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Nuclear Issues

1. India Missile Program

The US-based Defense News reported that sources within India's Defense Research and Development Organization (DRDO) stated that India was preparing to test launch the Surya or Agni IV, its first intercontinental ballistic missile (ICBM). The missile is expected to be tested in January and is believed to have a range of 5,000 km. The Surya II will be tested in 2003 and will have a range of 12,000 km, possibly extendable to 20,000 km. Russia has provided cryogenic engines for use as satellite boosters and for the Surya.

The Times of India states that the possibility of an Indian ICBM test is not surprising after the successful satellite launch as the space program "runs on the same technology that can be put to military use at a time and pace of India's choosing."

Indian External Affairs Minister Jaswant Singh, speaking at a news conference with Russian Foreign Minister Igor Ivanov, denied that India intended to test an ICBM.

2. US Missile Defense Program

C. Raja Mohan writes in The Hindu that both India and Russia have "responded positively" to the proposed US missile defense system. Russian Foreign Minister Igor Ivanov, in India, stated that Russia's desire for deep cuts to nuclear weapons were "in harmony" with the US approach.

Chairman of the Congress party's external affairs department, Natwar Singh, criticized the Indian government for its haste in endorsing the proposed nuclear doctrine of US President George Bush. Singh termed the central government's reaction as "thoughtlessly premature." He said aspects of the package may seem reasonable, but it needed to be evaluated in its entirety. Leftist parties also were critical of the government for its endorsement of US President Bush's missile defense program. The CPI stated that Indian support for the US missile defense proposal will draw India into an "aggressive drive which will unleash new and multi-sided nuclear arms race." The CPI(M) accused the Vajpayee government of seeking to become a US surrogate in South Asia, stating, "The Vajpayee Government is mortgaging India's right to strategic autonomy and an independent foreign policy."

3. Commentary on India and Missile Defense

Manoj Joshi states in the Times of India that India's endorsement of missile defense is based on the mistaken assumptions that India would somehow benefit from a missile defense shield and that India was technologically prepared for a world with such defenses. Joshi points to all of the PRC's potential responses to missile defense as being negative for India.

Muchkund Dubey writes in The Hindu that the Indian government's quick response to US President Bush's stated intent to pursue missile defense is nearly an "unqualified endorsement" of the missile defense concept. Dubey argues that deterrence is nowhere near disappearing and neither does the US appear to be abandoning unilateralism in favor of multilateral institutions. Dubey also argues that the world, once these defensive systems are in place, will strategically be highly unstable.

Editorials in the Times of India argue that India's "irrational exuberance" for the US missile defense program is difficult to explain. They state that the Indian statement focuses on Bush's proposed nuclear arms cuts but ignores the stability created by mutually-assured destruction (MAD). The editorial also argues that Indian support affects India's nonproliferation goals as the first thing the US missile shield will do is push the PRC to boost its missile forces.

Deepanshu Begchee and Matthew C.J. Rudolph write in The Hindu that, for India, the proposed US Theater Missile Defense (TMD) system was acceptable in that it would have little effect upon

strategic calculations in South Asia, while National Missile Defense (NMD) would cause an arms race in South Asia. They argue that it is the reality of this arms race that will lead to a reversal of recent trends towards nuclear test moratoriums and nuclear disarmament.

4. US Nuclear Sanctions

An editorial in The Dawn argues that the US will end within six months all economic sanctions imposed on India and Pakistan after the 1998 nuclear tests. The editorial attributes the policy change to perceptions by the Bush administration that sanctions are harming US economic interests. However, the editorial states, the US will maintain some sanctions against Pakistan until democratic rule there is restored.

India

1. India-US Military Cooperation

Manoj Joshi writes in the Times of India that before this week, Indian External Affairs Minister Jaswant Singh said that US abrogation of the 1972 ABM Treaty to pursue missile defense "may curb prospects for further nuclear disarmament and weaken the nonproliferation regime." After receiving a call from US National Security Advisor Condoleezza Rice last week, Joshi argues, Singh appeared to ignore the substance of US President Bush's announcement and focus only on Bush's promise to pursue nuclear arms cuts. Joshi focuses on the likelihood that US missile defenses could destabilize the India-PRC strategic relationship as PRC construction of many more missiles will force India to reexamine its definition of a minimum nuclear deterrent.

Indian officials stated that US officials have offered the prospect of enhanced US-India military cooperation as the payoff for Indian support for President Bush's missile defense, though the specific gains are not clear. Officials state that this may include US approval of the sale of select weapons or technology or the resumption of inter-service military contacts. The article states that this is likely to mean a reinterpretation of existing US laws concerning India, similar to Israel's situation, rather than an explicit repeal of current US restrictions.

2. India-Russia Talks

Russian Foreign Minister Igor Ivanov arrived in India for discussions with Indian officials on security and other topics of mutual interest. Vladimir Raduhin writes in The Hindu that Ivanov is expected to explore what developing India-US ties means for Russia. Russia's defense cooperation with India is assured, argues Raduhin, but Russia is concerned about India's possible support of US missile defense and abrogation of the ABM Treaty.

