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Nuclear Issues

1. Related News and Analysis

M.V. Ramana's essay in the Daily Times argues that "adopting ideas about how to deploy or use nuclear weapons - especially tactical weapons - from the cold war rivals would be suicidal."

According to Pervez Hoodbhoy, a Pakistani physicist, people in Pakistan "are not afraid [of nuclear war] because of simple ignorance" of what such a war would mean. In another interview with the daily Times of India, Hoodbhoy stated that "religious fundamentalism - Islamic and Hindu - has devastated both countries." In her essay for Outlook, India, novelist Arundhati Roy writes that nuclear weapons "violate everything that is humane, they alter the meaning of life."

Narendra Gupta, retired Air Vice-Marshal Indian Airforce, suggest that it will be "a fallacy" to believe that India's surface-to-surface missiles (SSM) can counter Pakistan's SSMs.

Afghanistan

1. Current Situation

Over 5,000 members of the International Security Assistance Force (ISAF) are now stationed in Kabul. ISAF has reportedly come under rocket fire in Gardez. The US forces mistakenly killed three members of the security squad of Governor of Logar, Dr Fazlullah Mujaddadi.

UNOCOL, a US oil company, has stated that it has "no plans or interest" in Turkmen-Afghanistan-Pakistan gas pipeline project. According to a report in the Daily Times, poppy cultivation in Afghanistan is "resuming steadily."

Australia's Prime Minister John Howard has stated that requests for further assistance "in the struggle against terrorism would be considered on their merits."

2. Reconstruction

Delegates at the Loya Jirga elected Hamid Karzai, the leader of the current interim administration, as Afghanistan's head of state. According to some reports, Karzai had the support of various warlords, former King Zahir Shah and members of the interim cabinet. The proceedings of the Loya Jirga were marked by delays, confusion and walkouts. Secretary of State Colin Powell has denied accusations that the US pushed for Karzai's nomination.

Edward Girardet's report in the Daily Times examines the influence of Tajiks from Panjshir valley, the original stronghold of the anti Taliban struggle, in the Loya Jirga. According to Rahimullah Yusufzai of the daily News, "US special envoy Zalmay Khalilzad has emerged as the king-maker in Afghanistan." Another report in the daily News looks at some of the players at the Jirga.

Ahmed Rashid's report in the Far Eastern Economic Review indicates that the political process in Afghanistan has been "seriously jeopardized by the failure of international donors to come up with sufficient funding for the reconstruction of the country or to support the government budget."

3. Humanitarian Crisis

Over a million Afghans refugees have reportedly returned to their country.

India-Pakistan Tensions

1. News

Following the visit of the US Deputy Secretary of State Richard Armitage the tensions between India and Pakistan have eased somewhat. President Musharraf's promise to crackdown on militants crossing into Kashmir was followed by India's lifting of ban on the use of its airspace by Pakistani commercial aircrafts. India has also ordered its western fleet to end patrols off Pakistani waters in the Arabian Sea. India has reportedly told the visiting US defense secretary Donald Rumsfeld that it is not planning any further immediate measures to diffuse the crisis. Pakistan's current envoy to Malaysia and former foreign secretary Najmuddin Shaikh has indicated that some militant groups may not be "entirely subservient" to the wishes of the government. K.P. Nayar's report in the daily Telegraph, India, examines the role of Brajesh Mishra, national security adviser to Vajpayee, in diffusing the India- Pakistan crisis. According to a report by Muzamil Jaleel in the daily Indian Express, the reduction in tension has had very little impact on Indian troops deployed along the Line of Control (LoC).

According to Pakistan's Chief of the Air Staff, Air Chief Marshal Mushaf Ali Mir, Indian unmanned aerial vehicle (UAV) Searcher Mk II that was shot down by the Pakistan Air Force was an Israeli spy plane launched from India.

India's Defence Secretary Yogendra Narain has denied reports that the US and Britain have suspended arms sales to India.

Amnesty International has criticized extensive anti-personnel mine laying operations being conducted by both India and Pakistan since December 2001. Yoginder Sikand's report in Outlook, India, examines the human costs of the Kashmir conflict.

2. Analysis and Opinions

In an essay for the daily Indian Express, J.N. Dixit argues that present circumstances require India to act "decisively in operational terms against Pakistan's activities in J&K." V.R. Raghavan (daily Hindu) criticizes the Indian government for "the belief that war can be used as political theatre to demonstrate resolve against the adversary." John Chipman & Gary Samore suggest a set of steps that can make both Prime Minister Vajpayee and President Musharraf "come out winners" in the current crisis.

