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India

1. Nuclear Issues

Prime Minister A. B. Vajpayee stated that India is prepared for a nuclear war if such a war is thrust upon it. Defense Minister George Fernandes clarified that India has no plans to go to war. A wide-ranging interview with Fernandes appears in AsiaWeek.

India's National Security Advisor, Brajesh Mishra, said that "we are not, definitely not, attempting to catch up with China in the number of delivery systems or warheads."

News Analysis: V. R. Raghavan argues that the recent "limited war doctrine," like the 1999 draft nuclear policy and post Pokhran statements, is unhelpfully taunting and ambiguous. Manoj Joshi suggests that India's nuclear deterrence would be enhanced if its nuclear command structure were more transparent. K. Subrahmanyam proposes a "non-emotional debate on the ethics of no-first-use in light of the Gita or any other doctrine of just war."

2. Security Planning

Former Indian Prime Minister I.K. Gujral and several prominent intellectuals urged a revival of the Lahore process "so that both India and Pakistan, along with other South Asian neighbors, march together building a vibrant and prosperous South Asian community."

3. Military Hardware

In a show of strength, the Indian Army, Navy, and Air Force combined in a large exercise in the Indian Ocean near Rajasthan. Dawn (Lahore) reports that India has contracted with a Russian firm to buy 300 T-90 tanks. An analysis in The News (Karachi) provides details on many of India's military equipment programs.

4. India-U.S. Relations

The U.S. State Department officially announced President Bill Clinton's state visit to India and Bangladesh. U.S. Under-secretary of State for South Asia Karl Indurfurth's speech provides a background for U.S. expectations. Indian Defense Minister George Fernandes said that India would not engage in security consultations before the U.S. lifted its post-Pokhran sanctions. Preliminary secretary-level meetings this week in Washington, D.C. will focus on collaborative counter-terrorism strategies.

The bi-weekly Frontline made the upcoming state visit its cover story, including two substantial news analyses, four newsmaker interviews, and three news analyses.

News Analysis: C. Raja Mohan draws distinctions between the political environment during the last U.S. State visit, by President Carter, and that of the current Clinton visit. In a News (Karachi) op ed., Hassan Ali Shahzeb castigates India's "negative politics" of "state terrorism" and "destructive diplomacy."

5. India-China Relations

In his first public statement since arriving in India from Tibet one month ago, the Karmapa (Buddhism's third highest spiritual leader) "expressed hope" that Tibetans in India would soon be able to return to their homeland under the Dalai Lama's leadership.

6. Foreign Relations: Nepal, Bangladesh

An Indian home ministry official reported that India has provided information about 16 Pakistani Inter-Services Intelligence (ISI) agents operating out of Bangladesh. India and Nepal completed a three-day working meeting with a joint statement pledging additional cooperation on terrorism, cross-border drug trafficking, and border security.

Pakistan

7. Nuclear Issues

Chief Executive Pervez Musharraf established a Nuclear Command Authority (NCA). The NCA will be responsible for policy formulation and will exercise employment and development control over all strategic nuclear forces and strategic organizations. It will be composed of two committees (employment and development) and a Strategic Plans Division, which will act as secretariat.

An unclassified US Central Intelligence Agency report submitted to the US Congress on Wednesday says that Chinese and North Korean "entities continued to provide assistance to Pakistan's ballistic missile programme during the first half of 1999". This assistance, the report maintains, is critical for Islamabad's efforts to produce ballistic missiles.

News Analysis: A News (Karachi) editorial observes that, while the new NCA adds valuable transparency to Pakistan's nuclear program, it also demonstrates clearly that control of the program is in the hands of the military.

8. CTBT Issues

Foreign Minister Abdul Sattar stated that Pakistan is a declared nuclear weapon state and that signing the CTBT will not alter its status.

