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# SANDNet Weekly Update, April 18, 2003

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## **Nuclear Issues**

### **1. News and Analysis**

India and Pakistan test fired nuclear-capable surface-to-surface missiles (Hindustan Times, India). Kunwar Idris (Dawn, Pakistan) considers Pakistan's fear of being next on the US hit list and Jane's Intelligence Digest reported that the US closely monitors Pakistan nuclear program, with a contingency plan in place should nuclear assets or technology fall into the hands of Islamic fundamentalists (Indian Express, India). The CIA released an unclassified report that cited Indian assistance in developing Libya's missile technology (Hindustan Times, India).

["Nuclear power and Kashmir"](#)

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## **Afghanistan**

### **1. News and Analysis**

During a renewed effort to track down the Taliban (Dawn, Pakistan), US air forces mistakenly bombed a home, killing 11 Afghan civilians (Jang, Pakistan), prompting Amnesty International to call for an investigation (Dawn, Pakistan). General Tommy Franks reiterated the US' commitment to rebuilding Afghanistan (Jang, Pakistan), which, argues Marc Kaufman (Dawn, Pakistan) has been reduced to simply establishing the basics of a working government. In an unprecedented step outside of its jurisdiction, NATO agreed to take command of the International Security Assistance Force (ISAF), which operates under a UN mandate (Dawn, Pakistan).

["Inquiry urged into Afghan bombing"](#)

["Rebuilding Afghanistan a bitter task for US"](#)

["Nato to take over Afghan peacekeeping force"](#)

Afghan Foreign Minister Dr. Abdullah Abdullah explained that his country was not interested in normalizing relations with Israel (Jang, Pakistan). On the North Waziristan border, security forces from Afghanistan traded fire with Pakistani guards (Jang, Pakistan). While some Afghan refugees are posing as Pakistani citizens to secure jobs and travel abroad (Dawn, Pakistan), several hundred others found their way back to Afghanistan, a process facilitated by the UNHCR.

["Afghans travel on fake Pakistani passports"](#)

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## **India-Pakistan Tensions**

### **1. Iraq War Fallout & Doctrine of Preemption**

Immediately after the fall of Baghdad, Indian External Affairs Minister Yashwant Sinha applied the doctrine of pre-emptive strikes against Pakistan (Outlook, India). Khursheed Mehmood Kasuri responded by warning Sinha that "[i]f India launches into anything stupid, they will pay a price" (Dawn, Pakistan). Despite US Secretary of State Colin Powell's dismissal of this extreme analogy, Indian Defense Minister George Fernandes supported Sinha's earlier remarks, adding, "Pakistan is in the habit of lying," which he later clarified as "casual and not any policy decision" (Hindustan Times, India and The Hindu, India).

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["Rajya Sabha Resolution: The Right Of Pre-Emptive Strike"](#)

["Pakistan's missiles better than India's: Kasuri"](#)

["Remarks were casual, says Fernandes"](#)

J.N. Dixit (Indian Express, India) evaluates the feasibility of pre-emptive strikes by India, while Hussain Haqqani argues that India cannot afford such attacks. Aqil Shah (Dawn, Pakistan) weighs Anglo-American pressures to "forego adventurism and adopt the path of dialogue and diplomacy," especially given the US' pursuit of Iraq. A Dawn (Pakistan) editorial criticizes India's "fantasy" of pre-emption while an editorial from Indian Express (India) juxtaposes Kashmir with Iraq.

["Locked in mortal combat?"](#)

["India's 'pre-emption' fantasy"](#)

## **2. Mediation by the US and Russia**

US Secretary of State Colin Powell indicated a renewed interest in facilitating the resolution of the Kashmir dispute (Dawn, Pakistan). The US is reportedly sending over Deputy Secretary Richard Armitage and Assistant Secretary Christina Rocca on a peace mission (Deccan Herald, India). Russia, too, called upon India and Pakistan to pursue peaceful means of resolution (Dawn, Pakistan). During the last 3 months, the Indian government completed nearly 60% of the removal of anti-tank and anti-personnel mines (Deccan Herald, India).

