

# SANDNet Weekly Update, May 23, 2001

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## **Nuclear Issues**

### **1. South Asia Nuclear Issue**

The International Institute for Strategic Studies (IISS) released a report which described the India-Pakistan relationship as a "rapidly evolving test-bed for nuclear deterrence theory." IISS reports that India may have fissile material stockpiles sufficient for 65 nuclear weapons and Pakistan for 39. The report states that India-Pakistan dialogue for risk reduction has been frozen since 1999, and that the PRC refuses to talk with India on nuclear issues "in any way that might suggest equality."

### **2. US Nonproliferation Policy**

A US State Department official clarified earlier remarks by US Assistant Secretary of State Richard Armitage, stating, "We are equally concerned about nuclear proliferation by both Pakistan and India." Armitage's earlier remarks may have appeared discriminatory, said the official, because the Indian press focused on Pakistan in its questions.

Christine Rocca, the Bush administration's nominee for US Assistant Secretary of State for South Asia, stated that US sanctions intended to punish Pakistan and India had outlived their usefulness and should be lifted.

### **3. India Nuclear Program**

Speaking in Malaysia, Indian Prime Minister A.B. Vajpayee stated that India needed its nuclear arsenal because it was being threatened with cross-border terrorism that sought to redraw its national boundaries.

### **4. US Missile Defense Proposal**

V.R. Raghavan, a Fellow with Stanford University's Center for International Studies and Cooperation, writes in *The Hindu* that nuclear weapons have been given a new strategic life by missile defenses. Raghavan argues that if the US proceeds with radical nuclear cuts, cuts to the nuclear umbrella that extends a security guarantee to US allies in Europe and Asia, it raises questions about the US as a credible security guarantor. Raghavan argues in his conclusion that the absence of clear benefits to India for supporting the US missile defense program raises questions about why the Indian government was so enthusiastic.

### **5. India-PRC Relations: Missile Defense**

An editorial in the *Times of India* argues that India's statement of support for the US missile defense program is similar to its nuclearization program in that it supports the National Missile Defense system without fully analyzing what it means for India. The editorial argues that more must be done to secure stronger a US-India relationship, but India has also failed to decide what concrete developments it wants out of the relationship.

Pakistan's *The News* quoted a report in *The Statesman* which attributed to PRC Ambassador to India Zhou Gang a warning to India that it may have too hastily expressed support for the US National Missile Defense (NMD) program without first analyzing it. Zhou said, "We oppose it because it

promotes strategic imbalances." The News also reported that two days after supporting US President Bush's speech, Indian External Affairs Minister Jaswant Singh warned, at a press conference with Russian Foreign Minister Igor Ivanov, that the US should not disturb existing arms control mechanisms.

Indian External Affairs Minister Jaswant Singh and PRC politburo member Li Changchun held talks on the US missile defense proposal, with both stating afterwards that there were more commonalities than differences. However, the Times of India notes that the two countries did not discuss contentious issues in their bilateral relations, such as the border dispute and PRC aid to Pakistan's weapons programs. An External Affairs Ministry spokesman stated that dismissed as "simplistic" arguments that the PRC was compensating India through talks with Li for leaving India off PRC Premier Zhu Rongji's tour of South Asia, especially as Li Peng had visited only India in January.

PRC Ambassador to India Zhou Gang reiterated that his country is opposed to the US missile defense plan. He said, "We oppose it because it promotes strategic imbalance, hegemonism and domination of world politics."

## **6. Pakistan Statements on Missile Defense**

Pakistan Foreign Minister Abdul Sattar stated that Pakistan supported the 1972 ABM Treaty and that it was opposed to the US National Missile Defense (NMD) proposal because it could trigger a new arms race.

The Hindu reports that Urdu-language daily The Jang quoted an unnamed senior Pakistani scientist as stating that the US National Missile Defense (NMD) system would not save India from missile attack and would cause international missile races.

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## **India**

### **1. Overview**

India's Directorate of Defense Policy released a 120-page report calling for the improvement of the Indian Army's rapid reaction capabilities and a defense umbrella that incorporates coordination with Indonesia, Singapore, Malaysia, Maldives, Mauritius and Vietnam. The plan calls for the acquisition of additional long-range aircraft, attack helicopters, and two aircraft carriers.

The News reports that the US-based Defense News states that the Directorate of Defense Policy plan will help develop India as a regional superpower. The article states that this plan may also be a response to the PRC's attempts to encircle India.

### **2. India-PRC Relations**

PRC Foreign Ministry spokesman Sun Yuxi stated that the visit to India by PRC politburo member Li Changchun promoted PRC-India ties.

Indian Air Chief Marshal A.Y. Tipnis will meet during his PRC visit with senior defense officials, including Commander of the People's Liberation Army General Liu Shun Yao, chief of the general staff General Fu Quan Yu, and Defense Minister General Chi Haotian.

### **3. India-Pakistan Relations**

Indian police in Jammu and Kashmir reported that Pakistani Ranger border guards fired mortars to damage fence posts intended to demarcate the border near Ramgarh.

The Indian government interlocutor for talks with Kashmir, K.C. Pant, stated in a letter to Shabbir Shah of the Jammu Kashmir Democratic Freedom (JKDF) Party that India was not opposed to Pakistani participation in a "graduated peace process" in settlement of the Kashmir issue.

#### **4. Kashmir Dialogue**

The Dawn reports that Home Minister L.K. Advani, a member of the hawkish rightwing faction of the BJP, and External Affairs Minister Jaswant Singh, a moderate, will visit Kashmir to evaluate the impact of the ceasefire. The Dawn reports that their traveling together is important because it ensures Prime Minister A.B. Vajpayee will get a balanced assessment of conditions in Jammu and Kashmir.

