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Nuclear Issues

1. Related News and Analysis

India's Deputy Chief of Army Staff has claimed that the Indian Army can "cope with a tactical nuclear strike in the battlefield." Abdul Kalam, one time director of India's missile development program and the current Indian Presidential nominee, believes that nuclear deterrent helped avert a nuclear war in South Asia. A new report by the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) suggests that 'dirty bombs' are "a real concern, a real threat."

In their respective essays for the daily News, Pakistan, Masooda Bano and Pervez Hoodbhoy express their alarm at the wide spread ignorance in South Asia of the consequences of a nuclear war.

Farrukh Saleem's article in the daily News, Pakistan, argues that Pakistan's "nuclear umbrella has ... proven to be no more than a suspended mirage."

Afghanistan

1. Current Situation

The International Security Assistance Force (ISAF) for Afghanistan has reportedly found "a large stash of guns, mortars and explosives" eastern Afghanistan. A report in the daily News indicate that British troops may have started evacuating from Khost towards Gardez province. Turkey has taken over the command of the ISAF from Britain. US forces believed to be in Pakistan's tribal areas bordering Afghanistan have reportedly come under rocket fire.

The Daily Times published an interview with Ismail Khan, a warlord and the governor of Herat province.

Afghanistan's new transitional cabinet was sworn in after former interior minister Yunus Qanooni agreed to rejoin the government as education minister. The proceedings of the Loya Jirga were marked by bickering and "occasional scuffles." According to the Human Rights Watch (HRW), "Afghanistan's warlords [have] emerged from the Loya Jirga with greater power and a new claim to legitimacy."

Ahmed Rashid's report on the proceeding of the Loya Jirga for the Far Eastern Economic Review suggests that "loya jirga has publicly exposed the contradictions and conflicts that have made stability in Afghanistan and the region so difficult to achieve."

2. Humanitarian Crisis

Khaled Mansour, World Food Program (WFP) spokesman, has stated that unless Afghanistan's need for food and funds are met urgently, the country "could soon be inhabited by walking skeletons."

India-Pakistan Tensions

1. News

The easing of tensions between India and Pakistan has not reduced the war of words between the two countries. Meanwhile, there is confusion over whether India has opened its airspace to Pakistani commercial flights.

Rahul Badi's article in *Frontline*, an Indian magazine, examines the issue of infiltration of Pakistan based militants into Kashmir.

A report in the daily *News, Pakistan*, claims that "Rumsfeld had to commit that the USA would not object to the sale of an upgraded version of Israeli anti-missile system [Arrow II] to India, if New Delhi begins taking the heat off Islamabad."

Notwithstanding the current standoff, Pakistan has offered India duty exemption on new export items.

2. Analysis and Opinions

An editorial in the daily *Indian Express* believes that it would "erroneous" to assume that terrorist attacks in Pakistan indicate that President Musharraf is not in control of the jihadi fighters. The daily *Hindu's* editorial urges India to take "imaginative de-escalatory steps and [start] a renewed dialogue with Pakistan on all issues."

Sarmila Bose's essay in the daily *Telegraph, India*, states that India would "violate an international treaty and commit a crime against humanity" if it were to abrogate its water sharing treaty with Pakistan.

Writing for the daily *Hindustan Times*, J.N.Dixit urges India to keep up its pressure on the border until it has proof that Pakistan has stopped "adversarial and intrusive activities against Indian security."

Pakistan

1. Pakistan: Domestic Situation

Ten people were killed and many more wounded when a car bomb exploded outside the US consulate-general in Karachi. Earlier, unknown assailants had fired three missiles at a camp where Iftikhar Hussain Shah, governor of Pakistan's frontier province, was staying. A report in *Outlook*, an Indian magazine, states that President Musharraf is "living under siege, retreating behind impregnable security to escape the wrath of jihadis." The leaders of *Muttahida Majlis Amal (MMA)*, a coalition of six Islamic parties, have stated that the "Kashmir Jihad will continue." In an effort to control religious schools suspected of encouraging extremism, Pakistan government has approved a law to register and regulate the *madaris* (religious seminaries), and has also arrested activists of militants Islamic groups.