## **3. Trilateral Relations Between India-US-Pakistan**

Amit Baruah (The Hindu, India) observes that the "renewed American entente with Pakistan has clearly irritated India." Consequently, India shifted its "middle path approach" in dealing with the US and Pakistan - both members of the UN Security Council - a trend that Ninan Koshy analyzes in Foreign Policy In Focus. C. Raja Mohan (The Hindu, India) predicts that "[i]f New Delhi and Washington do not arrive at a shared approach on Pakistan, it is inevitable that the subcontinent will drift towards a renewed military confrontation." The Vice President of the Muttahida Majlis-i-Amal (MMA) publicly stated that failure to restrict US forces in Afghanistan and Iraq could turn Pakistan into the next US target (Dawn, Pakistan). An unidentified US Department official declared that the US would continue military sales and economic assistance to Pakistan, in spite of sanctions on the Khan Research Laboratory (Dawn, Pakistan).

["A reactive exercise"](#)

["Indo-U.S. dialogue on Pakistan"](#)

["Pakistan must stop US advances, says Qazi"](#)

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## **Pakistan**

### **1. Domestic Situation**

Government and opposition parties remain locked in debate over the inclusion of the Legal Framework Order (LFO) in the 1973 Constitution (The Hindu, India). President Pervez Musharraf has declared his unwillingness to step down as Chief of Army Staff, citing fear of political destabilization (Jang, Pakistan). An editorial from Dawn (Pakistan) offers a historical perspective on the LFO impasse and Masud Akhtar Shaikh (Jang, Pakistan) explores the military's intentions in stalling this reform. B. Muralidhar Reddy (Frontline, India) discusses The International Crisis Group's recent report that warns of the ascendancy of extreme religious groups and Pakistan's subsequent Islamization.

["Impasse over LFO"](#)

Of the five accused in last year's US embassy bombing in Karachi, the Pakistani Anti-Terrorism Court convicted four, including the chief and general secretary of Harkat-ul-Mujahideen (HuM), a banned militant group (Dawn, Pakistan). Nadeem Saeed reports that recent gas pipeline explosions illustrate government neglect in taking promised preventive measures, though just a few days later, the Sindh government submitted a plan to step up protection of pipelines (Dawn, Pakistan).

["Two Harkat leaders sentenced to death"](#)

["Fresh blasts 'expose' govt claims"](#)

["Protection of oil, gas pipelines planned"](#)

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## **India**

### **1. Domestic Situation**

India's first SARS case has been reported in Goa (Outlook, India) with fears of financial after effects not far behind (Hindustan Times, India). Economic concerns grew when the International Monetary Fund (IMF) lowered India's growth projection for 2003 (Hindustan Times, India). The Asian Development Bank (ADB) has invited India to join a natural gas pipeline with Pakistan, Afghanistan, and Turkmenistan (Dawn, Pakistan).

["India invited to join C. Asian gas pipeline"](#)

The former Home Minister of Gujarat and active politician, Haren Pandya, was assassinated (Hindustan Times, India). Manas Dasgupta (The Hindu, India) reports that Chief Minister Narendra Modi is setting up a special cell within the intelligence department to concentrate on the activities of suspected terrorists. C.P. Bhambhri (The Hindu, India) argues that Sangh Parivar (literally "Hindu Family" - a name used to denote a group of ideologically similar parties and group) is closely linked with the BJP government, including that of Gujarat CM Modi. Sixteen months after the anti-Muslim killings in Gujarat, Aneesa Mirza was elected the mayor of Ahmedabad, both as the first Muslim and woman (Deccan Herald, India).

["Gujarat to strengthen intelligence wing"](#)

["Sangh Parivar in Government"](#)

The Vishwa Hindu Parishad (VHP) continued to defy the Rajasthani government's ban of trishuls (tridents - a popular and important symbol for the VHP), despite the arrest of the VHP leader, Praveen Togadia, for distributing trishuls and fanning communal passions (Deccan Herald, India). B. Rajeshwar (The Institute of Peace and Conflict Studies, India) uses the World Cup cricket match between India and Pakistan to highlight the growing clasp of communalism. Firadus Ahmed (The Institute of Peace and Conflict Studies, India) challenges the notion that the Muslim minority threatens India's domestic stability and security.

### **2. Military**

The Indian Space Research Organization (ISRO) launched the INSAT-3A satellite to provide telecommunications, meteorological, and other services (Hindustan Times, India). In addition to testing the surface-to-surface 'Prithvi' missile (see "Nuclear Issues" above), India also launched the indigenously built Nilgiri Class of ships, planned to become the standard frigate of the Indian Navy (The Hindu, India). The US has asked Israel to halt the sale of Phalcon radars for India's Airborne Early-Warning Air Control System (AWACS), with contending explanations of the Pentagon's pressure (Financial Express and Hindustan Times, India).

