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INDIA:

Sikh Troops Protest

The government is trying to minimize the mutiny of some Sikh troops and to shift blame for recent violence in Punjab to foreign involvement there. [REDACTED]

[REDACTED] despite government efforts to control publicity, the news is spreading of the rebellion of Sikh troops in Ramgarh, Ganganagar, and Pune. [REDACTED]

[REDACTED] the loyalty of the Sikh soldiers is divided between the Army and their religious group. [REDACTED]

A senior military officer publicly reported the capture of weapons made in Pakistan and China in the Sikh temple complex at Amritsar. He also identified as Pakistanis two persons killed during the assault by security forces last week. Senior Pakistani officials have denied the allegations and expressed hope that progress toward normalizing relations will not suffer. (C) [REDACTED]

Comment: The sporadic violence is likely to continue, but the Army remains in control and is prepared to carry out further government orders. Nonetheless, the Sikh unrest in the longer run may prompt New Delhi to extend its policy of integrating the Army, below even the brigade level, to reduce the risk of future religious rebellions by military units. The Sikhs form the single largest religious and ethnic group within the Army, comprising 11 percent of its total strength and 20 to 30 percent of the officer corps. [REDACTED]

The charges of Pakistani complicity aim to discredit the Sikh extremists, but they may also undercut recent efforts to improve relations before bilateral negotiations resume next month. Allegations of foreign involvement are unlikely to deflect the concern of the Indian public about the integrity of the Army, but most Indians so far have reacted positively to Prime Minister Gandhi's crackdown. [REDACTED]

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