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Nuclear Issues

1. Related News and Analysis

Parsa Rao's essay in the daily Deccan Herald, India, argues that denuclearising South Asia, as called for by Pakistan's President Musharraf, will not ensure peace in the region. M.V.Ramana writes in the daily Hindu, Pakistan, that censorship of Anand Patwardhan's anti-nuclear movie by the Indian government "denies people alternatives to the propaganda put out by Governments and hawks."

Afghanistan

1. Current Situation

According to a daily Frontier Post, Pakistan, report Afghan warlord in Khost province Badshah Khan has refused to accept the authority of the new Afghan President Hamid Karzai. The daily Balochistan Post reported that Kandahar police chief Azizullah Farangwal was killed in an ambush near his home. Meanwhile, President Hamid Karzai has reportedly dismissed his Afghan bodyguards and replaced them with American soldiers. The daily Dawn, Pakistan, reported a rocket attack on a US military camp outside the city of Gardez in eastern Afghanistan.

India-Pakistan Tensions

1. News

Pakistan's Defense Secretary has stated that his country is "not in a hurry" to open its airspace for over-flight by Indian commercial aircrafts. India has re-affirmed that it will not make further moves to ease the military standoff with Pakistan until Pakistan takes steps to permanently stop what it says is a steady flow of cross-border infiltration. India has voiced its unhappiness over the proposed sale to Pakistan by the US of six C-130 aircrafts. According to the daily Telegraph, India, Pakistan has moved some of its troops along the India-Pakistan border to a "defensive offence" position.

2. Analysis

M.V.Ramana (Daily Times, Pakistan) argues that "given the confusion and chaos of war, ideas about limited war and carefully controlled escalation ladders are wishful thinking at best." J.N. Dixit (Hindustan Times, India) suggests that "it would be unrealistic to expect any substantive support from Europe or western democracies on our [India's] concerns about J&K." Ejaz Haider (Daily Times) believes that proposed sale of Israeli made Arrow-2 ATBM (anti-tactical ballistic missile) to India would lead to further instability in the region. K. P. Nayar (Telegraph, India) reports that India - adopting a strategy used by Israeli lobbyists in Washington - has "chosen the Congressional route to put pressure on Washington to tighten the screws on General Pervez Musharraf."

Pakistan

1. Pakistan: Domestic Situation

All mainstream political parties have rejected the constitutional amendments package proposed by President Musharraf. President Musharraf has amended the Political Parties Order, 2002, removing

the condition of bachelor degree for holding any political party office. Pakistan's Chief Election Commissioner has asked the government to lift the ban on political activities "at the earliest". Columnist Nasim Zehra (News, Pakistan) believes that the proposed National Security Council will give excessive power to the President and "promote political conspiracy and not 'good government.'"

A Pakistani court convicted a Christian man of blasphemy, and - using Pakistan's blasphemy laws - sentenced him to death. A Daily Times editorial sharply criticized the decision and demanded that the blasphemy laws "must be reviewed and reworded as soon as possible so that religious sanity can be restored to Pakistani society."

Pakistani religious scholars and organizations have rejected the Madrassah Ordinance that was recently introduced by the government to control the functioning of religious seminaries. President Musharraf has stated that Pakistan "is not a secular country, nor its Army is secular and no body can dare to think on these lines." Interior Minister Moinuddin Haider has stated that there is a threat to the life of President Musharraf "from those who do not approve policies of the government."

Khalid Ahmed of the Daily Times reviews news and analysis appearing in Pakistan's widely read Urdu newspapers. "Islam and the Western World"

The Daily Times published an Interview with Pakistan's former Prime Minister Benazir Bhutto in which she called for the restoration of 1973 constitution.

2. U.S. - Pakistan Relations

Imtiaz Alam (News, Pakistan) writes that Pakistan "can degenerate into a failed state, or become Islamist, if the US continued to perpetuate military dictatorship and scuttle democracy in order to chase the ghost of al-Qaeda." Shireen Mazari (News, Pakistan) speculates that current wave of visits by US and British officials to Pakistan "could well be to pressurise Pakistan into conceding to Indian demands."

