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Nuclear Issues

1. India-Russia Nuclear Cooperation

Director of the Nuclear Power Corporation of India Limited VK Chaturvedi said the visit by Russian President Vladimir Putin to India is likely to open new cooperation between the India and Russia in nuclear power generation. He said the Russian government is providing the technical know-how for the Koodankulam nuclear power project near Kanniyakumari for establishing two units of 1000 Mw each, and construction will begin in February. Director of the Russian Atomic Institute B Malyshev said there was no change in Russia's attitude towards India after either the Pokharan-I or Pokharan-II nuclear tests.

2. India Nuclear Policy

The new chief of the Indian Army, General Sunderrajan Padmanabhan, said the Indian army will be trained to prepare for a nuclear war with an emphasis on weapons, tactics and war games. He said that "even if it is unlikely to take place... Nuclear weapons are weapons of tremendous power ... we have to war game, evolve, assess, internalize tactics and work out a series of approximations." Padmanabhan, who earlier served as Corps Commander in Srinagar and headed the Northern Command, said his immediate priority would be to tackle 'terrorism' in Kashmir.

India

1. India-Russia Relations

The centerpiece of the visit by Russian President Vladimir Putin to India will be the signing by Putin and Indian Prime Minister AB Vajpayee of an India-Russia Declaration on Strategic Partnership. Putin said, "Strategic does not mean military nor does it suggest the creation of any military alliance but will reflect national interests in reaction to globalization and mounting competition in the economic, technological and scientific spheres." Putin said the strategic partnership agreement proposed to be signed by him and Prime Minister Atal Bihari Vajpayee will in "some respects" be a "successor document" of the Indo-Soviet treaty of 1971. Russian military equipment still forms the core of India's armed forces and Putin's visit is expected to accelerate plans for Russian weaponry and spare parts to be manufactured in India. India Foreign Secretary Lalit Mansingh said both countries were determined to work together on the issue of terrorism because the threat faced by Russia in Chechnya and by India in Jammu and Kashmir emanated from the same source.

Foreign Secretary, Mr. Lalit Mansingh, said Russian talks with Pakistan would not harm India-Russian relations, which he said were "time-tested and based on continuity, trust and mutual understanding."

Sergei Prikhodko, Russian President's Chief Foreign Policy Adviser said the Declaration on Strategic Partnership, which Russian President Vladimir Putin will sign with Indian Prime Minister AB

Vajpayee, will signify a "qualitative leap" in bilateral relations. Prikhodko singled out a new 10-year program of cooperation in science and technology (ILTP); an inter- governmental agreement on cooperation in agriculture, a treaty on mutual legal assistance in civilian and commercial matters; a program of cultural, scientific and educational exchanges for 2000-2002; an accord on the principles of cooperation between Indian states and Russian provinces and a Memorandum of Understanding on mutual assistance between the Justice Ministries of the two countries. Prikhodko did not answer questions regarding whether the current visit by a Moscow envoy to Pakistan signified the start of a dialogue with the Taliban. He said, "We favor continued sanctions against the Taliban, maximum restrictions on any cooperation with the movement and preventing any aid, including financial, from reaching the Taliban."

A spokesman for the Russian Sukhoi Aircraft Corporation said the experience of joint work accumulated by his company and its Indian partners in jointly upgrading the SU-30 air fighter allowed them to undertake joint development of a fifth-generation jet. A Sukhoi delegation is also currently in India to finalize a contract for license production of another 140 SU-30MKI aircraft at Hindustan Aeronautics Limited (HAL) which is expected to be signed during Mr. Putin's visit.

The media in India also carried extensive coverage of Russian foreign policy and domestic politics in general during and immediately prior to the visit to India by Russian President Vladimir Putin. Many of the articles touched upon Russia's goal of reclaiming lost international prestige and upon Russia's regional relations as they pertain to Chechnya, India, Pakistan, and Afghanistan. An article in The Hindu argued that openness, transparency and intensive communication are the best means available to India and Russia to reassure each other about their diplomatic initiatives towards third countries of concern.

