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Nuclear Issues

1. Pakistan Nuclear Anniversary

Pakistan Chief Executive Pervez Musharraf, speaking on the third anniversary of Pakistan's nuclear weapons tests, said, "These tests restored the strategic balance in our region, which had earlier been disturbed by our neighbor."

2. US Missile Defense Program

Parama Sinha Palit, a Research Scholar at Jawaharlal Nehru University, argues that the proposed US National Missile Defense (NMD) system creates opportunities for India to engage the Bush administration because of India's support for nuclear disarmament. While NMD itself threatens global strategic stability, Palit argues, India can see many strategic advantages from missile defense that it must exploit.

India

1. Kashmir Ceasefire

India's Cabinet Committee on Security, headed by Prime Minister A.B. Vajpayee, decided to end India's unilateral ceasefire in Kashmir. External Affairs Minister Jaswant Singh said, "This phase is, therefore, over. These terrorist groups have hindered the restoration of peace in Jammu and Kashmir... Security forces shall take such action against terrorists as they judge best."

Manoj Joshi writes in the Times of India that the refusal of the militant groups to join the ceasefire meant that, despite the recent efforts of Indian government interlocutor K.C. Pant and Kashmiri leader Shabir Shah, the Indian ceasefire had come to a dead-end.

Indian government interlocutor K.C. Pant stated that he did not expect the government's decision to end the ceasefire to have any effect on the talks he initiated with Kashmiri groups. He said, "The non-initiation of combat operations against the militants in the state was not being honored by terrorists who chose the occasion to target civilians." Pant also said that the process of his talks with Kashmiri groups would continue in parallel with Indian government talks with Pakistan.

K.C. Pant arrived in Srinagar on Monday for talks with Kashmiri representatives, and he will stay in Jammu and Kashmir for six days. Pant will also meet with industrialists and small-business people to discuss means to addressing Kashmir's economic problems. Pant met with People's Democratic Freedom Party (PDFP) leader Shabir Shah on Tuesday. Shah termed the meeting "a good beginning." Shah also expressed his surprise over the Indian government's decision to withdraw the unilateral ceasefire. Shah delivered a two-page statement from the PDFP explaining its conditions for joining the dialogue.

2. India-Pakistan Dialogue

On the same day as ending its unilateral ceasefire in Kashmir, the Indian government offered to open negotiations with Pakistan on the Kashmir issue. India invited Pakistan Chief Executive Pervez Musharraf to visit India for talks with Indian Prime Minister A.B. Vajpayee, and delivered a formal invitation a few days later. External Affairs Minister Jaswant Singh said, "India is yet again offering the hand of friendship, reconciliation, cooperation and peace to Pakistan in the expectation that this opportunity shall be positively and purposefully utilized by them." The News stated that analysts believe that Vajpayee was pressured into abandoning the ceasefire by a violence-weary military and hardliners within his coalition. Media reports indicated that Pakistan Chief Executive Pervez Musharraf's visit to India is expected to take place in July.

Indian Foreign Office spokesman R.S. Jassal stated that there was no change in India's policy and that the talks sought with Pakistan would still be comprehensive and would not cover only Kashmir. The Times of India reports that while Pakistan would prefer to discuss only Kashmir, Kashmir is one of eight areas for discussion on India's list. Rashmi Saksena reports in The Week that the eight-point agenda offered by India includes: confidence building measures, Jammu and Kashmir, Siachen, Wullar Barrage/Tulbul navigation project, Sir Creek, terrorism and drug trafficking, economic cooperation, and exchanges in various fields.

External Affairs Minister Jaswant Singh responded to media questions and his answers sought to set the baseline of India's expectations for talks with Pakistan, though he reportedly was wary of making statements that could derail talks before they had begun. Singh said that India would not agree to a referendum in Jammu and Kashmir and would not agree to "denominational nationalism" that might place the Muslim-dominated areas within Pakistan because Kashmir was essentially an internal issue. Singh also reiterated India's perspective that militancy in Kashmir was "encouraged" and "abetted" by Pakistan and that the India-Iran gas pipeline was a bilateral, not trilateral, issue.

Indian Prime Minister A.B. Vajpayee stated that the All-Parties Hurriyat Conference representatives should meet first with Indian government interlocutor K.C. Pant before seeking to meet with Pakistan Chief Executive Pervez Musharraf during his anticipated trip to India. Indian Home Minister L.K. Advani suggested that the APHC would not be given a mediation role in the bilateral talks. APHC leader Abdul Ghani Lone stated that his group would seek to meet with Musharraf upon his visit to India as they had been denied the opportunity to meet with Musharraf in Pakistan. External Affairs Minister Jaswant Singh stated that he viewed the possibility of a meeting between Musharraf and the APHC as a "non-issue."

