SANDNet Weekly Update, August 8, 2001

Recommended Citation

SANDNet, "SANDNet Weekly Update, August 8, 2001", SANDNet, August 08, 2001,
https://nautilus.org/sandnet/sandnet-weekly-update-august-8-2001/

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Volume 2, #32

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Nuclear Issues

1. India-Pakistan Nuclear Parity

M.R. Srinivasan writes in The Hindu that there is no nuclear parity between India and Pakistan because India has a greater capacity for producing fissile material and because Pakistan has not yet declared a no-first-use policy. Srinivasan argues that while there will be extensive damage and death from a nuclear exchange, because Pakistan has few targets, "India will survive and come out the winner." Srinivasan also argues that US intervention has prevented the resolution of many conflicts, but that it is also Pakistan's attempts to rewrite the history of their partition which have prevented a resolution to the India-Pakistan conflict.
"Indo-Pak. nuclear asymmetry"

2. India Nuclear Policy

The US-based India Abroad reported that a recent US Defense Department-commissioned report by RAND's Ashley Tellis states that India does not intend to build a ready nuclear arsenal, but neither will it rollback its nuclear program. Instead, India prefers to keep its weapons components stored separately under strict command and control. India, states the report, shows restraint by being able to retaliate only hours or weeks later, while gaining the increase in security and prestige from being a nuclear power. Tellis reportedly argues that sustained US engagement could lead to a regional restraint regime.

3. Weapons Exports to South Asia

The Dawn reports that Germany's Die Woche weekly reported that a German firm has been accused of exporting to India components used in the construction of a launcher for the Agni medium-range missile. It is illegal in Germany to export any military technology to conflict zones, though these components may have had permits for export for use in bridge construction in India.

A UK prosecutor has accused Abu Siddique, a London-based exporter, of exporting to Pakistan several items that could be used to make weapons of mass destruction. The prosecutor said that the goods were sent without permit and evaded export restrictions.

4. US Sanctions and Nonproliferation Concerns

C. Raja Mohan writes in The Hindu that the Bush administration has sharpened the debate in the US between those willing to aid Indian and Pakistani command and control of their nuclear arsenals in the name of security while others object under the principle of nonproliferation. Mohan states that new pragmatism on nonproliferation could bring India into the international regime on nuclear transfers and allow it access to new nuclear power reactors.
"U.S. n-assistance to India, Pak.?"

US Assistant Secretary of State for South Asia Christina Rocca met in Pakistan with leaders of the Alliance for Restoration of Democracy and with Pakistan President Pervez Musharraf as part of a six-day visit to the region. It is believed that Musharraf and Rocca discussed US sanctions on Pakistan. Rocca also met with other Pakistani government officials. Rocca told reporters that the US was reviewing the nuclear-related sanctions, but that the democracy-related sanctions would remain in place until democracy was fully restored. Seeking to improve US relations with both Pakistan and India, Rocca said, "Non-proliferation remains an important goal of US policy. But we want to expand and transform our engagement on defense issues, talking more about potential areas of cooperation while continuing to narrow our differences." The Hindu states that Rocca expressed that the US in

interested in India and Pakistan continuing the dialogue begun at the Agra summit.
"Musharraf seeks lifting of U.S. sanctions"
"U.S. wants India, Pak. to continue dialogue"

Pakistan Finance Minister Shoukat Aziz stated that while the US maintains its sanctions against Pakistan, the US is aiding Pakistan to acquire much needed loans. Aziz cited a favorable report from the Bush administration that helped Pakistan get loans from the IMF and the World Bank.
"U.S. helping Pak.: Aziz"

The Hindu published an essay that argues that it is clear from US Assistant Secretary of State for South Asia Christina Rocca's visit that the US wants to reorganize its relations with all the states of South Asia on a stand-along manner, independent from its relations with other regional states. According to the essay, while US relations with Pakistan focused on democracy and with India on trade, the US approaches all states in the region from the policy goals of nonproliferation, anti-terrorism and regional peace and security.
"The U.S. stake in South Asia"

US Assistant Secretary of State for South Asia Christina Rocca also met with the Afghan Ambassador to Pakistan, the highest-level meeting between the US and the Taliban, but she said no new ground was broken. Taliban representative Mullah Abdus Salam Zaeff reportedly told Rocca that while Afghanistan was against terrorism, it would not expel guests who had fought alongside the Afghans against the Soviet Union.

