

# SANDNet Weekly Update, November 1, 2000

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## **Nuclear Issues**

### **1. India Nuclear Weapons**

Indian Atomic Energy Commission chairman R Chidambaram stated that the Pokhran nuclear tests in 1998 provided India with the "capability to design and fabricate nuclear weapons of low-yields up to 200 kilotons."

### **2. India Nuclear Policy**

K Subrahmanyam, convener of the Indian national security advisory board and author of the Kargil committee report, stated that it was not enough for India to have nuclear weapons. India must also project a credible deterrence by working out contingency plans, targeting, and command and control systems.

The Hindu published a letter to the editor in response to the article "Nuclear Restraint and Risk Reduction." The letter's author argues that the unilateral measures outlined in the original article are insufficient. The author advocates bilateral talks between India and Pakistan on nuclear weapons out of concern for the proximity of their countries, which gives a very small window for reaction if a nuclear weapon is launched.

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## **India**

### **1. Indian Military**

The Indian Navy has proposed upgrading 13 of its aircraft to equip them with Russian-made anti-ship missiles. The Indian Navy has no maritime strike aircraft while Pakistan does. The Navy would also like to equip the INS Viraat, India's only aircraft carrier, and six other ships with Israeli anti-missile Barak missile systems.

An article in the Times of India argued that the central government's appointment of Vice-Admiral Ravi Ganesh to direct the nuclear submarine project demonstrates the importance of the project to the government.

"India revives nuclear subs programme"

The Indian Air Force is to conduct its annual Trishul command-level maneuvers in early November. The objective of the exercise is to overcome high-mountain striking deficiencies exposed by the Kargil incident.

"IAF getting ready for major exercise"

### **2. Indian Military in Jammu and Kashmir**

Indian Defense Minister George Fernandes dismissed as false reports in the Pakistan media that the Pakistani Army had moved nine divisions to the Rann of Kutch area near the Indian border. Fernandes said that there were exercises underway in that area, but that they involved less than a division and were more than 75 km away from the border.

Home Minister LK Advani and Defense Minister George Fernandes approved equipping border counter-insurgency security forces with jammers, night-vision devices, new uniforms and new

weapons, including Kal Gostav rocket launchers, and replacing their AK-47s. Border posts will also be provided with satellite phones to help soldiers maintain contact with their families.

### **3. India-Occupied Kashmir**

Members of the Kashmir Action Committee, the Jammu Kashmir Liberation Front, and members of the AJK legislative assembly were reported by The Dawn to have demonstrated in Lahore to mark the occupation of the Kashmir Valley by Indian forces over fifty years ago.

Jammu and Kashmir Chief Minister Farooq Abdullah accused the Indian central government of an anti-Kashmir bias. The article said that the accusation comes as the central government has not allocated funds yet for the state governments' next fiscal year and because the central government rejected the state assembly's autonomy resolution.

### **4. India-PRC Border Issues**

Indian Defense Minister George Fernandes visited the Arunachal Pradesh region where there had been reports of incursions by PRC soldiers. He said there is no tension in the area and no stand-off, and that there was no evidence of intrusion. Mukut Mithi, chief minister of the region, said that PRC graziers have on occasion crossed the border accompanied by uniformed men.

K Venkatasubramanian, a member of the Planning Commission of India, reviews the historical economic relationship and development of India and China. Venkatasubramanian argues that border trade between India and the PRC could flourish under the PRC's membership in the World Trade Organization and would strengthen India's economy and infrastructure.

### **5. India-PRC Relations**

C Raja Mohan, writing in The Hindu, argues that India's recent foreign policy strategy has been to help India recover diplomatically from the nuclear tests, and is succeeding except in regards to the PRC. Mohan argues that Indian Prime Minister AB Vajpayee should move more quickly and with less caution in trying to strengthen ties with the PRC.

### **6. India-Bangladesh Relations**

India and Bangladesh agreed to assist each other to prevent the border crossing of criminals and insurgents in order to ease border tensions.

