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CONTENTS

October 17, 2000

Nuclear Weapons

1. India Nuclear Policy
2. Indian Nuclear Energy Program
3. Pakistan Nuclear Policy

India

1. Russian President Visit: Commentary
2. Security Policy
3. Military Issues
4. Foreign Relations: PRC, ASEAN

Pakistan

1. Military Government

Kashmir

1. Militant Groups
2. India-Pakistan Relationship
3. Jammu and Kashmir
4. Recent Violence
5. Afghanistan

Sri Lanka

1. Election Results
2. Election Issues
3. Election Commentary
4. Bandarnaike Fune

Nuclear Weapons

1. India Nuclear Policy

Indian Defense Minister George Fernandes said that despite the economic problems created by sanctions, India would not give up its nuclear program. He said, "We are surrounded by nuclear powers. These powers are possessing missiles and other weapons of mass destruction."

US Republican candidate for president, George W Bush, has indicated that if elected, he will lift sanctions against India and will not press India to sign the Comprehensive Test Ban Treaty. Bush supports testing of nuclear weapons as a means of ensuring their safety.

Malaysian Foreign Minister Syed Hamid Albar said India could do much to promote relations with the Association of Southeast Asia Nations and the ASEAN Regional Forum, including the promotion of global nuclear disarmament, nuclear nonproliferation, and an early decision to sign the Comprehensive Test Ban Treaty.

2. Indian Nuclear Energy Program

An article in The Hindu said Russian intentions behind the Memorandum of Understanding signed with India on atomic energy include sending a message to other nuclear weapons states regarding the futility of their blockade of India or any other aspiring nuclear power.

3. Pakistan Nuclear Policy

Pakistan Chief Executive Pervez Musharraf said Pakistan would use its nuclear weapons against India if Pakistan's security was jeopardized. Musharraf also said there is a national command structure in place and Pakistan's nuclear weapons were therefore "very secure." Qadeer Khan, architect of Pakistan's nuclear program, said the nuclear weapons were secure because Musharraf put into place the National Command Authority and the Strategic Force Command.

India

1. Russian President Visit: Commentary

John Cherian writes for Frontline Magazine that four defense deals were the highlight of Russian President Vladimir Putin's visit to India. Cherian argues that the defense deals, reportedly worth between \$5 billion and \$7 billion, are a force multiplier for India and an injection of hard currency into the economy for Russia. Frontline Magazine carried additional commentary on the visit.

2. Security Policy

C Raja Mohan argues that Indian policy toward Pakistan cannot be based on anticipation of Pakistan's imminent collapse because it is the threat of collapse that leaves Pakistan Chief Executive Pervez Musharraf as the source of stability in Pakistan and gives Pakistan leverage over the international community. Mohan argues in favor of containing Pakistan, which includes pressure for change internal to Pakistan as well as engaging Pakistan diplomatically.

The Times of India reported that the NDA government, which came to power after the Kargil

incident, gave a significant boost to defense spending and acquisitions.

3. Military Issues

An Indian Air Force MiG-21 crashed in the Bikaner district of Rajasthan, killing the pilot and a woman on the ground. Several days later, two MiG-21 jets on a training flight collided in Assam, killing one of the pilots. New pilots are trained on super-sonic MiG-21s because the Indian Air Force lacks Advance Jet Trainers, which take-off and land half as fast as the MiG-21.

The Indian Army reported that it has developed indigenous capabilities for repairing defective Russian missiles and overhauling major weapons platforms despite the absence of the requested technology transfer from Russia.

The US has not lifted sanctions imposed on India after the nuclear tests, and as a result, two-thirds of India's anti-submarine warfare (ASW) helicopters, which use US-made parts, are non-operational. Additionally, delivery of the British advanced jet trainers (AJT) is delayed partly because India is seeking alternative sources for the US-made parts used in the AJT.

4. Foreign Relations: PRC, ASEAN

A senior Ministry of External Affairs official said that the PRC was a problem for India, not because of the disputed border, but because of the PRC's sale of missiles and nuclear materials to Pakistan. The official said that if the PRC could be convinced to be neutral, Pakistan would be more reasonable with India.

A report prepared by the US Congressional Research Service stated that a goal of the PRC's military modernization is to subdue Indian power.

Pakistan

1. Military Government

Pakistan Chief Executive Pervez Musharraf reiterated that the military would not stay in power beyond the October 2002 deadline set by the Pakistan Supreme Court.