5. Russian BMD Systems
The Dawn reports that a US journal has quoted Indian defense ministry officials as stating that India was near buying its first ballistic missile defense system from Russia. India, according to the report, will purchase six S-300 ballistic missile defense systems and the rights to indigenously build another nineteen.

India

1. Domestic Politics
Indian Prime Minister A.B. Vajpayee offered to resign his post amid criticism in the aftermath of the Agra summit. Reports attributed Vajpayee's offer to resign as an attempt to distract the government from a probe into the possible role of the Prime Minister's Office in the growing UTI scam. Aides to Vajpayee are reported to have contacted the head of UTI, linking the US-64 mutual fund to a large loss. Parliamentary Affairs Minister Parmod Mahajan issued a statement that said that he, Home Minister L.K. Advani, External Affairs Minister Jaswant Singh, and HRD Minister Murli Manohar Joshi had asked him to reconsider. While some were silent on Vajpayee's offer to resignation offer, leaders of the National Democratic Alliance and BJP parties also rejected his offer. Vajpayee withdrew his offer to resign, as the NDA expressed its "unqualified faith and trust in Prime Minister Vajpayee's leadership."
"PM's resignation unacceptable, says Farooq"
"T.N. CM silent on PM's desire to resign"

Congress party spokesman Jaipal Reddy said, "The hypocritical offer of the Prime Minister to resign and his instant willingness to withdraw that offer amount to high drama and no comedy."

Ranjit Bhushan writes in Outlook India that while Prime Minister A.B. Vajpayee has survived this political storm, the voices within the BJP and NDA are growing increasingly critical of him.

2. India-US Relations
C. Raja Mohan writes in The Hindu that recent high-level contact between the US, Russia and the PRC introduce a greater degree of uncertainty for India's security environment, though the current domestic preoccupation with Pakistan has overshadowed these developments. Mohan argues that while some in India would support a PRC-Russia-India triangle against US domination, others fear a strong PRC-Russia relationship would severely constrain India. Mohan argues that India should seek open-ended engagement with all the great powers based on economic cooperation. India should also, he argues, consolidate ties with Russia, expand strategic cooperation with the US, and resolve bilateral problems with the PRC.
"India and the great powers"

Suhanshu Ranade writes in The Hindu that US-India relations have appeared to move forward quickly, but Ranade argues that this is illusory. Ranade states that the US believes, as shown by how US Secretary of State Colin Powell followed new US Ambassador to India Robert Blackwell's prescription for South Asia, that "for the next five years, developments in Pakistan are likely to have a greater impact on [US] interests than those in India."
"India's American alliance"

3. India-Pakistan Relations
India Home Minister L.K. Advani reiterated that cross-border terrorism was a major concern of India's and promised to crush it. Advani said the reason India and Pakistan could not agree on a joint statement at the Agra summit was because of Pakistan President Pervez Musharraf's television statement describing terrorism in Kashmir as a freedom struggle.

India External Affairs Minister Jaswant Singh warned Pakistan that if it persisted in promoting cross-border terrorism, it risked the decent into socio-political anarchy that befell Afghanistan.

4. India-PRC Border Talks
At the conclusion of the India-China Joint Working Group on the boundary issue, The Hindu reports that there is no indication that progress was made towards resolving their differences.
"Border talks with China conclude"

5. India-Nepal Trade
Increasing imports of several Nepalese products was discussed during trade talks between India and Nepal. India also agreed to waive excise duties on fuel provided to Nepalese aircraft in India.
"Indo-Nepal trade treaty discussed"

6. Kashmir Issues
The Hindu reports that with the failure at the Agra summit to move forward, India's armed forces perceive the need to reduce violence in Kashmir to contribute to a political solution. The armed forces finds the status quo unrewarding because of the increased militancy of the Pakistani government, the increased militant activity in Kashmir since the summit and the failure of Pakistan's "maximum restraint" along the Line of Control.
"Army for change of strategy in J&K"

The Hindu reports that the Indian Army is deploying 3,000 Rashtriya Rifles troops to Kashmir to combat militants. They will relieve border duties from regular troops, partly to allow regular troops to maintain their role as a deterrent against external aggressors and partly because of the inefficacy of the regular troops in counter-insurgency operations.
"Counter-insurgency forces for J&K"

The All-Parties Hurriyat Conference expressed its willingness to enter into talks with India's

designated interlocutor between the government and Kashmir, K.C. Pant. The APHC reportedly expressed a hope that on his next trip to Kashmir, Pant would only meet with the group and not with other groups.

