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Nuclear Issues

1. Related News and Analysis

Asia Times reports that Washington's opposition to the proposed Israeli sale of the Arrow missile defense system to India is straining Indo-US relations. Manpreet Sethi (Indian Express) argues that India needs to seriously consider nuclear power as a "viable alternative source of energy." Pakistan's President Pervez Musharraf has stated that he will not allow UN inspections at Pakistani nuclear facilities.
"An Arrow to Washington's heart"

Afghanistan

1. Current Situation

At least eight Afghans were killed in fighting between sub tribes of Paktia province. The daily News reports rumors that at least 16 US troops were killed on Friday in two different incidents in Khost and Gardez in Afghanistan. The Afghan government and the US military has rejected claims by President Musharraf that a lack of control inside Afghanistan could allow the Taliban and al-Qaeda to regroup there. According to a military spokesperson, the US Special Operations troops have found several large weapons caches in southeastern Afghanistan. Several hundred US Special Forces soldiers and Afghan allies are reportedly conducting operations in that region. Columnist MJ Akbar recounts impressions of his visit to Herat for the daily Dawn, Pakistan.
"A diary from Herat"

2. Humanitarian Crisis

Lack of resources has reportedly forced the UN's World Food Program to cut rations for millions of Afghans. Earlier this week, a mass grave, reportedly containing about 900 bodies of Taliban and al Qaeda fighters, was discovered in Northern Afghanistan. Ijaz Hussain (Daily Times) examines questions and problems arising from the return of more than 1.5 million Afghan refugees to their home.
"UN cuts Afghan food rations"

India-Pakistan Tensions

1. News

Pakistan has accused India of launching an air attack on its military post in northern Kashmir. India immediately dismissed Pakistan's claim as "disinformation and malicious propaganda.'' President Musharraf has also stated that the "possibility of individual small groups going across [the Line of Control into India] is there." Pakistan's junior foreign minister Inam-ul-Haq later echoed Musharraf's remarks. According to Indian foreign ministry spokeswoman Nirupama Rao, Musharraf's remarks confirm India's "worst fears." Meanwhile, the meeting of foreign ministers from the seven-member South Asian Association for Regional Cooperation (Saarc) in Katmandu, Nepal, has ended without the hoped-for meeting between the foreign minister of India and Pakistan. India has told the visiting US Deputy Secretary of State Richard Armitage that President Musharraf "has not implemented the promises that he had made" to stop infiltration of militants across the LoC into Kashmir.

"Islamabad claim a malicious propaganda, says New Delhi"
"Incursions might be going on into Valley"
"Worst fears confirmed, says Delhi"
"U.S. paying attention to cross-border terrorism: Armitage"

2. Analysis

The daily Telegraph published a review of VR Raghavan's book "Siachen: Conflict Without End". Conn Hallinan's essay (reprinted in Asia Times) criticizes Britain and the US for pursing military deals with India.
"Arming South Asia isn't the path to peace"

Pakistan

1. Pakistan: Domestic Situation

General Pervez Musharraf has announced constitutional amendments restoring presidential powers of dissolving the National Assembly. Musharraf has also appointed himself as president and chief of army staff for five years, and validated all actions, acts and laws promulgated by him. The Legal Framework Order 2002 also allows for a permanent political role for the military through the establishment of a National Security Council (NSC). All Pakistani political parties, as well as the Human Rights Commission of Pakistan (HRCP), have condemned the constitutional changes.
"NSC set up; powers to sack govt restored"

Editorials and opinions in the Pakistani press have been uniformly critical of President Musharraf's constitutional amendments.

Lieutenant-General Dan McNeill, the commander of coalition forces in Afghanistan, has stated that there may be "hundreds, maybe even a thousand" al Qaeda fighters in Pakistan. General Mcneill's claim was rejected by Pakistan as unsubstantiated. According to the daily Dawn, three Pakistani tribesmen found murdered close to the Afghanistan border might have been informers for US-led forces in the region.
"US claim on Al Qaeda fugitives rejected"

The daily News reports that controlling illegal weapons in Pakistan will be a difficult task for the government. Essays by Pepe Escobar and Aijazz Ahmed in Asia Times suggest that the Musharraf government is facing serious threat from extremist religious groups in Pakistan. Pakistan's intelligence agencies have reportedly handed over to the provinces a list of 'dangerous religious terrorists' who could sabotage forthcoming general elections. A daily News report indicates that the Pakistan government is concerned that terrorist might conduct attacks on September 11th.
"Terror stalks Musharraf"
"Musharraf braced for jihadi backlash"

According to a Daily Times report, Wall Street Journal correspondent Daniel Pearl was killed by an Arab after he tried to escape from kidnappers who had seized him earlier.

2. US - Pakistan Relations

US has agreed to reschedule Pakistan's over $3 bn bilateral debt.

The US consulate in Karachi, the target of a deadly bomb attack in June, has re-opened at an

undisclosed location. Khalid Ahmed (Daily Times) looks at conspiracy theories about the US role in Pakistan's politics appearing in country's Urdu press.

India

1. India: Domestic Situation

The Indian government has asked the Supreme Court to examine the legality of the Election Commission's (EC) decision to disallow early elections in Gujarat. India's Deputy Prime Minister L. K. Advani has stated his belief that the EC cannot hold up the elections in Gujarat. Meanwhile, the Gujarat Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) has announced its plans to launch a Hindu religious procession from one of the district worst hit by the recent anti-Muslim riots in the state. The daily Indian Express reports that six months after the anti-Muslim violence in Gujarat, the process of identification of missing persons "is making some headway."
"President refers Gujarat poll tangle to Supreme Court"
"EC cannot hold up polls"

2. India: Foreign Relations

Raja Mohan (Hindu) believes that by focusing on Indo-Pakistan crisis, "New Delhi and Washington are in the danger of missing the larger imperatives of their own bilateral relations." JN Dixit's essay in the daily Indian Express examines India's interests in Afghanistan and Central Asia.
"Boosting Indo-U.S. ties"

Kashmir

1. Internal Situation

The Kashmir Committee (KC), led by Ram Jethmalani, has suggested deferment of Assembly elections in Jammu and Kashmir (J&K). The Election Commission has, however, issued notification ordering polls in J&K from September 16. The ruling National Democratic Alliance (NDA) government is also opposed to deferring the Assembly elections. The BJP has decided to contest the J&K in alliance with the Jammu State Morcha (JSM), a newly created RSS front that brings together 19 organizations. Kashmir's largest militant group, Hizbul Mujahideen, has endorsed the All Parties Hurriyat Conference's (APHC) decision to boycott the elections.
"Kashmir Committee for deferring elections"
"J&K polls will not be postponed, says Advani"
"Hizb backs APHC stand on election"

In an interview with the Daily Times, Abdul Ghani Bhat, Chairman APHC, stated, among other things, that "Pakistan supports the cause of the people's right to self-determination. It is India which denies this inalienable right of ours."

Prem Shankar Jha (Hindustan times) argues that "Delhi has succeeded in turning the coming elections into a one-horse race." Muchkund Dubey (Hindu) argues that the "core of a [India's] Kashmir policy has to be the offer of the fullest possible autonomy to the people... It is the only modern, democratic and secular option available." Kanti Bajpai (Indian Express) believes that "good elections in Kashmir depend largely on .. [Musharraf's] willingness to allow Kashmiris to contest the polls and to vote. Good elections in Pakistan depend even more on him. Failure in both cases will

also be his responsibility."
"Needed: a Kashmir policy - I"
"Needed: a Kashmir policy - II"

Political violence continues in J&K.

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