The media reported on the one-year anniversary of the military coup in which Chief Executive Pervez Musharraf came to power. The Times of India reported statements by analysts, who said that conditions in Pakistan had not improved in the last year and that Musharraf was not likely to keep his promise to give up power in 2002.

Kashmir

1. Militant Groups

Indian Home Minister LK Advani said he thought the Hizbul Mujahideen would not renew its ceasefire offer "unless Pakistan acquiesces, because the Hizbul and all the militant groups ultimately take their instructions from Islamabad." Jammu and Kashmir Chief Minister Farooq Abdullah, however, is confident that talks with the Hizbul will resume soon.

US Representative Benjamin Gilman, chairman of the House International Relations Committee, urged the US State Department coordinator for counter-terrorism Michael A Sheehan to declare the Pakistan-based Lashkar-e-Taiba a terrorist group.

2. India-Pakistan Relationship

The Dawn quoted official sources as saying that India-Pakistan relations remained tense. The sources also said India had squandered an opportunity with the Hizbul Mujahideen ceasefire and had not reciprocated Pakistani offers to hold talks.

Pakistan Chief Executive Pervez Musharraf, speaking at the Pakistan Oil and Gas Conference 2000, said that India and Pakistan need to cooperate on oil and gas because India needed the proposed pipeline from Iran that would run through Pakistan.

KK Katyal argues in The Hindu that communal violence in Jammu and Kashmir threatens to develop into a full war, in parallel with the ongoing India-Pakistan conflict, that the region cannot afford.

3. Jammu and Kashmir

Indian Border Security Forces (BSF) officials were critical of Jammu and Kashmir Chief Minister Farooq Abdullah's offer to bring together state legislators to discuss the border fencing. The BSF would prefer to keep information on the fence secret from Pakistan and militant forces, while the legislators see the fence as redundant and a further restriction on the local population.

An article in Frontline Magazine by Praveen Swami highlights the communalistic divisions revealed by the conflict over census operations in Jammu and Kashmir.

4. Recent Violence

Jammu and Kashmir State Home Minister Mustaq Ahmad Lone said 18,582 families have been displaced by firing and shelling across the Line of Control since May, 1999. He said 11,044 families, or 43,510 individuals, continue to be displaced from their home villages in Jammu and Kashmir.

5. Afghanistan

Atul Aneja suggests in The Hindu that if the Taliban sweeps Afghanistan, they are more likely to focus on entrenching their power domestically than on spreading revolution to Central Asia in the name of pan-Islamic extremism or providing support to militants in Kashmir.

The joint statement signed by Russian President Vladimir Putin and Indian Prime Minister AB Vajpayee called for stronger sanctions against the Taliban, highlighting the importance of the situation for regional stability.

Sri Lanka

1. Election Results

The ruling People's Alliance (PA), which won 107 of 225 seats in the October 11 parliamentary elections, has been asked by Sri Lankan President Chandrika Kumaratunga to form a government. The opposition United National Party won 89 seats. The PA is attempting to form a government with the support of the Eelam People's Democratic Party (four seats), the National Unitary Alliance (three

seats), and an independent, to bring the coalition to 115 seats. The moderate Tamil United Liberation Front (TULF) demonstrated a comeback, winning about one-third of the votes cast in Jaffna and allowing it to claim three of the nine parliamentary seats.

Sri Lankan Prime Minister Ratnasiri Wickremanayake was sworn in for a second term. Sri Lankan President Chandrika Kumaratunga delayed swearing in her other cabinet officials to accommodate various members of the coalition with ministerial appointments.

2. Election Issues

The opposition United National Party threatened to seek to nullify the election because they said violence marred the election. European Union and other election monitors singled out the central province as having been affected by voting irregularities.

3. Election Commentary

Commentary on the recent elections in Sri Lanka said that President Chandrika Kumaratunga will have difficulty pushing her devolution proposals through the parliament because of the narrow majority she will have once a ruling coalition is formed. Prior to the election, Kumaratunga said she would revert to constitutional reform to solve the crisis while not letting up militarily against the LTTE, but her weak mandate may force her to find other ways to try to solve the war with the LTTE.

4. Bandarnaike Funeral

Former Prime Minister of Sri Lanka Sirimavo Bandaranaike, the world's first female prime minister and mother of President Chandrika Kumaratunga, died shortly after the election.

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