

# SANDNet Weekly Update, June 16, 2003

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## **Nuclear Issues**

### **1. Related News and Analysis**

Finance Minister Shaukat Aziz stated that there will be no roll back or freezing of Pakistan's nuclear weapons program. According to a recently published book India, in collaboration with the US, had been monitoring China's nuclear installations for 30 years.

Ahmed Faruqi (Daily Times) suggests that "India perceives an embryonic threat emanating from the US"; a factor that has "driven India to acquire an ICBM capability."

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## **Afghanistan**

### **1. Current News**

A number of people, including suspected Taliban fighters, were killed in various attacks. The Afghan authorities sent bodies of 21 people, said to be Taliban killed while fighting government troops near Kandahar, to Pakistan. However, Pakistani authorities handed back some bodies claiming that were of Afghan nationals.

["US soldiers gun down Afghan bodyguard"](#)

### **2. Analysis**

Ahmed Rashid and Barnett Rubin (Nation, Pakistan) warn that a "failure to provide Afghans with security will push that country back to the state of anarchy that gave rise to the Taliban and allowed al Qaeda to base itself there." Syed Saleem Shahzad (Asia Times) writes that US and Pakistani intelligence officials met with Taliban leaders in an effort to control the deteriorating security situation.

["US turns to the Taliban"](#)

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## **India-Pakistan Relations**

### **1. News**

During an interview, President Musharraf indicated that he will be "more than happy" to meet Indian Prime Minister Vajpayee, and stated that "to avoid Kargils [the 1999 conflict between India and Pakistan], we need to resolve disputes..." Both India's Ministry of Foreign Affairs and the Deputy Prime Minister, L.K. Advani criticized Musharraf for his remarks. Mariana Baabar (News, Pakistan) reports that "Pakistan appeared disappointed by the slow-pace attitude of India towards reviving the peace process." India's Defense Minister, George Fernandes believes that cross-border infiltration

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by Pakistan is continuing. Indian Prime Minister Vajpayee has stated that any talks with Islamabad over Kashmir should include the one-third portion of the region "under Pakistan's control." Speaking in Chicago, Advani stated that "there has to be some give and take to achieve peace." In an interview with Frontline (India) Syed Salahuddin, a leader of the Kashmiri group Hizbul Mujahideen, stated that "the solution to the Kashmir issue lies on the table. But due to India's obduracy it never comes to the table."

["Gen remarks not a good sign: MEA"](#)

["No fruitful talks after Musharraf's Kargil remarks: Advani"](#)

["No let-up in infiltration"](#)

["Advani says India ready for 'give and take' on Kashmir"](#)

The Delhi - Lahore bus service may resume by July 1. The daily Indian Express reports that India and Pakistan are likely to begin joint-secretary level talks in July.

["Joint-secy level talks with Pak to begin in July"](#)

## **2. Opinion and Analysis**

J.N. Dixit (Telegraph, India) suggests some "substantive steps" that can "underpin the process of a dialogue." A.G. Noorani (Frontline, India) argues that India's reversal of its Pakistan policy is the result of "total collapse of the policy which the government has pursued towards Pakistan in the last five years since it came to power." Amanat Ali Chaudhry (Nation, Pakistan) takes a dim view of the prospects of a successful peace process because of the rise of fundamentalist forces in India and Pakistan and the vested interest of military in keeping the Kashmir issue alive. Masood Hasan (News, Pakistan) finds it "heartening that people on both sides are taking initiatives to bridge the divide" between India and Pakistan.

Hamida Khuhro (Dawn, Pakistan) writes that only "enduring good relations" between India and Pakistan can assure the security of about 125 million Indian Muslims.

["Our forgotten commitment"](#)

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## **Pakistan**

### **1. Shariat Bill In NWFP**

The North West Frontier Province (NWFP) Assembly passed the Shariat Bill that would make the province the first in the country to be run according to a particular interpretation of Islamic Laws and customs. The NWFP government has also made the offering of prayers compulsory with warnings of action against violators and celebrated the day of the passage of the Bill as a "thanksgiving day" throughout the province. Both the ruling Pakistan Muslim League (PML -QA) and President Musharraf have criticized the passage of the Bill. Meanwhile, NWFP Chief Minister Akram Khan Durrani has warned Islamabad not to interfere with his government.

