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CONTENTS

July 10, 2003

Volume 4, #09

Nuclear Issues

1. Regional
2. India
3. Pakistan

Afghanistan

1. News
2. Campaign Against al-Qaeda and the Taliban
3. Analysis

India-Pakistan Tensions

1. News
2. Analysis
3. Regional Economic Cooperation

Pakistan

1. Massacre at Quetta
2. Domestic News
3. US-Pakistan Relations
4. Afghani-Pakistani Border Row
5. Foreign Relations

India

1. Aftermath of Gujarat Communal Violence
 2. Domestic News
-

3. US-India Relations
4. Sino-Indian Relations
5. Military

Jammu & Kashmir (J&K)

1. News
2. Militant Organizations
3. Mediation on Kashmir
4. Analysis

Sri Lanka

1. News
2. Peace Talks

Bangladesh

1. Ferry Capsizes with over 600 Passengers
 2. Domestic News
-

Nuclear Issues

1. Regional

M.V. Ramana and Zia Man co-authored an authoritative chapter on the nuclear confrontation in South Asia, published in the Stockholm International Peace Research Institute Yearbook 2003 (linked below). David Isenberg (Asia Times, Hong Kong) reviews a pair of articles from the Nonproliferation Review that compare the overall security of the Indian and Pakistani nuclear programs. Nadeem Malik (Asia Times, Hong Kong) discusses the US' increased efforts in monitoring the nuclear activities in South Asia.

2. India

Despite the fourth test in a week, India shelved the program to develop the Trishul, its version of the US-made Patriot -- a short-range surface-to-air missile. India plans to acquire the Israeli Barak missile as a replacement. The US has reportedly stopped asking India to sign the non-proliferation treaty (NPT), according to Foreign Secretary Kanwal Sibal.

3. Pakistan

In response to India's quickened schedule of testing missiles lately, Foreign Minister Khurshid Kasuri stated that India and Pakistan "are not in competition, and we will test when we need to according to our own timetable, and we will not react in this matter." Further, Foreign Minister Kasuri denied reports that Pakistan froze its nuclear program under pressure from the US. President General Pervez Musharraf reiterated that Pakistan does not believe in nuclear proliferation and would not lose control of its nuclear assets.

China's financial and technical assistance will accompany Pakistan's construction of a second nuclear power plant, which is expected to come online by 2010. A report from the Press Trust of India quotes Selig Harrison from the Center for International Policy in DC in claiming that

"Musharraf was fully involved in supplying uranium enrichment technology to Pyongyang [North Korea]."

Afghanistan

1. News

President Hamid Karzai's administration detained two journalists, which Human Rights Watch deemed a constraint on freedom of expression. When Karzai eventually ordered their release, the two journalists immediately went into hiding, prompting an intense search for their whereabouts.

Factional fighting continued among rivals General Abdul Rashid Dostum and Tajik commander Ustad Atta Mohammad, expending lives in their clashes. Rebel leader Gulbuddin Hekmatyar mocked Karzai's government as one full of opportunists "fighting their own people under the command of foreigners."

The United Nations High Commission for Refugees (UNHCR) began the daunting task of repatriating some 19,000 Afghans despite the UN's own reports of the deteriorating security situation. The United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime report shows that opium production flourishes in a post-Taliban Afghanistan. On July 1st, President George Bush stated that despite ongoing difficulties in Afghanistan (and Iraq), people (in both those countries) are better off now than before the U.S. military involvement.

Turkmen, Afghani and Pakistani officials have agreed on a route for a new trans-Afghan natural gas pipeline: from Turkmenistan's Dauletabad gas fields to Quetta via Kandahar. The World Bank approved \$39.2 million in aid and credit to support Afghanistan's public works program.

2. Campaign Against al-Qaeda and the Taliban

Approximately 800 US soldiers backed by more than 500 Italian paratroopers launched the ongoing "Operation Haven Denial" in Khost and Paktika provinces. A US military spokesman concluded that a weapons ban imposed by local Afghan leaders in the central province of Uruzgan appears to be working since fewer guns are seized at checkpoints. The Pakistani government recently formed a new investigative agency, the Special Investigation Group (SIG), with the specific responsibility of hunting down remnants of al-Qaeda. A five-person monitoring group set up by the UN Security Council issued a report citing the "significant" threat of the al-Qaeda network, particularly the emergence of a "third generation" of younger males, educated with Islamic extremism.