The opposition Congress Party expressed support for the government's decision to invite Pakistan Chief Executive Pervez Musharraf for talks. Jammu and Kashmir Chief Minister Farooq Abdullah said, "This is the next logical step in the peace process."

3. Commentary on Bilateral Talks

An editorial in the Times of India argues that while Indian Prime Minister A.B. Vajpayee's invitation letter to Pakistan Chief Executive Pervez Musharraf does not mention Kashmir, Pakistani officials continue to focus on Kashmir as the only issue for talks, as a "symptom of the feudal obscurantism of the Pakistani ruling class." The editorial also argues that Vajpayee should use the opportunity to explain his vision of bilateral reconciliation and how the process benefits Pakistan.

Nusrat Javeed writes in The News that following the Indian government's decision to end its unilateral ceasefire, the government also decided to reverse an eighteen-month policy of no talks with Pakistan. Javeed states that the Indian media, unable to fully understand the rationale behind the government's decision, has proffered that perhaps it was US pressure that led to the policy shift.

An editorial in the Times of India by K.S. Ambi reports that the visit by Pakistan Chief Executive Pervez Musharraf raises issues of protocol, such as whether an honor guard reception would be taken as a statement that India defeater Pakistan at Kargil, or the opposite, or as a statement of India forgiving Pakistan for Kargil. Indian officials meeting after the invitation was issued also stated that a forgiveness ceremony was being planned at which the families of those who died in the Kargil war hoped to present Musharraf with prasad.

Rashmi Saksena writes in The Week that India has again seized the initiative in inviting to India for talks Pakistan Chief Executive Pervez Musharraf, a man who refused to attend a ceremonial welcome headed by then-head Nawaz Sharif for Indian Prime Minister A.B. Vajpayee at the end of his historic peace bus ride. Saksena argues that Musharraf may not be able to resist pressure from the Army to set preconditions for the talks, which could give India the opportunity to withdraw its invitation.

4. India-US Relations

Stephen Cohen, a South Asia specialist with the Brookings Institution, stated that the invitation to talks to Pakistan Chief Executive Pervez Musharraf was offered to pre-empt increased US activism on the Kashmir issue. He said, "This is a negative. Another negative was that the dialogue with the Kashmiris had broken down."

US Deputy Secretary of State Richard Armitage stated that the Bush administration expected nuclear sanctions against India to be withdrawn gradually over the next four to five months. He also said that some sanctions against Pakistan would remain under rules that invoke sanctions when a democratic government is overthrown.

The Times of India quoted a senior US military official as stating that the US was looking to develop stronger military ties with India to counter the PRC and to stabilize a potential nuclear flashpoint. The official was speaking in advance of the visit to India by US Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, General Henry Shelton. Regarding India, the official said, "People see us and them having a common concern in Chinese power in the Far East."

5. India-PRC Relations

The Dawn reported that the PRC missile destroyer Harbin and tanker Taicang will visit India on a goodwill tour next week.

PRC Foreign Ministry spokesperson Zhu Bangzao stated that the visit by Indian Air Chief Marshall A.Y. Tipnis was "successful in enhancing mutual understanding and trust between the two militaries." Tipnis met with PRC Defense Minister General Chi Haotian and Chief of Staff of the PLA, General Fu Quanyou.

In an article for the Institute for Peace and Conflict Studies in New Delhi Subhash Kapila writes that PRC intelligence services, which established a foothold in India during British rule, worked with the US CIA in the 1970s to disrupt rule in the North East and is likely to currently be focusing on gathering information in areas that the PRC has not been able to constrain India, including: nuclear weaponization and command and control systems, missile development, space research, satellite surveillance, and India-US relations.

6. Kashmir Operations

A senior Indian Army officer reported that combat operations have already begun against militants who used the ceasefire to consolidate their positions in Kashmir. The officer said this would

especially include the Lashkar-e-Taiba but be softer towards groups of local militants, such as the Hizbul Mujahideen.