The Times of India reports that India has likely dropped its opposition to the termination of the 1972 ABM Treaty by the US, despite Russian insistence that support for the treaty in principle should be a part of a joint agreement by the two countries.

3. India-PRC Relations

Parama Sinha Palit, a Research Scholar at Jawaharlal Nehru University, writes in an essay for the New Delhi-based Institute for Peace and Conflict Studies that PRC-Indian ties will likely strengthen against the backdrop of fighting the spread of Muslim insurgents and terrorists in and near their territories.

The Hindu reports that the PRC and Russia will sign a treaty of friendship, their first since the last such treaty collapsed in 1979, driven in part by their similar strategic adversities. These challenges include US plans to abrogate the 1972 ABM Treaty and deploy missile defenses. In light of the Russia-India partnership, the article also questions whether there is a developing strategic triangle encompassing the PRC, Russia and India.

PRC Foreign Ministry spokesman Zhang Qiyue ruled out a strategic triangle between the PRC, India and Russia. Zhang stated that the PRC prefers to pursue its relations bilaterally. PRC Foreign Minister Tang Jiaxuan had earlier stated that it was "premature" to speak of a strategic triangle developing.

4. Military Exercises

Pakistani military spokesman Major General Rashid Qureshi denied reports that he had accused India of creating a war-like situation in conducting large military exercises near the border. Qureshi stated that the Indian exercises were routine and not near the border. Indian Army spokesman Colonel Shruti Kant stated that the exercises were India's largest in thirteen years, involved 60,000 troops, and were organized around the theme of tactical maneuvers in a nuclear conflict. Under a 1991 agreement, neither country should hold military exercises involving more than one company within 75 km of the border without notifying the other country.

Pakistan

1. Military Government

Pakistani daily The Jang, it was reported in the Times of India, states that Pakistan's military government had told the World Bank that there would be a continued military presence in all policy matters through a National Security Council. The military government did so to reassure potential donors under the Structural Adjustment Credit program of the World Bank, who were concerned about the continuity of reform policies should the government change.

Sources in the Commonwealth stated that Pakistan will face higher sanctions and the possibility of a full suspension of Commonwealth membership should it fail to announce a schedule for democratic elections prior to the October meeting of the Commonwealth heads of government meeting (CHOGM).

2. Pakistan-US Relations

High-level contacts between the US and Pakistan continue to develop with the invitation by US President George Bush to Pakistan Chief Executive Pervez Musharraf to visit the US for five days in July. The Pakistan Daily Observer, reports the Times of India, states that Bush seeks to discuss political, economic and security issues in South Asia. A Pakistan Foreign Office spokesman, however, stated that a formal invitation had not been received.

"Bush invites Musharraf for US trip: Media"

One day earlier, US Secretary of State Colin Powell invited Pakistan Foreign Minister Abdul Sattar to also visit the US.

3. Pakistan-India Relations

Retired Pakistani Air Marshal Asghar Khan, also head of the Tehrik-e-Istaqlal party, stated that India

never posed a threat to Pakistan and that it was Pakistan that started the wars in 1965 and 1971. He also said that Pakistan did not need to spend as much on defense as India would "never dare" attack Pakistan.

Kashmir

1. India-Kashmir Dialogue

Indian government negotiator K.C. Pant stated that the government would respond to the clarifications sought by Kashmiri leader Shabir Shah, head of the Jammu and Kashmir Democratic Freedom party. Pant also stated that he had not received a formal communication from the All-Parties Hurriyat Conference and therefore could not respond to questions on their participation in talks.

All-Parties Hurriyat Conference Chairman Abdul Gani Bhat stated that its statement to the press regarding talks with K.C. Pant was sufficient and that the APHC would not engage in the "useless formalities" of a formal response. In response to a question raising the issue of the APHC's demand for a formal invitation from the center before formulating a response, Bhat said the demand was made by individuals and not by the organization.

Jammu and Kashmir Democratic Freedom party representatives Maulana Mohammad Abdullah Tari and Salim Gilani, in New Delhi to deliver Shabir Shah's response to the government, stated to the media that the participation of Pakistan in the talks was not a precondition to participation by the JKDF. They said the key was deciding an agenda, though they also stated that the Kashmir issue needed settlement by India, Pakistan and the Kashmiri people.

The Dawn reports that, according to India Abroad weekly, the US State Department's Bureau of Intelligence and Research held a closed conference on Kashmir. The conference reportedly featured leading academics and experts on Kashmir from the US, India and Pakistan.

Sri Lanka

1. LTTE Statement

In a three-page statement, the Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam (LTTE) criticized the Sri Lankan government for unleashing a major military offensive at the end of the LTTE's four-month unilateral ceasefire. The LTTE accused the government of attempting to scuttle the two-year peace effort by Norwegian negotiators. The LTTE also stated that a cessation of hostilities was essential to moving the peace process forward.

2. Peace Process

The Hindu reports that official sources stated that the Sri Lankan government indicated to Norwegian negotiators that it is prepared to enter into an agreement with the LTTE to reduce hostilities in order to move the peace process forward. Norwegian peace envoy Erik Solheim left for London, possibly to meet with LTTE representative Anton Balasingham, after his having met with Sri Lankan President Chandrika Kumaratunga and opposition leader Ranil Wickremesinghe.

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