3. Operations against al-Qaeda

According to a daily Dawn report, al-Qaeda is planning attacks on the embassies of some European countries and India in Islamabad, Pakistan. France has closed down its consulate in Karachi. Rauf Klasra (News, Pakistan) reports that the Musharraf government is "deeply frustrated and disappointed" over the poor coordination among Pakistan's various law enforcement agencies involved in the crackdown on militants.

The six foreigners killed in recent shootouts with personnel of Pakistan's law-enforcing agencies in South Waziristan tribal agency and in Kohat are now believed to be Uzbekistanis rather than Chechens. The al-Qaeda suspects detained at Miranshsh Jail in North Waziristan Agency have reportedly gone on hunger strike unto death against their confinement for the last seven months.

Ahmed Omar Shaikh, convicted by Pakistan's anti-terror court on the charges of kidnapping and murder of Daniel Pearl, has filed an appeal before the Sindh High Court.

India

1. India: Domestic Situation

V. Venkatesan (Frontline, India) writes that the recent reorganization of the Bharatiya Janata Party

(BJP) "marks the completion of the process of L.K. Advani's takeover" in the party. The Frontline also published an interview with Arun Jaitley, BJP's new general secretary.

The Parliamentary Opposition, led by Congress, stalled the working of the Indian Parliament to protest against the dissolution of the Gujarat Assembly. An Amnesty International team sent to investigate the massacres and other human rights violations in Gujarat was denied visas to enter the country by the Indian government.

V.P. Malik, India's Chief of Army Staff during the 1999 Kargil war between India and Pakistan, believes that in launching its attack in Kashmir Pakistan "clearly blundered. It had failed to take into account a hard military response by India or a pro-actively conducted Indian diplomacy of 'restrained approach'".

2. U.S.-India Relations

Rahul Bedi's article in Frontline, India, examines the spread of US's military presence "even to hitherto inaccessible areas in Asia."

Kashmir

1. Internal Situation

Continued violence in Jammu and Kashmir has claimed more lives. A report in the daily Indian Express analyzes why Jammu is becoming the new target by the militants. Muzamil Jaleel's essay looks at how "people in the Valley resort to poetry to reveal their pain and document the hidden trauma of tragedy as prose is dangerous."

Arun Jaitley, Indian government's point man for Kashmir, and the Kashmir state government representative Ghulam Mohideen Shah are scheduled to hold talks focused on the key issue of the scope of autonomy for the state. The widely opposing positions of Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh (RSS) and Kashmir's ruling National Conference (NC) on the future of Jammu and Kashmir has created confusion over the BJP's 'Kashmir Policy'. Meanwhile, some members of the BJP's Legislative Party in Jammu and Kashmir have asked for a change in leadership.

Praveen Swami (Frontline, India) writes that the trifurcation plan for Kashmir proposed by the RSS and Vishwa Hindu Parishad (VHP) indicates that one should "never ever underestimate the insanity of the communalists." Neerja Chowdhury (Indian Express) also believes that "only the loony fringe" could justify division of Jammu and Kashmir along religious lines. Kuldip Nayar (Dawn, Pakistan) gives a thumbnail history of negotiations between Srinagar and New Delhi.

Prime Minister Atal Behari Vajpayee has postponed his political mission to Jammu and Kashmir. The postponement, according to Arati Jerath (Indian Express) is a result of the realization by the Indian government that its "two-year-long political initiative to co-opt separatist groups into the mainstream is reaching a dead-end." The failure of the Indian government to bring on board all major political player is also noted by Swami (Frontline, India).

The daily Telegraph, India, reported that Sardar Abdul Qayyum Khan, President Musharraf's pointman on Kashmir, has called on Hurriyat Conference to participate in October elections. Qayyum Khan denied the report. Hurriyat's former chairman Mirwaiz Umer Farooq has stated that his group is ready to hold "genuine and unconditional talks" at the highest level with the Center on

the Kashmir issue."

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