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Pakistan

1. CTBT

John Holum, a senior U.S. advisor regarding nuclear proliferation, noted that it will be difficult to

persuade India and Pakistan to sign the CTBT after the U.S. Senate failed to ratify the treaty. He also acknowledged that the treaty contains a clause that would enable the U.S. (or any other country) to withdraw from the treaty in "supreme national interest," if it chose to do so.

In separate statements, the French ambassador to Pakistan and the Consul General of Japan urged Pakistan to sign the CTBT.

Analysis: Dawn (Lahore) reprinted a Los Angeles Times op ed by Henry Kissinger. Kissinger argues that the "real and growing" danger of nuclear attack on the U.S. demands implementation of a U.S. missile defense system. Tanvir Ahmad Khan highlights shortcomings in Pakistan's nuclear command and control system and urges the international community to provide the financial assistance required to make the system more transparent. Aseff Ahmed Ali, a former Foreign Minister, argues that Pakistan's national interest, as well as safeguards within the treaty, provide a strong rationale for Pakistan to sign the CTBT.

2. Domestic Politics

Abdullah Muntazir, leader of Lashkar-e Toiba, a militant group based in Jammu & Kashmir, said that deposed Prime Minister Nawaz Sharif had put increasing pressure on his group and others to cease militant operations. After Chief Executive Pervez Musharraf took control of Pakistan, according to Muntazir, this pressure was reduced.

Amnesty International reports that at least 50 persons were killed in custody, 120 were executed extrajudicially, and 428 people were sentenced to death. The report also alleges gender, religious, and political motives for violence, torture, and rape in Pakistan.

3. Pakistan-US Relations

On February 17, U.S. Secretary of State said that the U.S. would like to "see some progress . . . on democracy and terrorism." A New York Times allegation of links between Islamic charitable organizations and militant activities was widely reported in the Pakistani press. Pakistan sent cabinet minister Omar Asghar Khan to Washington to "neutralize U.S. worries about training of terrorist groups in Pakistan's neighborhood" and banned the public display of firearms (a common rallying method) for all non-security personnel.

On February 18, U.S. National Security Council spokesperson David Leavy told reporters that a decision regarding a Clinton visit to Pakistan had not been reached and that "no preconditions" had been set for such a visit.

Analysis: Lt Gen (retired) Asad Durrani argues in an op ed (The News) that Pakistan should not compromise either its principles or its security interests in exchange for a Clinton visit. Aziz Siddiqui argues (Dawn) that Clinton should consider direct involvement in the resolution of regional and global security issues to be more important than bypassing Pakistan--as a part of an inconsistent U.S. policy of sometimes promoting democracy worldwide. K. Subrahmanyam argues in The Hindu (Madras) that the U.S. does not have a record of taking other countries' interests into consideration when planning its own policies. Therefore, one could infer from a Clinton decision to visit Islamabad "that the U.S. is being blackmailed directly by Pakistan vis-à-vis its own [U.S.] national security interests--a threat serious enough for Clinton to talk of a stop-over.

4. Pakistan-China Relations

Zhang Jiujuan, the Director General of the Asian Department, Chinese Foreign Ministry, held bilateral consultations with senior Pakistan foreign officials in Islamabad on February 19. Topics

ranged from defense and economic relations to culture and diplomatic interactions. Jiuhuan "appreciated" Pakistan's efforts to bring peace and stability to South Asia. Aslam Khan (in The News), citing Chinese and Western "diplomatic sources," reports that China is putting considerable pressure on the Pakistan government to rein in terrorist activity emanating from Afghanistan.

5. Pakistan-Afghanistan Relations

A notice advertising that the U.S. would reward credible information regarding the whereabouts of Osama bin Laden has been stamped on 100- rupee currency notes and matchbooks and distributed in Peshawar. Both Pakistan and the U.S. deny involvement. An article in the Sunday Telegraph (London, quoted in the Times of India) reports that bin Laden has become a cult figure in northern Pakistan. Amit Baruah of The Hindu (Madras) reports on "a symbiotic relationship [that] exists between the Taliban and the Pakistani state."

6. Foreign Relations: Iraq, Japan

Iraqi Deputy Prime Minister Tariq Aziz visited Islamabad on February 15- 16 and proposed improved ties with Pakistan "in all fields." A Pakistan spokesperson said that Aziz also "urged joint work among Islamic states and third world countries to protect their independence and sovereignty and to confront American attempts to interfere in their internal affairs."

Japan's Deputy foreign Minister, Ryoza Kato, met with Pakistan Foreign Secretary Shamshad Ahmed in Islamabad on February 16. According to the official statement, the two sides "exchanged views" on normalization of Pakistan-Japan economic and political relations.

