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CONTENTS

May 31, 2000

India

1. Nuclear Issues
2. U.N. Security Council Reform
3. Military Hardware
4. India-China Relations
5. Foreign Relations: Bangladesh, Russia, Iran

Pakistan

6. Nuclear Issues
7. Domestic Security
8. Foreign Relations: Russia, United Kingdom, Libya

Kashmir

9. Overviews
10. Indian Diplomacy
11. Pakistan Diplomacy
12. International Diplomacy

Sri Lanka

13. War Fighting
 14. Domestic Diplomacy
 15. Indian Diplomacy
 16. Norwegian and U.S. Diplomacy
-

India

1. Nuclear Issues

Following a meeting of the Aid to India Consortium, composed of senior finance policymakers from the U.S., Russia, France, Great Britain, China, Germany, and Japan, the World Bank offered India two billion dollars in development loans. A Japanese Foreign Ministry spokesperson said that Japan would not soften its bilateral sanctions against India.

Analysis. Zia Mian, M. V. Ramana, and Hui Zhang, U.S.-based physicists, observe that existing satellite technology would enable Pakistan and India to verify a bilateral freeze in fissile materials production. They argue that such a freeze would yield both regional and global security benefits. An editorial (in Times of India) argues that the "unequivocal commitment" to disarm, undertaken by the acknowledged nuclear powers at the recently concluded NPT review conference, is comparable with several commitments pledged in the past. Shubha Singh explores domestic factors that affect India's nuclear policy.

2. U.N. Security Council Reform

U.S. Under-secretary of State Thomas Pickering said that U.S. support for an Indian seat in an expanded U.N. Security Council would depend on evidence of New Delhi's "commitment to international principles, including those of disarmament and nonproliferation."

"Pickering lists benchmarks for Council seat"

3. Military Hardware

India agreed to purchase two squadrons of Mi-17 transport helicopters from Russia. The deal is valued at US\$160 million. Continuing negotiations begun last week, France offered to establish a Mirage manufacturing facility in India as a part of a broad military hardware arrangement with New Delhi.

4. India-China Relations

Indian President K.R. Narayanan is in the middle of a seven-day visit to Beijing, during which he hopes to "impart a sense of trust and confidence to Sino-Indian relations." The two countries agreed to resume military exchanges and India announced that Shiv Shankar Menon would become New Delhi's new ambassador to China.

5. Foreign Relations: Bangladesh, Russia, Iran

The Indian government decided to fence the entire 2,400-kilometer Indo-Bangladesh border as a part of its strategy to combat sustained illegal migration.

Russia's Deputy Prime Minister, Ilya Klebanov, said that India is Russia's "Strategic Partner with capital letters" and that Russia would not export arms supplies to Pakistan.

India and Iran set up a high-level joint working group to explore means by which Iranian natural gas could be exported to India. Iranian President Mohammed Khatami expressed the hope that India and Pakistan would succeed in resolving their bilateral disputes. [Note: most gas transport proposals recommend a pipeline from Iran through Pakistan to India.]

Pakistan

6. Nuclear Issues

Pakistani Chief Executive Pervez Musharraf proposed talks for a "nuclear restraint regime" with

India.

"Nuclear restraint regime: Pakistan ready for talks with India, says CE"

British Foreign Minister Peter Hain accused Pakistan of rapidly becoming "a threat to world peace" and claimed a link between global terrorism and Pakistan's export of nuclear capability to Afghanistan. A Pakistan Foreign Office statement said that Pakistan has never exported nuclear materials to any country and that, "if nuclear canisters were discovered in Afghanistan they must have been left by the Soviet Union. We must ask why these stocks were not removed when the Soviet army withdrew from Afghanistan."

In response to press reports that Pakistan is preparing for a new series of nuclear tests [See SANDNet, May 10], U.S. National Security Advisor Sandy Berger warned that additional testing would lead to the re-imposition of U.S. sanctions. U.S. Under-secretary of State Thomas Pickering traveled to Islamabad to discuss this and other issues with Chief Executive Pervez Musharraf. Pakistan Foreign Office statements said that Pakistan would "abide by its unilateral moratorium on nuclear testing," but that it "resolved to consolidate Pakistan's nuclear capability to deter aggression."