Hostile forces, not just limited to the Taliban, continue targeting US and pro-government soldiers as well as noncombatants, resulting in several casualties on both sides. A misdirected rocket hit a UNICEF center. There were no casualties and no group has claimed responsibility.

3. Analysis

A report from the Council on Foreign Relations (linked below) concludes that the US needs to provide greater support for Karzai's transitional government, as Afghanistan risks slipping back into a war-torn anarchy. Another publication from CFR, authored by Rajan Menon, focuses on Afghanistan within the context of Central Asia -- "the new great game." Militant organizations in the Central Asia Region (CAR) are beginning to reactivate and forge fresh ties with other formerly dormant movements.

India-Pakistan Tensions

1. News

Bus service will resume between Islamabad and New Delhi starting July 11th. In talks to restoring air links, Pakistan has pushed for arrangements to prevent India from unilaterally breaking the air link, as India has done twice since 1971. Masood Khan, spokesman for the Pakistani Foreign Office, emphasized that secretary-level talks must precede ministerial talks, to lay the foundation for a summit between the leaders. India freed 6 Pakistani prisoners and is finalizing the repatriation of 217 detained fishermen and prisoners.

Kuldip Nayar, leader of the nine parliamentarians on a peace mission to Pakistan, writes in Dawn (Pakistan) about the reception the delegation received from different elements of Pakistani society. Another delegation of students arrived on goodwill visit and Pakistani businessman traveled to India to urge the relaxation of visa restrictions. M.B. Naqvi (Deccan Herald, India) discusses the current thawing of relations in the context of previous "hiccups" in bilateral attempts at reconciliation.

2. Analysis

In a policy brief, Teresita Schaffer (Center for Strategic & International Studies, DC) makes the case that the time is not only right, but also fleeting -- for India and Pakistan to change the prognosis of "a long series of South Asian war scares." Despite current overtures toward the Pakistani government, argues Qudssia Akhlaque (Dawn, Pakistan), "the status of the CBMs [Confidence-Building Measures] announced by the Indian government just before the Agra summit in July 2001 remains unclear." Anwar Ahmad (Jang, Pakistan) dissects India's policy toward Pakistan, in light of recent interactions with the US and key Asian players -- Iran to the west and China to the east.

3. Regional Economic Cooperation

India and Pakistan to attend the South Asian Association for Regional Cooperation (SAARC) summit planned for January 2004. In the Daily Times (Pakistan), Ishtiaq Ahmed explains the opportunity and possibility to formulate a South Asian union of independent states -- SAARC "invested with a new enthusiasm and a programme of action." Indian Foreign Minister Yashwant Sinha proposed a South Asian union to promote economic and political cooperation. Myanmar offered its backing of Pakistan's bid to join the Association of South East Asian Nations (ASEAN).

Pakistan

1. Massacre at Quetta

At least four dozen people were killed and sixty-five injured when three unidentified gunmen opened fire on Shi'ite worshippers during Friday prayers. Police also suspect a fourth assailant, a suicide bomber. A city-wide curfew was immediately put into effect as mobs expressed their grief and anger. The Balochistan government responded by transferring the interior secretary and replacing two senior police officials. That weekend, UN member nations were preparing to meet in New York to discuss progress in curbing the spread of small arms.

An editorial in Jang (Pakistan) called for more urgent action than rearranging personnel, while

another editorial from Daily Times (Pakistan) tries to unearth the nature of the violence at Quetta -- sectarian or political. Arguing the former, Kanchan Lakshman (Asia Times, Hong Kong) believes the attackers hoped to ignite a cycle of violence between Sunni and Shi'ites (Sunnis constitute 77% and Shi'ites are 20% of Pakistan's population).

