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Nuclear Issues

1. NPT and CTBT
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An editorial in the Times of India by K. Subrahmanyam argued that if the US pursues permanent normal trade relations with the PRC after it has flouted the Non-Proliferation Treaty, then "the NPT is not worth the paper on which it is printed." While the core issue is the NPT, he argued, in India there is little point in finding a consensus on the Comprehensive Test Ban Treaty. This is because the US Senate has rejected the treaty and says that development of a nuclear missile defense system is needed because, in spite of the CTBT, proliferation exists.

India

1. US Nuclear Missile Defense System

Indian External Affairs Minister Jaswant Singh said that India opposed the US missile defense system, and that such a system would be "damaging to the overall approach to disarmament." He said that the system, "runs counter to their own philosophy of moving to ... a gradual reduction of the vast armory of weapons of mass destruction." The failure of the US National Missile Defense (NMD) system test is an opportunity to persuade the US to desist in developing a system that will destabilize arms control systems. If the US persists, the PRC will expand their missile inventory to maintain a credible deterrent, which would force India and then Pakistan to do the same. The PRC is already modernizing its short- and medium-range missiles, but India will be forced to choose between assuming a US-PRC arms race and depending on US arms control negotiations with the PRC and Pakistan.

2. International Agreements

Arvind Panagariya, professor of economics at the University of Maryland, argued that because India levies higher tariffs on imported products than the US, a Free Trade Area (FTA) between the US and India would create significant profits for US exporters and a loss of tariff revenue for India. While Mexico's experience with NAFTA reveals many benefits to be mythical, India must also consider the likely US demands for higher labor and environmental standards.

While India's relations with Western countries has improved significantly, consolidation of these gains is tied to India's progress on the Comprehensive Test Ban Treaty; there is also the question of whether bureaucratic lethargy will undermine advances in relations by failing to implement the many agreements signed by the government.

3. Foreign Relations: UK, Russia, Australia, France

India expressed disappointment with the British decision to resume exports of defense materials to Pakistan. An India Foreign Ministry spokesman said, "We believe that this step is not in consonance with the spirit of the stand taken by the Commonwealth as indeed by the British government in respect of the situation in Pakistan."

Russian Gazprom and Indian Gas Authority of India Limited will enter a partnership to lay oil pipelines between Iran and India with a capacity of 57,000 cubic meters. The US\$3 billion project will take five-to-seven years to complete and will begin with Gazprom's survey of the 1,500km route.

Australian Prime Minister John Howard stopped in India on his way back from London and held talks for two days with Indian officials. He stressed that Australia and India held compatible views on the world trade system, pointing out that the system is loaded against them by the US and Europe, and trade barriers should be reduced.

3. UN Security Council

US Ambassador to India Richard F. Celeste gave some credence to India's case for a permanent seat

on the UN Security Council. Speaking on behalf of the US, he said, "We agree that reforms at the Security Council are essential. The number of permanent members should be increased... and India has a compelling case." The US, however, has not formally supported any specific countries for permanent membership with the exception of Germany and Japan.

4. India-PRC Relations

Indian President KR Narayanan said that India has no desire to dominate the region and that the PRC and India were complementary countries that can cooperate. He also said that India did not object to a Sino-Pakistan relationship as long as it was not directed against India.

The Hindu conducted an interview with Singapore Prime Minister Goh Chok Tong last week. Goh said that India should play a larger role in Southeast Asia, economically, politically, and in security. Singapore, he said, could not play a role in improving the Sino-Indian relationship.

5. Military Hardware

India successfully tested the Akash surface-to-air missile on Saturday, which is nuclear-capable and has a range of 25 km.

India and France have developed a clearer vision of their strategic relationship and decided to expand trade in military hardware. France has offered to license production of the new Mirage-200-5 jet to India, and India may acquire SM-39 anti-ship missiles and tank-mountable GIAT artillery guns.

Pakistan

1. Overview

The Pakistan Embassy in Afghanistan suffered damage, but no casualties, after a bomb exploded in the complex.

The World Bank will provide a grant of US\$0.5 million for reform programs in the petroleum industry, including making the regulatory system more transparent. The Asian Development Bank will provide a US\$2.9 million grant to strengthen institutional capacity for legal system reforms.

2. Government Institutions

Pakistan Chief Executive Pervez Musharraf said that he would make public on August 14 the final plan to strengthen provincial autonomy and devolve power to the provinces from the central government. He said that while he desires the opinions of some politicians on issues of national interest, the national and provincial assemblies will not be restored.

Pakistan Chief Executive Pervez Musharraf said that he has nothing to do with politics or receiving popular votes, but wanted to serve all areas of the country equally. He said that he was working on development plans for some areas of the country and sought to increase tourism in others.

