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India

1. Anti-Terrorism

Najma Heptulla, the Rajya Sabha Deputy Chairperson, met with PRC Premier Li Peng to seek PRC support for India's draft resolution on international terrorism that is before the United Nations. Support was given for the draft resolution by the foreign ministers of the G-8 as they met in Japan. The US initially had reservations about the resolution's provisions for combating international terrorism but not its basic principles.

India's National Human Rights Commission (NHRC) reported to the government of India that despite the lapse of the Terrorist and Disruptive Activities Act (TADA), current laws concerning terrorism were sufficient, and that the new Prevention of Terrorism Bill was unnecessary and its "draconian" provisions had no place in a democracy. While Home Minister LK Advani said that the government would be careful to take into account the views of the NRHC, sources in the government also said that the draft Bill was balanced and contained safeguards to ensure there was no abuse of its provisions. An editorial in the Times of India argued that while the new Bill is "less draconian" than TADA, "in the interest of political prudence and civil liberties, [Advani] would be best advised gracefully to bury the ill-conceived law."

2. Japanese Sanctions

The Japanese Daily Yomiuri quoted a Japanese foreign ministry official as saying Prime Minister Yoshiro Mori is likely to announce the lifting of economic sanctions against India and Pakistan. The official said that the move would be made to improve relations with India. It would also help prevent further deterioration in Pakistan's economy, which would fuel religious fundamentalism and political instability. Japan had previously demanded that both sign the Comprehensive Test Ban Treaty.

3. Regional Relations

The South Asia Monitor, published by the US-based Center for Strategic and International Studies (CSIS), carried a report on India's regional relationships, in which it argued that India has been expanding relations in Asia in the two years since its nuclear tests. It said that India-PRC relations were dominated by their geo-strategic rivalry, they have little trade, and threaten to be economic competitors internationally. The content of the growing relationships with Japan and Southeast Asia is primarily economic (with trade with ASEAN larger than that with Japan), and broader regional cooperation was still very limited. However, India is developing security relationships with Japan and Vietnam.

Small arms fire was exchanged across the India-Bangladesh border, which is not clearly marked in all areas, after Indian border guards killed three Bangladeshis who were collecting sand and stones on the Indian side of the border. Talks between border security officials of both countries began June 18 to resolve this and other border-maintenance issues.

4. Foreign Relations: PRC

The PRC is reciprocating two positive trips by Indian officials to the PRC by sending Foreign Minister Tang Jiaxuan, who arrived July 20. An Indian official said that it is expected to be an opportunity "to look at bilateral issues" in a visit that "would be low on ceremony and high on content." The PRC and India on July 17 signed a Memorandum of Understanding to exchange

information technology-related government strategies, encourage mutual investment, and establish joint ventures.

5. India-Russia-PRC Strategic Partnership

General Leonid Ivashov, head of the Russian Defense Ministry International Cooperation Department, said that Russia, India, and China could form a partnership based on their shared interests and common threats. He said that the three will emerge as major centers of power in the world while the US is already slipping, and that the military alliances of the past will be replaced by "collective security on the basis of compromises." He also indicated that Russia would support India's inclusion in the Shanghai Five regional security organization.

6. Muslim Country Relations

The Arab League reported on July 14 that Home Minister LK Advani's recently pledged support for increased nuclear cooperation between Israel and India will have a detrimental effect upon the Arab world. The Arab League also reported that Israel sold India a border surveillance system.

Oman Foreign Minister Yusuf bin Alayui Abdullah visited India from July 17-18 to work out "modalities for implementation" of a US$1 billion joint fertilizer project to be built in Oman and which the Indian government recently approved.

7. Foreign Relations: US

The Hindu reported on comments by Paul Wolfowitz, Dean of the School of Advanced International Studies at Johns Hopkins University and foreign policy advisor to George W. Bush. Wolfowitz argued that the US should seek to guide competition in South Asia using arms control agreements rather than an excessive focus on testing. He made other recommendations that focus on strengthening a bilateral relationship with India rather than using India as a "card" against the PRC.

Pakistan

1. Military Exercises

The Pakistan Navy conducted its annual war-games this week, which Chief Executive Pervez Musharraf said would help Pakistan evaluate the maritime threats faced by Pakistan and assess the Navy's goals and development plans in this context.

2. Military Government

Pakistan Federal Information Minister Javed Jabbar, referring to amendments that Chief Executive Pervez Musharraf may add to the constitution, said, "there is no move to replace the Parliamentary form of government in the country with a Presidential system."