Prime Minister Mir Zafrullah Khan Jamali hinted at foreign involvement and Hameedullah Abid (Daily Times, Pakistan) reports that Pakistani intelligence suspects an Indo-Afghan nexus, which India strongly denies. Pakistani authorities arrested an Afghan national, Ali Shah Khan, accused of spying for India. The Pakistani government stepped up security at Iranian embassies, according to intelligence reports. Iran's foreign ministry expressed concern of a resurgence of terrorist groups in Pakistan. France and Germany strongly condemned the attack, as President Musharraf was ending a visit to France.

2. Domestic News

Muddassir Rizvi (Asia Times, Hong Kong) evaluates the domestic backlash from President Musharraf's comment that Pakistan should discuss opening ties with Israel, which is currently not recognized as a state. Syed Saleem Shahzad (Asia Times, Hong Kong) and I.M. Mohsin (Daily Times, Pakistan) chronicle the gradual rise of political popularity of the Muttahida Majlis-e-Amal (MMA), an alliance of six religious parties. In the Hindu (India), Asma Khan Lone argues that Pakistan's slide towards fundamentalism is in fact, a reaction to class discrimination. Hussain Haqqani (Carnegie Endowment for International Peace, DC) criticizes Musharraf's inability to control the more extreme political elements, such as the MMA, and even suggests that Musharraf could be leveraging this shift to enhance Pakistan's strategic depth against India.

Three members of the militant group Harkat Jihad-e-Islami were given the death penalty for a May 2002 bombing that killed 11 French engineers. Muhammad Ilyas (Dawn, Pakistan) discusses the controversy over distorted census data for the past two decades. The plight of the farmers in Okara continues, where tenant farmers protest attempts by the military to evict them (by changing their status to day-laborers) from the lands they have occupied for nearly a century.

3. US-Pakistan Relations

Shahid Haved Burki (Dawn, Pakistan) tries to account for the level of American press coverage that President Musharraf's visit received. In light of the US' \$3 billion grant to Pakistan, Sultan Ahmed (Dawn, Pakistan) the importance of using external aid in a timely and effective manner. Iffat Idris (Al-Ahram Weekly, Egypt) writes about Musharraf reaping rewards for loyalty to the US and that the general's "legitimacy of rule comes as much, if not more, from international acceptance than from a popular mandate." Some experts believe that the Trade and Investment Framework Agreement that the US signed with Pakistan resulted from political, rather than economic expediency.

Khalid Hasan (Daily Times, Pakistan) faults the US for not leveraging its influence over Musharraf to press him on democratic rule, while Farhatullah Babar (Dawn, Pakistan), a senator for the Pakistan's People Party, highlights the shortcomings of Musharraf's travels. Given the recent shifts in geopolitics, Zubeida Mustafa (Dawn, Pakistan) judges the success (or lack thereof) of Musharraf's visit according to the 'core' issue: "By remaining rigid vis-à-vis Kashmir, Pakistan is driving itself into isolation." In the Daily Times (Pakistan), Ahmed Faruqui describes the impressions created by Musharraf's visit.

In response to the British and American request for peacekeeping troops in Iraq, President Musharraf tentatively accepted "in principle." Although, recent reports suggested that Pakistan would wait until the security environment improves or the Iraqi people choose to welcome foreign

troops. Ijaz Hussain (Daily Times, Pakistan) considers the effect of dispatching Pakistani troops on the country's image in the Middle East and on democratic rule at home.

4. Afghani-Pakistani Border Row

In response to President Musharraf's comments allegedly questioning the legitimacy of the US-backed Afghani government, President Hamid Karzai warned Pakistan not to interfere in Afghani affairs. The row escalated as thousands of Afghans took the streets of Kabul, first calling for the withdrawal of Pakistani troops, and then attacking the Pakistani embassy, forcing it to shut down. The assault prompted an immediate call from Karzai to Musharraf. The Afghani leader issued a personal apology, offered to compensate for the damage, and guaranteed the mission's future security. Additionally, Pakistani and Afghani forces have been trading fire across the border near Mohmand Agency.

Ahmed Rashid (Daily Times, Pakistan) describes the genesis of the Afghan-Pakistani tensions, as well as their immediate and mid-term consequences for Karzai's administration. An editorial from the same paper calls the tension "unnecessary," argues that the recent conflict with Afghanistan "emanates from the policies pursued by Islamabad in the past," not from Pakistan's recent cooperation with the United States, as some strongly believe.