Ten Pakistan Army and paramilitary personnel patrolling remote areas of the tribal regions of the Frontier province were killed in an encounter with suspected al-Qaeda fighters. According to a *Daily Times* report, 27 men, suspected of being al-Qaeda members, were arrested in Lahore.

According to Pakistan's 'Economic Survey for fiscal year 2001-2002' 28.2% of the population is living below the poverty line.

Ahead of the October General Elections, President Musharraf's government has proposed major

changes in laws governing the constitution of the government including empowering the President to dissolve the National Assembly or to dismiss the Prime Minister.

Khalid Ahmed of the Daily Times reviews news and opinions appearing in Pakistan's Urdu press.

2. U.S. - Pakistan Relations

President Musharraf has denied giving an "assurance" to the US of permanently ending movements along the border.

Writing for the daily Dawn, Iffat Malik suggest that President Bush is using the 'war on terrorism' to get out of the "sticky hole of domestic criticism, waning popularity, the prospect of electoral defeat and an unfinished right-wing agenda." Adrian Husain's essay in the same newspaper argues that increase in violence by Jihadis is the price Pakistan "has to pay" for aligning itself with the US.

India

1. India: Domestic Situation

Vishwa Hindu Parishad (VHP), a right wing Hindu party, has announced its plans to start a movement for starting construction of Ram temple in Ayodhya reversing earlier assurance it had given to the Union Government that it will abide by the court verdict on the Ayodhya issue. The ruling Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) has sought to distance itself from the stand taken by VHP. Prominent saints and seers in Ayodhya have demanded a ban on VHP. According to a report in the daily Hindustan Times, the Gujarat Government is reneging on its official assurances that the victims of Hindu communal violence now living in relief camps would not be forced to go back till the process of rehabilitation is complete.

Aijaz Ahmad's essay in Frontline argues that "today India faces the classic situation of a pre-fascist upheaval."

In a controversial move, the Indian government has opened up Indian print media to foreign investment.

2. US-India Relations

Shafek Koreshe's essay in the daily Dawn, and Sudha Ramchandran's article in Asia Times examine growing military ties between India and Israel.

Kashmir

1. Internal Situation

The All Parties Hurriyat Conference (APHC) has decided to keep its 'parallel election commission', conceived in January to prove the grouping's representative character during the Assembly elections, "in abeyance." The Jammu and Kashmir Liberation Front (JKLF) has backed APHC's call to Pakistan to limit its support to the political and diplomatic fronts. APHC has also asked the Indian government to allow its leaders to travel to Pakistan to "negotiate peace with [militants and seek] a peaceful resolution to the dispute of Jammu and Kashmir." Meanwhile, there have been reports of

continued violence in the state. However, Hizbul Mujahideen, the largest militant group in Kashmir, has vowed to disrupt the upcoming elections in the Jammu and Kashmir.

2. India, Pakistan, US

A report in the daily Hindu suggests that Indian Prime Minister Vajpayee may be open to discussing "devolution of more powers" to the state of Jammu and Kashmir (J&K). VHP has called upon Hindus to "ensure the success of its crusade to safeguard the interests of the minorities (Hindus) in Jammu and Kashmir." India has ruled out the deployment of foreign troops in J&K to help flush out suspected al Qaeda fighters. Prime Minister Vajpayee has stated that he views US role in J&K as that of 'facilitator' not mediator.

President Musharraf has stated that Pakistan will not accept the Line of Control dividing Kashmir between Pakistan and India as the international border.

3. Opinion and Analysis

An editorial in the daily Telegraph, India, argues that "there is considerable merit in the demand for autonomy" made by Farooq Abdullah, the Chief Minister of J&K. Writing for the daily Hindu, Harish Khare argues that "it is about time New Delhi realises that the Abdullahs are not the solution but a part of the problem." Kuldip Nayar's essay in the daily Dawn argues that it a delusion to believe that "Kashmir has remained a bilateral problem or that we have been able to keep away the association of a third party." Writing for the daily Hindu, Amitabh Mattoo argues that "converting the LoC into the international border is being seen as the most practical solution to the Kashmir issue."

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