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Nuclear Issues

1. NPT Conference

The five "acknowledged" nuclear powers (U.S., Russia, China, France, Britain) formally pledged "an unequivocal undertaking" to eliminate atomic weapons. They did not estimate the time required to complete this undertaking. The "Hindu" described the pledge as "meaningless." The Times of India reported on a Carnegie Institute study, which concluded that progress at the NPT conference was limited because most countries do not believe the U.S. is genuinely committed to nuclear disarmament.

2. United States Nuclear Activities

The Far Eastern Economic Review reports that the U.S. government has formally concluded that China exported M-11 missiles and a missile launcher to Pakistan in 1991-1992. China said that any U.S. sanctions on the decade-old export would be "unreasonable."

The Pakistani newspaper "Dawn," relying on a Los Angeles Times story, said that the CIA has concluded that U.S. deployment of a national missile defense would lead to a missile buildup in China, India, and Pakistan. An editorial (in Dawn) urged the U.S. not to trigger such an arms race.

3. South Asian Test Rumors

The Times of India reported a "strong feeling among the diplomatic community" that Pakistan may explode a nuclear device soon, after which it would sign the CTBT ahead of India. The Hindu observed that China and Pakistan were about to hold Foreign Secretary-level talks and suggested that Pakistan might seek Chinese approval of the rumored tests.

Analysis: U.S. analyst George Perkovich suggested that rumors of a Pakistani test were started by the Pakistan government in response to a hawkish statement by P.K. Iyengar, former chairman of India's atomic research center [see SANDNet May 3].

Stimson Center President Michael Krepon proposes a nine-point confidence-building formula that would help India and Pakistan to reduce the risk of nuclear war. Shireen M Mazari responds to Krepon by saying that a naive application of lessons learned from the U.S./USSR experience is bound to fail in South Asia. Mazari proceeds to propose her own nine-point initiative.

Pakistan

4. Security Analysis

Mirza Aslam Beg, Pakistan's former Chief of Army Staff, writes that a South Asian "limited war" is, in effect, a "cold war" and has already begun. He argues that Pakistan can win such a war by building its economy, continuing its policy of nuclear restraint, and enhancing its "moral capital" regarding Kashmir.

5. Pakistan-China Relations

Pakistani Finance Minister Shaukat Aziz met his Chinese counterpart, Shi Guangsheng, in Beijing.

The meeting led to the creation of working groups to explore three development projects in Pakistan: a US\$1.5 billion Chinese investment in Pakistan's railway system, the construction of a new seaport at Gawadar, and expansion of the Pakistan Steel works.

6. Pakistan-U.S. Relations

In response to last week's Pakistan Supreme Court order that Chief Executive Pervez Musharraf must hold national elections within three years [see SANDNet, May 10], U.S. State Department spokesperson Richard Boucher said, "Regarding the Supreme Court of Pakistan's decision, I think we would simply say that overturning democracy is not right."

7. Pakistan-Afghanistan-U.S. Relations

Pakistani Interior Minister Moinuddin Haider offered to help the United States engage in a dialogue with the Taliban government in Afghanistan. Haider also asked the Taliban government to stop training militants who, he said, sometimes return to engage in terrorist activities in Pakistan. Foreign Office spokesperson Iftikhar Murshed said that Taliban Interior Minister Mullah Razaq Akhund had been asked to extradite Osama bin Laden in response to a U.S. request.

India

8. India-France Relations

French Defense Minister Alain Richard traveled to New Delhi to meet his Indian counterpart, George Fernandes. Both ministers said that the two countries are "strategic partners" and that there is considerable scope for new "industrial military cooperation." Negotiations continue regarding advanced jet trainers, Mirage-2000 aircraft, and submarine construction projects.

9. India-U.S. Relations

U.S. Senator Sam Brownback said that he would introduce a new amendment to the Foreign Operations Appropriations Bill, which will be voted on next week. The amendment would lift all sanctions against India.

10. U.N. Security Council

UN Secretary-General Kofi Annan clarified that one of the proposals to reform the UN Security Council included a provision for five new permanent members: two from industrialized countries and three from the developing world. He said that "when it comes to the Indian seat, even though the decision will have to be taken by the members, I think there is a sense among a large number of UN members that India will be natural for a consideration for such a seat."

