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Nuclear Issues

1. Pakistan-India Nuclear Weapons

Nadeem Iqbal's essay explores the place of nuclear weapons in the strategic calculations of India and Pakistan. The two countries have not yet developed 'official' nuclear doctrines.

["Hiding behind a nuclear cloud"](#)

Afghanistan

1. Afghanistan: Current Situation

Afghan military units have begun withdrawing from Kabul as a UN sanctioned multi-national force is set to take over the security of the city.

["Peacekeepers deal signed in Kabul"](#)

Haji Gul Agha, the governor of Kandahar, believes that the leader of the Taliban Mullah Omar is hiding in central Afghanistan. Earlier, Mullah Omar staged a dramatic escape from his hideout in Helmand province, ending speculations about surrender negotiated by some Afghan tribal elders.

["Omar escapes amid surrender parleys"](#)

Several high-ranking Taliban officials who had surrendered to Haji Gul Agha's forces were set free. The US had demanded the hand-over of prisoners to them for questioning. Meanwhile, the Pakistan government has arrested Mullah Abdul Zaeef, the former Taliban ambassador to Pakistan.

According to reports in Pakistani and Asian press, the fall of Taliban has resulted in the return of Afghan warlords to Afghanistan causing serious law and order problems. The United Nations has also complained that large-scale looting of food stocks by Afghan warlords is hampering its humanitarian efforts.

["Warlords claim their spoils of war"](#)

British Prime Minister Tony Blair is the first western leader to visit the post-Taliban Afghanistan.

["British PM visits Afghanistan"](#)

A report by Marc Herold in Frontline, an Indian Magazine, estimates the number of civilian casualties in the Afghanistan war.

2. Afghanistan: Reconstruction Efforts

More than 50 countries, almost all multilateral donors, the United Nations, and Afghanistan's interim government, will participate in the ministerial-level conference on the Reconstruction of Afghanistan to be held on January 21 and 22 in Tokyo, Japan.

3. Humanitarian Crisis

According to the United Nations High Commission for Refugees (UNHCR) about 4,000 Afghan refugees are massed near the Chaman border between Pakistan and Afghanistan. Pakistan has completely closed its borders with Afghanistan. UNHCR estimates that about 200,000 Afghan refugees have entered Pakistan since September 11, 2001. Reports also indicate that the number of

Afghan refugees returning back to their country has started to decline.

["Refugees' return to Afghanistan declines"](#)

Clashes between armed tribesmen are reportedly hampering UN relief work in tribal areas of Pakistan. World Health Organization (WHO) has stated that it alone cannot provide help to all Afghans suffering from various diseases. The UNICEF has stated that fewer than 40 percent of Afghan children are getting the vaccines needed to help them survive childhood diseases such as measles.

4. Pakistan

Pakistan government has denied reports that troops guarding the country's border with Afghanistan have been redeployed to Pakistan's eastern border with India. Because of tensions with India, Pakistan has, reportedly, reclaimed use of two air force bases it had handed over to the US.

["Pakistan threatens to withdraw troops from Durrand Line"](#)

Pakistan has refuted reports that it would allow coalition forces operating in Afghanistan to pursue suspected al-Qaeda member inside Pakistan's territory.

["Arrangement not being changed: US hunt for Osama"](#)

5. Afghanistan War - Assessments and Implications

Writing from Islamabad, Pakistan for Al-Ahram weekly, Egypt, Absar Aslam believes that the war in Afghanistan is "far from over". A report in the daily Hindu, India, examines the increase in US-Philippines military cooperation in recent months.

["Tying up against terrorism"](#)

Shahid Javed Burki's essay in the daily Dawn, Pakistan, argues that the West can neither win peace for its citizens through military triumphs nor can it "shut out the rest of the world behind a high wall of protection and live comfortably and fearlessly." He offers some alternatives.

["The Gordon Brown Plan"](#)

The Far Eastern Economic Review reports that "the oil companies that gave up on Afghanistan under Taliban rule will have to wait some time before they can make money there."

India-Pakistan Tensions

1. News

India's External Affairs Minister, Jaswant Singh has ruled out talks with Pakistan until there is a "change" in Pakistan's "attitude." India's Prime Minister Atal Behari Vajpayee has made four demands of the Pakistan government including the extradition of 20 alleged militants living in Pakistan to India. During his visit to South Asia, the British Prime Minister Tony Blair stated that "complete and total rejection of attacks" could be the only starting point of a dialogue between India and Pakistan. Despite high tensions on Indo-Pakistan borders, the Directors-General of Military Operations of India and Pakistan held talks on a dedicated hotline.

["Jaswant rules out early dialogue with Pakistan"](#)

["Rejection of terrorism a pre-condition for talks"](#)

["DGMOs talk, ease threats of war"](#)

The list of 20 alleged militants India wants Pakistan to extradite was published in the daily News,

Pakistan. The spokesman for Pakistan's President Musharraf stated that India has not provided any proof with the list and " without proper proof his Government would not be able to act."

