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NUCLEAR ISSUES

1. International Treaties: NPT, ABM, CTBT

The Indian government today ruled out the possibility of giving up the nuclear weapons programme and joining the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT). External Affairs Minister Jaswant Singh told both the Houses of Parliament that "the NPT community needs to understand that India cannot join the NPT as a non-nuclear weapon state."

General Leonid Ivashov, international cooperation director of Russia's Defense Ministry, objected to a U.S. proposal to revise the Anti-ballistic Missile Treaty. He argues that an ostensibly "limited" defense system could easily be transformed into a global one. Sudha Ramachandran (in the Deccan Herald) argues that the joint statement by the P-5 nuclear weapons states shrouds differences among them. The P-5 statement reads, "...preserving and strengthening the ABM Treaty [is] a cornerstone of strategic stability." Ramachandran argues that China and Russia seek to retain (preserve) the current treaty, while the U.S. seeks to amend (strengthen) the treaty.

Analysis: Arjun Makhijani (in the Hindu) argues that the U.S., Great Britain, and France are violating both the NPT and the CTBT. Nonetheless, he concludes that India should sign the CTBT and use the treaty as an institutional disarmament mechanism. Sudha Ramachandran observes that, for the first time, some non-governmental organizations (NGOs) have been invited to make presentations at an official NPT conference. Ramachandran argues that NGO access might marginally influence the NPT debate.

2. South Asian Nuclear Issues

A new U.S. Central Intelligence Agency report alleges that India and Pakistan have benefited from the acquisition of foreign missile and nuclear technology. The report says that Russia supported India and China supported Pakistan.

U.S. Assistant Secretary of State Karl Inderfurth said that, following Indian signature to the CTBT, the U.S. would recommend that the World Bank and the Asian Development Bank proceed with US\$1.5 billion in loans that have been stalled since India's May 1998 nuclear tests. Asian Development Bank President Tadao Chino argued that the sanctions should be removed immediately, saying, "the ADB's operations should be guided by economic considerations and not by political ones."

INDIA

3. Security Planning

The Group of Ministers set up separate task forces on defence management, intelligence, border management, and internal security. The Vajpayee government constituted the Group to comprehensively examine Indian national security in light of last summer's Kargil war.

4. India-China Relations

On May 8, the U.S. newspaper Washington Times argued that China was likely to feel challenged by the Indian navy's decision to undertake joint exercises with Japan, and Vietnam in the South China Sea [The SANDNet Update, April 26, reported on these exercises as well as India-Korea exercises]. Following an extensive review of India-China relations, Mira Sinha Bhattacharjee and C. V. Ranganathan urge that the two countries follow ten principles of constructive cooperation.

5. India-U.S. Relations

U.S. National Security Advisor Sandy Berger reaffirmed that U.S. President Bill Clinton's state visit to India was intended to "change the terms of reference of our relationship with India." John Gannon, a current official in the U.S. Central Intelligence Agency, said that India, Pakistan, Iran, Iraq, and North Korea are countries that are expected to pursue regional agendas that "collide with U.S. interests."

6. Foreign Relations: Uzbekistan

Prime Minister A.B. Vajpayee and Uzbekistan President Islam Karimov signed a joint declaration that will serve as a foundation for both countries' policies toward Afghanistan.

PAKISTAN

7. Security Planning

Pakistani Chief Executive Pervez Musharraf told his senior army commanders that Pakistan has to be ready for "all eventualities because India is not responding to peace overtures."

8. Pakistan-U.S. Relations

John Gannon, an official in the U.S. Central Intelligence Agency, said that Pakistan, along with India, Iran, Iraq, and North Korea are countries that are expected to pursue regional agendas that "collide with U.S. interests." U.S. Assistant Secretary of State Karl Inderfurth asked Pakistan to take "concrete steps" for resumption of a "productive dialogue" with India.

