

# SANDNet Weekly Update, June 27, 2000

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## Nuclear Issues

### 1. US Missile Defense

Achin Vanaik argued in an editorial that if the US develops a NMD system, then the "window of opportunity" will be lost for nuclear restraint and disarmament. Vanaik argues that a US NMD system will force the PRC, and subsequently India, to expand their nuclear forces to maintain a credible threat.

### 2. Comprehensive Test Ban Treaty

The Indian Congress has so far been unable to develop a national consensus on signing the Comprehensive Test Ban Treaty (CTBT). Speaking to the debate, Former Indian Foreign Secretary Muchkund Dubey argues that there is nothing in Rajiv Gandhi's Action Plan that necessitates a link between signing the CTBT and elimination of nuclear weapons. He argues that the Action Plan is outdated, and that India should sign the CTBT to develop international credibility and then work, simultaneously, towards a credible nuclear deterrent and global nuclear disarmament.

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## India

### 1. Overview

An editorial by former Foreign Secretary K Shankar Bajpai argued that India is being pressed to ignore all that is wrong and bad about the Pakistani government and focus only on Kashmir as Pakistan requests. India must push ahead on drawing Kashmir in and be more forceful in explaining its rationale for policy.

### 2. Prithvi Missile Test

US State Department spokesman Richard Boucher said that the US regretted India's test-firing of the Prithvi medium-range missile because of the need for both India and Pakistan to exercise restraint. India responded by lashing out at US indifference to the assistance Pakistan is receiving from the PRC on its missile program. A Pakistani spokesman said that no advance warning had been given prior to the test, violating the bilateral agreement, but that Pakistan would not respond to the test.

### 3. Foreign Relations: Britain

Indian Defence Minister George Fernandes met in London with British Defense Minister Geoff Hoon, where they discussed Indian security concerns, Indian nuclear doctrine, and the situation in Pakistan and Afghanistan. They also discussed the British offer of the Hawk trainer jet and other equipment, as well as Indian perceptions of British export controls, a result of US sanctions against India. India and Britain are planning cooperation in the areas of training, peacekeeping, and defense equipment production. Fernandes also stated that Indian Navy Sea Harrier jets and Sea King helicopters sent to Britain for refitting are being held in Britain without the necessary work because of the US sanctions.

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#### **4. Foreign Relations: Others**

Indian Commerce and Industry Minister Murasoli Maran told the 20th meeting of the foreign ministers of the G-15 countries that greater dialogue was needed between the G-8 and the G-15 nations to discuss the growing economic disequilibrium. He also said the WTO should be "restricted to trade and trade alone," and that developing countries must "put an end to this trend of protectionism through the back door" in multilateral trade.

Australian Prime Minister John Howard will visit India beginning July 10. Relations between India and Australia have improved since the post-nuclear test lows, driven by consultations over Fiji

Prime Minister A.B. Vajpayee Behari Vajpayee will make the first official visit by an Indian Prime Minister to Portugal. Portugal holds the rotating presidency of the EU.

Indian Home Minister LK Advani was in Paris to meet with French official Jean Pierre Chevenement to discuss ways to tackle international terrorism. He stated, "The biggest threat to India's internal security has been Pakistan's proxy war in which the principle ingredients have been infiltration, subversion and terrorism."

Italy is looking forward to the visit by Indian Prime Minister A.B. Vajpayee. In order to raise its profile in India and build on growing trade, Italy will offer "green cards" for 6,000-7,000 Indian IT experts. Italy will be the next chair of the G-8 and may seek India's support for a non-permanent seat on the UN Security Council, but will also likely push India on signing the Comprehensive Test Ban Treaty and curbing attacks on Christians.

The Indian Navy is planning a fleet review by the President and the Supreme Commander of the Armed Forces in celebration of the half-century mark of the Indian Republic. Under the motto "Bridges of Friendship," the review will include Indian and foreign warships. The annual review at Port Blair has in the past included ships and senior officers from Sri Lanka, Indonesia, Malaysia, Singapore, and Thailand. This effort is one of many to develop ties with potential strategic partners in the Middle East and Southeast Asia, and India would like these partners to make use of under-used India ship-building capacities.

