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Nuclear Issues

1. US NMD

An editorial in the Times of India argued that the decision by US President Bill Clinton to defer the decision regarding deployment of the proposed National Missile Defense system has relieved pressure on the US at the UN Millennium Summit. However, the explanation given for this decision revealed a lack of confidence in international non-proliferation regimes and therefore weakens them.

2. Nuclear Policy in South Asia

An editorial in the Times of India argued that India should not pander to US beliefs about nuclear proliferation. Rather, India should present the US with a new regional security concept, one which demonstrates that the PRC's influence can be contained by regional actors.

VR Raghavan argues in The Hindu that nuclear deterrence is built through reassurances, which requires talks with one's adversary and a reduction in fear. Raghavan further argues that South Asia is victim of two contrasting trends: the imperative of India and Pakistan to become recognized as nuclear weapons states, and their unwillingness to engage in official talks on nuclear issues.

India

1. International Agreements

Indian President Narayanan gave his assent to the parliamentary bill related to implementing India's obligations as a signatory to the Chemical Weapons Convention.

Indian Prime Minister AB Vajpayee's primary secretary Brajesh Mishra stated that Vajpayee would not meet with Pakistan Chief Executive Pervez Musharraf at the UN Millennium Summit. He also said India does not intend to sign the Comprehensive Test Ban Treaty in the near future.

2. India-US Relations

Indian Prime Minister AB Vajpayee delayed his trip to the US by two days due to medical reasons, canceling a trip to San Francisco. He will meet with Russian President Vladimir Putin on the sidelines of the UN Millennium Summit. Indian Prime Minister AB Vajpayee's visit to the US could be an attempt to confirm India's post-Cold War alignment with the US.

C Raja Mohan argues that since the Kashmir issue will be prominent in Vajpayee's talks with US President Bill Clinton, Vajpayee must be prepared to lay down new statements on India's position while protecting certain core diplomatic principles.

In "The Arrogance of Power: The Secret World of Richard Nixon," Anthony Summers argued that Nixon considered the use of nuclear weapons during the 1971 India-Pakistan War in the event that the PRC or USSR became involved in the conflict.

3. Anti-Terrorism Initiatives

Indian Foreign Secretary Lalit Mansingh held two day of talks with US Under-Secretary of State for Political Affairs Thomas Pickering and said that the US assured India of its support for India's terrorism convention initiative. The Indo-US Joint Working Group on counter-terrorism has been

expanded to include drug trafficking.

British Home Secretary Jack Straw and Indian Home Minister LK Advani formed a Joint Working Group to counter terrorism on a bilateral basis, as well as increase coordination to combat drug trafficking and other crimes. India and France have complained that Muslim terrorist groups have used British territory to operate. India-British relations have improved since the 1998 Pokhran missile tests.

4. India-PRC Relations

India will send two warships to the PRC to participate in politically symbolic naval exercises. Exercises with the PRC Navy will be followed by exercises with Singapore, Indonesia, Vietnam, and South Korea in the South China Sea.

VV Paranjpe argued in The Hindu that India-PRC ties have improved but relations are still not "friendly," as evidenced by the PRC's continued support for Pakistan and its failure to support India's bid for a permanent seat on the UN Security Council. The relationship is complicated by Sino-Pakistani collusion on weapons and by the failure to resolve the Sino-Indian border.

5. Foreign Relations: South Africa

India and South Africa will sign a defense cooperation agreement to focus on cooperation at the strategic level. Cooperation will include joint military training and exercises.

6. Military Hardware

The India Air Force will have ready the first batch of upgraded Mig-21 fighters and will also receive from Russia an advanced version of the Sukhoi-30 MK1. India's Union Cabinet has also granted approval for the purchase of 10 French Mirage-2000H multi-role aircraft to compensate for attrition in the fleet. India is also preparing to buy 35-40 Hawk-100 jet trainers from Britain.