7. Security

Indian Home Minister L.K. Advani unveiled a reorganization of India's national security structure, which is to include tighter border management and the establishment of a defense intelligence agency and a strategic command to manage the nuclear forces. The report by the ministers participating in the Cabinet Committee on Security said, "Notwithstanding the deterrence provided by India's nuclear tests, the possibility of a conventional war between two nuclear powered states cannot be ruled out. This was amply demonstrated by the Kargil war of 1999." Not approved but still under consideration is the creation of Chief of Defense staff over the three armed services. The report also expressed continuing concern over military cooperation between the PRC and Pakistan. The report stated that the PRC was among those of India's neighbors which pose "multiple and complex threats and challenges" to India.

The Times of India reported on an article in the Russian daily Nezavisimaya Gazeta which said that the three Russian-made Krivak III class stealth frigates to be commissioned this year for India will "virtually neutralize" Pakistan's submarine program.

8. Afghanistan

External Affairs Minister Jaswant Singh stated that India will provide "full shelter" to Muslims and other minorities that are forced to flee the Taliban regime in Afghanistan.

Pakistan

1. Indian Ceasefire in Kashmir

Pakistan's cabinet, presided over by Prime Minister Sultan Mahmood Chaudhry, expressed concern over India's decision to end its unilateral ceasefire in Kashmir. Pakistan Foreign Minister Abdul Sattar stated that Pakistan knew the ceasefire was a lie, adding, "India has removed even the pretense of restraint and given the Indian armed forces a carte blanche to continue state terrorism against the Kashmiri people."

2. India Talks Offer

Pakistan Foreign Minister Abdul Sattar stated that the Kashmir issue was expected to be the top issue discussed when Pakistan Chief Executive Pervez Musharraf meets with Indian Prime Minister A.B. Vajpayee in India. Musharraf received the formal invitation Friday and the Foreign Office stated that he would accept the invitation.

The Dawn carried the full text of the letter from Indian Prime Minister A.B. Vajpayee to Pakistan Chief Executive Pervez Musharraf.

Pakistan government spokesman Major General Rashid Qureshi stated that it was Pakistan's position that India should follow through on the UN resolution to conduct a referendum Kashmir, but also praised India's offer of talks as a courageous decision. Pakistan Foreign Minister Abdul Sattar also pointed out that bilateral agreements do not begin with the Lahore declaration, but also include early UN Security Council resolutions. He said, "To say what will be discussed and what not will be discussed is a useless exercise. The basic issue is that of the right of self-determination of the people

of Kashmir."

Outlook India published the full text of Pakistan Chief Executive Pervez Musharraf's reply to Indian Prime Minister A.B. Vajpayee's invitation to visit India. Musharraf accepted Vajpayee's invitation, stating his anticipation of discussing the focal issue of Jammu and Kashmir, as well as any other issues.
"'The Root Cause Of Tension...Is The Unresolved Jammu And Kashmir Dispute'"

3. Reactions to Talks Offer

The Times of India cited several former Pakistani government officials and current political party leaders as expressing cautious optimism regarding the latest Indian peace initiative. Islamic parties in Pakistan, however, expressed skepticism about the outcome of such talks. Jamaat-e-Islami spokesman Amirul Azzem said, "India should admit Kashmir is not its integral part and must end the ongoing atrocities on Kashmiris to prove its sincerity for peace in the region."

4. Pakistan-US Relations

US President George Bush nominated Wendy J. Chamberlain as the US Ambassador to Pakistan, to replace William Milam.

5. Pakistan-India Relations

Pakistan Federal Commerce Minister Razzq Dawood stated that Pakistan would not change its policy regarding its refusal to grant Most Favored Nation trading status to India.

Kashmir

1. India-Kashmir Dialogue

Jammu and Kashmir Democratic Freedom Party chief Shabir Shah said that he would not be deterred from accepting K.C. Pant's offer of talks by threats of violence from militant groups. He said that he had toured Kashmir to gauge interest in the offer and that the results were encouraging. Shah reported meeting with leaders in the All-Parties Hurriyat Conference and local council and religious groups.

Shabir Shah, speaking as K.C. Pant arrived in Kashmir, asked Indian Prime Minister A.B. Vajpayee to stop attacks on innocent civilians and to abrogate the Disturbed Area Act and the Armed Forces (Special Powers) Act to create the conditions for serious talks on Kashmir. Shah reiterated that resolving the Kashmir issue required tripartite talks, but said that "the initiative to settle the Kashmir issue lies with India."

2. APHC Role in Talks

The All-Parties Hurriyat Conference expressed support for India's decision to invite Pakistan Chief Executive Pervez Musharraf for talks. Former APHC chairman Mirwaiz Umer Farooq said, "This is a welcome and positive step for breaking the deadlock...and Hurriyat Conference would make all efforts to narrow down the gap between the two countries."

