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Nuclear Issues

1. Comprehensive Test Ban Treaty

An editorial in The Dawn argues that Pakistanis' doubts about the Comprehensive Test Ban Treaty (CTBT) follow from their perceptions that the CTBT is a trap created by the US to dismantle Pakistan's nuclear force, that signing the CTBT will allow monitors to pry into Pakistan's program, and that signing will preclude Pakistan from testing weapons as they age or modernize. The editorial explains why these perceptions are false, and explains additional reasons why Pakistan should sign, including the pressure it will put on India and the need to focus on economic growth and national unity over weapons development.

2. Indian Nuclear Program

Frontline Magazine interviewed Anil Kakodkar, who became Chairman of India's Atomic Energy Commission on December 1. Kakodkar spoke about the state of India's nuclear energy program and then turned to India's nuclear weapons program. He stated that weaponization must continue to develop a credible nuclear deterrent and that India has the capability to build a neutron bomb.

3. Nuclear Weapons in South Asia

Haider K. Nizamani, a postdoctoral fellow at the Center for Nonproliferation Studies at the Monterey Institute for International Studies, has published a book on nuclear weapons development in India and Pakistan, and argues that nuclearization is linked to nation building.

India

1. Security Planning

The Indian Institute for Defense Studies and Analysis published their December issue of Strategic Analysis, which contains many articles on security issues in South Asia. An essay by Gurmeet Kanwal, a Research Fellow at IDSA, argues that the end of the Cold War has created an era of strategic uncertainty, and India needs to adopt a formal defense policy to cope with these emerging threats. Kanwal argues that one aspect of this policy should be to ensure a secure environment for economic development through a credible nuclear deterrence with Pakistan and the PRC, one with a demonstrated delivery system.

K. Subrahmanyam, convener of India's National Security Advisory Board, gave a speech covered in Strategic Analysis in which Subrahmanyam describes many shortfalls in India's national security planning and administration, many of which center around communication failures within elites and a failure to inform the public of threats.

2. Militant Groups

Seven National Democratic Front of Bodoland and 153 United Liberation Front of Assam militants surrendered to the Assam state government.

3. India-UK Military Ties

British Secretary of State for Defense Geoffrey Hoon, after arriving in India, assured India that Britain would soon resume the supply of parts for the anti-submarine Sea King helicopter. US sanctions after the nuclear tests blocked delivery of parts to India and about two-thirds of India's 39 Sea Kings have been grounded. British High Commissioner Rob Young later announced that the US State Department had granted a waiver for these parts, but not for other British defense equipment. Hoon said that he hoped to deepen cooperation with India in defense-related areas.

4. India-PRC Relations

The PRC has decided to not send a ship to India's International Fleet Review, which the Times of India attributes to a desire to not annoy Pakistan, but will send a speaker to the associated conference.

The Times of India reported that a visit is being scheduled to India by chair of the PRC's National People's Congress Li Peng. The visit will possibly take place in January.

Wang Xin, a PRC official in the Ministry of Foreign Trade and Economic Cooperation, said that the PRC is ready to cooperate with India to combat the smuggling of PRC products into India. Wang said that the smuggling "has harmed the interests of legitimate Chinese exports to India."

Pakistan

1. Overview

The Times of India published an editorial from The Friday Times that pointed to the likelihood of a repeated cycle of leadership by bad politicians followed by bad military leaders.

2. Sharif Pardon and Exile

Doctors examining deposed Pakistani Prime Minister Nawaz Sharif announced that he has developed a heart problem, but reported him in stable condition after being examined at Attock Fort prison.

Anwar Mehmood, head of Pakistan's information department, announced that Nawaz Sharif had requested a pardon in exchange for going into exile for at least ten years. Sharif would like to seek treatment for his heart problem abroad. Pakistan President Rafiq Tarar announced on Sunday that Sharif had been pardoned and exiled, though the original fine and disqualification from public service still stand. Sharif will begin his exile in Saudi Arabia, through he may later go to Britain.

Pro-Nawaz Sharif leaders of the Pakistan Muslim League announced that Sharif will retain the post

of president of the party despite his exile. Sharif named Javed Hashmi as acting president and appointed a leadership committee under Raja Zeraful Haq.

A Pakistani government official announcement stated that millions of dollars worth of assets had been confiscated from the family of Nawaz Sharif, including industrial firms, residential properties, and agricultural land. Government spokesman Major General Rashid Qureshi announced that the government had confiscated nearly 80 percent of the Sharif family's assets.

3. Responses to Sharif Pardon

An editorial in the Times of India argued that the release of deposed Pakistan Prime Minister Nawaz Sharif by Chief Executive Pervez Musharraf was to help Musharraf earn domestic support, but may hurt the legitimacy of his rule. The Pakistani fundamentalist party Jamaat-e-Islami attacked the pardon of Sharif as "a major blow" to the Pakistani government's plan for eradication of corruption.

