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Nuclear Issues

1. South Asian Nuclear Conditions

David Albright, at the Institute for Science and International Security (ISIS), updates estimates made in 1998 of the size of Pakistan and India's inventory of separated weapons-grade fissile materials. Albright estimates that Pakistan has a greater stock of weapons-grade plutonium and highly enriched uranium and is likely to have turned more of its material into weapons.

PR Chari argues in *The Hindu* that, just as the US, PRC, and Russia managed to not descend into nuclear war despite near misses and the irrationality of their leaders, India and Pakistan are likely to "muddle along despite periodic alarms." Chari also argues that India still has the option to pursue nuclear restraint and to not weaponize or deploy its nuclear weapons.

2. India Nuclear Policy

An article in *The Hindu* by G Balachandran argues that Russia can comply with international nonproliferation regimes, such as NPT and the Nuclear Suppliers Group, and still cooperate with India in nuclear energy.

The Hindu reported that recent statements by Indian Army Chief, General Sundararajan Padmanabhan, have led to speculation as to whether there has been a shift in Indian nuclear policy, raising further questions about who is responsible for determining Indian security policy.

India

1. Indian Military Cohesiveness

Indian Wing Commander NK Pant argued in an essay by the Institute for Peace and Conflict Studies in New Delhi, India, that the Indian military could significantly benefit from a more unitary approach to defense planning. Pant supports the implementation of a "Chief of the Defense Staff" concept.

An article in *The Hindu* argued that there was a need for a single Defense Intelligence Agency (DIA) at the peak of the three military services to enable coordination of their activities. The DIA should avoid the bureaucratization that affects the US DIA, and should be headed by the various military services in rotation.

2. Indian Security Policy

Speaking at the Combined Commanders' Conference of the Armed Forces, Defense Minister George Fernandes said that cross-border terrorism was growing and that the military should focus on preventing cross-border infiltration into Jammu and Kashmir.

3. India-PRC Relations

The Times of India reported on PRC media reports concerning India's "big power diplomacy" and

argued that the PRC was worried about India's strengthening relationship with the US and Russia.

Subhash Kapila, with the Institute for Peace and Conflict Studies in New Delhi, India, examines the India-Japan relationship. Kapila states that the PRC carries weight in Japan's and in India's strategic calculations because it has destabilized the sub-regions through aiding nuclear weaponization and missile programs in Pakistan and the DPRK.

Sonika Gupta, Research Officer with the Institute for Peace and Conflict Studies in New Delhi, India, states that while the PRC is a major conventional and nuclear threat to India, it is internally focused and not belligerent right now. Gupta argues that India must put the past behind it and move forward, balancing threat perceptions and fence-mending.

Indian Defense Minister George Fernandes said that he would not ignore reports by Arunachal Pradesh CM Mukut Mithi that a PRC-built mule trail has been used for infiltrating India from the PRC.

4. Foreign Relations: Russia, Bangladesh

Russian President Vladimir Putin, in a letter to Indian President KR Narayanan and Prime Minister AB Vajpayee, stated his intent to develop the India-Russia strategic partnership.

Senior officials in the Bangladesh Rifles (BDR) and the Indian Border Security Forces (BSF) met last week. The DBR intended to seek free access for its nationals between Bangladesh and its enclaves inside Indian territory.

Pakistan

1. United Nations Security Council

Pakistan Ambassador to the UN Shamshad Ahmad said the credibility of the UN Security Council is undermined every time it ignores a conflict. Ahmad called for comprehensive reform of the UNSC to make it more democratic and accountable.

An editorial in The Dawn argued that the ineffectiveness and selective morality of the UN Security Council was a result of the unipolar system now in existence under the US.

2. Pakistan Military

A two-day conference of Pakistani military commanders, presided over by Chief Executive Pervez Musharraf, met and discussed regional and geopolitical security issues and internal law and order.

A Pakistan Foreign Ministry spokesman said that the government of Pakistan was concerned about India's plan to purchase 350 multi-role jet fighters. The spokesman said, "The stated position of Pakistan is that it wants to avoid any arms race- be it nuclear or conventional."

The Pakistani Army is training regular soldiers and militants in mountaineering and high-altitude warfare to emphasize snow survival. The article argued this is threatening to India because it demonstrates that Pakistan intends to create Kargil-like situations along the border.

Kashmir

1. Pakistani Military Activities

The Pakistani daily The News reported that the Pakistani Army began moving nine Army divisions towards the International Border shared with India on October 21. A spokesman for the Pakistani Inter-Services Public Relations department said that the divisions were engaged in standard training.