2. India-PRC Relations

The PRC has adopted a somewhat benign position regarding Russian President Vladimir Putin's visit. The PRC expressed hope that the visit of the Russian President Vladimir Putin to India would lead to peace and stability in the region. PRC Foreign Ministry spokesperson Sun Yuxi said, "We hope that the development of the India-Russia relationship will be beneficial for preserving regional security, peace and stability. Both India and Russia are our close neighbors and friendly nations. We want to see the relations between the two countries develop." However, the PRC did draw attention to Putin's recent advocacy of a nebulous form of cooperation between Russia, China, and India.

Indian Labor Minister Satyanarayan Jatiya, on an official visit to the PRC, announced that India and the PRC have signed their first Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) for closer cooperation on key labor issues to hasten the pace of economic growth. He said, "India has signed an MoU with China after both sides recognized the importance of employment, vocational training and social security to national economic development."

Former PRC ambassador to India and currently the deputy director of Chinese Center for International Studies in Beijing, Cheng Ruisheng, said Sino-India relations are improving fast and "India need not worry about limited arms sales to Pakistan by China in view of India's huge military procurement." He related the PRC's perspective on Kashmir and on India's quest for a permanent seat on the UN Security Council.

3. India-US Relations

At the second meeting of the Indo-U.S. joint working group (JWG) on counter-terrorism during which India conveyed its serious concern over Pakistan's sustained attempts at sponsoring cross-border terrorism in the name of "jihad" (holy war), India and the US agreed on a range of measures to

enhance cooperation to combat international terrorism. The US team was led by Michael A Sheehan, US coordinator for counter-terrorism, and the Indian delegation was headed by Alok Prasad, joint secretary (Americas) in the external affairs ministry.

Sources in the Indian government said that US officials were completing the necessary formalities for declaring the Lashkar-e-Taiba (LeT) a foreign terrorist organization, after the recent talks between the US and India on terrorism and narcotics trafficking.

The former National Security Adviser to US President Carter, Zbigniew Brzezinski, making a distinction between Islamic nation-states and Islamic terrorism, said India should not expect its relations with the US to be based on an alliance against Islamic fundamentalism. He contributed US hesitancy towards US-India relations to the Cold War past, the ambiguity inherent in the Indian position on nuclear weapons and US uneasiness about the possession of nuclear weapons by hostile neighbors and also doubts about India's economic ability.

The governments of India and the US signed an agreement to expand cooperation on narcotics control, which provides for US funding of US\$200,000 for providing equipment and training to Indian law enforcement agencies engaged in counter-narcotics operations.

4. Military hardware

India test-fired its Trishul short-range surface-to-air missile last week. The Trishul, which has triple battlefield roles for the Army, Air Force and Navy, has a range of 500 meter to 9 km, with the capacity of carrying a 15 kg warhead.

The Prabal missile boat, the Indian Navy's fourth, was launched and will be ready for active service in January, 2002. With a displacement of 477 tons, the boat carries surface-to-surface missiles.

The Indian government appointed Vice Admiral DN Ganesh, currently Flag Officer Commanding-in-Chief of the Cochin-based Southern naval command, to be director of the Advance Technology Vessel (ATV), the Indian top-secret nuclear submarine project. The project is being coordinated by the Defence Research and Development Organization (DRDO), and has been experiencing delays.

Home secretary Kamal Pande has stressed that there is an urgent need to revamp the intelligence machinery of the country. He said, "An effective intelligence machinery can dramatically shift the scales in favor of law enforcement agencies. We have to concede that the analytical and interpretative capabilities of our intelligence agencies are much below the requisite levels." He accused State law enforcement agencies of parochial concerns.

The Task Force on Intelligence apparatus, which examined the recommendations of the Kargil Committee report on intelligence leading to the Kargil War, has submitted its report to the group of ministers (GOM), which examines the role of various Indian intelligence organizations and recommends specific proposal for implementation.

An article in The Hindu by C Raja Mohan which argued that India will be tempted to return to defining a geopolitical grand strategy by the strengthening relations with Russia, the US, and even the PRC, but should instead focus on its core problems with Kashmir, Afghanistan, Pakistan, and the PRC. India should focus on cooperative, rather than balancing, policies.

Lieutenant General Sundarajan Padmanabhan took over as Chief of Army Staff, the fourth artillery officer to occupy the Indian Army's highest office.

5. Indian Defense Relations: South Africa, Israel

Indian Defence Minister George Fernandes and South African Defence Minister Patrick Lekota signed a defense cooperation agreement to expand and formalize cooperation in the areas of defence and defence industry. The agreement will institutionalize regular dialogue on defence and security issues, cooperation in defence science and technology, and exchange programs for military and medical personnel.