News Analysis: In a lengthy News op ed., former Foreign Minister Agha Shahi argues that Pakistan should not rush into signing the CTBT prior to U.S. President Clinton's South Asia visit because the benefits of signing before India are not as great as the costs of signing if India does not follow suit. Rifaat Hussain, also in The News, argues that Pakistan's public debate has fostered "blind emotionalism" rather than rational discourse; Hussain suggests several benefits that would follow from CTBT signature.

9. Security Planning

Former Foreign Secretary expressed concern that India would begin "a five- or six-day war." Chief Executive Pervez Musharraf ruled out war between India and Pakistan in the near future. He described Pakistan's nuclear strategy as "extremely responsible" and India's as "extremely offensive."

News Analysis: Khalid Mahmud, a senior scholar at the Institute of Regional Studies (Islamabad),

argues that Indian military and diplomatic offensives are intended to "browbeat Pakistan along the Line of Control (LoC) and raise the alarm of a nuclear flashpoint for international consumption."

10. Foreign Relations

Afghanistan's second-ranking leader, Mulla Rabbani, completed extensive discussions with Pakistani Chief Executive Musharraf and others in Islamabad. Their joint statement reaffirmed opposition to terrorism worldwide. Rabbani indicated the Taliban's willingness to hold talks with the opposition Northern Alliance; Musharraf offered to go to Afghanistan to persuade the Taliban to withdraw asylum to Osama bin Laden. Separately, U.S. CIA director George Tenet testified before Congress that Osama Bin Laden is actively seeking weapons of mass destruction.

A Chechen official traveled through Pakistan in order to open Chechnya's first embassy, in Kabul. A Russian foreign ministry official asked his Pakistani counterpart how a Chechen individual managed to enter Pakistan. Pakistan accused Moscow of "gross interference" in Pakistani internal affairs.

11. Pakistan-U.S. Relations: News

The United States did not announce a state visit to Pakistan. Statements out of Washington included, "the visit [to India] does not preclude a similar visit to Pakistan" (Feb. 1); a request for "changes ... regarding our longstanding concerns on terrorism, proliferation, and restoration of democracy" (Feb. 2); an assurance to Pakistan that Clinton's non-announcement of plans to visit Islamabad is not a snub (Feb. 4); and attempts to find a "formula that would allow [Clinton] to touch down in Islamabad, if only for a few hours," for talks with Pakistan's chief executive Gen Pervez Musharraf (Feb. 6).

The Pakistan foreign ministry initially chose not to comment on the non- announcement (Feb. 2). CE Musharraf then predicted increasing tension on the LoC if Clinton did not visit Islamabad and use his influence to help resolve the Kashmir crisis (Feb. 4). Next day, Foreign Minister Abdul Sattar refused to negotiate with the U.S. on terms (terrorism, proliferation, democracy) of a visit. On Feb. 6, Musharraf expressed optimism that the modalities surrounding the visit could be worked out.

U.S. Congressman Frank Pallone introduced a U.S. House Resolution asking Secretary of State Madeleine Albright to designate the Pakistan government as one "which has repeatedly provided support for international terrorism." The relevant subcommittee chairman argued that it would not be in the U.S. interest to place Pakistan on a Terrorist List.

12. Pakistan-U.S. Relations: Analysis

Analysis from Pakistan: Mir Jamilur Rahman argues that a U.S. decision to skip over Pakistan would be more than symbolic: it would be followed by still more hostile U.S.- Pakistan relations. Farukh Saleem argues that the U.S.'s shifting emphasis from Kashmir to terrorism benefits the leaders of all three countries; the benefit to Musharraf is an implicit right to proceed as he chooses domestically. Two scholars, Edward Said and Nadeem Shahid, use "Waiting for Godot" as a metaphor for the Clinton (non)visit, that is, it is unclear both whether or not Clinton will come and, if he does, what benefits might accrue to Pakistan. A Dawn editorial urges India not to celebrate their visit in the form of increased provocations on the LoC because Pakistan will be ready to respond.