The Purulia arms-drop case, in which five Russian pilots were sentenced to life in a Calcutta prison, is criticized by Russian officials which accuse Indian security forces of charging the pilots to cover up for their failure to arrest those behind the arms-smuggling operation. The issue will overshadow External Affairs Minister Jaswant Singh's upcoming visit to Russia.

Sino-Indian ties are on a rebound, and President KR Narayanan's recent visit to the PRC demonstrated the same compartmentalized approach to resolving the PRC's call to de-weaponize South Asia, as the approach is working in resolving Sino-Indian border disputes. The PRC did not raise the issue of nuclear tests.

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## **Pakistan**

### **1. Overview**

Pakistan's newest national budget shows cuts in military spending, but the military and debt servicing still account for 75 percent of the budget, leaving little for social and infrastructure programs. The budget, however, is predicated upon the ability of the government to increase tax

collection, as only 1.2 million of 140 million people currently pay taxes.

## **2. Kashmiri Militants**

Indian Major General JR Mukherjee said that there are 112 camps training Kashmiri militants in Pakistan and Pakistan-occupied Kashmir. There are also 2,500 trained militants waiting to cross into Kashmir to join the 1,400-1,600 militants already operating there. Pakistan denied these claims, and responded that India "is trying to hide that it is a popular revolt against their rule in Kashmir."

## **3. Foreign Relations: Indonesia**

Indonesian President Abdurrahman Wahid said that he supported Pakistan's entry into the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) Regional Forum (ARF), but also told Pakistani Chief Executive Pervez Musharraf that India could not be considered outside the Islamic world. No concrete announcements were made regarding any specific economic cooperation between the two countries.

## **4. Foreign Relations: US**

Pakistan's foreign minister Abdul Sattar began meetings last Thursday with US Deputy Secretary of State Strobe Talbott in which Pakistan wants to convey that it will pursue "a policy of responsibility and restraint on nuclear issues." Sattar asked the US to lift economic and military sanctions, but said talks were "very productive." This ninth round of dialogue focused on US concerns regarding nuclear export controls, the Comprehensive Test Ban treaty, terminating missile development programs, and the need for Pakistan to engage India in confidence-building measures. Ambassador Michael Sheehan, US State Department's coordinator on counter-terrorism, said, "Pakistan also has tolerated terrorists living and moving freely within its territory. But the areas of cooperation are real. Pakistan is also a victim of terrorism."

## **5. Foreign Relations: EU**

Italy, Sweden, and Belgium, all EU members, refused to accept Pakistani retired military officers as Pakistan's ambassadors to their countries. Retired military officers were accepted as ambassadors in UAE, Thailand, and Morocco.

## **6. Support for Pakistan**

Pakistani minister for Kashmir affairs and northern areas Abbas Saifraz Khan said, "It is time for us to realize that isolating [Afghanistan] is not the solution of the problem. The Afghans must be engaged." He said that Afghanistan should be assisted in its rehabilitation by the international community.

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## **Sri Lanka**

### **1. Indian Loan**

The Indian-Sri Lankan joint statement after Indian Foreign Minister Jaswant Singh's visit was a diplomatic win for Sri Lanka as it managed to secure a US\$100 million loan from India while avoiding any mention of a cease-fire or troop-withdrawal. The Pattali Makkal Katchi, a constituent of the NDA government, opposed the US\$100 million loan as encouraging state terrorism against the LTTE and likened it to the arms provided to Sri Lanka by Pakistan and Israel. An article in the Times

of India stated that the situation in Jaffna had stabilized and the mission by Singh was to demonstrate to Tamils in both Sri Lanka and India that India has little interest in a separate and sovereign Eelam. Minister Karunanidhi said that he hoped that Sri Lanka would grant Tamils equal rights and said the US\$100 million loan by India was meant only for food and medicine.