US National Security Council spokesman P.J. Crowley expressed US support for Pakistan's decision to release Nawaz Sharif from prison. A senior official in the US State Department reported that the US was not informed of the deal ahead of time, but had been in talks with Pakistan and Saudi Arabia over the last few months.

4. Pakistan-US Relations

Following the US decision to deduct US\$60 million for wheat aid from a Pakistani government account first used to pay for F-16 purchases, the US negotiated with Pakistan and agreed to provide US\$30 million in compensatory assistance after the end of this year. Pakistan Chief Executive Pervez Musharraf stated that he had little choice in the original deal because it had been agreed to by the previous government.

Kashmir

1. Jammu and Kashmir Overview

Jammu and Kashmir Chief Minister Farooq Abdullah stated that border fencing would move ahead in order to block infiltration efforts.

2. Ceasefire: All-Parties Hurriyat Conference

Indian Prime Minister A.B. Vajpayee stated that if there were such a request by the All-Parties Hurriyat Conference, India would consider allowing them to visit Pakistan despite rejecting the idea of the APHC holding simultaneous, though separate, talks with India and Pakistan. Senior Hurriyat leader and Jammu and Kashmir Liberation Front chair Yaseen Malik said the APHC was not seeking a mediating role, but wanted to go to Pakistan to talk with militant groups there.

Abdul Ghani Bhat and other All-Parties Hurriyat Conference leaders, met with Pakistani High Commissioner Qazi Ashraf Jehangir to discuss the ceasefire and future steps. Bhat stated there had not yet been contacts with the Indian government, and the APHC has so far refused to comment on India's statement that it had ruled out tripartite talks with Pakistan. Bhat said that indications were that the Indian government was serious about starting talks, but that the various parties would need to come together for talks or "we may not be able to break the ice."

Senior All-Parties Hurriyat Conference leader Abdul Gani Lone stated that once political dialogue

started in Kashmir, mercenaries would need to leave. Lone also requested militant groups respond positively to the ceasefire. Lone pushed for consensus among the Kashmiri groups and Pakistan in their response to the ceasefire to facilitate approaching a dialogue with an open mind, but also said India would have to come to the negotiating table.

All-Parties Hurriyat Conference leader Syed Shah Gilani stated that the Hurriyat constitution clearly states the Hurriyat's position as seeking a solution to the Kashmir problem through tripartite talks or under the authority of the UN, and that there was no third alternative.

3. Ceasefire: Hizbul Mujahideen

Hizbul Mujahideen supreme commander Syed Salahuddin stated that Kashmiri leaders should push for a permanent solution to the Kashmir problem and not settle for a temporary peace. The Dawn reported that the Hizbul has neither rejected nor accepted the ceasefire, but wants India to agree to proposals for the settlement of the core problem. Deputy commander Muhammad Javed stated that there could not be talks without the participation of Pakistan.

4. Ceasefire: India-Pakistan Dialogue

Pakistan Foreign Secretary Abdul Sattar stated that if Pakistan's proposal for resolving the Kashmir issue is unacceptable to India, then India should prepare a counterproposal. Sattar denied the charge that Pakistan had a role in cross-border infiltration and violence. Sattar argued that the protest in Kashmir was peaceful until India sent in police and security forces. Sattar termed India's initiatives as "half steps."

Pakistan Foreign Office spokesman Riaz Mohammad Khan reiterated Pakistan's official, two-part position: that Pakistan would exercise maximum restraint along the Line of Control, and that preparations for tripartite talks should begin. Pakistan High Commissioner Ashraf Jehangir Qazi said that Pakistan was willing to abide by all bilateral agreements with India, including the Lahore declaration, and said, "India should agree to a set of modalities which can allow all parties concerned to participate in a negotiating process."

An Indian Ministry of External Affairs spokesman ruled out tripartite talks. The spokesman said that Pakistan should stop supporting cross-border terrorism to create an environment conducive to bilateral talks.

Jammu and Kashmir Chief Minister Farooq Abdullah praised Pakistan's statement of "maximum restraint" along the line of control and stated that if the ceasefire goes well, it could lead to a second summit between Indian Prime Minister A.B. Vajpayee and Pakistani government officials.

5. Ceasefire: Analysis of Peace Initiative

In a Frontline Magazine essay, Praveen Swami argues that despite vitriolic statements to the contrary, it appears that militant groups in Kashmir were honoring the ceasefire and were themselves suffering divisions over the ceasefire issue.

An editorial in The Dawn stated that Frontline Magazine argued that not only are there divisions among militant groups over how to approach the ceasefire, Indian ministries are also divided over the future of the ceasefire and whether or how Pakistan can be involved in the process. The editorial also pointed to an Outlook India poll in Kashmir that showed that 39 percent of Kashmiris held both militant groups and the Indian government responsible for violence in Kashmir.

An editorial in The Dawn argued that while India has not accepted Pakistan's offer of tripartite talks,

India says that Pakistan will be involved in talks with militants at a later time. The editorial argues that the barriers to talks are not insurmountable, though India has taken a two-track approach to Pakistan, projecting toughness domestically while internationally seeming accommodative.