Pakistan Foreign Minister Abdul Sattar said that Pakistan would not sign the NPT as a non-nuclear weapon state. He later told U.S. Under-secretary of State Thomas Pickering that Pakistan would "play a positive role" in negotiating an equitable fissile material cut-off treaty. Pickering urged Pakistan to sign the CTBT and NPT.

An editorial (in The News) argues that U.S.-Pakistan divergences in nuclear thinking are not new. However, the differences are being expressed more stridently as the U.S. attempts to recast its global role in a post-Cold War world. Another editorial (in Dawn) supports Foreign Minister Abdul Sattar's statement that Pakistan would continue to be a responsible nuclear power. Lt-General Talat Masood (ret) analyzes the differences between nuclear and non-nuclear powers that, he argues, must be resolved before the NPT agenda becomes a useful instrument of global nuclear disarmament. Dr. Abdul Qadeer Khan, Pakistan's leading atomic scientist, urged the government of Pakistan to stop "harping on [the nuclear tests] two years ago. It was a good thing. It gave us a viable deterrence, but please forget it now. Now concentrate on the development of science and technology." Former Pakistan Prime Minister Benazir Bhutto calls upon India and Pakistan "to jointly or singly adhere quickly to the CTBT; announce a moratorium on fissile material production; resist the development, flight-testing, and storage of ballistic weapons; and strengthen export controls on nuclear technology."

7. Domestic Security

Chief Executive Pervez Musharraf agreed to hold national elections within three years, as ordered by the Pakistan Supreme Court. The IMF approved Pakistan's tax reform agenda. Finance Minister Shaukat Aziz said that he expected a three-year, US\$2.5 billion IMF loan package to follow shortly.

Mazhar Abbas (in Outlook) argues that Chief Executive Pervez Musharraf gives too much credence to right-wing religious groups--most notably by failing to amend Pakistan's blasphemy law. Abbas fears that "the danger for Musharraf is that, while trying to appease the right-wingers, he may entirely lose his earlier, pro-reform, liberal image." Najum Mushtaq supports the idea that Pakistan should re-formulate its foreign policy in light of declining U.S. support for its government. However, he says, the U.S. should not be the focus of any new policy. Instead, "India, or rather hatred of India, has dictated the agenda of domestic as well as foreign politics in Pakistan ... Any review of Pakistan's foreign policy must therefore start with a review of our India policy. It is highly irrational to continue following a course that has yielded so little and done so much harm to our nation."

8. Foreign Relations: Russia, United Kingdom, Libya

Sergei Ivanov, Secretary of Russia's Security Council, said that "more pressure should be brought to bear on those two or three countries that have recognized the Taliban regime, above all on Pakistan, the main sponsor of the movement." He also alleged that the Taliban trains Chechen rebels and threatened "pre-emptive strikes" against such training camps in Afghanistan.

Libya has expressed an interest in purchasing Pakistan-produced defense supplies, including guns, ammunition, uniforms, and ready-to-eat meals for the 65,000-strong Libyan army.

Kashmir

9. Overviews

The magazine "India Today" published an 18-article overview of the Kashmir conflict. "The Kashmir Jigsaw"

10. Indian Diplomacy

The Indian High Commissioner to Pakistan, G. Parthasarathy, met with Pakistan Chief Executive Pervez Musharraf for one hour. This was the first meeting between an Indian official and Chief Executive Musharraf since the coup on October 12, 1999.

Shortly after 22,000 census workers began to collect data for India's 2001 decadal census, the separatist group Al-Fateh Force warned "employees and census officers not to take part in the so-called census as the Indian government is already implementing demographic changes like Israel did in occupied lands ... Anybody found guilty of ignoring this call will be treated as a traitor." [Note: security difficulties forced India to cancel its Kashmir census operations in 1991; the most recent census of Jammu & Kashmir occurred in 1981.] Residents of several towns in Indian-administered Kashmir held a general strike to protest an alleged rise in the number of people dying in state custody. Indian police allegedly fired teargas on protestors in the town of Sopore.

