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Nuclear Issues

1. India Nuclear Policy

Gurmeet Kanwal, Senior Fellow at the Institute for Defense Studies and Analysis in New Delhi, writes that India's "minimum credible nuclear deterrence" and "no first use" policy is based on the concept of deterrence by denial, where India would have to pay a high price to retaliate against an adversary's first strike. India seeks to simultaneously deter an opponent from attacking while reassuring its own people of its preparation for attack, and all within India's commitment to global disarmament.

2. India Nuclear Program

Indian Defense Minister George Fernandes stated that the Agni II intermediate range ballistic missile, with a 2,200 km range and one-ton warhead, is ready for induction into India's defense arsenal.

Director of the US Central Intelligence Agency George Tenet testified before the US Senate that there was a high risk of war between India and Pakistan, and that it is likely that there will be a further escalation in the race for nuclear superiority between the two, leading to further nuclear testing. Tenet also testified that India enjoyed a superiority in conventional arms over Pakistan, and that India, along with the PRC and Iran, had received ballistic missile technology from Russia.

Manpreet Sethi, Research Officer at the Institute for Defense Studies and Analysis in New Delhi, argues that the Kargil incident proved that the dangers from nuclear and other mass destruction weapons is not significantly greater than in other regions. Sethi argues that the overshadowing role of the PRC has been overlooked in most analyses of the region. Sethi concludes that because nuclear dangers transcend regional boundaries, the mitigation of these threats must also prevail on a global level.

India

1. India-UK Military Hardware Deal

The UK Director General of Defense Exports Anthony Pawson reported that India was likely to finalize the deal to buy 66 of the Hawk advanced jet trainer (AJT) by the end of March. One issue is India's worry that the US embargo will complicate upgrades and parts for the aircraft.

2. Military Hardware

This week was the first public flight of India's Light Combat Aircraft (LAC), at an air show in

Bangalore. The Times of India reported that the LCA is the smallest lightweight multi-role supersonic aircraft in the world.

The Indian Navy completed a deal to acquire Israel's Barak missile defense system for nearly US$300 million. The system protects warships and has a range of 60 km.

3. India-Russia Military Relations

Russian Air Force Chief General Anatoly M. Kornukov stated, prior to meeting with Indian Air Chief Marshal A.Y. Tipnis, that Russia was interested in helping India develop the Light Combat Aircraft (LCA) and was willing to hold joint exercises with the two countries' air forces. An article in The Hindu stated that the project is currently based around US technology, and India should sound out US-based firms' interest in the project before redirecting aspects of the project to incorporate technology of Russian design.

Kota Harinarayana, Director of the Light Combat Aircraft (LCA) program, stated that the LCA will be just as good as European-built jet fighters, but will cost half as much. He said that India used composite materials to reduce the number of parts needed, which helped bring the cost down to US$17 million, compared to over US$100 million for a US-built F-22.

The Times of India reported that, contrary to US preferences, Russian Air Force Chief General Anatoly M. Kornukov said that Russia will lease India four Tu-22M3 Backfire long-range bombers and will equip them with KH-22 cruise missiles. The Backfire has a range of 2,400 km, though the bomber could be upgraded with mid-air refueling to extend the range to 5,000 km. The cruise missiles will have conventional warheads and a range of 500 km.

Russia reported that the delays in upgrading India's fleet of MiG-21 fighter jets is because India's specific requests on the upgrade, including new missiles and software changes, also had to be agreed to by manufacturers in Israel and France.

The Hindu reported that an India-Russia deal for five Russian Ka-31 marine helicopters indicates that the two countries are close to signing a deal for 25-28 MiG-29K aircraft to be attached to the Admiral Gorshkov aircraft carrier. The deal may also include licensed production of the MiG-29K in India.

4. India-Malaysia Military Hardware Deal

The Malaysian government signed a deal with Pakistan to purchase US$20.9 million in arms, including anti-tank weapons and surface-to-air missiles.

5. India-PRC Strategic Relations

Security talks between India's C.A. Rangachari and PRC Assistant Foreign Minister Wang Yi concluded, with both sides exchanging perspectives on regional and international issues. Indian Foreign Secretary Lalit Mansingh, who met with Wang Yi after the talks, raised the issue of Pakistan's nuclear and missile programs. Wang raised the issue of a Tibetan granted refugee status by India.

Vijay Sakhuja, Research Fellow at the Institute for Defense Studies and Analysis in New Delhi, states that the PRC is developing a maritime infrastructure as part of transitioning from a continental power to a maritime power. This has included the development of maritime industries, construction facilities, and military forces. Sakhuja also states that the PRC Navy will makes its presence felt in South Asia because the Indian Ocean states will be the sources of much of the resources that the

PRC will need for this process, and is the location of many of the sea lines of communication (SLOCs) that serve the PRC economy.

