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Nuclear Issues

1. Pakistan Nuclear Policy

V.R. Raghavan writes in the Hindu that, as India and Pakistan committed themselves in the Lahore Declaration, they should immediately begin a dialogue on nuclear issues regardless of other issues. Raghavan states that during the meetings between the Islamabad Policy Research Institute and the Delhi Policy Group, some Pakistani participants made it clear that Pakistan's development of nuclear weapons is linked to advancement of policy goals in relation to jehad and to achieving Indian concessions on Jammu and Kashmir. Others, however, focus on how nuclear weapons currently interfere with Pakistan's economic development.

An ordinance issued by Pakistan President Rafiq Tarar creates the Pakistan Nuclear Regulatory Authority, which will be responsible for licensing and inspecting nuclear facilities.

Pakistani Chief of Naval Staff Admiral Abdul Aziz Mirza stated that Pakistan did not need to match India militarily but should focus instead on a selective deterrent. He stated that Pakistan could deploy nuclear weapons on its submarines.

2. Pakistan Missile Program

A Pakistani official was reported in Pakistan's The News as having stated that the medium-range Shaheen I and intermediate-range Shaheen II ballistic missiles were in production and had been inducted into the Army. The Hindu, which reported on The News report, stated that the Shaheen II has not been tested.

3. India Missile Program

V.K. Atre, scientific advisor to the Indian Defense Minister, stated that the Agni II intermediate-range ballistic missile was ready for induction into the missile forces "sometime this year" after its successful test last week.

C.V. Gopalakrishnan reviews in The Hindu the barriers that India overcame to produce the Agni II missile, including the difficulty of a fully indigenous missile program and constraint of US sanctions. Gopalakrishnan argues that, despite the explosive power of modern conventional bombs and the contrasting danger of nuclear weapons, nuclear missiles continue to be inducted into armed forces.

4. India Nuclear Program

At this year's annual Republic Day parade, India decided not to showcase the Agni II missile, and instead focused attention on the Prithvi, which can carry a one-ton warhead 300 km. The Hindu argued that this was to send a signal to the PRC that its nuclear forces were not targeted at the PRC but at Pakistan. The Hindu stated that the Agni and the TU-22 bomber are the most likely delivery vehicles for India's nuclear weapons, and not the Prithvi.

India

1. Gujarat Earthquake

More than 20,000 are believed dead, with estimates that number may rise tens of thousands more, after a 7.9 (Richter scale) earthquake struck Gujarat in India's northeast on Republic Day, January 26. An aftershock measuring 5.9 on the Richter scale hit on January 28. Rescue efforts have mostly given over to clean up efforts, with relief materials flowing in from around the world. Prime Minister A.B. Vajpayee, criticized for the government's slow reaction to the quake, has created a permanent National Disaster Management Cell to cope with disaster response.
An Indian External Affairs spokesman denied that India had rejected the offer of humanitarian assistance from Pakistan. Pakistan Chief Executive Pervez Musharraf had stated at a news conference that assistance had been offered and rejected by India. Pakistan is due to airlift in blankets and tents. An Indian official stated that the mistake on Musharraf's part could have been the result of miscommunication, as Indian officials may have told Pakistani officials that the first priority was equipment to detect survivors, and not blankets.

2. Indian Unilateral Ceasefire

Indian Prime Minister A.B. Vajpayee stated that India had decided at a formal meeting of the Cabinet Committee on Security (CCS) to extend for an additional month the unilateral ceasefire in Jammu and Kashmir. He said, "It is now the responsibility of Pakistan to see to it that terrorist acts in Jammu and Kashmir are stopped." The BJP party is opposed both to an extension of the ceasefire and to a possible visit to Pakistan by the All-Parties Hurriyat Conference. The Dawn reported that, according to statements by the All-Parties Hurriyat Conference, the Indian Army "had never seriously observed the truce."

The Hindustan Times reported that, despite divisions over the ceasefire within the ruling coalition and outside, the decision to extend the ceasefire was made because the Indian Army thought the ceasefire was conducive to peace. The Army had reportedly stated that the ceasefire forced militant groups to attack civilians, which led to their being increasingly isolated and therefore unable to carry out coordinated attacks.