An article in The Hindu by Kesava Menon cited an article in the Israeli Haaretz that said Israel is hesitant to sell India the Phalcon radar system because of US pressure as well as a fear that the sale could jeopardize establishing relations with Pakistan. Menon voiced concern that this is the first step in Pakistan affecting the India-Israel relationship.

6. German Aid Resumed

German Foreign Minister Joschka Fischer made a three-day official visit to India to further consolidate bilateral ties and he signaled complete normalization of India-Germany ties. At the beginning of the visit, Fischer announced Germany's intention to implement a phased resumption of development aid to India, suspended since the Pokhran nuclear tests in May, 1998. Germany, along with Japan, was one of the largest international donors to India, extending up to DM400 million financial assistance each year. Fischer held discussions with External Affairs Minister Jaswant Singh and reached general understandings on Kashmir, the Comprehensive Test Ban Treaty, enlargement of the UN Security Council, and other regional and international issues.

7. Flood

Severe flooding struck West Bengal, leaving as many as one thousand dead and 18 million marooned and homeless.

8. United Nations

Indian ambassador to the UN Kamallesh Sharma said in the UN General Assembly that the Security Council could not claim to act on behalf of the world body in the present circumstances. He said, "Over the last few years, the Security Council has used an elastic concept of security to stretch its mandate well beyond what the charter gave to it... The lack of adequate representation of developing countries in the council severely impairs its functioning and casts a shadow on the legitimacy of its decisions which mainly impacts developing countries."

Indian ambassador to the UN Kamallesh Sharma urged the UN to focus its attention on international terrorism and mobilize international opinion against juntas, but did not mention Pakistan by name.

Pakistan

1. Pakistan Nuclear Policy

The Pakistan Atomic Energy Commission took control of the Chashma Nuclear Power Plant (CHASNUPP) from the China National Nuclear Corporation (CNNC) in a simple ceremony. Dr Ashfaq Ahmad, Chairman PAEC congratulated the Chinese and the Pakistani engineers and appreciated their painstaking efforts to make the project a success.

2. US Terrorism List

US President Bill Clinton, according to a press release of the Indo-American Political Foundation,

reportedly said Pakistan may have to be declared a terrorist state. He said, "We don't know if that is effective but at some point we may have to do that."

3. Russian Relations

Pakistani media carried reports that Russian President Vladimir Putin intended to accept an invitation to visit Pakistan. Sergei Yastrzhembsky, aide to Russian President Vladimir Putin, said that acceptance of the invitation would depend on Pakistan's readiness to heed Russian concerns about "the situation in the region and in Central Asia, including Afghanistan." Alexei Volin, deputy chief of the Russian Government Staff, said, "There will be no defence cooperation with Pakistan, because India is all too important for Russia to jeopardize our ties."

Russian officials announced that Interior Ministers from Russia, Pakistan, Tajikistan and Uzbekistan would soon meet in Islamabad to discuss drug trafficking, trans-national crimes and illegal migration. Russia is concerned about sectarian violence and terrorism in the region, including the possibility that Chechen terrorists were receiving training in Afghanistan, possibly with Pakistani support. Russian President Vladimir Putin's Special Envoy Sergey Vladimirovich Yasterzhembsky called on Pakistan Chief Executive General Pervez Musharraf and conveyed Russia's concerns on the policies of Taliban and the growth of fundamentalist Islamic groups in the region. He urged Pakistan to play a substantive role in preventing expansion of radical and extremist Islamic groups in the region. As the Taliban cements their position in Afghanistan, this raises concerns for the stability of republics throughout Central Asia.

4. Pakistan-EU Relations

The European Union Ambassador to Pakistan Kurt Juul said that the EU had postponed signing of an agreement with that was finalized last year Pakistan pending restoration of democracy and 'respect for human rights'.

A three-member European Union mission, comprising senior diplomats from France and Sweden, will visit Pakistan next month for exploratory talks with the military government. A diplomatic source said the mission was decided upon because "Many member countries were not prepared to allow the EU to engage in direct formal dialogue with the military junta."

An IMF official, responding to the Pakistan Finance minister's official statement regarding an agreement having been reached with an IMF official's mission in Pakistan over a bailout for Pakistan, specifying a figure of \$ 700 million standby loan and some rescheduling of debts that it was too early to mention any figures, said there were still stages to be covered before final approval could be given.

