into its strategic and tactical plans.

Senior members of the Pakistani military will meet with an eleven-member PRC defense delegation, led by the Commission for Chinese Science and Technology Industries for National Defense head Zhong Weimin.

Kashmir

1. Hizbul Ceasefire Dialogue

The Hizbul Mujahideen named a three-member team for negotiations with the Indian government. Hizbul supreme commander Syed Salahuddin said that the Kashmir issue could only be solved, "through tripartite talks that include Kashmiris, India, and Pakistan. We won't accept any condition which says that the talks should be within the ambit of the Indian Constitution or without involving Pakistan." The Hizbul command council nominated Fazil-ul Haq Qureshi, separatist leader of the Kashmir People's Political Front, to negotiate with the Indian government to work out the modalities of the ceasefire.

Fazil-ul Haq Qureshi, nominated by the Hizbul to be their negotiator, was contacted by the Indian Home Ministry for talks but was waiting for guidelines from the Hizbul. Sources close to the Hizbul reported that the group was contacting other Kashmiri leaders in Jammu and Kashmir and abroad to discuss their next move.

Indian Union Home Ministry Secretary Kamal Pande arrived for talks on August 3. The Hizbul came with a 12-point wish-list which included: modalities of the ceasefire, removal of bunkers, an end to crackdowns and harassment of civilians, a release of prisoners, and revocation of the Special Powers Act. Before the talks began, Riaz Rasool, a Hizbul commander, said that talks were related to implementation of the ceasefire and were not peace talks.

2. Breakdown of Hizbul Ceasefire Dialogue

The Hizbul met on August 5 with members of the Indian military, primarily to identify militant forces that may be hostile to the ceasefire. The Hizbul accused the Indian government of attempting to tie the talks into a bilateral structure rather than the preferred trilateral structure. The Hizbul also stated that its members were still being harassed by Indian security forces. A senior Indian Army official said that the Army was having problems deciding how to implement the ceasefire as it can not definitively identify to which militant group an extremist belongs. The Army also said other militant groups were being forced into desperate acts in order to wield more power in the event of peace talks.

The supreme council of the Hizbul Mujahideen issued a statement which demanded a positive response from India by 5pm on August 8. Syed Salahuddin said he was disappointed with the Indian government's "dilly-dallying tactics." The Hizbul had been asking the Indian government to clarify the relationship of the talks to other issues, including the constitution. Salahuddin said on August 6, "Kashmir is neither an internal problem of India that it could resolve through direct talks with the Kashmiris only ... nor is it a border dispute as could be resolved through bilateral talks between New Delhi and Islamabad by ignoring the Kashmiris." Pakistan urged India to participate in tripartite talks.

Indian Prime Minister AB Vajpayee said that dialogue with the Hizbul would be within the context of the constitution, but India would not be unwilling to talk if dialogue went beyond the constitution. He added, "Pakistan has misread our generosity and our desire for friendly relations as a weakness

and adopted cross-border terrorism as an instrument of state policy."

Hizbul Mujahideen supreme commander Syed Salahuddin urged ambassadors and high commissioners in Pakistan to place international pressure on India to compel it to accept the ceasefire offer. The Hizbul rescinded its ceasefire offer on August 8 because India refused to allow Pakistan to participate in peace talks.

3. Responses to the Ceasefire: Kashmiri Groups

The Muttahidda Jihad Council, an informal alliance of Kashmiri militant groups, decided on August 1 to intensify actions in Jammu and Kashmir, partly to bring the Hizbul "back into the MJC fold."

Militant groups, including the Al-Badr Mujahideen, Lashkar-e-Taiba, Harkatul Mujahideen, and the Jaish-I-Mohammad called on the Hizbul to review their ceasefire offer as dialogue with India was meaningless, and stated they would continue with the jihad as only it could end the Indian occupation of Jammu and Kashmir.

Jammu and Kashmir Chief Minister Farooq Abdullah asked other militant groups in the Kashmir to follow the Hizbul's example, and asked Pakistan to encourage them "to bring peace in the Valley." He said that he "need not join any dialogue with the militants." He explained that this is both because the Indian government is speaking with the militant groups and because there was "nothing common between the talks and demand for autonomy." He said that the bilateral peace talks would not move forward if either side insisted on preconditions, the All-Parties Hurriyat Conference was sidelined by its not being involved in the talks, and there was a possible role for the Hizbul in the Jammu and Kashmir state political framework.

All-Parties Hurriyat Conference chairman Abdul Gani Bhat said that Pakistan and the APHC should be invited to the talks between India and the Hizbul, and that without them there could be no permanent peace.