India

7. CTBT

John Holum, a senior advisor to U.S. President Bill Clinton, acknowledged that it is "unlikely" that India will sign the CTBT during the Clinton visit to India. U.S. State Department spokesperson James Rubin said that the U.S. seeks a "working relationship" with India but that differences regarding nonproliferation remain a "major problem."

French Foreign Minister Hubert Vedrine said that France is prepared to consider expanded civilian nuclear energy cooperation if India signs the CTBT.

On the Indian side, staunch opposition to the CTBT by Rashtriya Swayamsewak Sangh (RSS) is reported to be a constraint on the Indian government.

8. Military Hardware

Defense Minister George Fernandes seeks to raise defense spending by 30 percent, from 2.3 percent to 3 percent of GNP. India has allocated US\$200 million to launch the SSK-Class submarine project, which has been stalled since 1992. SSK submarines would be 66 meters long, carry a crew of up to 40, and enter service in 2004.

9. India-US Relations

In response to Prime Minister A. B. Vajpayee's request that President Bill Clinton bypass Pakistan during his South Asia trip, a White House spokesperson urged that the State Visit to New Delhi be

"viewed on its own merit" regardless of whatever other stops the President might take. U.S. State Department spokesperson James Rubin suggested that Secretary of State Madeleine Albright might be a part of the presidential delegation to South Asia.

Analysis: Kanwaldeep Singh argues that, although a joint council of Indian and U.S. companies has prepared a 50-point agenda, economic consultations are not likely to address the contentious environmental and labor issues that dominated last month's World Trade Organization meeting in Seattle.

Indian Air Force fighter pilot Satnam Shah reportedly has confessed to being a CIA agent. He is alleged to have sold sensitive defense information to the U.S.

10. Foreign Relations: France, Canada

French Foreign Minister Hubert Vedrine visited New Delhi for two days as a participant in the high-profile Indo-French Forum. During the visit, he acknowledged India's position as "one of the six or seven major powers in a multipolar world," and proposed expanded civilian nuclear cooperation following an Indian signature on the CTBT. Vedrine also supported a permanent seat for India on the United Nations security council, and urged multipolar cooperation--including cooperation with Pakistan--in order to challenge U.S. dominance. In an interview with Le Figaro (Paris), Indian Prime Minister A.B. Vajpayee supported an Indo- French strategic dialogue, but insisted that for such a dialogue to occur, "your country has to make a strategic choice between the great democratic power, India, and Pakistan, a small country under military dictatorship."

The Indo-Canada working group on counter-terrorism completed its third meeting on February 16. India has established many such working groups as it seeks to forward a proposal to the United Nations for a comprehensive convention on international terrorism in September.

Kashmir

11. Military Activities

India announced plans to construct a fence along a 240-km stretch of the Line of Control (LoC). Pakistani military spokesperson Major General Rashid Qureshi denied Indian reports that Pakistan increased the strength of the Pakistan army in the border areas. Two days later Indian Chief of Army Staff V. P. Malik "confirmed" a "floating movement" of Pakistani troops along the LoC. The Nation (Islamabad) reported on Feb 21 that India plans to send two more battalions toward the LoC.

12. Pakistan-India Dialogue

Pakistani Chief Executive Pervez Musharraf again stressed the need for a "Kashmir-centered dialogue that would lead to an equitable solution", and Indian Prime Minister A.B. Vajpayee insisted that "the only agenda for talks on Kashmir with Pakistan will be the return of Pakistan- occupied Kashmir."

13. International Dialogue

On February 16, President Bill Clinton again offered to mediate the Kashmir issue; French Foreign Minister Hubert Vedrine supported Clinton's offer. In response, Pakistan reiterated its ongoing support for mediation, while India reiterated its ongoing support for intraregional dispute resolution. Subsequently, Clinton clarified on February 17 that the U.S. would mediate only if asked to do so by

both India and Pakistan. A White House spokesperson further clarified that Clinton had simply restated a long-standing U.S. policy regarding Kashmir. On the following day, Clinton explicitly rejected the idea of a U.S. "special envoy" for Kashmir.

14. Pakistan, Domestic Pressures

The Times of India reports that Muslim Conference leader Sardar Abdul Qayyum, in an interview to The Nation, criticized as "suicidal" Chief Executive Musharraf's idea of a conventional war in Kashmir.

Sri Lanka

15. Norwegian Mediation

Norwegian Foreign Minister Knut Vollebaek arrived in Colombo on February 16 to begin the process of mediating a dialogue between the Sri Lanka government, the opposition United National Party (UNP), and the Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam (LTTE). Vollebaek proposed that most of the discussions take place in Oslo, Norway. All sides expressed a readiness to engage in peace talks, which are expected to continue for one year, but the LTTE announced that it would call for withdrawal of all government troops from the north and east prior to engaging in the Oslo process.

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