The Times of India reported that India loses 20 square meters per day, or 3 square kilometers per year, to Bangladesh because of erosion along the Ganga river.

### **7. Foreign Relations: Japan, Israel, Russia**

The Japanese Coast Guard ship Shikishima will visit India November 5-8 and participate in a joint exercise that will simulate a counter-operation against ship piracy.

India has been exempted from a US veto on technology transfer arms exports by Israel, permitting strategic arms exports to India from Israel to resume.

Outlook India carried an article by Shantanu Guha Ray which argues that the cost of refurbishing and refitting the Russian aircraft carrier Admiral Gorshkov is close to the cost of an indigenously-built carrier. Ray also raises other issues regarding the deal.

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## **Pakistan**

### **1. Military Government**

An editorial in The Dawn by Moonis Ahmar argues that there are contradictions between the threat perception of the ruling elite and those threats faced by the population at large. Ahmar argues that Pakistani threat perceptions should be focused more on the day-to-day needs of the people and not the interests of the elite establishment.

Pakistan Chief Executive Pervez Musharraf admitted that the popularity of his administration is in decline, but said he "will be the first man to think of bringing someone else for running Pakistan if I feel we are not performing."

Organizers anticipate that 500,000 supporters of the Jamaat-e-Islami, or Party of Islam, will gather to ask the military to abdicate power in favor of a national government that would implement Islamic rule. Security for the event will be provided by 2,000 members of the militant Hizbul Mujahideen.

Stephen P Cohen, Senior Fellow at the Brookings Institution, wrote in The Asian Wall Street Journal that Pakistan faces internal problems, including Islamic extremism, but argues that the US should pursue a Pakistan policy that supports Pakistan's educational system, consultations with Pakistan's key allies, and the Pakistani middle class.

### **2. Pakistani Air Space**

Following reported fears in Pakistan and Afghanistan that the US will use missiles to attack Afghanistan if it finds Osama bin Laden is responsible for the recent attack on the USS Cole, Pakistan Foreign Minister Abdul Sattar said that Pakistan would not permit the US to use Pakistani airspace to attack Afghanistan.

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## **Kashmir**

### **1. Militant Groups**

Shaikh Jamilul Rehman, secretary general of the Muttahida Jihad Council, stated that Pakistani mercenaries have acquired surface-to-air missiles (SAMs) and plan to use them in Jammu and Kashmir. Rehman said they were "to counter the Indian Air Force," but had not been tested. Indian Defense Ministry sources dismissed reports of militants with SAMs as "ridiculous," while Pakistani defense experts said that the presence of SAMs in Jammu and Kashmir could be destabilizing.

### **2. India-Pakistan Talks**

Himachal Som, Director-General of the Indian Council for Cultural Relations, said that India has expressed its commitment to a "composite" talks process with Pakistan as long as Pakistan upheld existing bilateral agreements and stopped cross-border terrorism.

### **3. Cross-Border Violence**

Home Minister LK Advani said that the return of tourism to Jammu and Kashmir is a sign that Indian security forces will win the proxy war with Pakistan.

An Indian Army spokesman accused Pakistan of using 120-mm artillery guns to drop hundreds of mortar shells along the Line of Control.

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## **Sri Lanka**

### **1. Election Outcomes**

An article in Frontline Magazine analyzed the election outcome and argued that the People's Assembly government of President Chandrika Kumaratunga will find it difficult to implement amending the constitution and finding a solution to the Tamil conflict.

The opposition United National Party has delivered a 69-day ultimatum to the government of Sri Lankan President Chandrika Kumaratunga to implement political reforms or the UNP will withdraw its support in Parliament.

### **2. Recent Violence**

Tamils rioted in Vavuniya and Trincomalee after 3,000 Singhalese villagers killed 25 former child guerrillas incarcerated at a rehabilitation camp. Sri Lankan police arrested a Tamil lawmaker and declared a 24-hour curfew in three towns.

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