Nasim Zehra (News, Pakistan) argues that "there have to be groups contesting the MMA's interpretation of Islam. Musharraf's speeches alone present no counterpoint to a politically strong MMA's non- pluralistic view of Islam." Mani Shankar Aiyar (Indian Express) believes that "this is the moment of reckoning for the consequences of the military and the theocracy having mutually promoted each other since the creation of Pakistan." Tariq Rahman (News) writes that the federal government should check the authoritarian excesses of the religious lobby but should not dismiss or suppress the NWFP government. The Daily Times ruefully notes that "our misfortune is that the people are now in the uncomfortable position of being asked to choose between Talibanisation and

General Musharraf." Rahimullah Yusufzai (News) suggests that some critics of the Shariat Law are "writing half-truths and spreading lies."

## **2. Political News and Analysis**

President Musharraf is reportedly unwilling to discuss the issue of his quitting the army with opposition parties. The Lahore High Court has ruled that President Musharraf's continuation as the Chief of Army Staff (COAS) does not violate any provision in the Constitution. The combined opposition in the National Assembly has, however, demanded Musharraf's resignation as the President. Prime Minister Mir Zafarullah Jamali has stated that his government is open to holding dialogue on the controversial Legal Framework Order (LFO) with the opposition political parties. ["Musharraf can continue as Army chief: HC"](#)

Raja Riaz (Nation, Pakistan) reports that Muttahida Majlis-e-Amal (MMA) has expressed its readiness to accept President Pervez Musharraf in uniform, provided the government implements its 17-point Islamisation package. The Daily Times notes with concern that attempts are being made by the PML-QA to save General Musharraf's LFO by conceding Shariah in the whole of Pakistan. Mushahid Hussain (Nation) believes that a 'Mother of All Deals' with the "mainstream political forces .. alone can be a guarantee of a stable democracy." Khalid Hasan (Daily Times) examines a recent report in Far Eastern Economic Review indicating that President Musharraf may be on verge of dissolving democratic legislatures and reimposing military rule.

## **3. Miscellaneous Stories**

Farhatullah Babar (Dawn) examines legal issues involved in the current stand off between the military and tenant farmer at a military farm in Punjab. Twelve trainee policemen belonging to the local Hazara community were killed in what is thought to be an act of sectarian violence. The daily News reports on rumors of US FBI activities in Pakistan. The daily Dawn reports that Internet users in Pakistan are increasingly turning to proxy servers to access websites which have been banned and blocked by the government.

["Okara: military's poor case"](#)

["Internet users turn to proxy servers"](#)

Pakistan has announced its new budget. The country's defense budget is estimated at Rs 160.250 billion for the fiscal 2003-04.

## **4. US - Pakistan Relations**

Statement on the US Central Command's (CENTCOM)'s website that Pakistan's participation in 'war on terrorism' cost the country some \$10 billion has led to criticism of the government by opposition political parties. US CENTCOM subsequently pulled the data off its website.

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## **India**

### **1. India: Domestic Situation**

Dioone Bunsha (Frontline, India) gives an account of his visit to a training camp run by the Vishwa Hindu Parishad (VHP), an extremist Hindu organization. In examining India's energy security, Bhupendra Kumar Singh (Hindu) suggests that the country has "a limited resource base, lacks adequate infrastructure and an integrated long-term energy policy." Amulya Ganguli (Hindustan

Times) notes that Congress, "normally known for floundering about without a sense of direction" has taken some "politically savvy" steps in recent months.