Jasgit Singh (daily Indian Express) argues that "terrorism, not Kashmir, is the central issue" in the current crisis. K. Subrahmanyam (daily Times of India) criticizes the US for giving into Pakistan's "nuclear blackmail." Imtiaz Alam (daily News, Pakistan) believes that "General Musharraf with his 'guerrilla retreat' [from his support of the jihadis] has snatched high moral and diplomatic ground from the Indians."

Pratap Mehta (daily Hindu) believes that for a "genuine dialogue to be possible the entire discourse on Kashmir will have to change: both [India and Pakistan] will have to see the issue as a non-zero sum game, that is look for a resolution where both can win." Iffat Malik's essay in the daily Dawn argues that if India and Pakistan were to go to war "they will do so purely because of domestic politics." Sadanand Dhume (Far eastern Economic Review) also argues that because of domestic

political compulsions "even if Pakistan stops militant infiltration into Kashmir, it may not be enough to stop war."

Pakistan

1. Pakistan: Domestic Situation

Pakistan's Foreign Minister Abdul Sattar has offered resignation for "health reasons." President Musharraf has reportedly decided to retain Abdul Sattar and not appoint a new foreign minister.

According to a report initially published by the Newsweek, Pakistani jihadis have promised to continue their fight in Kashmir. Leader of various Pakistani political parties have reaffirmed their support of the "Kashmiris' struggle in a principled and political manner." K.P. Nayar's report in the daily Telegraph suggests "a split in the Pakistani establishment on turning off the terrorist tap permanently." A Daily Times editorial criticizes the Pakistan government for giving contradictory signals about the recently announced ban on 115 Madaris [seminaries] allegedly involved in extremism and militancy.

India

1. India: Domestic Situation

The ruling National Democratic Alliance has proposed Abdul Kalam - once in charge of India's missile development program - for the president of India.

Andre Beteille's essay in the daily Telegraph argues that in India "there are not only cleavages - of language, religion, education, occupation and so on - but also cross-cutting ties." Harish Khare believes that Prime Minister Vajpayee has initiated "confidence-building measures within his own Government." BG Verghese's essay in the daily Hindustan Times argues that "Hindutva's litany of hate against Muslims and other minorities" reflects "its own mindset."

According to a report by Stockholm International Peace Research Institute (SIPRI), India is the 11th largest military spender in the world with \$12.9 billion budgetary expenditure for 2001.

2. U.S.-India Relations

An editorial in the daily Nation, Pakistan, believes that the US is favoring India. Maqsoodul Hasan Nuri's essay in the daily News, Pakistan, expresses concern over "the increasing solidification of the Indo-Israel nexus in the past few years."

Kashmir

1. Internal Situation

Defense Secretary Donald Rumsfeld has toned down his earlier statements that al-Qaeda militants may be operating in Kashmir. Syed Ali Shah Geelani, a leader of the All Parties Hurriyat Conference (APHC), was arrested under the recently enacted Prevention of Terrorism Act (POTA); his arrest

caused a protest strike in Srinager.

Zafar Meraj's essay in Outlook, India, examines the recent split in Hizbul Mujahideen, Kashmir's most prominent militant group. Pradeep Dutta's report for the daily Indian Express suggests "growing differences" between Pakistan based Lashkar-e-Toiba and the Hizbul Mujahideen.

MORI International, an opinion polling organization, has published results of a recent poll conducted in Jammu and Kashmir. A report in the daily Times of India analyzes the poll.

According to a daily Telegraph, India, report, "a section of Prime Minister Atal Bihari Vajpayee's advisers believes that the time has come for India to show an iron fist in Kashmir."

2. India, Pakistan, US

In an interview with the daily Frontier Post, the chairman of the Muttahida Jihad Council, an alliance of 15 Jihadi organizations, has ruled out the possibility of any ceasefire with India. The Defence Council of Pakistan and Afghanistan, a loose coalition of various Pakistani political parties, has accused President Musharraf of "total surrender" to the US and compromising the 'Kashmir cause'.

Writing for the daily Frontier Post, Kamila Shamsie stressed the need to "stop thinking about Kashmir in terms of what India and Pakistan want, and start thinking about the rights of the Kashmiris."

Raja Mohan's report in the daily Hindu believes that India should focus on "preparing the ground for a final settlement of the Kashmir dispute." Writing for the daily Dawn, Jawad Naqvi suggests that the US may be seeking a "long-term political solution in the region."

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