## **2. Interim Council Plan**

Sri Lanka's ruling People's Alliance (PA) party set a June 30 deadline for reaching political consensus on a devolution package to grant regional autonomy to Tamil provinces. The PA and United National Party (UNP) have made progress in achieving consensus on the issue, though it remained unclear if their interim council for north-eastern Sri Lanka would include the LTTE in its reaching out to the Tamil minority. India was officially informed of the council, which can only be activated after the Constitution is finalized and broad autonomy has been granted to regional councils. An editorial by Praful Bidwai argued that India, because of its own 50 million Tamils and its role in Sri Lanka in the 1980s, cannot play the role of the neutral mediator and should instead acknowledge its past mistakes and encourage devolution and negotiation.

Sri Lankan President Chandrika Kumaratunga decided to exclude the LTTE from the interim council for now as their inclusion would upset hard-line Sinhala groups that oppose devolution. The LTTE could be included in the interim administration if they rejected violence and joined the democratic process. The UNP and moderate Tamil parties expressed a desire for the LTTE to be included.

Tamils, 18 percent of Sri Lanka's population, appealed to the island's Muslim population (7.1 percent of the population) to join them in fighting against the Sinhalese ethnic majority, though many were skeptical as the LTTE has dislocated and attacked Muslims in the past.

## **3. Norwegian Diplomacy**

Norway praised India for its decision to politically engage Sri Lanka after External Affairs Minister Jaswant Singh's visit. The article said that the LTTE has offered a ceasefire, but may be waiting to recapture Jaffna before committing to talks. Norway's attempts, in conjunction with Indian efforts and US backing, could be eroding barriers to returning to dialogue between the Government and the LTTE.

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## **Kashmir**

### **1. Overview**

India released Shamsul Alam, a detained Pakistani fisherman, because he is suffering from cancer.

Indian Law and Justice Minister Ram Jethmalani challenged Pakistan to take India to the International Court of Justice if it believes India used force or fraud to win Kashmir's accession to India.

The Times of India reported that there has been little reduction in the Pakistan-backed insurgency in Jammu and Kashmir. However, there are signs of battle fatigue on all sides that is good for dialogue.

### **2. Nuclear Restraint Regime**

The Pakistani government offered India a reciprocal strategic restraint regime in nuclear and conventional weapons on June 13, an offer first made by Pakistan in 1998, but not since the military

took control. Pakistani Foreign Minister Abdul Sattar expressed Pakistan's wish that India follow up on the Lahore process, saying, "It is India's choice.... We will wait for India to consider whether stalling will serve their interests better." He also referred to Kashmir as a "core issue." An Indian foreign office spokesman said, "There is nothing new in the Pakistani proposal which is essentially propagandist." External Affairs spokesman RS Jassal said that it was Pakistan which derailed the talks with the Kargil invasion and that there would be no talks until there were clear signs Pakistan had ceased to support terrorist activities in Kashmir. An editorial in The Hindu argued that by dismissing an offer by Pakistan to discuss a strategic restraint regime as propaganda from the military government, India is refusing to acknowledge the necessity of dialogue and runs the risk of losing international credibility.

### **3. Solutions for Jammu and Kashmir**

With the release of leaders of the All-party Hurriyat Conference (AHPC), there is talk that the US is working to bring India, Pakistan, and the AHPC together for talks. AHPC sources are discussing several formulae for Jammu and Kashmir with differing degrees of division, autonomy, and sovereignty.

Chief Minister Farooq Abdullah and Shabir Shah said that trifurcation of Kashmir and Jammu would break up the country and that Pakistan should not be included in talks. A large Muslim group in Kargil expressed opposition to dividing Jammu and Kashmir into three regions, and would prefer that Jammu, Kashmir, and Pakistan-occupied Kashmir be united into one territory. Minister of State for Civil Aviation Chaman Lal Gupta said that calls for autonomy by Abdullah are based on only ethnic and regional concerns and not in the interest of the center.

French Assistant Secretary of the Foreign Ministry for Asia Dominique Girard said that no third-party could make a contribution as a mediator, and that it was up to India and Pakistan to settle their bilateral issues.

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