

SANDNet Weekly Update, June 12, 2001

Recommended Citation

SANDNet, "SANDNet Weekly Update, June 12, 2001", SANDNet, June 12, 2001,
<https://nautilus.org/sandnet/sandnet-weekly-update-june-12-2001/>

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Nuclear Issues

1. Pakistan Nuclear Policy

A senior Pakistani official stated that the government, in consultation with several ministries, was formulating a new nuclear export control law that would incorporate existing laws and seek to close "loopholes."

India

1. India-Russia Defense Issues

External Affairs Jaswant Singh, in Russia for the first meeting of an India-Russia joint commission on defense cooperation, sought to allay Russia fears regarding India's position on the US missile defense program. Singh said, "There is no difference between India and Russia on the issue. It is the press that has blown the issue out of proportion." He added, "The ABM treaty is a bilateral agreement...which should not be abrogated unilaterally. We have not supported the US proposal for building the NMD system." However, while the two countries affirmed their defense relationship, there was no joint statement on missile defense.

Pakistan's The News reports that India will acquire ballistic missile defenses from Russia, including the S-300MV and S-300 PMU2 systems. According to the Moscow Times, reports The News, Russia will develop a missile defense system for India as part of a \$10 billion package.

The Times of India reports claims in Russian dailies that India will finance the completion of two Shuka-B class nuclear submarines and that India will acquire three AMUR-1650 submarines for \$1.2 billion and a license to build six more for \$1.5 billion. The submarines can be equipped with the nuclear-capable RK-55 Granat cruise missile, which has a range of 3,200 km.

2. India-Kashmir Dialogue

Indian government interlocutor K.C. Pant met with Congress Party leaders to gauge the party's views on the Kashmir peace process. He said he would meet with more political party representatives.

3. India-Pakistan Relations

Indian Home Minister L.K. Advani expressed optimism regarding the potential outcomes of the proposed summit talks between Indian Prime Minister A.B. Vajpayee and Pakistan Chief Executive Pervez Musharraf. Advani said that Musharraf had changed his position and now agreed to abide by the Simla agreement and Lahore Declaration.

Former Prime Minister of India Chandra Shekhar was pessimistic about the prospect of India-Pakistan summit talks.

Indian and Pakistani press reported that Pakistani rangers, firing across the Line of Control at Indian border outposts, killed one soldier and injured another person.

4. India-PRC Border Dispute

A meeting of the India-PRC Expert Group on the bilateral border issue is due to meet this month to compare each other's maps of the Line of Actual Control. While the border is described as peaceful, India charges the PRC with occupying 43,000 sq km in Jammu and Kashmir, and the PRC accuses India of occupying 90,000 sq km of its territory.

5. PRC Security

The Times of India states, according to a recent report written by Nan Li for the United States Institute of Peace (USIP), that the PRC feels a much greater degree of vulnerability with India than with any of its other neighbors because of border disputes and tensions and India's recent nuclear tests. Referring to the existence within the PRC of independence movements, like in Tibet, the study said, "China is most likely to take a defensive position that focuses on conserving what is in its possession, rather than an offensive posture that places an emphasis on acquiring what it claims." The study further argues that the PRC may redeploy intermediate range ballistic missiles and increase military aid to Pakistan to take pressure from India off its borders.

6. India-Bangladesh Border Dispute

India and Bangladesh will hold two days of talks to discuss the recent border clashes that left nineteen soldiers killed. They will discuss demarcation of a 6.5 km long disputed section of their 4,000 km border.

7. Nepal Regicide

Indian paramilitary forces along the border with Nepal remain on high-alert status in the aftermath of the regicide there.

Pakistan

1. Pakistan-India Relations

The News reports that Pakistan is set to reduce the import duty on 200 products of Indian origin under the South Asian Preferential Trade Agreement (SAPTA).

Muhammad Najeeb writes in the Times of India that the proposed Vajpayee-Musharraf summit is the dominant conversation topic in Pakistan, but that few Pakistanis favor converting the Line of Control into an international border. Najeeb said that the Pakistani media is encouraging the military government to discuss the summit with political parties.

The Times of India reports that former Pakistan Prime Minister Benazir Bhutto expressed that her party supports engagement between India and Pakistan, but criticized India for engaging a military dictator.

2. Islamic Groups

The Times of India reports that the Pakistani media has been supportive of Pakistan Chief Executive

Pervez Musharraf's attempts to rein in "irresponsible statements" by hardline Islamic groups. He said their statements had "brought Pakistan to the verge of being declared a terrorist state." The essay states that both India and Pakistan would need to rein in extremists within their countries to make the summit a success.

Pakistan Chief Executive Pervez Musharraf reassured the All-Parties Hurriyat Conference that a final decision on the Kashmir issue would not be made without their input. Musharraf also explained that whether he is able to meet with the APHC during his trip to India is up to the Indian government.

3. US Report on Kashmir

The conservative US-based Washington Times was reported in the South Asian media as stating the Pakistan Chief Executive Pervez Musharraf was believed prepared to propose to India a formula, "to grant Kashmir some degree of autonomy, declare a demilitarized zone, soften the border restrictions and allow trade to begin."

Kashmir

1. India-Pakistan Talks

The News reports that India and Pakistan have been in talks to prepare concrete issues for the proposed summit. So far, visa issues and fishing incidents have been proposed by Pakistan.

2. Militant Groups

Hizbul Mujahideen leader Syed Salahuddin stated that fighting in Kashmir would continue along side the proposed summit. He said, "We won't silence our guns, and they can keep on talking."

3. All-Parties Hurriyat Conference Statements

All-Parties Hurriyat Conference chairman Abdul Gani Bhat stated that the upcoming Vajpayee-Musharraf summit should look towards a permanent solution to Kashmir rather than devising a temporary one. An unnamed senior APHC leader and Democratic Freedom Party leader Shabir Shah both said that there were conditions under which free elections with full participation by the groups there could be held in Kashmir. APHC senior executive committee member Abdul Gani Lone said that the APHC was interested in contested elections to prove how representative it is of opinion in Kashmir.

An All-Parties Hurriyat Conference statement said that the group would stop holding strikes and rallies in order to help prevent any derailment of the proposed India-Pakistan summit. It also demanded its participation in the summit. The Times of India later reported that senior APHC members were ignorant of the suspension of activities, with some stating that the matter would be discussed at an upcoming executive meeting.

4. Recent Violence

The Times of India reported on June 8 that seventy-five people, including sixty militants had been killed in Jammu and Kashmir since the May 31 ending of India's unilateral ceasefire. The following day it reported that 100 people, including seventy militants, had been killed.

Sri Lanka

1. Domestic Politics

A political battle between Sri Lanka's Supreme Court and the Parliament grew as the opposition political party attempted to begin impeachment hearings against the Chief Justice. The Supreme Court responded by issuing a ban on creating a panel to investigate the charges against the Chief Justice.

2. LTTE Ban

Official government sources stated that President Chandrika Kumaratunga's People's Alliance Party appeared divided over whether to lift the ban on the Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam (LTTE) in order to stimulate peace talks.

3. Norwegian Role in Peace Process

The Times of India reports that Norwegian peace envoy to Sri Lanka Erik Solheim has possibly been sidelined as he was excluded from talks on the LTTE between President Chandrika Kumaratunga and Norwegian Foreign Minister Thorbjørn Jagland.

The LTTE has accused the Sri Lankan government of sidelining Erik Solheim under the pretense of upgrading Norway's role in the peace talks. The government has been critical of Solheim for being partial to the LTTE.

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