4. Responses to the Ceasefire: India, Pakistan

Vajpayee accused Pakistan of being behind the recent killings in Jammu and Kashmir, and said Pakistan intended to derail talks with the Hizbul. Pakistan Chief Executive Pervez Musharraf said that his government had no role in the ceasefire offer. He said, "This is an indigenous effort that is going on.... It is up to India and Pakistan together to take this opportunity and initiate the process of dialogue."

Indian Defense Minister George Fernandes has appealed to other militant groups in Jammu and Kashmir to follow the Hizbul Mujahideen in announcing a ceasefire and participating in peace talks.

US Ambassador to India Richard F Celeste said that the US welcomed India's determination to build on the ceasefire offer. He said, "The US fully supports India's attempt for dialogue and hopes that the dialogue would be successful."

5. Responses to the Ceasefire: Editorials

An editorial in the Times of India stated that the ceasefire brought a sense of optimism to the Kashmir. It also argued that when the Indian government offers talks it implicitly does so within its constitutional capacity, but that to state it explicitly is to deliberately provoke and derail talks. Further, inviting Pakistan to participate in tripartite talks would give Pakistan some jurisdiction over Jammu and Kashmir, whose accession to India was complete in all respects.

The Hindu argued that implementation of a ceasefire would require a means of identifying Hizbul militants as opposed to those of other militant groups, and would require "hotlines" to facilitate communication between security forces and Hizbul regional commanders. There are also many questions regarding whether Pakistan is behind the ceasefire, and if so, the goals of the ceasefire.

The cover story for Outlook India reported on the ceasefire as the most significant "half-chance of bringing about peace in the Valley," but identified obstacles, including the Hizbul's threat to rescind its ceasefire offer, the continuing attacks by other militant groups, and the absence of a commitment by the All-Parties Hurriyat Conference because it does not want to see fissures develop in the United Jihad Council. The article identified reasons why the Hizbul had extended the ceasefire offer, and said that security forces believe the activities of other militant groups could be curtailed by the Hizbul.

The Week carried an article which examines the complexity of diplomatic maneuvering by the US, the Pakistani government, Pakistan Chief Executive Pervez Musharraf, indigenous- and foreign-based Kashmiri militant groups, and the ceasefire offer; it also provides an overview of several Kashmiri militant groups.

The Hindu argues that first the autonomy resolution passed by the Jammu and Kashmir Assembly and then the Hizbul ceasefire offer have turned the spotlight on the region, but the Indian government should not confuse devolution of power to the states with dialogue related to the Kashmir. The remainder of the article reviews developments in Jammu and Kashmir since 1954, emphasizing the need for the Indian government to connect with those alienated from the mainstream.

An editorial in the Times of India argued that Indian Prime Minister AB Vajpayee has again risen above partisan politics to deal with the ceasefire offer, that the participation of local Hizbul commanders in the talks is a sign that the ceasefire offer is a real offer, and that terrorist violence must be at the top of the agenda in their dialogue.

6. Massacre in Jammu and Kashmir

The militant group Lashkar-e-Taiba claimed responsibility for an attack on Amarnath pilgrims in Pahalgam left at least 60 injured and 25 dead on August 2. In less than twelve hours, militant groups attacked in six locations in Jammu and Kashmir and more than 100 were killed by August 3, 64 in three large attacks and an additional 29 in smaller attacks. A curfew was implemented in Jammu town and then extended to other towns in Jammu. Some curfews were removed on August 5.

Indian Prime Minister AB Vajpayee suggested that Pakistan was behind the massacres, and said the attacks were aimed at stopping dialogue between the Hizbul and India. He welcomed all groups that reject violence to join talks, but said, "I don't see any possibility of talks with Pakistan."

The Times of India published a chronology of major killings that have occurred in Jammu and Kashmir since March, 1997.

The Pakistani Foreign Ministry condemned the killings, but indicated that the perpetrators could be Indian security forces. A statement said, "On previous occasions, terrorist acts aimed at civilians have been carried out by renegade elements at the behest of Indian security forces to malign the Kashmiri freedom struggle internationally." A Foreign Office spokesman said, "When India is beginning to realize the futility of its efforts to impose a military solution on Kashmiris, it is attempting to divide the Kashmiri freedom movement." Pakistan Foreign Minister Abdul Sattar said that the US should put pressure on India to permit an impartial investigation into the massacre.