["Just a list, no evidence"](#)

Clashes between Indian and Pakistani troops continued along the line of control. Ahmad Rashid reports on military mobilization in Pakistan.

["Heavy mortar shelling on combat posts"](#)

International Campaign to Ban Landmines (ICBL) has expressed concern over reports that India is laying landmine along its entire border with Pakistan. India, Pakistan and the US have not signed the Ottawa Mine Ban Treaty. The daily Hindu, India, reported that at least 20 people were killed when a truck backed into a field where the Army had laid mines as part of the military deployment.

["20 killed in landmine blast near border"](#)

2. Analysis and Opinions

K.K.Katyay's essay in the daily Hindu, India, analyzes the recently concluded South Asian Association for Regional Cooperation (SAARC) summit in Kathmandu, Nepal.

["A hand of friendship and after"](#)

Indian writer and journalist M.J.Akbar sees parallels between the 1999 Indo-Pakistan war in Kargil and the current crisis between the two countries.

["Is December 13 the Kargil of 2001?"](#)

Shahid Scheik's suggests that India is trying to internationally isolate Pakistan and damage its economy.

Parween Swami's article in Frontline, an Indian weekly, warns that India is making it difficult for Musharraf to act in a manner that will allow for a peaceful resolution of the Kashmir issue

Pakistan Foreign Minister Abdul Sattar gave an interview to A.G.Noorani of Frontline, an Indian magazine.

Indian journalist Praful Bidwai argues that the Vajpayee government, under pressure from right-wing Bharatiya Janata Party, is provoking a military confrontation with Pakistan.

Journalist and author Ahmad Rashid argues that the military build-up by Pakistan and India could create an "unstoppable momentum."

International Response

In an attempt to diffuse tensions between India and Pakistan, the US Secretary of State Colin Powell is scheduled to visit the region on January 15th. Members of the Shanghai Six group of Central Asia states have expressed concern about growing tensions between India and Pakistan. Fu Ying, director-general of China's foreign ministry's Asian Affairs department sees China's role as that of a peacemaker through "moral persuasion."

["Shanghai Six stresses restraint"](#)

Pakistan

1. Pakistan: Domestic Situation

Members of Laskhar-e-Toiba and Jaish-e-Mohammad - Pakistan based militant groups allegedly responsible for attacking the Indian Parliament building - and other militant sectarian parties have been arrested by the Pakistani government. President Musharraf is expected to soon announce additional measures against militant Islamic groups.

["More LT, Jaish activists arrested"](#)

Anwar Syed examines the emerging form of a future democratic government in Pakistan.

["Guideposts on roadmap"](#)

2. India-Pakistan Relations

India has threatened to abrogate the Indus Water River treaty with Pakistan. Adam Nayar gives a brief history of the treaty and examines the significance of such a move by India.

["What Indus water treaty means"](#)

3. Pakistan - International Relations

Syed Saleem Shahzad examines the reasons motivating improved relations between Pakistan and Iran. Pakistan received the first consignment of 10 F-7PG aircrafts from China.

["Iran courts Pakistan to counter US"](#)

India

1. India: Domestic Situation

Zoya Hasan's essay in the Indian daily Hindu argues that the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) is using the issue of "temple and terror" to deflect attention from its poor performance in the state of Uttar Pradesh (UP). BJP, however, has asserted that war with Pakistan is "not a part of its election plank" in the forthcoming polls in UP and Punjab.

["The BJP's game plan in U.P."](#)

["Border tension not an election issue, says BJP"](#)

Scholar Andre Beteille argues that the current resurgence of identity politics in India does not "augur well" for the future of liberal democracy in India.

["Pluralism and liberalism"](#)

A report on India's energy supplies suggests that a war with Pakistan will undermine the country's energy security.

["Running on empty"](#)

2. Iran-India Relations

Iran and India are jointly preparing a feasibility study for a gas pipeline linking the two countries.

["Iran-India study on gas project by June"](#)

Kashmir

1. Internal Situation

Violence and protest continued to claim lives in Kashmir.

["LeT attack foiled"](#)

["13 killed in Kashmir violence"](#)

["Kashmiris protest killing of shopkeeper"](#)

Chairman of the nationalist Jammu and Kashmir Liberation Front (JKLF) Amanullah Khan has challenged the Indian government's charge that he is a terrorist.

A report in Tehelka, an internet based magazine, describes the living conditions in the land-mined border regions of Jammu and Kashmir. Another report looks at the effects of India-Pakistan standoff on the lives of people living along the border regions.

["Refugees in their own land"](#)

Harish Khare believes that the All Party Hurriyat Conference can prove its democratic credentials in the forthcoming Assembly elections in Kashmir.

["The opportunity in Kashmir"](#)

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