["India's energy security"](#)

The Archaeological Survey of India (ASI) has submitted a report to the Allahabad High Court saying it has found no evidence of a structure under the demolished Babri Masjid so far. The VHP, however has stated that "whatever may be the judicial verdict, whatever may be the result of the excavation, the Ramjanmabhoomi temple will be built (at the disputed site) because it's a matter of faith."

["Law for Ram temple is new Sangh mantra"](#)

Rajni Kothari (Hindustan Times) reviews two recent NGO publications on governance and democracy in India. Premvir Das (Indian Express) believes that "the time has come for renewed and ruthless intervention by the political leadership" in an effort to transform the Indian military.

["Defensive at Defence"](#)

## **2. US-India Relations**

Indian Prime Minister Atal Behari Vajpayee has stated that no decision on US request that India send troops to Iraq will be made without national consensus. A high-level US delegation is in New Delhi in order to persuade India to send its troops. US Ambassador to India Robert Blackwill has stated that a decision by the Indian Government not to contribute troops to a US-led stabilization force in Iraq will "not damage" ties between both countries.

["No troops for Iraq without consensus, PM assures Sonia"](#)

["South Block readies for US team, Iraq parleys"](#)

["Refusing troops won't affect ties"](#)

Amit Baruah (Hindu, India), Praful Bidwai (News, Pakistan) and Taufiq Subhan (Indian Express) argue that India must not send its troops to Iraq. Rajiv Shukla (Indian Express) finds the growing US-India ties "heartening" while Jayati Ghosh (Frontline) writes that the "Indian government's foreign policy shift towards the United States and Israel augurs ill for peace in the region and for India's own development prospects." According to Daily Times, India would like to get from the US "equipment needed to counter nuclear strikes and the Patriot missile defence system."

["Should India do the U.S. bidding?"](#)

["Iraq: Why we must stay away"](#)

["US and US"](#)

## **3. Foreign Policy Issues**

V. R. Raghavan (Hindu) writes that US' "unwillingness to act firmly and decisively with North Korea is seen as evidence of its shifting commitment to its allies' security interests." Jasjit Singh (Indian Express) would like "India and China [to] bury old phantoms and seize trade and military opportunities." J.N. Dixit examines Prime Minister Vajpayee's tour of Germany, Russia and France in the context of growing US unilateralism.

["Asian security and the U.S."](#)

["Line of actual gain"](#)

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## **Kashmir**

### **1. News**

Violence continues to claim more lives in Jammu and Kashmir (J&K). The Indian authorities arrested, and later released, Yasin Malik, the chairman of the Jammu-Kashmir Liberation Front (JKLF). The JKLF has proposed a unified and independent Kashmir. The daily Indian Express reports that a group of about 20 Kashmiri Muslim youth left their jobs in Saudi Arabia and came back "to fight the terrorists." The Indian army is reportedly building a fence along the Line of Control (LoC) in the Poonch and Rajouri districts of J&K.

["Malik held; Hurriyat says govt frustration showing"](#)

["Indian seeks Kashmir solution in technology"](#)

## **2. Analysis**

M.P. Bhandara (Dawn, Pakistan) notes that the "quantum of autonomy that the Valley administration would enjoy is the key issue" in resolving the Kashmir dispute. Balraj Puri (Frontline, India) argues that the Good Friday peace agreement in Northern Ireland cannot be replicated in the J&K.

["A Kashmir roadmap"](#)

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## **Sri Lanka**

### **1. Peace Process**

V. Suryanarayan (Frontline, India) writes that "with the Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam (LTTE) keen on extending the territorial jurisdiction of its de facto state to the whole of the North-East and the Sri Lankan government ruling out an administrative mechanism falling outside the scope of the Constitution, the divide is growing." V. S. Sambandan believes that "the LTTE has stuck to its broadly predictable strategy of pushing Colombo to the edge and then going for the jugular." P.K. Balachandran (Daily Times) reports that the LTTE has stated that it would resume peace talks only if the Sri Lankan government agreed to a "new and refined" agenda. Earlier in the week, a Tamil Tiger rebel merchant ship was blown, while a politician opposed to the guerrillas was gunned down.

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