5. Foreign Relations

Prime Minister Jamali stated that improved Sino-Indian relations would not adversely effect China's relationship with Pakistan. Pakistan and China also reopened the Khunjerab Pass, closed several months ago to prevent the spread of SARS. An editorial in the Daily Times (Pakistan) suggests some lessons about land settlement that Pakistan could learn from the recent Sino-Indian agreement on Tibet.

During his trip, President Musharraf asked the United Kingdom to stop the rise in India's defense spending; India, he argued, is developing a military superiority that renders Pakistan's nuclear arsenal as its only real deterrent. Germany agreed to ease restrictions on Pakistan's buying of military equipment. Senior Saudi Arabian defense officials visited Pakistan to explore the possibility of purchasing military equipment. Pakistan agreed to boost economic ties with France.

India

1. Aftermath of Gujarat Communal Violence

In the first verdict in a case relating to Gujarat's communal violence, 21 people individuals were accused of burning alive 12 Muslims, in what became known as the "Best Bakery" case. All 21 suspects were acquitted, for lack of evidence. Amnesty International said the acquittal has "confirmed its worst fears about the lack of Government commitment to ensure justice to victims of the communal violence in Gujarat" and demanded re-trial of the case.

Human Rights Watch released a report examining the record of state authorities in holding perpetrators accountable and providing humanitarian relief to victims of state-supported massacres of Muslims in February and March 2002. An editorial in the Times of India criticizes the National Human Rights Commission for its sporadic efforts at acknowledging and acting upon human rights violations. The first annual conference of the Indian-Muslim Council (IMC)-USA convened to discuss the aftermath of the communal violence in Gujarat and how to counter the growth of Hindu

extremism in India.

An editorial in the Hindu (India) terms the Best Bakery acquittals as "the culmination of a sloppy prosecution marred by interference from members of the ruling establishment," while Sandeep Dougal (Outlook India, UK) believes that "there is no hope for any justice in the other cases under trial. And we are responsible." Asghar Ali Engineer (Deccan Herald, India) parses the oft-confused concepts of communalism, fanaticism and fundamentalism.

2. Domestic News

As a result of monsoon rains, the Brahmaputra river breached its banks at several places in Assam, leaving more than 460,000 people homeless. At least a dozen people were killed when a Hyderabad-bound train jumped the tracks.

The All India Muslim Personal Law Board rejected Kanchi Shankaracharya Jayendra Saraswathi's formula to resolve the Ayodhya imbroglio. Vishwa Hindu Parishad (VHP) president Ashok Singhal demanded the resignation of the Prime Minister Vajpayee and his Deputy Advani for their failure to pass a law facilitating the construction of a Ram temple at the disputed site at Ayodhya. Rajmohan Gandhi (Hindustan Times, India) offers collected accounts of attendees of a VHP meeting held in early April. Harbans Mukhia (The Hindu, India) examines the hypocrisies and contradictions that surface when discussing the Indian polity and the rise of Hindu extremism.

3. US-India Relations

Writing in Foreign Policy In Focus (US), Ninan Koshy states clearly that deploying Indian troops "will only serve U.S. interests, not India's, not Iraq's." Prakash Karat (The Hindu, India) believes that "participation of Indian troops in the subjugation and re-colonisation of Iraq will spell the end of an independent foreign policy." An editorial from the same paper echoes this sentiment and proposes a multilateral setting for India to engage itself in Iraq. Praful Bidwai (Hindustan Times, India) explains the dilemma this way: "[India] must choose between morality, the preference of its own people (87 per cent of whom opposed Iraq's invasion) and its unanimous Parliament resolution, on the one hand, and the slavish acceptance of, and collusion with, one of the most cynically devised projects for global domination, on the other." J.K. Dutt (The Statesmen, India) argues that India could refuse the American offer and still maintain healthy relations.