India expects to sign an agreement with Russia prior to the visit of Russian President Vladimir Putin for the purchase of 124 T-90S tanks and the licensed production of another 186 in India.

The Indian Air Force reported that its combined tonnage of annually airlifted logistical materials has increased by 15,000 tons to 40,000 since the Kargil incident.

Pakistan

1. PRC Proliferation

The Times of India covered a report issued by the Monterey Institute for International Studies that stated that the PRC has been a constant supplier to Pakistan of nuclear products and services. The report provides details of these transactions and of transactions related to missile equipment and technology.

2. IMF

The US is not expected to block any IMF plan to resume assistance to Pakistan. The US must provide a waiver to enable the IMF or World Bank to proceed because of sanctions imposed by the US after the 1998 nuclear tests.

An editorial in The Dawn argued that the 1999 IMF bailout package is set to expire and Pakistan requires a second package or it will be worse off financially than after the 1998 nuclear test. The editorial also argued that the IMF should ensure pressure by IMF members states upon Pakistan to sign the Comprehensive Test Ban Treaty or to extradite Osama Bin Laden does not become so great as to interfere with a rescue operation.

3. Military Government

Pakistan's Business Recorder reported that prior to his trip to the US, Pakistan Chief Executive Pervez Musharraf is likely to assume the office of President of Pakistan.

Pakistan Chief Executive Pervez Musharraf reshuffled the top leadership of the military. The move was reported as being in anticipation of the retirement of five generals, but analysts reported that the move also rewards several generals who were central to the coup.

Kashmir

1. India-Pakistan Dialogue

Former Indian Union Home Minister Mufti Mohammed Sayeed said that no conditions should be put on talks with Pakistan and that the condition that Pakistan stop cross-border terrorism "appears vague as negotiations have no barometer to begin with."

2. Kargil Peaks

Indian MP RK Anand claimed that Pakistani forces continued to occupy six positions on the Indian side of the Line of Control, including Point 5353. Pakistan Foreign Office spokesman Riaz Mohammad Khan rejected the statement that Pakistani troops were on the Indian side of the Line of Control. Indian Minister for State Defense Hiren Pathak stated that Point 5353 was never under Indian control and said no Kargil peaks were under Pakistani control.

3. India-Pakistan Fisheries Issues

An Indian Ministry of External Affairs spokesman reported that Pakistan had denied consular access to 11 Indian fishermen whose boat had recently sunk while in Pakistani waters. Pakistan said they had been hospitalized and India would be granted consular access.

The Dawn reported that 301 Pakistani fishermen had been detained in India while 112 Indian fishermen had been detained in Pakistan.

Chief Executive Pervez Musharraf made the decision to revoke licenses for foreign deep-sea fishermen to operate in Pakistani waters. This decision affects 19 foreign trawlers who had been issued licenses and used them.

4. India-Pakistan Trade

India is seeking to resume the export of sugar to Pakistan with a 100,000 ton shipment. Sugar exports had stopped after the Kargil incident.

5. Militant Groups

The apex body of the Jamat-e-Islami placed two additional people in a position to represent the Jamat at the All-Parties Hurriyat Conference. This move takes power away from Syed Ali Shah Geelani, who was the sole Jamat representative as chairman of the APHC. Geelani and Jamat president Ghulam Mohammad Bhat had disagreed on the Jamat's stand on the Hizbul Mujahideen ceasefire.

Masood, official Hizbul Mujahideen spokesman, urged the Indian government to state a clear policy on talks with militant groups. He said talks must be transparent and India must agree to involve Pakistan.

The Jammu and Kashmir Liberation Front has urged the international community to accept the JKLF's five-stage formula for the independence of the region, and warned that it would not tolerate being sidelined in talks.

6. Census in Jammu and Kashmir

The Jammu and Kashmir state government decided to move forward with a census despite a threat by the Hizbul Mujahideen.

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