Analysis from India: The Times of India editorializes that Clinton is right to shift from the U.S. traditional support of dictators around the world toward promotion of democracy in the new millenium. Mahendra Ved argues that Clinton's choice demonstrates, for the first time, a firm and measurable commitment by the U.S. to curb terrorism worldwide. K. Subrahmanyam congratulates

the U.S. on its decision not to accede to Pakistan's "sophisticated blackmail."

Analysis from the United States: Aziz Haniffa provides the thumb-nail impressions of several South Asia scholars and policymakers on Clinton's proposed tour.

13. Military Hardware

Pakistan successfully test-fired its Hatf-I (Death-I) surface-to-surface short- range ballistic missile, which can be tipped with a "variety of warheads." The Dhanush, a 250-km ballistic missile, will be test-fired in March.

Kashmir

14. Military Engagements

The United Nations Military Observer Group for India and Pakistan recorded 3,388 violations of the Line of Control (LoC) by India during 1996-1999. [ed: India does not permit the UNMOGIP on its side of the LoC, so this body does not collect data regarding Pakistani LoC violations.] India and Pakistan each engaged in mortar fire.

15. India-Pakistan Dialogue

Pakistani Foreign Minister Sattar described 28 years of Pakistan-India negotiations on Kashmir as "an exercise in futility." Chief Executive Musharraf repeated his willingness to travel to New Delhi for talks on Kashmir; Prime Minister Vajpayee responded by welcoming a Musharraf visit, but only in order to "chalk out the modalities of the return [to India] of Pakistan-occupied Kashmir." Both Indian and Pakistani interpretations of the Vajpayee speech are provided. [ed. the return of "Pakistan-occupied Kashmir" is a long-standing Indian position, but it is rarely expressed in public].

16. International Dialogue

Following a Kashmir self-determination rally in London, several British Members of Parliament expressed support for a peaceful solution to the conflict. Chief Executive Musharraf separately told German and Afghan diplomats that internationally-facilitated dialogue would enhance the chances of a meaningful resolution.

On February 2, a speech by U.S. Under-Secretary of State Karl Indurfurth outlined the ways in which the U.S. would adopt a "policy of greater engagement with South Asia," including pursuit of democracy, economic and social development, and "South Asia's integration into the global mainstream." Subsequently, President Clinton offered to act as a peace broker between India and Pakistan. The offer was immediately rejected by India.

17. Pakistan

On the occasion of Kashmiri Independence Day, a national holiday in Pakistan, Chief Executive Musharraf, President Rafiq Tarar, and Interior Minister Moinuddin Haider said, in separate speeches, that Pakistan would continue to support the "legitimate struggle" of the Kashmiri people and "not allow India to intimidate us." In a pair of editorials, Dawn said both that New Delhi's "lame excuses" and 700,000 troops have generated "Kashmir's agony," and that Islamabad and New Delhi should make the compromises necessary to resolve the issue rather than "quibbling over semantics."

18. India

Prime Minister Vajpayee is now expected to make public the government report that found intelligence shortcomings responsible for the Summer 1999 Kargil conflict.

Jammu & Kashmir Chief Minister Farooq Abdullah's request that his state be given greater autonomy has come under fire both in parts of his state and in New Delhi. On February 5 (Pakistan's Kashmiri Independence Day) Abdullah said that a limited war might erupt if Pakistan continued to support the Kashmir freedom movement.

Bangladesh

19. Bangladesh-Indian Relations

Left-wing and Islamic groups have expressed displeasure over U.S. President Bill Clinton's visit to Dhaka in March. They view the visit as neither "a general diplomatic tour nor a reflection of goodwill . . . Rather, it aims at strengthening U.S. power in South Asia and establishing an absolute command over the country's oil and gas resources." C. Raja Mohan, in *The Hindu*, argues that U.S. interest in Bangladesh goes beyond natural resources. Rather, "the U.S. sees Bangladesh as an important example of the proposition that Islam and Democracy are indeed compatible."

Sri Lanka

20. Peace Process

President Chandrika Kumaratunga said that the Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam (LTTE) has a "vital role" in ending the country's civil war. Norway's mediation will be meaningless unless all sides contribute to the conflict's resolution.

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