

# SANDNet Weekly Update, March 23, 2000

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### News Related to the Clinton Trip

*[Editor's Note: SANDNet will distribute a more extensive summary of Clinton Visit speeches, interactions, and outcomes after the trip has been completed.]*

#### 1. India-US Vision Statement

On March 21, U.S. President Clinton Indian Prime Minister Vajpayee issued a joint "vision statement." The statement acknowledges the importance of more regular dialogue between the two countries at the highest political levels, pledges both countries to continue discussions on nuclear nonproliferation, and establishes several financial, commercial, trade, and technology fora. The workings of the technology forum are spelled out in great detail.

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## **2. India: Nuclear Issues**

President Clinton sent a long email message, datelined "Aboard Air Force One," to the Indian weekly "Indiatimes." Prior to his departure, President Clinton established a special task force "to get the CTBT signed and ratified within and outside the United States." The task force will be led by former head of the U.S. Joint Chiefs of Staff John Shalikashvili. U.S. Under-Secretary of State Strobe Talbott and Indian External Affairs Minister Jaswant Singh both stated that India's nuclear status quo was unlikely to change, regardless of U.S. pressure. [Talbott and Singh completed 12 rounds of nuclear dialogue prior to the Clinton visit]. Nonetheless, two days before his departure, President Clinton stated that "[t]here are those in the region who hope we will simply accept the status quo and so on. I will not do that." Similarly, U.S. Secretary of State Madeleine Albright said, "Our approach to nonproliferation is global. We cannot abandon it simply because we desire an improved relationship [with India]."

Indian Prime Minister A.B. Vajpayee said, "We are not going to sign the CTBT during Clinton's visit, but the issue will be discussed." National Security Advisor Brajesh Mishra said, "We can be absolutely clear that there is going to be no rollback of our nuclear weapons program or delivery systems." Manoj Joshi's analysis of the remaining U.S. sanctions concludes that the changes announced by the Clinton administration in recent months "appear to be symbolic rather than substantive."

## **3. India Security**

Sixty-five members of the House of Representatives urged President Clinton to "publicly acknowledge the strength of India's claim to be a permanent member of the United Nations Security Council." Indian President K.R. Narayanan made the same request during a speech at a banquet for President Clinton. Narayanan also objected to Clinton's descriptions of Kashmir as "the most dangerous place in the world" and "a nuclear flashpoint." Narayanan said that "such alarmist descriptions will only encourage those who indulge in terrorism and violence." Prime Minister A.B. Vajpayee said that India "will not take any decision under pressure as far as our security is concerned. Decisions will be ours."

## **4. India Economy**

The majority of discussions this week between the Clinton and Vajpayee administrations focus on economic issues. In addition to the forums announced in the India-United States vision statement (see item #1 above) Sanjaya Baru and Seema Guha anticipate many other discussions that are expected to occur, particularly when the President Clinton leaves Delhi for Hyderabad and Jaipur.

## **5. Kashmir**

Prior to departure, Secretary of State Madeleine Albright said that "tangible steps must be taken to respect the LoC. So long as [the LoC] principle is violated, the people of Kashmir have no real hope for peace." Indian External Affairs Minister Jaswant Singh said that the U.S. "reaffirmation of the validity of the LoC" reinforced the Indian position. U.S. Assistant Secretary of State for South Asian Affairs Karl Inderfurth said that the U.S. policy on Kashmir "remains the same, but the nature of the conflict has transformed" in the last decade and especially in the last two years.

Abdul Gani Lone, a senior leader of the All-Party Hurriyat Conference, said that U.S. support of the validity of the LoC is contrary to the Hurriyat's interests. [The Hurriyat seeks to develop a Kashmir

constituency on both sides of the LoC.] Lone argued that, "since the U.S. has lent its ear to dissenters in all the troubled spots of the world, it is incumbent upon Mr. Clinton to grant an audience to the Hurriyat leadership." Mirwaiz Farooq, Acting Chairman of the Hurriyat, had planned to travel to New Delhi to request such a meeting, but he was placed under house arrest. According to The Hindu, "police cordoned off his residence during the night and he was asked not to go outside without police permission."

## **6. Pakistan**

The Times of India published an extensive interview with Maleeha Lodhi, Pakistan's Ambassador to the United States. U.S. analyst Stephen Cohen, just returned from Pakistan, said that "there is an expectation [among government officials in Pakistan] that Clinton's visit will legitimize the current effort by the military regime to reform the Pakistan economy, restructure the Pakistani political system, reduce the level of corruption, and rebuild Pakistani civilian institutions." In an effort to generate a "positive appearance," Chief Executive Pervez Musharraf banned public meetings, strikes, and processions for the duration of President Clinton's visit. Separately, in a CBS interview, Musharraf expressed hope that the U.S. could help to improve Pakistan-India ties, which are "truly bad."

## **7. Bangladesh**

Prior to the Clinton visit, Adul Hassan Chowdhury, State Minister for Foreign Affairs, announced that Bangladesh would seek a write-off for US\$700 million in loans and an extradition, from the U.S. to Bangladesh, of the men who assassinated Sheikh Mujibur Rahman, Bangladesh's first Prime Minister. [The men were convicted, in absentia, in 1998.] The visit itself generated US\$187 million in carefully targeted aid, no loan forgiveness, and no extradition. Bangladesh Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina urged continued U.S. support of "democratic governments around the world."

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## **News Independent of the Clinton Trip**

### **8. Pakistan**

Last week's SANDNet update reported new satellite pictures showing some of Pakistan's nuclear facilities. This week, Pakistani Foreign Minister Abdul Sattar said that the pictures showed old missile plants that were included on a list of nuclear plants supplied by Pakistan to India in January 2000. Indian External Affairs Minister Jaswant Singh said that he was "studying the pictures" but that he was "not alarmed" by them.

Pakistan officials described as "not worth even a comment" Indian allegations that Pakistan was preparing for high altitude warfare.

Commonwealth Secretary-General Emeka Anyaoku said that Pakistan will continue to remain suspended from the body until the Musharraf regime announces a firm timetable for restoration of democracy in Pakistan.

"Pakistan to remain suspended from C'wealth"

Pakistan agreed to let an Iranian gas pipeline to India pass through its territory. The project was proposed in 1993, when Benazir Bhutto was Pakistan's Prime Minister.

### **9. India**

The Parliament of the European Union adopted a resolution asking India and Pakistan to refrain from any provocation along the LoC and, if necessary, to consider mediation by the UN to solve their outstanding issues, including Kashmir. The India press reported "increased activity" and "heightened tension" in the Kutch border area between Rajasthan (India) and Sindh (Pakistan). Australian Foreign Minister Alexander Downer is scheduled to begin a 5-day official visit to India on March 21. He is expected to press for closer strategic ties between India and Australia.

## **10. Sri Lanka**

President Chandrika Kumaratunga announced a 6-month timetable for negotiations regarding proposed constitutional reforms, and a four-week time frame for more specific talks with the opposition United National Party.

## **11. Nepal**

Government instability reported in the March 1 edition of the SANDNet Update culminated, for the moment at least, in the selection of Girija Prasad Koirala as Nepal's new Prime Minister. [Koirala and the previous prime minister, Krishna Prasad Bhattarai, control competing factions of the Nepali Congress, by far the largest political party in Nepal]. The Times of India printed a brief summary of Nepal's recent political events.

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