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Nuclear Issues

1. India Nuclear Policy

Indian Minister for External Affairs Jaswant Singh said India would continue to observe a moratorium on further nuclear tests and would not prevent the Comprehensive Test Ban Treaty from coming into force. He said, "It is not just weapons of mass destruction or an arms race that endanger peace but also dehumanizing poverty and lack of development." He said India's nuclear policy included a unilateral moratorium on testing, no first use, a tight export regime, and a willingness to engage other nations on all aspects of international security.

Indian National Security Advisor Brajesh Mishra said India could withdraw the unilateral moratorium on further nuclear testing if its national interests were threatened. He said, "If our supreme national interests are in jeopardy, we can withdraw."

Indian Prime Minister AB Vajpayee criticized the established Nuclear Weapons States (NWS) as using "one yardstick for themselves and another for others" on the issue of nuclear disarmament. He said the NWS should make declarations similar to India's no first-use policy for nuclear weapons.

2. Pakistan Nuclear Policy

Pakistan Foreign Minister Adbul Sattar stated that Pakistan would have signed the Comprehensive Test Ban Treaty if not for the May 1998 nuclear tests by India. Sattar said Pakistan had supported the idea of the CTBT since it was conceived.

India

1. Naval Good-will Visits: PRC, Japan

The Indian Navy destroyer INS Delhi and corvette INS Kora completed a good-will visit to Shanghai, the first such visit to the PRC since India's nuclear tests, and sailed for a similar good-will visit to Japan. The Japanese visit culminated in the first India-Japan bilateral naval exercise.

An article in The Hindu praised the Indian naval visit to the PRC, emphasizing the constructiveness of the visit for bilateral India-PRC relations and for combating piracy in the sea-lanes in Southeast Asia.

2. India-US Relations

An editorial in the Times of India after Prime Minister AB Vajpayee's visit to the US stated that the US seemed to come to terms with India's possession of a nuclear arsenal while India made none of the concessions that had been expected on Kashmir, talks with Pakistan, or US mediation. Vajpayee briefed Indian President KR Narayanan on his US visit.

US Commander-in-Chief of the Pacific Admiral Dennis C Blair, while visiting India, said sanctions by the US against India have affected India-US military-to-military cooperation. He added, "India knows what the US expects to restore full Indo-US military relations."

An article in The Dawn reported on an editorial in the New York Times, which argued that the Kashmir issue was "one of the gravest threats to world stability," and that the improved US-India bilateral relationship should be accompanied by greater pressure on India by the US to defuse tensions with Pakistan. The Times also argued that India should demonstrate nuclear restraint to avoid provoking Pakistan or the PRC.

3. Israeli Security Team

The Times of India reported that an Israeli team of counter-terrorism experts was visiting Jammu and Kashmir under the invitation of Home Minister LK Advani and would prepare a feasibility study of Indian security needs. A government spokesman later denied that Advani had invited the team.

4. India-Iraq Trade Relations

Indian Minister of State for External Affairs Ajith Kumar Panja led a trade delegation to Iraq to discuss strengthening bilateral economic ties.

5. India-Russian Relations

Russian Deputy Prime Minister Ilya Klebanov is in India to finalize agreements prior to the visit by Russian President Vladimir Putin. He said Russia wanted to take part in nuclear power projects in India and that India would soon sign the Comprehensive Test Ban Treaty. The agreements include the finalization of a new 10-year agreement to replace the Integrated Long-Term Programme of Cooperation in Science and Technology, which is set to expire this year.

6. Military Hardware

The Indian government successfully retested the Akash missile. The Akash is a multi-role surface-to-air missile with a maximum range of 25 km and a ceiling height of 18 km.

India is discussing with the Israeli government the acquisition of advanced radar equipment fitted to the Arrow anti-ballistic missile system designed by Israel with the assistance of the US. India is also considering the purchase of two planes equipped with the Phalcon radar system.

Indian Defense Minister George Fernandes said the Indian Army has placed an order for 124 domestically produced Arjun main battle tanks, though the timeline for production will force India to acquire Russian T-90 tanks.

Indian Air Chief Marshal AY Tipnis reported that delivery of 40 Russian SU-30MKI warplanes and upgrading of already acquired SU-30MKI and SU30K multi-role fighters would begin next year. The acquisition and upgrading of all 50 SU-MKI fighters will be completed by 2004-5. A contract for Indian indigenous production of 140 SU-MKI is expected to be signed during Russian President Vladimir Putin's upcoming visit.

Pakistan

1. Pakistan-US Relations

Pakistan Foreign Minister Adbul Sattar stated that Pakistan was not concerned about the improvement of US-India bilateral relations. He said, "We have been assured again and again that the US is not following a zero-sum game in South Asia."