Responding to a U.S. State Department report that alleges Pakistani government support of terrorists [see SANDNet update, May 3], Chief Executive Pervez Musharraf said that perceptions of the definition of "terrorism" vary across cultures. Musharraf said that groups in Pakistan that are engaged in armed activities cannot properly be called terrorists. Pakistani Interior Minister Moinuddin Haider said that the U.S., which last week described Pakistan as both a state supporter of terrorism and a friend of the U.S., is sending mixed signals.

Pakistan-U.S. Relations (SANDNet, May 3)

Vasantha Arora (in Outlook) argues that U.S. geostrategic concerns prevent it from punishing Pakistan in the manner that the U.S. claims terrorist sponsors ought to be punished. Aziz Siddiqui (in Dawn) argues that government reports are drafted to support government policies. In this sense, "International violence ... done by enemies is terrorism ... Violence done by oneself or one's allies merits some other name." Shireen M Mazari (in the News) argues that the U.S. and other "status quo powers" regularly engage in terrorism, which is defined as an action where the victim and target are distinct: "the victim perishes but the target reacts to the news of that destruction."

9. Domestic Politics

Pakistan's Foreign Office is in the midst of a major reshuffle. New appointments will be made for posts including Ambassador to Russia, Permanent Representative to the United Nations, Foreign Office Spokesperson, and High Commissioner to Canada. Twenty-two top-level foreign service officers also will be reposted ahead of normal rotation schedules.

10. Foreign Relations: Commonwealth

Commonwealth Secretary-General Don McKinnon announced that he will visit Pakistan to ask Chief Executive Pervez Musharraf to issue a timetable for Pakistan's return to democracy and to convey to Musharraf future Commonwealth penalties in the event that no timetable is issued.

KASHMIR

11. Hurriyat Initiative

All Parties Hurriyat Conference (APHC) spokesperson Abdul Majid said that the APHC is ready for talks with the Indian government, "but they must have an open mind." Three top APHC leaders had a five-hour meeting with the Pakistani High Commissioner to India, Ashraf Jehangir Qazi, on May 4. On the following day Pakistani Chief Executive Pervez Musharraf said that the Kashmir problem could be solved only through tripartite talks; his message was repeated by Kashmiri leader Yasin Malik two days later. Indian Home Minister L.K. Advani said that "as far as any group in Jammu and Kashmir is concerned, we can talk to anybody who is willing to talk to us." However, he also said that "we are not going to talk to Islamabad until it stops cross-border terrorism." On the following day, two militant groups, the Al-Umar Mujahideen and Al Feteah Force, threatened that Kashmiri groups that negotiate with the Indian government will be "punished."

12. India-Pakistan Dialogue

Regular, semi-annual border talks between the Indian Border Security Force and the Pakistan Rangers yielded an agreement to stop cross-border firing during the current wheat harvest season. Indian security forces discovered AK-47 rifles, explosives, detonators, remote control devices, and ammunition that had been stockpiled by independent militants operating in Kashmir.

Indian Home Minister L.K. Advani described Pakistan's support of terrorists as part of a "continuing proxy war." Advani convened a high-level meeting in Srinagar to discuss measures to stop cross-border terrorist infiltrations.

Analysis. K. Subrahmanyam (in the Times of India) argues that India has not acted on the lessons learned during last summer's Kargil war: intelligence continues to be poorly gathered and slowly filtered through political and bureaucratic levels; responsibility among different agencies (and at different levels within agencies) remains poorly demarcated.

SRI LANKA

13. War Overview

The Indian weekly "Outlook" published a four-part special report on the war in Sri Lanka from the government and Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam (LTTE) perspective.

14. War Fighting

The LTTE army advanced from Elephant Pass to Kilali and Palaly, moving toward Jaffna. The LTTE offered a temporary ceasefire that would enable the government to withdraw 25,000 soldiers. The offer was rejected.

A government statement "strongly refuted" claims that government troops were to be withdrawn, adding that the army had "effectively repulsed all attempts" by the LTTE to control Kilali. "Military officials" said that new weapons and ammunition are being "rushed" to Jaffna and that the army is preparing for an LTTE attack on the airport at Palaly.