V. Sudarshan, writing in Outlook India, states that sources indicate that the All-Parties Hurriyat Conference agrees that violence must stop if there is to be a meaningful political process. Sudarshan also relates the dilemma that Pakistan faces: if it continues to support violence then it risks alienating Kashmiris tired of the violence, but if Pakistan stops the violence then it loses its lever in Kashmir. Sudarshan argues that it is in the interest of the APHC for Pakistan to be included in talks so that Pakistan ceases support of militant groups. However, it is also in the Kashmiris' interest for Pakistan to participate in talks to increase their leverage with India.

A.G. Noorani argues in an essay for Frontline Magazine that Indian Prime Minister A.B. Vajpayee's ceasefire will only make political sense if he is willing to invite Pakistan to resume the Lahore process and invite the All-Parties Hurriyat Conference separately to dialogue.

6. Commentary on the Ceasefire: PRC, France

PRC Foreign Ministry spokeswoman Zhang Qiyue said that the PRC welcomed Pakistan's decision to exercise maximum restraint along the Line of Control.

French Ambassador Bernard de Faubornet de Montferrand praised the Indian government's ceasefire, but stated that there must be dialogue between India, Pakistan, and the Kashmiri people to resolve the Kashmir issue.

Z.U. Khan, chairman of International Human Rights Observer, stated that the UN should play a role in Kashmir similar to that in East Timor and Kosovo.

7. US Role in Kashmir Dialogue

US officials have stated support generally for the ceasefire and for talks between the relevant parties, but a senior US State Department official refused to commit the US to any particular proposal for talks.

An article by Praveen Swami in Frontline Magazine deplores the quiet role that the US appears to be playing in the resolution of the Kashmir issue. Swami cites the role of US businessman Mansoor Ijaz in recent events. The Times of India reported that Jammu and Kashmir Chief Minister Farooq Abdullah stated that a plan for trifurcation of Kashmir was an "American plan" designed to dismantle India.

8. Recent Violence

The Times of India cited an analysis done by the Udhampur headquarters of the India Army's Northern Command that showed that Pakistani firing is down to 25 percent of normal at the fourth week of the ceasefire. The Dawn reported that, while down everywhere else, India was reporting an increase in firing on the Siachen glacier.

The India Coast Guard reported that five Pakistani boats and their crew of 48 fisherman were caught poaching near the International Border Line, but were let off with only a warning as a goodwill Ramazan ceasefire gesture.

Sri Lanka

1. Foreign Aid Initiative

Sri Lanka will seek the support of international donors at its Paris aid consortium meeting, which had been delayed by over a year. Sri Lanka hopes to outline its latest peace initiatives for ending the fighting with the Liberation Tigers Tamil Eelam. The government's finances are in trouble because of the large portion of the budget devoted to defense spending.

2. Military

The Sri Lankan military reported that an operation successfully captured several LTTE areas in the Jaffna Peninsula.

3. LTTE Operations

An article in The Week reported that the LTTE, having lost bases in Thailand, are looking for places along the Indian coast to locate logistical supplies and to operate the drug-running that supports their efforts. The Week reported that Indian Navy resources are already stretched thin in these areas.

4. Sri Lanka-Indian Relations

Himal Magazine published a review of John Gooneratne's new book, "A Decade of Confrontation- Sri Lanka and India in the 1980's." Gooneratne traces the relationship between Sri Lanka, India, and the Tamil insurgency.

Afghanistan

1. Dialogue

The Times of India reported that representatives from both the Taliban, which controls 95 percent of Afghanistan, and the northern opposition forces are in Turkmenistan for talks being mediated by Turkmenistan and the UN. The two sides have not met directly.

2. UN Sanctions

A US-Russian draft resolution before the UN Security Council would expand sanctions against the Taliban because of its failure to comply with previous UN resolutions ordering it to end fighting and deliver suspected terrorist Osama bin Laden to US authorities for trial. The new resolution would ban military assistance and military sales to the Taliban and order the withdrawal of any military advisors to the Taliban. The resolution would also freeze assets and restrict travel by Taliban members.

Taliban Deputy Information Minister Abdur Rahman Hotak stated that attempts to force the Taliban to change its policy of protecting Osama bin Laden by imposing additional sanctions would not work.

3. Taliban-Pakistan Relations

Pakistan Foreign Minister Abdul Sattar criticized as "one sided" the proposed UN resolution to tighten sanctions upon the Taliban in Afghanistan and said the sanctions "seem to be a prescription

for fueling the strife."

The Pakistan Ministry of Commerce has approved a subsidy on the supply to Afghanistan of 600,000 tons of wheat, because Afghanistan is unable to pay world market prices for the wheat it needs. The Commerce Ministry has also begun issuing permits to private parties to export wheat to Afghanistan. Pakistan and Afghanistan signed an agreement for the transfer of 300,000 tons on the government-to-government level.

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