3. Democracy

Prosecutor General of the National Accountability Bureau (NAB) Farooq Adam Khan said that investigations were being launched against all the past legislators of the previous two assemblies with the goal of recovering lost money. He said that for those in government service, there were provisions for dismissal from their jobs, but investigations had not been publicized because, "We are not in a position where we can afford scandals against institutions on which we rely so much. I think it is in the national interest that these institutions wash their dirty linen in private." Farooq Adam

Khan said that while the NAB Ordinance was a draconian anti-corruption tool, "Here we are trying, desperately trying, to show to you that we are not using [them] purely for political purposes.

The Dawn reported on a new edited volume by Susan Pharr and Robert Putnam, "Disaffected Democracies," in which they claim that confidence in democratic governments is declining because people no longer feel government is as necessary, especially in the economic sphere.

4. India's Relations with Britain and Australia

The Pakistan Foreign Office said that India demonstrated ill will towards Pakistan in criticizing the British decision to permit export licenses for defense related items.

Pakistan Chief Executive Pervez Musharraf has criticized Australia's developing ties with India, saying the tilt towards India could harm regional stability and increase tensions in South Asia. He stated, "If Australians are also thinking of contributing towards peace in the region, then certainly their dealing with India is absolutely counter-productive."

Kashmir

1. Violence in Jammu and Kashmir

The Times of India reported that three Pakistani soldiers were killed and two injured when a Pakistani patrol attacked a forward Indian post along the Line of Control in Jammu. The Dawn reported that ten people were killed in separate incidences of conflict in Kashmir between Indian forces and freedom fighters.

2. India-Pakistan Relations

The Dawn reported that Indian Exterior Minister Jaswant Singh praised Pakistan Chief Executive Pervez Musharraf's offer for bilateral dialogue, but said, "this whole exercise is not about public relations, the exercise is about good bilateral relations." The Hindu added that Jaswant Singh was skeptical whether there were conditions conducive to such a dialogue when Pakistan is also promoting cross-border terrorism and advocating jehad.

Pakistan dismissed reports that India requested that Pakistan hand over the men responsible for hijacking an Indian Airline flight last December. A Pakistan Foreign Office spokesman said, "How can the Indians make such a request? How should the Indians presume the hijackers are in Pakistan? We are against terrorism and are, in fact, the victims of terrorism."

Deposed Pakistan Prime Minister Nawaz Sharif told the media that he and Indian Prime Minister AB Vajpayee had agreed upon a time-table for settlement of the Kashmir issue, which would have been solved had not the military coup occurred. The military denied his claims and accused him of harming Pakistan's interests.

Pakistan Ambassador to the United Nations Shamshad Ahmad told the new president of the UN Security Council last week that the international community should stay involved in Afghanistan. He added that there was greater urgency to solving the Kashmir conflict because India has failed to resolve the issue according to the UN resolution.

3. Autonomy Resolution

Jammu and Kashmir Minister Farooq Abdullah has said that while there has been general criticism of the autonomy resolution, there has been no discussion of which specific clauses are problematic. The National Conference is set to announce a new strategy on July 13. Justice RS Sarkaria said that

the central government can easily delegate additional powers to Jammu and Kashmir, or any state, under the current constitution without needing a constitutional amendment, and that in doing so, "everything will be resolved."

In a Times of India editorial by Union urban minister and former governor of Jammu and Kashmir Jagmohan, he argued that fundamental to Kashmir autonomy is whether it will be positive or whether it "breeds separatism, subversion and secession." He also argued, "the advocates of pre-'53 position for J&K are misleading the people, planting untenable and unworkable notions in their minds and arousing false and dangerous hopes."

Farooq Abdullah has created for the autonomy concept new legitimacy, though he is not likely to achieve the pre-1953 status for Jammu and Kashmir he seeks.

The Bharatiya Janata Party restated that the Cabinet's decision to reject autonomy for Jammu and Kashmir was final, and that dialogue with the National Conference would only go forward in the context of devolution of power to all the states.

Sri Lanka

1. Draft Constitution

Sri Lankan President Chandrika Kumaratunga opened talks on Monday with Tamil parties to discuss whether they would accept proposals on devolution of power. Most Tamil parties have rejected the provisions in the new draft Constitution for not meeting Tamil aspirations, and some have said the government should have sought the approval of the Liberation Tigers of Tamil Elam (LTTE) prior to completing the draft.

The three most contentious issues for the Tamil parties are the unitary as opposed to federal government, the issue of ownership of land under a devolved power structure, and the question of a referendum to determine the merger of the Northeastern provinces. The moderate Tamil United Liberation Front (TULF) party told President Chandrika Kumaratunga that an effective resolution to the situation required the inclusion of the LTTE in the process.

Rohan Edrisinha, of the non-governmental Centre for Policy Alternatives, said, "the problem with the new constitution is that the whole process has been secretive.... Constitution making in other countries has been through the consultative process and Sri Lanka should have followed these trends." He anticipates that even if passed by Parliament, there could be challenges to its legitimacy by other political parties.

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