Pakistan

1. Domestic Politics
B. Muralidhar Reddy reports in The Hindu that on August 14, Pakistan President Pervez Musharraf is expected to announce a new local government system, including a package devolving financial and political powers to local bodies. Reddy states that there is some concern that Musharraf will be able to convert the local bodies into, in effect, an electoral college to legitimize his ascent to the Presidency. Another concern, states Reddy, is that this new system could evolve into a system parallel to, and then dominant over, the provincial governments.
"Pak. to have new local govt. system soon"

The News reports that under new local governance directives to be issued on August 14, provincial and district governments will be barred from making new appointments until the completion of the transition period on June 30, 2002.

The Dawn reports that during talks with US Assistant Secretary of State for South Asia Christina Rocca, Pakistan President Pervez Musharraf reaffirmed his resolve to restore democracy to Pakistan by October of 2002, as ordered by the Supreme Court directive.

The Supreme Court Bar Association has announced that it has adopted a resolution stating that the assumption of the Presidency by Pervez Musharraf was unconstitutional and that the SCBAP would challenge the move.
"Musharraf's rule challenged"

2. Domestic Terrorism Measures
Pakistan President Pervez Musharraf gave approval for an offensive to begin against terrorists in Pakistan, directing that Rangers and paramilitary troops be used to aid police in a clamp down on militant groups. Musharraf said, "We owe it to this nation and we shall give them peace and security at every level." He added, "My government will not be deterred by such acts and we will chase them till the last terrorist is apprehended." A government official added, "There is no question of banning any political or religio-political party as the focus will only be o the militant outfits." Musharraf called a special meeting of provincial governors and others to finalize details for his anti-terrorism campaign.
"Pak. President vows to 'combat terrorism'"

3. All-Parties Hurriyat Conference
Pakistan President Pervez Musharraf was reported as having sent a letter to All-Parties Hurriyat Conference chairman Abdul Gani Bhat assuring that Musharraf would continue to seek the APHC's participation in any settlement of the Kashmir issue.
"Musharraf for Hurriyat's role in dialogue"

4. Kashmir
Mohammad Anwar Khan, a former Major General who retired to become a candidate, has been elected by the electoral college as President of Pakistan-administered Kashmir. Khan was the candidate put forward by the Muslim Conference. Amir Mir argues in Outlook India that this was a carefully crafted move by Pakistan President Pervez Musharraf to block any designs Kashmiris or

India may have for Pakistan-administered Kashmir.
"Anwar Khan, new PoK President"

Kashmir

1. Statements
All-Parties Hurriyat Conference leaders Abdul Ghani Lone and Mirwaiz Umar Farooq stated that they would no longer present their suggestions for a peaceful settlement of the Kashmir issue until the Indian government provided a specific forum for talks.
"'Kashmiri struggle more political'"

At a conference on the Agra summit held at the University of Karachi in Pakistan, former Ambassador Mahdi Masud stated that their could be no normalization of relations between Pakistan and India until there was a resolution to the Kashmir issue. Masud stated that he was not concerned that a joint statement failed to be issued for the summit, but was concerned that India had not changed its position on Kashmir.

Chairperson of the Institute of Strategic Studies in Islamabad argued against seeking a mediation role for the US in the Kashmir issue, citing the failure of US intervention to have helped in the resolution of crises in the Middle East.

2. Militant Groups
The Hizbul Mujahideen has appointed Moeenul Islam as deputy operational commander in Kashmir. He replaces Abdul Hamid Masood Tantray, who was reportedly killed in Kashmir.
"New Hizb commander"

Sri Lanka

1. Media Restrictions
The Sri Lankan government restored restrictions on the media to prevent journalists from traveling to areas where there is fighting with the Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam. The restriction had been rescinded just three months ago.

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Nautilus Institute
608 San Miguel Ave., Berkeley, CA 94707-1535 | Phone: (510) 423-0372 | Email: nautilus@nautilus.org