5. Extradition Agreements

The Pakistan Foreign Office issued a statement that said Pakistan and Russia have agreed to conclude an extradition treaty and work in close cooperation with each other in the fight against terrorism, arms, narcotics trafficking and illegal immigration. Interior Secretary, Mr. Hassan Raza Pasha, said extradition treaties had been signed with 26 countries and more would be signed to facilitate the bringing back of wanted persons.

6. Military Hardware

The Pakistan Aeronautical Complex is scheduled to begin full-fledged serial production of the S-7 multi-role combat aircraft, enabling the Pakistan Air Force (PAF) to induct 150 to 200 fighters by 2003. The S-7 aircraft is expected to replace large number of in service F-6s, A-5s and F-7s. Pakistan

and the PRC are jointly manufacturing the Super-7 fighter and the PRC has promised orders.

Kashmir

1. Militant Groups

Hizbul Mujahideen spokesman Saleem Hashmi said the Hizbul would consider reinstating a ceasefire in Kashmir only if it received assurances from the international community that India would disengage from tripartite talks once they were prepared. India is not agreeable to the outfit's demand for tripartite talks involving Pakistan and is also against third-party mediation in resolving the Kashmir issue.

Jamaat-e-Islami Qazi Hussain Ahmed criticized the military as having failed miserably in all fields and that it was time to return to the barracks. The confrontation is unusual as in the past the Jamaat was considered an ardent supporter of the army rule and military governments, but their relationship has declined since the ceasefire proposal.

2. Russian Diplomacy

Russia called for the resumption of talks between India and Pakistan and expressed readiness to help resolve the long-standing problem of Kashmir. The Russian daily Kommersant wrote, "In response to Russia's request for brokering contacts with the Afghan Taliban, Pakistan is expecting in return Russia's help in dialogue with India on Kashmir." The agreement to sign a bilateral accord on combating terrorism, illicit drug and arms trade and illegal immigration was the only "tangible outcome" of Kremlin envoy Sergei Yastrzhembsky's Islamabad mission. Yastrzhembsky said he had grounds to feel "cautiously optimistic" about better future relations between Russia and Pakistan.

3. EU Diplomacy

Diplomats from four European countries held talks with leaders of the All-Parties Hurriyat Conference and the mediator in the aborted talks between the Indian government and the Hizbul Mujahideen, Fazal Haq Qureshi, who is also chairman of the Jammu and Kashmir People's Political Front. The delegation included Michal Caillouet of the EU, French ambassador to India Bernard de Montferand, John Nordenfelt (Sweden), Guy Trouveroy (Belgium) and Eva Nguyen Binh, First Secretary of the French Embassy in New Delhi, Hurriyat chairman Prof Abdul Gani Bhat said, "I cannot talk of mediation or intervention. The world opinion is in favor of resolution of the Kashmir issue peacefully through dialogue." The European diplomats also met with officials in the Jammu and Kashmir state government and other militant groups.

4. War Refugees

The Times of India reported that 70,000 Hindus who had crossed over during the 1971 war still carry the refugee tag and a number of them are yet to get Indian nationality. Singh Sodha, a migrant, said "Mr Vajpayee and Mr Shekhawat raised our issues when they were in the Jan Sangh. Now they are in power, but they have forgotten the commitments towards us. We are not refugees, we are displaced persons."

Sri Lanka

1. Sri Lankan Election

Opposition parties have been harping on the "political motive" of President Chandrika Kumaratunga's new Jaffna campaign against the Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam. The military and Kumaratunga's People's Alliance (PA) deny this is the case, but admit that the assault will at least hamper any LTTE attempt to interfere with the October 10 polls. Kumaratunga must get the message across to the electorate that she is not going soft on the LTTE, despite her campaign to devolve more powers to the Tamils in the North and East.

2. LTTE Bomber Threat

The Times of India reported that despite intelligence reports received by law enforcement officials warning of threatened bomb strikes by LTTE bombers, politicians have not taken the threat to the elections seriously enough. Chief of police Lucky Kodithawakku has briefed ministers on precautions to be taken during the campaign. He said, "With the reports of LTTE losses in Jaffna mounting, we expect them to push more bombers into Colombo in order to show their presence."

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