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INDIA:

Dealing With the Punjab Crisis

New Delhi is continuing to deal harshly with both Sikh moderates and extremists and is preparing to issue a "white paper" on the causes of the crisis in Punjab. [REDACTED]

[REDACTED] Prime Minister Gandhi is adamant that she will not negotiate with the Sikhs until Punjab has returned to normal. [REDACTED]

Authorities in Punjab on Thursday arrested the acting leaders of two Sikh organizations who had called a meeting of prominent Sikhs and religious elders, according to press accounts. More than 6,000 Sikhs are being detained under the national security act. Two senior state administrators resigned after senior officials in New Delhi alleged that their failure to crack down on Sikh dissidence during the past two years contributed to the crisis, according to press reports. [REDACTED]

[REDACTED] the publication of the white paper has been delayed, apparently because of disagreements about how to handle the question of foreign support for the Sikh extremists.

Comment: Gandhi's hard line apparently reflects her determination to avoid any appearance of compromise that might dilute Hindu support for her crackdown in an election year. Her actions probably will delay the emergence of a new moderate Sikh leadership and could prompt disaffected Sikhs to turn to the extremists. [REDACTED]

The government's white paper will be the first since the Sino-Indian war in 1962. Gandhi may choose to play down charges against the US, but she probably will calculate that accusing Pakistan of involvement will be well received by Hindu voters. [REDACTED]