Yaseen Malik, a senior leader of both the All Parties Hurriyat Conference (APHC) and the Jammu and Kashmir Liberation Front, strongly supported dialogue between Kashmiri groups and the Indian government. Yet, also this week, the APHC criticized alleged human rights violations by the Indian government and the Indian government arrested two dozen APHC activists.

11. Pakistan Diplomacy

Hina Jilani, a leading Pakistani Civil Rights activist, alleges that the Pakistan military government's agenda includes supporting militant groups in Kashmir. She argues that, "as long as this nexus exists, Pakistan cannot play any meaningful role in realizing the goals of regional or internal security."

12. International Diplomacy

U.S. Under-secretary of State Thomas Pickering urged "simultaneous movement" in the positions of India and Pakistan in a way that would enable India-Pakistan negotiations regarding Kashmir to resume quickly. Praveen Swamy (in Frontline) analyzes recent attempts to resume the Kashmir peace process and concludes, "the fact is that, for the first time in 50 years, the U.S. has emerged as a de facto arbiter of the fate of Jammu and Kashmir."

Sri Lanka

13. War Fighting

The Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam (LTTE) set Friday, June 2, as the deadline by which all government soldiers must have evacuated the Jaffna peninsula. The LTTE called a 12-hour "unilateral ceasefire" on May 28, ostensibly to enable civilian refugees to leave the peninsula. Some reports suggested that fighting stopped during the ceasefire; others suggested that government and LTTE forces "pounded each other with artillery despite a unilateral truce offer from the guerrillas." On May 30, the war spread to the sea for the first time in six weeks as the Sri Lankan navy destroyed rebel boats ferrying arms and ammunition to LTTE forces on the Jaffna peninsula. A report in *The News* describes LTTE president Velupillai Prabhakaran and analyzes his influence on LTTE activities during the past two decades.

14. Domestic Diplomacy

Sri Lankan President Chandrika Kumaratunga appealed to government employees to donate two days' pay during the "next few months" and urged all citizens to make "some sacrifices" that would send a message to the government soldiers that the people support the army. Later, she offered LTTE president Velupillai Prabhakaran the Chief Ministership of Jaffna province if the LTTE would end the armed conflict.

15. Indian Diplomacy

India's Home Minister, L.K. Advani, said that India would not send a peacekeeping force to Sri Lanka, but would also prevent "other powers inimical to India" from sending troops to the island. Indian National Security Advisor Brajesh Mishra said that India would help to evacuate Sri Lankan government soldiers from the Jaffna Peninsula only under "proper conditions," but said that he would not "spell out the conditions." Sri Lankan Deputy Minister for External Affairs Lakshman Kiriella welcomed India's conditional offer to help evacuate troops, but said that such a measure is not required at the moment. High-level officials from both India and the U.S. said that the creation of an independent Tamil state would not be an acceptable way out of the current crisis.

Analysis. Eric Gonslaves, a former Indian foreign secretary, argues that Indian interests are sufficiently threatened to justify Indian military support to the Sri Lankan government. He suggests that the peace following such support would begin more quickly and would be more just than a negotiated settlement between Sri Lanka and a relatively strong LTTE organization.

16. Norwegian and U.S. Diplomacy

The British High Commissioner to India, Sir Rob Young, urged India to give Norwegian negotiators a chance to broker peace in Sri Lanka. The Norwegian delegation remained in Colombo, but its contacts with the LTTE were limited. Two newspapers have been closed down for violating censorship rules. The second, the English language weekly "Sunday Leader," attempted to get past the censors by carrying news from the battlefield entirely in the negative: "heavy fighting was not raging in the north and Tigers were not pounding Palaly airbase ... No soldiers were killed or wounded and several buildings within the base had not suffered minor damage."

In what "The Hindu" describes as "an apparent show of solidarity with Sri Lanka," the U.S. has moved "an element" of its naval task from the Persian Gulf toward Sri Lanka.

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