Kashmir

11. Indian Dialogue

The official Indian government assessment of the Kargil War, by K. Subrahmanyam, K.K. Hazari, B.G. Verghese, and Satish Chandra, is now available to the public.

Analysis: Pran Chopra observes that both the international community and important Kashmiri groups support the idea of the Line of Control (LOC) as an international border. For this reason, Chopra argues, the Indian government should reconsider proposals that would make the LOC a de jure boundary. Amit Baruah suggests that religious conservatives might constrain Pakistani Chief Executive Pervez Musharraf during Pakistan-India negotiations on a variety of issues in the same way that they forced him to withdraw a controversial blasphemy bill.

12. Indian Military Activities

The Indian Defense Ministry's annual report shows that, after the Kargil war, India has dramatically improved its capabilities in helicopter transport, communications, and firepower generally. In addition, wintering soldiers were provided with superior clothing, sleeping bags, and fiber-reinforced tents.

Sri Lanka

13. War Fighting

Most reports indicate that the Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam continued to progress across the Jaffna peninsula.

14. Domestic Peace Initiatives

Sri Lankan President Chandrika Kumaratunga said that she was ready for talks if the LTTE would "lay down arms and eschew violence." LTTE General Janak Perera said that the Sri Lankan army must leave Jaffna. Kumaratunga was unwilling to surrender the peninsula.

15. Indian Policy Choices

The Indian navy turned back nearly all boats that attempted to carry refugees from Sri Lanka to India. The navy is now considering how, if asked, it would assist in a sealift evacuation of Sri Lankan government soldiers from Jaffna.

The U.S. and France both stressed the importance of India assuming a "responsible" role in the resolution of the Sri Lankan war.

Even as Indian Defense Minister George Fernandes reiterated that India would not become militarily involved in Sri Lanka, many reports suggested that an Indian diplomatic role is beginning to emerge. Sri Lankan Foreign Minister Lakshman Kadirgamar said that events might force India to mediate. The BJP said that India could engage the LTTE even though the Indian government has banned that organization. Indian Prime Minister A.B. Vajpayee said that India was ready for a role in Sri Lanka, but that the LTTE as well as the Sri Lankan government must seek Indian involvement. The Indian Express reported that Sri Lankan General Rohan Daluwatte took a four-day unpublicized visit to Bangalore, where he met "senior Indian military officials" and "may have" asked New Delhi for logistical support.

Analysis: Nirupama Subramanian offers three reasons for Sri Lanka's support of Indian involvement now, compared with widespread opposition to the Indian peacekeeping force that entered Sri Lanka in 1987 at the request of the Sri Lankan government. First, Subramanian suggests that the Sinhalese community believes that India is opposed to the LTTE and that actions by the Indian government would lead to a reduction in the LTTE's influence in Sri Lanka (Subramanian argues

that many Sinhala leaders still believe that western countries continue to support the LTTE both diplomatically and militarily [this is not a change, according to Subramanian. Subramanian argues that western countries were relatively pro-LTTE in 1987 as well]). Second, Subramanian argues that India has a greater interest in stopping separatists movements now, compared to 1987, when its interest was less intense in this regard. The difference is that India is host to many separatist movements that might view LTTE success as an example and might, in response to an LTTE victory, attempt to secede from India and enforce their secession through force of arms. Third, in Subramanian's view, Tamil communities view India as a more honest broker than the Sri Lankan government on its own, Norway, or the United States. V. R. Raghavan argues that an Indian-supported military solution is not feasible. Even without Indian military intervention, argues Raghavan, no reasonable scenario would lead to the destruction of either the Sri Lankan army or the LTTE. All scenarios point to some kind of ceasefire, which could be guided through Indian political coordination.

16. Other International Actors

A three-member Norwegian delegation returned to Colombo to meet with government members. No talks with the LTTE were scheduled. In its first statement regarding the current crisis, the European Union called on "both parties in this tragic, long-running conflict to cease hostilities and begin negotiations with a view to secure a peaceful resolution of the conflict." A Pakistan foreign office statement said that "interference in internal affairs is impermissible under international law." [Last week, Pakistan sold weapons to the Sri Lankan government. See SANDNet, May 10]

Analysis: Charu Lata Joshi provides examples of Sri Lankan censorship, as well as inflated claims by LTTE spokespeople, that increase the difficulty of understanding the current status of the civil war.

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