Under pressure from orthodox Muslim clergy, Pakistan Chief Executive Pervez Musharraf has restored the Islamic provisions of the constitution removed at the time of the coup.

Kashmir

1. Overview

The Indian Army returned to Pakistan the body of sepoy Karamat Hussain Shah, one of the three Pakistani soldiers who were shot by the Indian Army in Jammu last week. The other two bodies were retrieved by Pakistani soldiers at the time of the incident.

The foreign ministers of the G-8, meeting in Tokyo, asked India and Pakistan to resume dialogue and avoid any actions that could destabilize the region. They also asked India and Pakistan to assist international efforts to strengthen the nuclear non-proliferation regime.

2. Iran-Pakistan-India Gas Pipeline

Iranian Deputy Foreign Minster Mohsen Aminzadeh arrived in India on July 19 to continue discussion of the Iran-India natural gas pipeline and recent developments in Afghanistan. An editorial in the Pakistan daily Dawn argued that by separating economic and political considerations, India and Pakistan can move forward on the project, which will result in substantial economic gains for both. For Pakistan, the economic benefits beyond job creation could total US$700 million in royalties and US$200 million from discounted prices on gas.

3. Autonomy/Devolution Talks

The Congress Party spokesman Prithviraj Chavan said that the party would support devolution of power to Jammu and Kashmir but could not support autonomy as outlined in the recent resolution because of implications for other border states in India.

Jammu and Kashmir Chief Minister Farooq Abdullah has agreed to discuss with the central government the devolution of financial and administrative powers under the concept of "devolution" as the government is more willing to discuss the needs of Jammu and Kashmir with the autonomy issue pushed to the background. Farooq Abdullah delayed proposed talks with Prime Minister AB Vajpayee due to religious ceremonies related to the death of his mother. Speaking after the ceremonies, Farooq said that all events from 1946 to the present were up for discussion, but that Kashmir would never secede from India to become independent or part of Pakistan.

After meeting with Prime Minister AB Vajpayee on Monday, Jammu and Kashmir Chief Minister Farooq Abdullah said that the meeting was to set the agenda for discussion of greater autonomy for the state, but there was no timeline set. He also clarified that there was no demand for pre-1953 status for Jammu and Kashmir and that talks would have to take into account current conditions.

4. Pakistan-Administered Kashmir

A source in the Indian Army reported that four of eleven children kidnapped by Pakistani militants had escaped and surrendered to Indian soldiers. The source said that Pakistan has begun a new strategy of kidnapping Kashmiri children to train them for militant activities, and is doing so because of international condemnation for pushing foreign mercenaries into Jammu and Kashmir.

Amanullah Khan, chairman of the Pakistan-based Jammu and Kashmir Liberation Front (JKLF), has proposed that Pakistan-administered Kashmir and India-Administered Kashmir be unified, given autonomy, and after 15 years a referendum be held to determined whether it joins Pakistan or India.

Sri Lanka

1. Draft Constitution

The Eelam People's Democratic Party and the People's Liberation Organization of Tamils, former Tamil militant groups that are now represented in Parliament, told the government of Sri Lanka that the draft constitution could not be supported in its current form because of the provisions on devolution and control of land. The Tamil United Liberation Front has also rejected the draft constitution.

Singhalese extremists are criticizing the government for giving away too much. The Sihala Urumaya, a Singhalese extremist group, released a statement which said, "If regional councils are now established, can anybody ... fail to realize that those councils will be the 'little now' and a separate state of Tamil Eelam the 'more later'?" Buddhist clergy are voicing support for Singhala Urumaya and opposition to autonomy for the Tamils, though their lack of support for President Chandrika Kumaratunga may stem from the lack of attention the government has placed upon the clergy's opinion during the last few years.

2. Foreign Mediation

British deputy under-secretary of state in the Foreign and Commonwealth Office Peter Westmacott met with the moderate Tamil parties to encourage them to be more positive towards developing a consensus with the Sri Lankan government over the proposed draft constitution. The British envoy replaces the previous Norwegian attempts at mediation.

3. Military Developments

Sri Lankan Army spokesman Brigadier Pallitha Fernando reported that the army had stopped the LTTE's offensive in northern Jaffna

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Announcements

The Indian Council of Social Science Research will be inviting international experts to their October 2-3 conference, whose themes will include the emerging order for international security and regional peace, the new economic order, and others.

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