Pakistan Chief Executive Pervez Musharraf said the growing US-India ties are a concern for Pakistanis who feel that their Cold War-ally is abandoning them. He also urged the US to play a stronger role in Kashmir and to drop its plans to tighten UN sanctions against the Taliban in Afghanistan.

2. Missile Development

A Pakistani Army senior official reported that Pakistan had begun serial production of the Shaheen-I terminal guided medium-range missile, which has a range of 600-750 km and can field a nuclear warhead. Pakistan nuclear scientist Abdul Qadeer Khan said Pakistan was ready to test the intermediate range ballistic missile Shaheen-II, which may have a range of 2,500 km. He said Pakistan had a foolproof and flawless system in place for the delivery of nuclear weapons.

3. Pakistan-Russia Relations

Russian President Vladimir Putin, speaking at an event in which the Pakistani Ambassador to Russia presented his credentials to Putin, said Pakistan had special importance for Russia and stressed the need for bilateral cooperation.

4. Separatist Movements

A statement by the leadership of the Sindhi, after the London meeting of the Sindhi, Paktoon, and Muttahida Qaumi Movement (MQM) leaders, demanded the right of self-determination for Sindh within Pakistan. They said, "Sindh has been denied the status of an independent, autonomous and sovereign state as envisaged in the Pakistan Resolution of 1940."

Kashmir

1. EU Mission to Kashmir

A delegation with ambassadors from France, Sweden, Belgium and Portugal, led by EU ambassador Michel Caillouet, conducted a fact-finding mission in Jammu and Kashmir. An EU delegation has visited every year for the past five years. They also met with the leaders of the All-Parties Hurriyat Conference and Fazal Haq Qureshi, mediator in the aborted talks between the Indian government and the Hizbul Mujahideen.

2. India-Pakistan Talks

Indian External Affairs Minister Jaswant Singh, speaking about India-Pakistan talks, said "We can change a friend, but not a neighbor... So India will start dialogue with Pakistan again." However, he did not specify any conditions for talks nor mention a timeline. Official Indian government sources dismissed his statement.

The Deccan Herald reported that there is growing tension in Pakistan from increased expectations for serious armed conflict between India and Pakistan. The article argued that there were fewer reasons for Pakistan than India to exercise self-restraint, and that Pakistan views the status quo as undermining its interests in Kashmir.

A spokesman for the Pakistan Fishermen's Cooperative Society, Haji Ghazanfar Ali Boota said 137 detained Pakistani fishermen were likely to be released by India in exchange for the release of 112 Indian fishermen.

Dushni Weerakoon argued in Himal Magazine that strained relations between India and Pakistan will prevent the successful negotiation of a South Asia-area free trade agreement. In its stead, bilateral trade agreements have come into force, but there is the danger of alienating the region-wide consensus that is needed for a free-trade region.

3. Indian Initiatives in Jammu and Kashmir

Indian Army Lieutenant General AS Khanna said the Indian government had begun fencing a 187 km-long section of the international border, rather than the Line of Control, in Kashmir to prevent infiltration by guerillas.

4. Jammu and Kashmir Census

The Jammu and Kashmir State government was reported to have decided to provide security personnel to protect those implementing the second and final stage of the census operation. The second phase had been held up because of threats by the Hizbul Mujahideen, which repeated its threat again this week.

5. Militant Groups

An Indian government ban on militant outfits operating in Jammu and Kashmir lapsed in February and militant groups are technically legal as long as they don't otherwise act illegally by injuring people or destroying property.

6. Kashmir Violence

Pakistan increased shelling along the Line of Control. Reports have said this was in order for Pakistan to push militants into Jammu and Kashmir before winter begins.

The Pakistani army reported that 14 Indian soldiers had been killed when 70-80 Indian soldiers attempted to take a Pakistani post along the Line of Control.

The Times of India reported that a bomb exploded in Kargil, a region that had so far been free of militant groups.

Militants fired 16 or 17 rockets at Rajouri, but there was no damage.

The links below provide additional coverage of incidents of violence that occurred in the past week in Jammu and Kashmir. The Indian Army reported 65 militants killed in the first 19 days of this month, compared to 81 during all of August.

Sri Lanka

1. India-Pakistan Role

An editorial in Himal Magazine argued that Sri Lanka may turn to Pakistan for military aid after receiving a hesitant response from India. India is caught between a concern for provoking its own

Tamil minorities and a desire not to see Sri Lanka turn to Pakistan for assistance.

2. Military Actions

Sri Lankan government soldiers gained control of Chavakachcheri from the Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam (LTTE), who were repulsed in their attempt to retake the city. 111 people died on both sides. Two LTTE boats were destroyed near Chalai. An LTTE ambush killed 21 Sri Lankan soldiers.

3. Child Soldiers

After Sri Lankan government soldiers gained control of Chavakachcheri, the LTTE reportedly abducted school girls to fill their deflated ranks.

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