6. Kashmir Ceasefire

Indian Defense Minister George Fernandes reported that forces in Jammu and Kashmir have requested that the ceasefire there not be extended past February 26, as to do so would put civilian lives in danger. Intelligence sources were reported by the Times of India as stating that the central government would has a difficult decision to make on the extension of the ceasefire because the decision must be made in consideration of several recent high-profile attacks.

Indian Home Minister L.K. Advani stated that the decision to further extend the ceasefire would take careful consideration. He also said the government was considering initiatives to arm local village "guards" for self-defense in the aftermath of the killing of six Sikhs. The All-Parties Hurriyat Conference condemned the killing but opposes arming the Sikhs for self-defense.

Ashwani Talwar writes in the Times of India that recent incidents of violence may cause the Indian government to lose its patience and decide not to extend the ceasefire past February 26.

7. Gujarat Earthquake

The Indian government reported that the official death toll in the Gujarat earthquake reached 16,927 people. It reported also that 18,600 cattle had been killed.

Pakistan

1. India-Pakistan Relations

Pakistan Chief Executive Pervez Musharraf told reporters that Pakistan has done everything possible to begin dialogue with India and now India must take the initiative to accept talks and to send the All-Parties Hurriyat Conference delegation to Pakistan. He said the only way to resolve militancy, terrorism and religious jehad was to solve the Kashmir and Afghanistan problems.

2. Militant Groups

Pakistan Interior Minister Moinuddin Haider stated that police were given instructions to crack down on militant groups in Pakistan. He said that individuals will not be allowed to publicize that they belong to a Jehadi group or solicit funds. People will also not be permitted to display weapons.

3. Democratic Elections

The Supreme Court of Pakistan has asked Chief Executive Pervez Musharraf to clarify his plans for holding democratic elections, in anticipation of the end of his three-year term. Government lawyer Sharifuddin Pirzada stated in response that the government promised to hold elections before October 12, 2002.

Kashmir

1. US Mediation

According to US Democratic Party sources, former President Bill Clinton is finalizing preparations for a trip to India in April. The trip is officially related to the Gujarat earthquake, but sources indicate that Clinton will explore whether there is a role for him in mediating between India and Pakistan over Kashmir.

2. APHC

Former chairman of the All-Parties Hurriyat Conference Mirwaiz Umer Farooq stated that the APHC will consider opening offices in Brussels, New York, and Saudi Arabia to raise awareness of the Kashmir issue. He also urged the Indian government to issue passports to the APHC delegation seeking to visit Pakistan.

3. Kashmir

Harish Khare writes in The Hindu that it is a reflection of the current government's fragility and its lack of conceptual boldness that it is unable to face the political risk associated with the real pursuit of a peace dialogue. Meanwhile, there is no clear answer to the Kashmir question or to whether Pakistan Chief Executive Pervez Musharraf can deliver on any agreements he makes.

Sri Lanka

1. Peace Dialogue

The Times of India reported that the Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam agreed to hold peace talks with the Sri Lankan government if Britain does not ban the LTTE under new anti-terrorism laws. The article also cited reports by Sri Lankan intelligence agencies that the LTTE was rearming and preparing new recruits.

2. Defense Budget

A budget was presented to the Sri Lanka Parliament that increases the defense budget to US$720 million. This is a 20 percent increase over the previous year's budget, but less than what was actually spent with the mid-year increase in fighting against the LTTE. The Hindu reports that Sri Lanka's growing budget deficit indicates that it can not afford this level of defense spending.

Afghanistan

1. US Aid

The United States Agency for International Development announced that it would airlift tents, blankets, water jugs and medical kits to Afghanistan and Pakistan to alleviate years of drought and war.

2. UN Sanctions

US State Department spokesman Richard Boucher stated that the US had asked the Taliban to close its New York office in compliance with UN sanctions. The Bush administration also announced it was reviewing the status of Taliban representative in the US Abdul Hakeem Mujahid. Taliban Foreign Minister Wakil Ahmed Mutawakil stated that if the US closed the Taliban office in New York, the

Taliban would retaliate by closing the office in Kabul of the UN Special Mission in Afghanistan.

3. Taliban-Pakistan Relations

Pakistan Foreign Minister Moinuddin Haider visited Afghanistan for the first high-level visit between the two countries since the 1999 military takeover. While the two countries are close, they have disagreements over the deportation of criminals.

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