4. Sino-Indian Relations

India and China plan joint naval exercises in the coming months. Pramit Pal Chauduri (Hindustan Times, India) discusses one of the common aims of the Sino-Indian summit: stability so each country may focus on its domestic issues, such as the economy. Writing in Dawn (Pakistan), however, Kuldip Nayar raises old doubts about what -- if any -- border settlement could overcome China and India's rocky past.

"Nothing better illustrates the perils of Brahmanical guile in diplomacy than the damaging controversy created over India's stand on Tibet," writes Brahma Chellaney in Hindustan Times (India). Two pieces from Asia Times (Hong Kong) discuss the ramifications of improved Sino-Indian relations on the Tibetan independence movement. Ranjit Devraj argues that in the process of overcoming decades of hostility, China and India "may have sealed the cause...forever." B. Raman poses ominous questions about India's shift on policy towards Tibet, and more importantly, towards China -- and whether Indian policymakers are even aware of this shift.

In light of improved relations between Beijing and New Delhi, Anil Joseph (Hindustan Times, India)

examines a potential trilateral cooperation that would include Moscow. This strategic triangle -- three nuclear-armed states and 2.5 billion people -- could balance US power, but not for many years, as few of the necessary mechanisms are in place, argues Sergei Blagov (Asia Times, Hong Kong). And perhaps this axis talk is to remain symbolic, as a spokesman for the Chinese foreign office dispelled any rumor of such alliance.

5. Military

As part of a \$1 billion deal inked with India in 1997, Russia delivered the second of three Krivak-class frigates. The Chief of the Indian Air Force expressed the need for a satellite dedicated to military purposes. India signed a defense cooperation agreement with the United Arab Emirates (UAE) and is considering military collaboration with Canada. Locally, Indian and Nepali agencies agreed to exchange intelligence and the Indian Navy agreed to help guard Mauritian waters.

Jammu & Kashmir (J&K)

1. News

Even during President Abdul Kalam's visit to the region, violence claimed the lives of more Indian soldiers, militants, and civilians. Fourteen Indian soldiers were killed, reportedly by members of the militant group al-Nasireen. A J&K Minister was almost killed as militants attempted to bomb his vehicle, though six people were killed and dozens injured.

Political infighting persisted among the All Parties Hurriyat Conference (APHC). Syed Ali Geelani, leader of Jamaat-e-Islami, has been boycotting APHC meetings and threatening to form his own alliance, in protest of the APHC's inaction against the Peoples Conference (PC), which he says fielded proxy candidates during state elections last year despite a boycott call.

Indian security forces intensified the security of J&K in preparation for a massive Hindu pilgrimage. The Indian Armed Forces have begun heavily recruiting Kashmiri youth, reports Kalyan Ray (Deccan Herald, India).

There are a few signs of improvement in the valley, however. Authorities in the Pakistan-occupied (or Azad, meaning "free") Jammu and Kashmir reopened a major road in the Neelum Valley, which had restricted residents' movement for nearly a decade. Indian troops even announced on loudspeakers that they would not target it. The Pakistani government decided to take the initiative on financing the \$1.5 billion Neelum-Jhelum hydropower project.

2. Militant Organizations

The fissure in the militant group Jaish-e-Mohammed (JeM) grew to a separation, as Abdullah Shah Mazhar split off to form Khuddam-ul-Islam and is feuding with the parent group, JeM, and its leader, Maulana Masood Azhar. The infighting created an opportunity for authorities to accelerate their crackdown on members of these militant groups, especially following the arrest of former JeM leader, Abdul Jabbar (aka Umer Farooq).

"When the time is right we will extend our cooperation to the initiative taken by India and Pakistan," said Junaid-ul-Islam, a spokesman for the militant group Hizbul-Mujahideen (HM). A faction of HM joined Hizb-e-Islami (HeI) after the death of their leader, Abdul Majid Dar. Just a few days earlier, Indian Border Security Force (BSF) had shot and killed high-ranking members of HM.

In the US, authorities arrested 8 suspects for allegedly providing material support to Lashkar--Taiba (LeT), which operates in Kashmir.