["India's stealth warship to be launched on Friday"](#)

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## Kashmir

### 1. Killings at Nadimarg

Twenty-four Kashmiri Hindus (known as Pandits) were murdered by 10-12 "unidentified gunmen." India alleges the assailants were Pakistan-backed militants, but no group has claimed responsibility (see below). Praveen Swami (Frontline, India) observes that the "failure of police to prevent the [killing] in Nadimarg is part of a larger pattern of security force dysfunction" in Kashmir. Ershad Mahmud (Jang, Pakistan) tries to determine who would benefit from the killing of innocents. Tariq Bhat (The Week, India) covers exiled Pandits' sentiments of fear and uncertainty about returning while Pran Chopra (The Hindu, India) discusses New Delhi and Srinagar's differing policies on the Pandits' emigration. Akhila Raman (Znet South Asia) argue that Kashmiri Muslims' support of the Pandits (and opposition to the killings) reveal a Kashmiri solidarity, as Muzamil Jaleel (Indian Express, India) reports that local Muslims villagers are becoming human shields to protect their Hindu neighbors.

Though no group has claimed responsibility for the murder of 24 Pandits (including 11 women, and 2 children), J&K Police named Lashkar-e-Taiba (LeT) after arresting one of its commanders in connection with the killings (The Hindu, India). While an LeT spokesman has denied the allegations (Dawn, Pakistan) the group's founder, Hafiz Saeed, publicly stated his desired policy for dealing with India: "a tit-for-tat response and reciprocate in the same way by killing the Hindus, just like it is killing the Muslims in Kashmir" (Hindustan Times, India). Banned militant groups are quietly reincarnating in Pakistan, claiming to have non-militant agendas (Gulf News, United Arab Emirates).

["LeT behind Nadimarg massacre"](#)

["Lashker denies hand in Nadimarg massacre"](#)

### 2. Hizbul Mujahideen (HM)

The assassination of the chief commander of Hizbul Mujahideen (HM), a banned militant group, has reportedly created rival factions and kept the HM in the throes of violent upheaval, according to Sudha Ramachandran (Asia Times, Hong Kong). Police in Pakistan-Occupied Kashmir (also referred to as "Azad" or "Free" Kashmir) arrested 14 HM members to forestall further infighting (Jang, Pakistan). Although HM has already selected its new chief commander (Dawn, Pakistan), fallout from the HM power struggle has brought in more militants from abroad (Hindustan Times, India).

["Changing face of militancy"](#)

["Harkat vows to avenge chief's killing"](#)

### 3. Other News

Jammu and Kashmir (J&K) Chief Minister Mufti Mohammed Sayeed blamed Pakistan for creating unrest (Jang, Pakistan). More Kashmiris were killed in the continuing political violence (Dawn, Pakistan). The Indian army has reportedly launched a campaign to educate the people of J&K on the dangers of Improvised Explosive Devices, or IEDs (Deccan Herald, India).

["Eight killed in fresh Kashmir violence"](#)

["Eight killed in Kashmir"](#)

Praveen Swami (Frontline, India) chronicles the All Parties Hurriyat Conference's (APHC) search for a new voice. Democratic Freedom Party (DFP) leader Shabir Ahmad Shah invited Prime Minister Vajpayee for talks on his upcoming visit to J&K (Deccan Herald, India).

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## Sri Lanka

### 1. News and Analysis

Talks between the Sri Lankan military and the Tamil National Alliance (TNA) have ended without an agreement (Gulf News, United Arab Emirates). Sri Lankan politics is flooded with reports of the Tamil United Liberation Front's (TULF) leader's statement of his party's independence from the Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam (LTTE) and of the Sri Lankan President's claim that the LTTE has established a "de facto separate state" (Frontline and The Hindu, India). Syed Ali Mujtaba (Himal Mag, Nepal) explores the plight of the Sri Lankan Tamil refugees residing in South India. Marwaan Macan-Markar (Dawn, Pakistan) discusses the LTTE's reaction to US mediation in peace talks.

["LTTE has set up de-facto State"](#)

["Tamil Tigers bow to US as godfather"](#)

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