Muhammad Usman, acting chief of the Muttahida Jihad Council, denied the involvement of the organization in the recent massacres, but said that it could have been Indian intelligence agencies. The Hizbul Mujahideen, the Jammu and Kashmir Liberation Front, and the United Jehadi Council all condemned the massacres. Several militant groups denied involvement, and stated that Islam does not permit them to target civilians; they only attack Indian security forces.

Nearly 12,000 migrant laborers and Hindu pilgrims are trying to escape Jammu and Kashmir. Kashmir is under curfew because of fears of reprisals against Muslims. Police in New Delhi used tear gas and water cannon to control a crowd of more than 500 Vishwa Hindu Parishad activists who were demonstrating against the massacre. Demonstrations also occurred in Punjab, Haryana, and Himachal Pradesh.

The Hindu suggested that while the recent killings would not derail bilateral talks between the Hizbul and the government of India, it would delay the possibility of an India-Pakistan dialogue, partly as there can be only a guessing game regarding Pakistan's intentions.

7. Other Military Actions in Jammu and Kashmir

The Indian Army has launched offensives targeted against militants in response to the recent killings.

At least six Indian soldiers were killed and another eight injured when militants attacked an Army base.

Indian security forces reported heavy exchanges of fire along the Line of Control (LoC), which they said was done by Pakistan to infiltrate militants and weapons across the border. Patrols were increased along the LoC as Indian security forces attempted to find those responsible for the recent killings.

8. India-Pakistan Dialogue

A senior Indian government official stated that India will not resume talks with Pakistan until cross-border terrorism stops, and said the talks between the Indian government and the Hizbul, "are between two parties; the government is speaking to a group of people who are Indian citizens," and the government would not permit the participation of the US, non-Indian Kashmiris, or Pakistanis.

An article in The Dawn reported that if the ceasefire offered by the Hizbul lasts several weeks, India would be likely to extend a formal invitation to leaders of the All-Parties Hurriyat Conference for dialogue.

Pakistan Chief Executive Pervez Musharraf said that he favored signing a no-war agreement with India, and said he would hand over power to civilians according to the deadline set by the Supreme Court.

A group of former Pakistani and Indian diplomats spoke at a Islamabad Policy Research Institute seminar and argued that regardless of differences between the two countries, recent tensions make it important that they resume dialogue immediately. Former Pakistan Foreign Secretary Najmuddin Sheikh said that both countries could realize large economic and political gains by reducing tensions. Former Indian diplomat MK Rasgotra said, "repeated calls from [Pakistan] for Jihad and other activities complicate matters."

9. US Role in Dialogue

US President Clinton called Indian Prime Minister AB Vajpayee after the massacre in the Kashmir and offered to talk to Pakistan to contain further mayhem. Officials in Pakistan reported that Pakistan Chief Executive Pervez Musharraf would meet with Clinton and Vajpayee in bilateral meetings at the UN Millennium Summit in New York in September. They said India would have a hard time refusing because of the new hope created by the Hizbul Mujahideen ceasefire offer.

The government of India released a sanitized statement on US President Bill Clinton's call to Indian Prime Minister AB Vajpayee, and officials are stating that Clinton's offer to speak to Pakistan Chief Executive Pervez Musharraf and ask him to help contain terrorist activities indicated that Clinton held Pakistan responsible for the recent killings.

An editorial in the Times of India stated, "Pakistan is very much behind the Hizbul ceasefire move which came about largely because of intense backroom maneuvers involving intermediaries from the United States." Pakistan Foreign Office spokesman Riaz Mohammed Khan said that he was not aware of any US role in facilitating the ceasefire, but agreed the US and other countries could play a useful role in the resolution of the Kashmir conflict.

Sri Lanka

1. Constitutional Reform

The Sri Lankan government's cabinet agreed by consensus to the constitutional reform package, which detracted from the opposition UNP party's arguments against the reforms.

Debate on the bill started August 8, but there is speculation whether President Chandrika Kumaratunga can muster the necessary two-thirds majority to pass the new constitution. The Buddhist clergy, the Liberation Tigers of Tamil Elam (LTTE), and non-militant Tamil parties all are opposed to the reforms, though for different reasons. The UNP's rejection of the draft puts passage in doubt. An editorial in The Dawn argued it would have required a coup for Kumaratunga to overcome opposition from these groups and pass the new constitution through the Parliament.

President Kumaratunga said the government was ready to discuss the reform constitution with the LTTE, but "If they reject these proposals, we will continue the war." Many Tamil leaders see this offer of devolved powers to be the most serious attempt at resolving the crisis. The adoption of the proposed constitution would grant nearly 86,000 "Indian Tamils" citizenship in Sri Lanka.

On August 8, the government withdrew the reform constitution because of lack of support in Parliament.

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