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Nuclear Issues

1. CIA Report on Proliferation

The US Central Intelligence Agency, in a semi-annual report to the US Congress on proliferation threats, stated that India is continuing its nuclear weapons program, assisted by technology from Russia and Western Europe. The report also stated that Pakistan is moving to serial production of its short-range ballistic missile with continued PRC assistance, despite PRC promises to the contrary.

2. India Missile Test

India conducted a test of its Akash surface-to-air missile. The Akash has a range of 25 km.

India

1. Security Policy

India's Group of Ministers, advised by the heads of India's armed forces, submitted a report to Prime Minister A.B. Vajpayee that proposed the creation of a Chief of Defense Staff post to command India's nuclear arsenal. The new position would aid joint operations by the armed forces and would advise the government on military issues.

S.R. Valurri, former Director General of the Indian Defense Ministry's Aeronautical Development Agency, argues in an extensive article for The Hindu that even if the Light Combat Aircraft being indigenously developed is not inducted for use in the Indian Air Force, the government should support the organizations developing the LCA or it will waste the investments it has so far made. Valurri describes a number of roadblocks during the LCA development.

2. Ceasefire Issues

Indian Home Minister L.K. Advani stated that there was not a ceasefire in Jammu and Kashmir, but a combat operation stoppage. He said Prime Minister A.B. Vajpayee "has never said that it was a ceasefire but the government has only instructed the defense forces not to open fire but to respond to militant attacks." Advani stated that the ceasefire extension was not a sign of weakness and that there was no review of the ceasefire underway. He said that the ceasefire demonstrated Pakistan's core issue in maintaining the proxy war to a desire to prove the two-nation theory correct.

C. Raja Mohan argues in The Hindu that Indian Prime Minister A.B. Vajpayee has raised expectations for the peace process with the extension of the ceasefire, but argues that Vajpayee should not wait until May to decide how to move forward. Mohan states that Vajpayee needs to now take a political risk to move the process along.

"Can Vajpayee risk more on Kashmir?"

3. India-US Relations

The Times of India is reporting that the next US Ambassador to India will likely be Robert Blackwell, a former aid to Condoleezza Rice during the elder George Bush's administration and currently with the Kennedy School at Harvard University. Blackwell is an expert on the PRC.

Former Indian Foreign Secretary J.N. Dixit stated that India-US relations are unlikely to change

substantially under the administration of US President George W. Bush. Dixit said, "They'll remain engaged with India... They'll also uphold the Strobe Talbott-Jaswant Singh talks that are in their interest." Dixit also stated that there would not be a relaxation of the nonproliferation regime.

4. India-PRC Relations

An editorial in the on-line Himal Magazine argues that it is the PRC's size and economic prowess that it has been accepted into the World Trade Organization, and states that the US missile-defense program provides the PRC with the justification for its missile modernization and buildup programs. The editorial argues that while it may be in the interest of India, the PRC and Russia to develop a cooperative, anti-US triangle, it is more likely that Russia and India will use this "China card" to gain assistance from the US and other Western countries.

Pakistan

1. Overview

Suba Chandran, a Research Officer with the Institute for Peace and Conflict Studies in New Delhi, argues that a significant concern in evaluating Pakistan Chief Executive Pervez Musharraf's desire for dialogue with India is determining how much control Musharraf has over jihadi groups in Pakistan. Chandran reviews the development of the Pakistani jihadi forces and the need to control these groups to pursue peace.

2. Pakistan-US Relations

Parama Sinha Palit writes, in an article for the Institute for Peace and Conflict Studies in New Delhi, that in the process of changing its policy focus in South Asia from Pakistan to India, the US needs to realize that its economic and strategic concerns depend on its ability to control Pakistan. Palit also argues that if the US pursues its missile defense program, the PRC will strengthen its armed forces, implying Pakistan will also become better armed.

3. Pakistan-India Relations

A Pakistan Foreign Office spokesman stated that India's decision to increase its defense budget by 14 percent would upset the military balance in South Asia.

Pakistani official sources stated that Pakistan Chief Executive Pervez Musharraf hopes during his visit to Saudi Arabia to convince the government there to mediate between Pakistan and India over Kashmir.

Kashmir

1. Ceasefire Overview

The Hindu reported that Kashmiris are expressing the feeling that the level of activity by security forces in Jammu and Kashmir indicates that there is not really a ceasefire underway. The article states that the refrain from Kashmiris is: "If this is what a ceasefire means, don't bother extending it."

Former Indian Navy Chief L. Ramdas concluded a week-long visit to Pakistan as leader of a delegation from the India-Pakistan Soldiers Initiative for Peace (IPSIP), and stated that the positive responses he met there indicates that there will be forward movement in the peace process. Ramdas was also critical of Pakistani Chief Executive Pervez Musharraf, accusing him of distorting facts in

his representations of Kashmir.

2. India-Pakistan Relations

Indian and Pakistani railway officials agreed to extend for three years the Samjhota Express train, which runs between the two countries carrying passengers and cargo.

3. Militant Groups

Shoukat Maqbool Butt, head of the National Liberation Front in Kashmir and a leader of the All Parties National Alliance, an alliance of pro-independence Kashmiri groups, urged militant groups in Kashmir to stop operations against Indian security forces. He said, "Instead of terming the ceasefire as a mockery, deception, and what not, we should put India to the test.... They should not only accept the ceasefire but also reciprocate."

A spokesman for the Pakistan-based Hizbul Mujahideen militant group stated that the Indian government should provide a formula for how it intends to resolve the Kashmir issue.

Ishtiaq Hameed, a spokesman for the Mutahidda Jihad Council, stated that the group decided to intensify attacks upon security personnel in Kashmir. Hameed stated that this was to demonstrate that India's ceasefire is a deception.

4. Recent Violence

The media is reporting that the Rajouri killing of 14 policemen is the largest single killing of police personnel by militants in the last twelve years. It is reportedly also the largest killing since the ceasefire began. The Times of India reported that the killing has caused a new flow of Kashmiris seeking to flee the Rajouri and Poonch areas.

Afghanistan

1. Taliban Statue Destruction

The South Asian and international media has reported that Afghanistan's Taliban has begun destroying archaeological relics that it believes are "un-Islamic," including Buddhas carved into the cliffs of Bamiyan. The Hindu reports that many of the statues slated for destruction date from when Pakistan was a center of Buddhist learning about 2,000 years ago. The links below provide coverage of the issue, including analysis of the Taliban's motives.

Sri Lanka

1. UK Ban on LTTE

The Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam stated that despite their decision to oppose the UK ban on their organization, they would continue to participate in the Norwegian-facilitated peace initiative.

2. Norwegian Peace Initiative

Amid reports that the Norwegian government is close to reaching an agreement between the LTTE and the Sri Lankan government, envoy Erik Solheim returned to Sri Lanka for further discussions on the peace process.

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