3. Mediation on Kashmir

President Musharraf proposed that the United States could facilitate talks, which both the US and India openly opposed. "We have repeatedly said there is no third party role in the bilateral dialogue. There is no space for a third party at the table," said External Affairs Minister Yashwant Sinha. Leader of the Indian parliamentarians on a peace mission to Pakistan, Kuldip Nayar, said that they have no objection to give top priority to the Kashmir issue in any future Indo-Pakistan talks. President of the National Conference, Omar Abdullah, claimed that India is planning on inviting a third party to mediate. Pakistani Foreign Minister Khurshid Kasuri explained that his country was prepared to discuss the Kashmir issue in a bilateral or multilateral setting.

The European Commission approved 1.95 million euro (\$2.2 million) in aid. Farooq Abdullah, former chief minister of J&K, proposed that former South African president Nelson Mandela help facilitate a resolution to the Kashmir issue.

4. Analysis

K. Balagopal (Economic & Political Weekly, India) questions if there is any momentum left in the notion of collective self-determination. Writing in Jang (Pakistan), Pervaiz Iqbal Cheema, an associate at the Islamabad Policy Research Institute, outlines and analyzes the details of Musharraf's four-stage formula to solve the Kashmir dispute. Additionally, Khaled Ahmed (Daily Times, Pakistan) discusses the history and feasibility of the "Chenab Formula" as a solution. Moeed Yusuf, a Brookings Institution fellow, states that "Pakistan's support for the insurgents (if there is any) has seen no positive results though it has kept the Kashmir issue alive."

Sultan Shahin (Asia Times, Hong Kong) examines the propaganda war being waged over the Hill Kaka incident. Writing in the Daily Times (Pakistan),

Sri Lanka

1. News

UNICEF is working with the Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam (LTTE) to rehabilitate child soldiers. Five people, including two police officers, were sentenced to death after being found guilty for their involvement in a massacre of 28 Tamil guerrilla suspects who were being rehabilitated in a camp in central Sri Lanka two years ago. Police arrested Professor K. Nedunchezian, a Tamil separatist leader and one of the main accused in the possession of a huge cache of explosives recovered by the police in Bangalore in November 2002.

Authorities remanded 250 Pakistanis and 5 Sri Lankans in connection with a smuggling racket. The British government denied a visa for the leader of the LTTE's political wing, S.P. Teamilchelvam, and has begun fingerprinting Sri Lankans applying for visas to curb immigration and asylum abuse.

The Sri Lanka Monitoring Mission (SLMM), a group of European officials monitoring a ceasefire in Sri Lanka, reported that a Tamil Tiger rebel ship sunk by the Indian navy on June 14th violated a UN convention by not flying an appropriate flag.

2. Peace Talks

Norwegian peace envoys began fresh efforts yesterday to revive Sri Lanka's stalled peace process, traveling to the rebel-held north to meet Tamil Tiger leaders. Additionally, the Sri Lankan government will submit draft proposals on a provisional administrative structure in the strife-torn north and eastern provinces. A presidential spokesperson accused the LTTE of preparations to break the Norwegian-brokered ceasefire, citing the murders of military informants and continued recruitment. A piece from the Sunday Times (Sri Lanka) analyzes the new results and expectations that have developed, especially on the part of the LTTE. Finally, D.B.S. Jeyaraj (Frontline, India) questions the LTTE's politics of brinkmanship as "a course that could be dangerous for the peace boat."

Bangladesh

1. Ferry Capsizes with over 600 Passengers

More than 600 people are feared missing or dead after a whirlpool sucked in an overloaded boat (its maximum capacity was closer to 400). Rafiq Hasan (The Daily Star, Bangladesh) reports that a lack of governmental supervision perpetuates overloading, inefficiency of captains, and flawed design.

2. Domestic News

Despite continued US pressure to deploy troops in Iraq in return for economic benefits, Bangladesh waits for India or Pakistan to take the initiative. The World Bank approved a 2-year \$1.25 billion loan, contingent upon the government's performance, for example, in continued structural reforms, improved economic governance, and tighter fiscal management.

Police recovered nearly 120 kg of explosives and cache of ammunition, later connecting the contraband to members of the local Jamaat-e-Islami of Bangladesh (JIB) and the Jatiya Party (JP). Authorities have not been able to find the rifles for which the 62,000 seized bullets were destined.

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