Sources in the Indian Army said that the Army had not been notified of any military exercises being conducted close to the International Border. However, officers with the Indian Army said that there was no danger because the troops and the exercises were spread over such a large area.

Indian Defense Minister George Fernandes stated that there was no danger of a repetition of Kargil as a result of the Pakistani exercise about 75 km from the border. He said that Kargil resulted because India did not have enough troops deployed at the time.

2. India-Pakistan Talks

A joint paper by Pakistan's Institute for Regional Studies and India's International Centre for Peace Initiatives offers a forward-looking road-map to India-Pakistan rapprochement.

Former Pakistan Finance Minister Mubashir Hasan stated after a visit to New Delhi that India and Pakistan were likely to begin talks within a few months because of the positive effect Pakistan's Kashmir policy was having upon India.

3. Jammu and Kashmir

Indian Home Minister LK Advani stated that while the central government was in favor of devolution of power to Jammu and Kashmir, he ruled out a return to pre-1953 status for Kashmir as proposed by the recent autonomy measure passed in the Jammu and Kashmir State Assembly.

4. US Diplomatic Efforts

The South Asian media reported on a speech by US National Security Advisor Samuel Berger, who said that the US helped avert war between India and Pakistan in 1999.

The US-based Business Standard reported that sources in the US stated that US Secretary of State Madeleine Albright intended to visit Kashmir before the end of her term for personal reasons.

5. Militant Groups

Indian Home Minister LK Advani stated that the Indian government was willing to conduct talks with militant groups if they disarmed and came to the negotiating table.

Indian Defense Minister George Fernandes stated there would be no unilateral ceasefire in the campaign against militants in Jammu and Kashmir, because the Indian Army "cannot remain inactive against infiltration from across the border." However, Fernandes did endorse statements by the Indian Army that a political solution is better for Kashmir than a military one.

Jammu and Kashmir Pradesh Congress Committee president Mohammad Shafi Qureshi stated that the central government was not interested in holding talks with the militant Hizbul Mujahideen, and had only offered to boost India's image for Prime Minister AB Vajpayee's visit to the US.

The Times of India carried a report by the Pakistani Friday Times which stated that there was a serious split within the Harkat-ul-Mujahideen, also known as the Harkat-ul-Ansar. The Harkat was been named by the US as a terrorist organization and has since split into three factions.

Sri Lanka

1. Election Results

Sri Lankan President Chandrika Kumaratunga did not have a cabinet prior to the first meeting of the Parliament and was still attempting to formalize a coalition. The Times of India reported that there appeared to be some rapprochement between Kumaratunga and her estranged brother, opposition United National Party member Anura Bandaranaike, after the death of their mother. Bandaranaike was appointed Speaker of the Parliament, the first opposition party member so appointed in 40 years.

The Tamil Eelam People's Democratic Party and the Muslim National Unity Alliance will back Sri Lankan President Chandrika Kumaratunga's People's Alliance coalition, providing Kumaratunga with 117 of 225 seats in the parliament. In exchange, a Tamil member of parliament will hold a cabinet seat.

The United National Party agreed not to disrupt the People's Alliance's narrow margin in the parliament if President Chandrika Kumaratunga agreed to introduce reforms of the police, electoral department, judiciary, and the public sector. UNP leader Ranil Wickremesinghe predicted the parliament would not last its six-year term.

The Dawn reported that, contrary to Sri Lanka's democratic tradition, there were charges that the People's Alliance engaged in vote rigging, intimidation, and ballot stuffing. UNP leader Ranil Wickremesinghe said that new votes in affected areas would give the UNP nine additional votes, creating the need for a national unity coalition of minority parties led by the People's Alliance.

2. Military Actions

Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam (LTTE) boats armed with explosives breached security in the Trincomalee harbor, but were blocked by the Sri Lankan Navy. A total of 24 people were killed. The Sri Lankan Navy lost two vessels and one helicopter, and had another 43 sailors injured.

Afghanistan

1. Displaced Persons

More than 2,600 Afghan refugees crossed the border at Pakistan's Torkham border post. 18,000 Afghan's have sought asylum in recent weeks.

2. Cross-Border Violence

Iranian security forces killed eleven Afghans and freed the Afghan's hostages near the border with Afghanistan. In 1999, 740 Afghan smugglers and 174 Iranian security force troops were killed in border areas.

A Russia-US joint working group on counter-terrorism issued an agreement to seek additional UN sanctions against Afghanistan in order to put increased pressure on the Taliban to stop supporting terrorism.

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