3. South Asia Conference

At a seminar on "Tensions and Conflicts in the Indian Subcontinent," former Prime Minister of India Inder Kumar Gurjal stated that peace between India and Pakistan depended upon cooperation, but that gains made in Track II talks were being undermined and rolled-back by militancy. Gurjal and other participants also called for a revival of SAARC, a regional cooperative regime.

4. India-US Relations

Indian Ambassador to the US Naresh Chandra stated that, as a result of a better understanding of conditions in South Asia by the US, the US is likely to lift its remaining sanctions against India. The Hindu reported that US Secretary of State Colin Powell has asked the State Department to begin a review of sanctions imposed on India and other countries. Powell said there was no time frame for the review.

Malini Parthasarathy argues in The Hindu that while the Indian political establishment sees the incoming administration of US President George W. Bush as more likely to engage India, many miss

the fact that the US will be harsher on the PRC, which has its own implications for regional security.

5. India-PRC Relations

Achin Vanaik writes in The Hindu that India's relationship with the PRC has fundamentally changed for the better since the Pokhran nuclear tests. However, Vanaik argues, there is not sufficient recognition of the fact that the relationship with the PRC is not predetermined to be hostile or friendly, and that India must have a clear policy to pursue the relationship it desires. Vanaik argues in favor of solving the border dispute as a way to strengthen bilateral ties.

Pakistan

1. Military

Pakistan's Navy began its Seaspark 2001 naval exercise in the Arabian Sea, with the participation of warships from Saudi Arabia.

2. Pakistan-US Relations

The US welcomed India's extension of the unilateral ceasefire, and US State Department spokesman Richard Boucher stated that Pakistan should use its influence over Kashmiri militants to stop the violence.

Pakistan Ambassador Maleeha Lodhi, in an interview with Reuters news service, urged US President George W. Bush to become engaged in South Asia and to support debt forgiveness for Pakistan.

In a speech to the UN Conference on Disarmament, Pakistan Foreign Secretary Inamul Haq stated that the proposed US missile defense system would increase tensions among the major powers and lead to an arms race.

3. Pakistan-India Relations

Pakistan responded to the extension by India of its unilateral ceasefire in a statement by the Foreign Office which urged India to end repression in Kashmir and to sit down to three-way talks. Pakistan Foreign Minister Abdul Sattar also stated that the peace process would be set back if India did not permit the All-Parties Hurriyat Conference to travel to Pakistan.

Speaking at a conference organized by the India's Institute for Defense Studies and Analyses, Pakistani General Jahangir Karamat, former chief of the Pakistani Army, stated that India should consent to having the US act as a mediator between India and Pakistan.

Kashmir

1. Indian Ceasefire

Jammu and Kashmir Chief Minister Farooq Abdullah expressed his disapproval that the central government's decision to extend the ceasefire in Kashmir. The Indian government made its decision despite Abdullah's reports that violence has increased during the ceasefire.

2. India-Pakistan Relations

Delegations of retired Indian and Pakistani naval officers met in Malaysia as part of a conference to promote better bilateral understanding on maritime issues.

All-Parties Hurriyat Conference leader Abdul Gani Lone reiterated that it was in India's interest to permit the visit of the APHC leadership to Pakistan. The Hindustan Times cited sources in the APHC and the Indian government which said talks were on between the two, which may pave the way for the APHC visit to Pakistan.

Sri Lanka

1. LTTE Ceasefire

As the Sri Lankan government launched an offensive against them, the Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam (LTTE) announced that it would extend its unilateral ceasefire by another month.

2. Peace Dialogue

Sri Lankan President Chandrika Kumaratunga stated that the Norwegian peace settlement was on track, but that there would be no ceasefire by the government. The government had reportedly refused to sign a Memorandum of Understanding delivered by Norwegian envoy Erik Solheim, and the LTTE has refused a second meeting with Solheim.

Afghanistan

1. Military Actions

The Dawn reported that fighting between the Taliban and anti-Taliban forces intensified.

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