The Indian government Cabinet Committee on Security is due to meet after this visit to determine the fate of the ceasefire. The Times of India reported that sources stated the ceasefire was likely to be extended because of the initiation of dialogue with Kashmiri leaders by K.C. Pant.

Chinmaya R. Gharekhan argues in The Hindu that the best solution to the Kashmir issue involves converting the Line of Control into a more permanent and formal line between India and Pakistan. Gharekhan reviews several historical attempts to resolve the issue and proposes direct bilateral talks between the two countries, though Pakistan may take this as a sign of Indian weakness.

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### **Pakistan**

#### **1. Military Hardware**

The Times of India reports on a Jane's Defense Weekly report indicating that Pakistan will upgrade its 85-IIAP main battle tanks with thermal imaging cameras, improving their combat capabilities.

Indian defense sources stated that Pakistan has begun using PRC-made Unmanned Aerial Vehicles (UAVs) to survey the border in Jammu. The sources believe Pakistan is mapping infiltration routes and India's security measures.

#### **2. Pakistan-PRC Relations**

Pakistan Chief Executive Pervez Musharraf stated that Pakistan's strategy was to maintain a minimum credible deterrent force, and that it expected the PRC to play a balancing role in regional stability by aiding Pakistan maintain its deterrent. Musharraf made these remarks at a seminar organized by the Institute of Strategic Studies.

Pakistan Finance Minister Shaukat Aziz announced that the PRC will provide Pakistan with \$1 billion in assistance for various projects, including \$200 million supplier's credit for the railways, \$100 million for telecommunications and \$120 million for an oil pipeline.

Two PRC North Sea Fleet ships arrived in Pakistan under the command of PRC Rear Admiral Zhang Yan as part of the celebration of fifty years of relations between the PRC and Pakistan. The same celebration had brought PRC Prime Minister Zhu Rongji.

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## **Kashmir**

### **1. US Role in Kashmir**

US Secretary of State Colin Powell indicated while testifying before a US Congress sub-committee that there is room for the US to take a more proactive role in India-Pakistan relations and the resolution of the Kashmir issue.

### **2. India-Kashmir Dialogue**

Indian government interlocutor K.C. Pant responded to queries by Jammu Kashmir Democratic Freedom (JKDF) Party leader Shabir Shah, and is believed to have been conciliatory and invited Shah to talks. Shah stated that we welcomed a visit to Kashmir by Pant to start talks. Shah said, "If he visits the Valley and likes to come to my house, I will be very happy." He said he would like Pant to visit the Valley for the talks, but that it was not a precondition, only a desire for Pant to experience conditions in Kashmir. Shah did state that participation by Pakistan was compulsory at some stage of the process.

Shabir Shah has sent a letter to Pakistan Chief Executive Pervez Musharraf, which is believed to convey his thoughts on the Kashmir issue. Shah also forwarded copies of the letter by K.C. Pant to the leadership of the All-Parties Hurriyat Conference. However, in a statement critical of the APHC, Shah stated he was not in favor of obstructing or putting preconditions on talks with the Indian government.

Pakistan's Joint Chiefs of Staff met to discuss the developing situation in Kashmir. The Times of India reports that this meeting was prompted by Jammu Kashmir Democratic Freedom Party leader Shabir Shah's stated inclination to enter into talks with the Indian government and his request that Pakistan contribute to the peace process.

Shabir Shah was arrested by police in Pulwama, Sringar, for attempting to hold a rally.

### **3. Militant Groups**

All-Parties Hurriyat Conference Chairman Abdul Gani Bhat reiterated that the APHC would not engage the Indian government in talks until the APHC delegation had been permitted to visit Pakistan for talks with the government and other groups there. Bhat stated that there would be no need for tripartite talks if there was an internationally-supervised plebiscite.

### **4. India-Pakistan Dialogue**

At the Colombo, Sri Lanka, meeting of the South Asian Association for Regional Cooperation (SAARC), a regional organization frozen for several years because of the India-Pakistan relationship, the Indian and Pakistani foreign secretaries are expected to meet for the first time in two years. While some other analysts disagreed, C. Uday Bhaskar, deputy director of the Institute for Defense Studies and Analyses, said, "Any contact between the foreign secretaries will have an impact on the larger Kashmir issue."

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## **Sri Lanka**

## 1. Parliamentary Politics

The Tamil United Liberation Front (TULF) party, represented in Sri Lanka's parliament, is under pressure from pro-Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam (LTTE) groups to support the no-confidence vote against the government being proposed by the opposition United National Party. Nirupama Subramanian writes in *The Hindu* that support from pro-LTTE groups comes despite the fact that it may upset the Norwegian-sponsored peace process which has finally motivated the Sri Lankan government to be willing to talk with the LTTE. Subramanian explains that several of the LTTE parties would be willing to support the UNP rather than work with the Kumaratunga government.

## 2. Norwegian Peace Efforts

Nirupama Subramanian writes in *The Hindu* that Norwegian peace envoy Erik Solheim arrived in Sri Lanka to meet with President Chandrika Kumaratunga and possibly with LTTE leader Velupillai Prabhakaran in LTTE territory. Subramanian states that a breakthrough is close, especially as it is believed that the government is no longer averse to a cessation of hostilities prior to the beginning of talks.

The LTTE issued a statement saying that no agreement was reached between Erik Solheim and the LTTE during his visit. The LTTE web site reported that this failure was due to the government's unwillingness to remove a ban imposed on the LTTE three years ago. The LTTE also demands a formal ceasefire and an easing of the trade ban.

Erik Solheim returned to Colombo for talks with the Sri Lankan government after talks with the LTTE failed to produce new developments. Solheim left Sri Lanka on Saturday without having achieved the desired breakthrough.

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