The Sri Lankan government gave wide powers to the military, police, and administration to combat the LTTE. State authorities can now seize aircraft, ships, and other property without giving any

reason, ban publication of newspapers and leaflets, and prohibit demonstrations and strikes that may harm the country's war effort. Also, the government censor now must approve in advance the text of all reports on the war by foreign news correspondents.

Both "Dawn" (Pakistan) and the Hindu (India) argue that the Sri Lankan government must negotiate in good faith with the LTTE and must not let the Jaffna Peninsula fall militarily.

15. Sri Lanka-India Relations

Indian External Affairs Minister Jaswant Singh confirmed that the Indian government had received "some requests from the Government of Sri Lanka in the context of the present situation." He said that the Indian government would not be a part of "any kind of military intervention." Prime Minister A.B. Vajpayee said that India would not sell arms to the government of Sri Lanka. A May 4 Times of India editorial supports this position, saying that "India's best bet is to stay out of the swamp, even while doing what it can to preserve the integrity of Sri Lanka and curb the terrorist activities of the LTTE." [Note: The government of India designated the LTTE as a terrorist organization long before the current crisis began.]

An Indian Foreign Office spokesperson clarified that India "would not abdicate its regional role," but that "a hands-on policy does not necessarily imply military involvement." Prime Minister A.B. Vajpayee later clarified that India did not support Tamil Eelam (independence) and that the crisis should be solved "within the framework of Sri Lanka's unity and territorial integrity." External Affairs Minister Jaswant Singh suggested that India would consider playing the role of mediator if both the Sri Lankan government and the LTTE asked it to do so. The Indian Chief of Air Staff flew to Colombo, the Sri Lankan capitol, on what the Indian office of external affairs described as a "goodwill mission." The Indian navy deployed five aircraft to an Indian airbase close to Sri Lanka. The aircraft were expected to conduct "certain exercises" off the Indian coastline. More generally, the navy, coast guard, and police began to patrol the Indian coastline more aggressively. An Indian deputy inspector general of police described the exercises as an effort "to prevent the possible infiltration of Sri Lankan Tamil militant groups in the guise of refugees."

While some Tamil Nadu political parties urged the Indian government to support the LTTE, most major parties in both India's governing coalition and the opposition supported the government's position regarding Sri Lanka. The Tamil Nadu state government banned a conference organized by the Tamil Eelam Liberation Supporters' Coordination Committee on the grounds that the meeting "could disturb public peace."

16. Indian Policy Debate

A May 6 Times of India editorial urges greater support to the Sri Lankan government, arguing that "the LTTE's success in its current offensive cannot be in the interest of democratic politics in Tamil Nadu" and that support in India for the LTTE is based on "Tamil emotionalism." Prem Shankar Jha (in Outlook) argues that India must ensure that the Sri Lankan government defeats the LTTE and urges the Indian government to engage in limited air strikes against the Tamil Tigers. V.R. Raghavan (in the Hindu) argues that Indian actions that would allow "the conflict to continue will only extend the fruitless military conflict indefinitely ... Indian involvement should be of facilitating a peaceful outcome through constructively engaging both sides to the conflict."

17. Foreign Policy: Pakistan, Israel, Russia, United States

The Sri Lankan government requested help from Pakistan, which reaffirmed its "support to Sri Lanka's territorial integrity and sovereignty." Sri Lanka resumed its diplomatic relations with Israel, which were severed in 1991, in hopes of gaining Israeli military hardware and counter-insurgency expertise. A Russian Foreign Ministry Statement referring to the LTTE said that "it is impossible to suppress the wave of terrorism, which has spread to many countries of the world, without pooling

the efforts of all states in countering this common evil." A U.S. state department spokesman said that the U.S. has not received a Sri Lankan request for assistance, but that "we would certainly consider a request for humanitarian assistance. In the past, we have provided them with certain military equipment as well." A U.S. state department report, "Patterns of Global Terrorism 1999," described the LTTE as "a terrorist organization ... conducting numerous attacks on government, police, civilian, and military targets." [Note: The U.S. has designated the LTTE as a terrorist organization since 1997.]

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