APHC chairman Abdul Ghani Bhatt said that a delegation would meet with Musharraf during his trip to India. Bhatt also rejected meeting with Indian interlocutor for Kashmir K.C. Pant, stating that

such a meeting would be pointless. He said, "The process of seeking the end of the Kashmir stalemate will be resolved between India and Pakistan and us, the Kashmiris. Where is the room for Pant in this?"

Pakistan Foreign Minister Abdul Sattar stated that Pakistan Chief Executive Pervez Musharraf intended to meet with the executive council of the APHC, and that any denial of such a meeting by the Indian government would have a negative impact upon the talks. Sattar said Pakistan "made India accept Pakistan's stance for a dialogue on the vital issue" of Kashmir and other issues, and that India had been forced by international pressure to invite Musharraf.

The APHC said in a statement that a resolution to the Kashmir issue would remain elusive unless the APHC were included in talks.

3. Comments on India-Pakistan Talks Offer

Public opinion in Kashmir was favorable to the Indian government's decision to extend an invitation for talks to Pakistan Chief Executive Pervez Musharraf. Jammu and Kashmir Chief Minister Farooq Abdullah welcomed the decision to end the ceasefire. He added, "I am hopeful that the talks between India and Pakistan would yield good results." Jamaat-e-Islami chief Gulam Mohammad Bhat said that, before the All-Parties Hurriyat Conference might be included in their bilateral talks, "Let the two parties to the dispute discuss the issue in the first instance."

Outlook India carried an essay by Mariana Baabar in which she argues that India's offer of talks is viewed in Pakistan as a capitulation to Pakistan's argued role in Kashmir and as India's failure to treat Kashmir as only a "law and order" problem. Khalid Mehmood, a professor at the Institute of Regional Studies, said, "This is a diplomatic success for Pakistan, as New Delhi as now done away with any conditions for future talks." Baabar cites reports by The News that the invitation many only be a trap. Ameer of the militant Al Badr, Bakht Zamin Khan said, "The mujahideen have been told to step up activities against the Indian army as the offer of talks is only a ploy to gain international sympathy." He said India had never been sincere about ending the fighting in Kashmir.

Hizbul Mujahideen supreme commander Syed Salahuddin said that India's invitation to Musharraf to visit was a "deception aimed at misleading the world community." He asked Pakistan to demand as a precondition for Musharraf's visit assurances from India that violence in Kashmir will stop and that Kashmir will be the focal point of talks.

4. India-Pakistan Relations

The Times of India cited diplomatic sources as reporting that the Pakistani and Indian high commissioners in Sri Lanka are working to arrange a meeting between their countries' foreign ministers during the SAARC meeting on June 8 and 9.

The Times of India reports that the Iran-India gas pipeline has been given new life by the improvement of India-Pakistan relations. Indian External Affairs Jaswant Singh's recent statements indicate that India is not concerned with whether the pipeline's route is overland through Pakistan or underwater, as long as Iran guarantees its safety.

5. Cross-Border Violence

Official sources reported that Pakistani troops fired at Indian troops and posts along the international border in Hiranagar, RS Pura, Samba and Akhnoor. This flare-up breaks a three-month lull in firings.

India's Border Security Forces reported that Pakistan has destroyed fifteen iron pillars erected for fence construction along the international border after earlier destroying thirty near Samba. BSF officer Vijay Raman said, "We are determined to continue with fencing, come what may."

Sri Lanka

1. Peace Process

A Sri Lankan official reported that President Chandrika Kumaratunga was exploring the possibility of lifting a ban on the Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam, which would remove a roadblock to peace talks imposed by the LTTE. Paikiasothy Sarvanamuttu, head of the think tank Center for Policy Alternative, said, "The very fact that the LTTE is willing to come to the negotiating table, if the ban is lifted, is a sure pointer that things can look god in the future." Justice Minister Weerakoon responded to media reports by denying that the government was considering lifting the ban on the LTTE.

A statement by the LTTE blamed the Sri Lankan government for failure to break the impasse between the two.

Sri Lankan President Chandrika Kumaratunga on Tuesday invited the LTTE to participate in peace talks, expressing hope that the LTTE could be persuaded to stop fighting and participate in Norwegian-back peace talks despite maintenance of the ban on the LTTE group.

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Nautilus Institute
608 San Miguel Ave., Berkeley, CA 94707-1535 | Phone: (510) 423-0372 | Email: nautilus@nautilus.org